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Catholic and Methodist Missionaries in the
Milne Bay Province of Papua New Guinea,
1930–80

Ross Mackay

A thesis submitted in fulfilment of the requirements of the
Degree of Doctor of Philosophy
in the Australian National University
Canberra ACT Australia
January 1999
Except where otherwise acknowledged, this thesis is based on my own original research.

[Signature]
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ABSTRACT

This thesis is divided into four sections. The first focuses on the missionaries: who they were, the leaders under whom they worked, and how their labours succeeded. All white missionaries (except for a relative few in the Methodist Mission after 1968) were Australian, the Methodists predominantly middle class, the Catholics mostly from working class backgrounds. They brought with them aspects of the sectarian divide of their homeland. The period up to the mid-sixties was a time of polarised and acrimonious sectarian division in Australia. Doctrines of papal infallibility and the sinlessness of Mary horrified many Protestants, and the foundational debate of the primacy of Scripture over that of the Church ensured a high level of argument and debate. While these debates did not take place among the missionaries in Papua, relations between the competing missionaries reflected the fact there was little fraternisation and dialogue, though there was no outright hostility or physical confrontation. When there was a problem it was usually a personality clash between individuals. The nature and details of the sectarian divide are dealt with in chapter one, as is the major political issue of separate spheres of influence.

The second section examines the Catholic and Methodist Missions from 1930 up to, and including what was the most serious issue they faced, the evacuation of the white missionaries in January 1942. This decade was the period of establishment of the Catholic Mission, and of growing conservatism, reflected in the leadership, in the Methodist work. A chapter is devoted to the events that created the evacuation controversy and what happened among the Papuan people when the missionaries departed, including why the Methodists left behind their Pacific Island colleagues.

The third section takes up the story from when the missionaries returned in 1945 up until 1980. For the Catholics these were years of expansion into new areas as the hindrance of 'spheres of influence' broke down. The progress from a small, struggling church to one that, by the mid-fifties, had spread across the whole province are examined as is the important organisational changes that took place until this mission became part of a national church. As well, it was a period in which the directions they had spent so long in setting were sorely tested, especially their emphasis on school
education. In the Methodist Mission the post-war period began with entrenched conservatism but, in the space of a couple of years in the mid-sixties, underwent such a powerful period of change that, by 1970, they were a truly national church with independence in an absolute sense. Rapid strides to an autonomous, independent church are analysed as are the factors that had held the process back for so long.

The fourth section deals with Papuan responses to the missionaries' efforts. Cultural effects, both in the area of traditional beliefs in marriage and magic as well as millenarian movements, are examined in two different chapters. The other two chapters look at the responses through the 'outward' contributions of education, medical and technical services with the final chapter looking at the 'inward' responses as seen in 'ownership' of the missions and their messages as measured by attendances at worship and the development of local leaders. The conclusion claims the self-evidence of certain facts: that Christianity is a deep and permanent factor in the lives of these people and that the Methodist/United Church is the preferred church by the great majority for one main reason: it was the first to be there and the experience of the people was sufficiently positive for there to be no reason to change allegiance when the Catholics arrived. At the same time, it is acknowledged the Catholic Church is also a permanent and welcome institution in the lives of the Massim people.
## ABBREVIATIONS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Abbreviation</th>
<th>Description</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ANG AU</td>
<td>Australia New Guinea Administration Unit.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Annals</em></td>
<td><em>The Annals of Our Lady of the Sacred Heart (Official organ of Missionaries of the Sacred Heart - Australian edition).</em></td>
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<tr>
<td>A&amp;T</td>
<td>Appointments and Training Committee, Methodist Overseas Missions.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ARM</td>
<td>Assistant Resident Magistrate.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CD</td>
<td>Chairman of the District.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CTI</td>
<td>Circuit Training Institution.</td>
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<tr>
<td>DTI</td>
<td>District Training Institution.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FNDSC</td>
<td>Filles de Notre-Dame du Sacre-Couer (Daughters of our Lady of the Sacred Heart).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FP</td>
<td>Father Provincial.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GBMTC</td>
<td>George Brown Missionary Training College, Haberfield NSW.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>JPH</em></td>
<td><em>Journal of Pacific History.</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LMS</td>
<td>London Missionary Society</td>
</tr>
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<td>MOM</td>
<td>Methodist Overseas Missions.</td>
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<td>MR</td>
<td><em>Missionary Review (Official organ of the Methodist Overseas Missions).</em></td>
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<tr>
<td>MSC</td>
<td>Missionaires du Sacre-Couer (Missionaries of the Sacred Heart).</td>
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<tr>
<td>NGC</td>
<td>United Church Archives, New Guinea Collection, University of Papua New Guinea, Port Moresby.</td>
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<tr>
<td>PIME</td>
<td>Pontifico Instituto Missioni Estere (before 1926 the Missioni Estere di Milano or Milan Foreign Mission Society).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SHM</td>
<td>Sacred Heart Monastery, Kensington NSW.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SDA</td>
<td>Seventh Day Adventist.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SPAN</td>
<td>Solomons Papua and New (Guinea).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UC</td>
<td>United Church Archives, University of Papua New Guinea. <em>(see NGC above. UC’ references are prior to re-cataloguing).</em></td>
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PREFACE

This study examines the history of two Australian missionary bodies who worked among the Massim, the people of the Milne Bay province of Papua New Guinea. One of them, the Methodist Mission, commenced its endeavours on 19 June 1891, under the leadership of the Reverend William Bromilow. The early Methodist decades, which had been fruitful, have been examined by Wetherell. However, apart from this work and Langmore's study of the early missionaries, little other historical research has been done but one thing is apparent: by 1930, with 35,000 people (out of an estimated population of 80,000) attending worship, the Methodist Mission had made a permanent and paramount place for itself in the lives of the Massim.

In 1968 I joined the line of Methodist missionaries who had served in Papua. At my penultimate synod meeting, at Bunama in 1973, the people were beginning to think of the centenary celebrations to take place in 1991, and there was a realisation among some that the stories of the past suggested Bromilow was the originator of all things, yet it was clear he could not have been. I had often asked questions of the older men about their experiences with the missionaries and this led to my help being sought to address the questions being asked about the past. This thesis is the response to that request and follows years of part-time study doing my primary and then Masters degrees.

In seeking to answer the request made to me there were two considerations to be addressed. One was the question I should answer. This proved to be simple: what did the missionaries set out to do; did they achieve whatever it was; and what criteria could be validly used to determine the success or otherwise of their endeavours. The second consideration was my role as one of those missionaries. During my time in Papua (1968-75) I only ever considered my role to be a missionary but when I set out to write a history I needed to change that focus. This was a quantum leap for me in a

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2 Diane Langmore, Missionary Lives: Papua 1874-1914.

number of ways for it required me be more critical of missionary motives and methods than I would have otherwise been, and it required me to look dispassionately at the Catholic work with which, during my time in Papua, I had only a fleeting contact. Methodist/United Church missionaries considered the Catholic missionaries as unwelcome latecomers whose presence was as much about their rejection of Protestantism as it was about evangelising the Massim. There was little room for understanding about their work and this study has made me look at them as colleagues in mission rather than as the opposition.

It was forty years after the Methodist commencement that the Roman Catholic order, the Missionaries of the Sacred Heart (MSC), arrived to begin their mission. The Roman Catholic presence was the result of the initiative of Bishop Alain de Boismenu of Yule Island, who was keen to establish a strong Australian Catholic presence in Port Moresby and to challenge the separate spheres of influence agreement that had so restricted the Catholics in Papua since 1890. A first initiative in 1930 ended in failure but a second attempt, in August 1932, established a permanent presence. Of the beginnings and the first fifty years little has been written: there is a limited amount in the official history of the MSC and the only other writing is a narrative history by one of the brothers at Sideia.4

The lack of historical research in missionary history in Milne Bay stands in stark contrast with what has happened in anthropology. Here the study of the Milne Bay people has been voluminous5; according to Young the Massim of Milne Bay have been to British anthropology what the Mediterranean has been to European philosophy.6 The interest of anthropologists is understandable, especially those who belong to the school

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4 James Waldersee, 'Neither Eagles nor Saints': MSC Missions in Oceania 1881-1975; Kevin McGhee, Australian MSC Missions in Eastern Papua: The First Fifty Years.

5 Foremost among the published studies are Seligman, Melanesians of British New Guinea; Malinowski, Argonauts of the Western Pacific; Armstrong, Rossel Island: An Ethnological Study; Fortune, Sorcerers of Dobu; Young, Fighting with Food and Magicians of Manumanua; Battaglia, On the Bones of the Serpent. Unpublished ethnological studies include Berde, 'Melanesians as Methodists: Economy and Marriage on a Papua New Guinea Island' PhD, Pennsylvania 1974; Macintyre, 'Changing Paths: An historical Ethnography of the Traders of Tubetube', PhD ANU 1983. There are numerous published journal articles, many by Geza Roheim.

of functional anthropology pioneered by Malinowski. The factors that made these communities so attractive to anthropologists - isolated enough to develop their own customs and culture, mortuary rituals, languages, trading patterns and marriage practices - were, however, some of the factors that made missionary activity difficult. Where anthropologists might prefer the people to remain in their traditional state, missionaries were foremost (with government) in trying to bring the people into a wider world. The isolation and small populations of these islands meant little or no economic development, transportation was always difficult and proved to be the most costly item on mission budgets, the vast distances made human resources costly and the provision of medical and communication services very difficult. Milne Bay's relative isolation even today is the major reason most expatriates who have lived and worked in Papua New Guinea have never visited the province.

The fifty years covered in this study is both convenient and necessary. It begins in 1930 when the MSC arrived to start a work in direct opposition to the Methodists, and concludes in 1980 when they were forced to divest some of their work because of financial and staffing shortages, handing over their mission on Goodenough and then, in 1986, the Trobriands, to the Italian-based Pontifico Institute Missioni Estere (PIME) religious order. In the Methodist Mission 1930 was a significant year, for it was the time when colleagues began to seek the removal of Bromilow's successor, Matthew Gilmour, from his position as chairman of the district, heralding a new - though not necessarily different - era. By 1980 the Mission - since 1968 the Papuan Islands Region of the United Church of Papua New Guinea - was largely localised with no missionary clergy, and only a few European specialists in nursing, high school teaching and a manager for SPAN, the national church-owned industrial company that grew out of the technical training department begun by Matthew Gilmour at Salamo in 1922.

This thesis places itself in a new position as far as the history of missions in Milne Bay is concerned. Wetherell's study, which includes the Methodists but not the Catholics, concludes at the second world war, just a decade after the MSC arrival. It deals with the origins and consolidation of the Methodists; this study moves into the new era of localisation, self-government and autonomy of the Church. In the context of other missionary studies in Papua New Guinea it differs in that it offers a comparative
examination of two missions whereas, apart from Wetherell, other studies are of individual missions. Garrett’s trilogy gives little attention to the area this study looks at though the general conclusions he makes about localisation and autonomy are in agreement my conclusions.

Thus, by taking the study up to 1980 new ground is broken. No complete study of the Methodists in the post-war period has previously been attempted and the Catholic Mission in Waldersee is quite limited. This thesis undertakes the fuller historical study needed, including some of the anthropological issues raised by missionary activity. The study looks primarily at the missionaries: the influence of various leaders, what kind of people the missionaries were, what their sending bodies expected of them, what their major contributions to the lives of the Massim were, as well as a look at some of the responses of the people to the stimulus the missionaries gave.

This study is limited in its focus to studying these two missions in their location. This is quite deliberate on two grounds. One is the separate ‘spheres of influence’ agreement which made it almost impossible for the two missions to work in the same locations. By keeping the two churches apart the intent of the agreement was preserved, at least until after the second world war. This resulted in both missions having an inward looking focus where they sought to counter each other’s influence.

The second limiting effect is the geography of the Milne Bay province. The cost of transportation – and the time it took to travel any significant distance – meant neither group of missionaries had much opportunity to engage with the wider world. Consequently, they did not have any significant engagement with other religious bodies in the country and their home bases were in Sydney, Australia. This isolation meant they were unaware of many of the developments and thinking going on in other places and an inability to engage with those things even when they might have been aware. Even theological and missiological books and journals were unavailable or unattainable.

The sources I have accessed are indicative of this isolation. Three types of primary sources are used. The first, one which makes it different from many similar studies of missions and missionaries, was my own participation as a Methodist/United Church missionary in this Mission. As such I had effectively eight years field work (1968–75) to draw upon. My knowledge of the Dobuan language helped me learn many
things and my placements at East Cape and Bwaruada put me in the middle of village communities, among people who were happy to share their experiences and knowledge.

The second source is correspondence and official records. MSC files are held at the monastery at Kensington NSW where the letters were, at the time I used them, uncatalogued. They are now catalogued and still held there. I was not given access to the minutes of the provincial chapter which, I was informed, would not be available to any person in a similar position. Given the comparative recent period under study I found this restriction understandable. Financial data on the MSC was gleaned from letters and statements in the files. Statistical information in Appendix III comes from the official Roman Catholic yearbook and from the files at Kensington. Prior to 1951 Eastern Papua figures were included as part of the Yule Island statistics in the yearbook so are not included in the appendix. After 1973, due to the creation of the Papua New Guinea province of the MSC, the yearbook ceased to include them in its records.

The voluminous Methodist material is housed in the Mitchell Library at the NSW State Library in Sydney. This consists of Mission Board and associated committees' minutes, district synod minutes as well as the missionaries' annual personal reports and many files of communications between the general secretaries and the chairmen of districts and with individual missionaries. Included in these files are the financial statements and accounts including annual estimates for each district. The New Guinea Collection at the University of Papua New Guinea houses the records from the Papua District/Papuan Islands Region. Over the years these have been re-catalogued and references to them in footnotes reflects the period in which I viewed them.

The Papua District of Methodist Overseas Missions became a constituent part of the United Church of Papua New Guinea and the Solomon Islands when that church was inaugurated in January 1968. After that time missionaries were no longer required to write annual reports for the Mission Board, nor did they communicate with the Board as they had before; their reference point had become the United Church Assembly office in Port Moresby. Consequent to the departure of the overseas ministers, statistical information became much harder to come by. Collection of such material was not a priority for Papuan ministers with the result statistical information has proved less reliable and in no year since 1977 have the figures for all circuits been included in the
annual returns. In some years less than two-thirds of circuits recorded their figures, making the statistics in appendix I incomplete. Appendix II on financial support and expenditure is also incomplete for the same reason, and it should be further noted that the region has received no outside financial assistance since 1978.

The third primary source of information was the missionaries themselves. Many related their stories to me, others put them on paper, and a few on tape. In the Methodist group there are few still living, and most of those live in retirement. They claim forgetfulness but, while the detail may be hazy, their perceptions are quite good. Many MSC priests are still working in Papua and are quite old. It was not possible to speak with some of them, but those I interviewed were clear and precise. Besides these and other primary sources such as the Methodist magazine Missionary Review and its MSC counterpart, Annals, the MSC histories by Waldersee and McGhee were useful.

It is a potential source of difficulty to be both a participant and to critique the missionary endeavour. One needs to avoid hagiography on one hand and condemnation on the other. What helped me to accept the middle ground was that, as a participant, the former becomes impossible (missionaries are more aware of their inadequacies than any critic) and the latter would be to deny the people in Papua their identity as Christians, a claim they hold dear.

I was fortunate to arrive when the autonomous church had been formed; the debate on self-government was over and the debate on localisation in which missionaries would be no longer required was well underway. Within a few years it was all over. Consequently I had no part to play in those discussions – my arrival presumed I was there for the purpose of training Papuans to take over and to then leave.

I would like to thank the following representatives from both the Catholic and Methodist Missions for their help: Gwen and John Bartlett, Joan Benbow, Kingsley and Joan Bond, Ian Chaseling (Salamo), Andrew Cawthera (UK), Jenny Charlesworth, Jim Dawes, Colin and Frances Garlick, Margaret Hall, Isikeli Hau'ofa, Val Hurford (UK), Robert and Miriam Imms, John and Kerry Jefferys, Paul Jennings, Fred and Eileen Kemp, Kevin McGhee, Georgine McKenzie-Hicks, Des Moore, Michael Morwood, Tony O'Brien, Pat Riddel (nee Mylrea), Joan Rockey (nee Cashin), George and Anne Scarlett, Greta Smith (nee Secomb), Harold and Barbara Taylor, Kevin Twomey, Colin
White, Maureen Williams (UK), and Ian and Jean Whitelock.

Appreciation for their help is expressed to Jim and Anne Henderson of the Summer Institute of Linguistics, Simeon Namunu and Michael Rynkiewich of the Melanesian Institute, Goroka PNG, Father John Hoare of the Catholic Archdiocese of Canberra, and the Reverend Cecil Gribble, who was not only a mentor to me in my younger days as a missionary, but also a great help in this research. Jenny Cook read the whole manuscript.

To the MSC archivists at Kensington, the late Father John F. McMahon and his successor, Father Tony Caruana, I am particularly thankful. Both were gracious, brotherly and most helpful. They expressed in a practical way to me that the sectarian divide does not exist with them. I regret the deaths of Father McMahon and Cecil Gribble, which occurred during the period of my research, and I thank God for them both.

I want to express gratitude to the people of the Milne Bay province for accepting me and my family as part of them when we lived there. Both my children, Suzanne and Philip, were born while we lived there and they experienced the best start possible in their lives. The legacy still remains with them, as it does for my wife, Ann, and myself. We learnt and received far more than we contributed.

At the Research School of Pacific and Asian Studies at Australian National University are people to whom I owe a great deal. Dorothy McIntosh, Julie Gordon and Jude Shanahan in the office were kindness and patience personified and more helpful than I deserved. I thank the department for funds that enabled me to do field research in Melbourne, Adelaide, Perth and the United Kingdom. A special thank you goes to Kay Dancey in the Cartography Unit for preparing the maps. I was particularly fortunate in the academic advisors I had: Dr Michael Young, Dr Hank Nelson and Dr Donald Denoon. Each read some or all of my draft and provided me with the most helpful insight and encouragement.

My deepest gratitude goes to my main supervisor, Dr Niel Gunson. To have the doyen of historians on this subject as a supervisor was helpful but I also received much more from Niel. For his encouragement, patience, time and wisdom I am most appreciative. I am profoundly thankful for all he has done for me as a mentor and a
friend, and his continuance with me after his official retirement only indicates how fortunate I have been. I also express appreciation to fellow students Paul D'Arcy, Andrew Hamilton, Ben Liua'ana, Kambati Uriam, Monica Wehner and Christine Weir.

Finally, I thank my wife, Ann, for putting up with no holidays for the past seven years as I have worked on this thesis. As a part-time student holidays are the one time I could get a consistent period to spend on it and her willingness to forego time away has been a sacrifice for which I will always be thankful.

As a Christian I testify to my dependence on God and give him thanks for the calling to work in Papua and I dedicate this work to his honour and glory.
INTRODUCTION

The Milne Bay province, situated at the south-eastern end of Papua New Guinea, encompasses a large area of the Coral Sea and island chains as well as a portion of the mainland around Milne Bay itself. Much of the land mass is volcanic with rich soil, mineral deposits, notably gold, large stands of forest timbers and its waters are home to a large supply of fish. The islands, many surrounded by large coral reefs and lagoons, form groups of which the better known are the D’Enrecasteaux, Louisiades, Engineers and Trobriands. The latter is different to the others in that it consists of flat coral islands with little water and poor soil, yet its people are skilled in agriculture and considered the best gardeners in the province. The culture is predominantly matrilineal but there are a number of patrilineal societies, the most important being those on Goodenough. The people speak a multiplicity of languages and hundreds of dialects. Today Pidgin English is little used in the province; while Dobuan has had prominence because of its use in the kula cycle and its adoption as the lingua franca by the Methodist Mission, today it is not so widely used due to English being the language of instruction and of government.

Exposed as it is to the east, Milne Bay has been the first point of entry to many explorers, the first known one being the Spanish sailor, Captain Luis Baez de Torres, who captained the Almoranta on its voyage of discovery of the Pacific. Separated from the expedition leader, Quiros, in Vanuatu, Torres sailed on alone and anchored in Oba Bay on the south-west tip of Sideia Island in 1605, naming the island Saint Bonaventure. It is claimed that, as in any such expedition, a Roman Catholic chaplain would go ashore and conduct Mass, such would have happened on this occasion. Consequently, even though there is no direct evidence, the honour of conducting the first Christian act is claimed for Torres’ chaplain, and a white wooden cross has been erected on the site with the inscription:

Here on 28th April 1605, the Franciscan Chaplain on Torres’ Ship came ashore and said the First known Mass to be celebrated in Papua.1

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1 ‘Preface’, K. McGhee, The First Fifty Years: Australian MSC Missions (Private Circulation). This memorial was erected in the late 1970’s.
The next explorer was the Frenchman Louis de Bougainville, in 1768. Sailing from the south, he landed on the mainland at Orangerie Bay then travelled east, to the south of Samarai and on to the Louisiades. He was followed in 1793 by Captain Antoine D'Entrecasteaux who, unsuccessfully searching for his countryman La Perouse, landed in the far east at Rossel Island before sailing north-west past Misima, Normanby and the Trobriands, naming various places after crew members: Rossel, Lusancay and Trobriand, as well as giving his own name to the island group that comprises Normanby, Dobu, Fergusson and Goodenough. Other explorers followed in the nineteenth century, including Captain Dumont D'Urville in 1840 and the Briton, Captain Owen Stanley in 1849.

From the mid-1850s numbers of traders, prospectors, divers and fishermen settled in these islands and many met their death. Killed in the Louisiades, between 1878 and 1887, were Chinese, Malays, North Americans, English, French, Pacific Islanders, Australians and even individuals from Africa and Greece. In 1888, when gold was discovered on Sudest and then Misima, miners began to settle but they moved on when newer discoveries were made. Numbers of miners in the Louisiades were volatile: in 1889 there were 300 on Sudest and 400 at Misima yet by the time the first missionaries arrived in 1891, there were only 38 at each place. Numbers of miners on Woodlark were more stable, averaging around 100 from commencement of mining in 1895 to 1900.

A further incursion of European influence was the labour recruiters. Some Massim were kidnapped, many others were duped on board recruiter's vessels for what turned out to be three year terms of employment on the Queensland cane fields. A Royal Commission report into this practice of 'blackbirding' led to the return of 405 men to their Milne Bay homes in 1885. The most notorious of these recruiters was the skipper of the Hopeful, Captain Neils Sorenson, who has been described as a psychopath who bashed, murdered and kidnapped these islanders. It was against the background

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of such kidnaps and death that MacGregor championed the arrival of Wesleyans in June 1891.

Four Christian missions have made a major contribution to the lives of the Massim people of the Milne Bay province, the Methodists, the Roman Catholic MSC order and its sister congregation, Daughters of Our Lady of the Sacred Heart, the Anglicans and Kwato. This thesis is a study of the two whose influence has been the most extensive: Methodist and Catholic. The distinction of being the first to arrive in Papua belongs to the Roman Catholics. The Marists, entrusted with the task of evangelising the western Pacific, settled on Woodlark (Murua) Island in 1847. Woodlark was a most inappropriate place for such a venture: it was isolated, relatively large but with poor soil, large tracts of inland swamps and had a small population who had a battle to eke out a bare existence.

The attempt proved abortive and the Marists, disappointed and weary of any signs of success, departed four years later, handing over its priests who elected to remain - and the very meagre results - to the Milan Foreign Mission Society (PIME). Similar problems of isolation, poverty, drought and famine continued and the Milan Fathers left in 1855 following the murder of their priest, Father Giovanni Mazzucconi, by Muruans.

The permanent entry of the church came with the arrival of the Methodists. In 1890 the head of the Wesleyan Methodist Missionary Society and veteran missionary in Samoa and the New Guinea Islands, the Reverend Dr George Brown, arrived at Dobu to investigate starting a new mission in the wake of the comity agreement between the Anglicans, London Missionary Society (LMS) and Wesleyans. Subsequent to his visit a mission began on 19 June 1891 when William Bromilow, a former missionary in Fiji,

5 The SDA have had a small work centred at a leprosy hospital at Gesila near Samarai and a small village work at Sewa Bay, Normanby Island.

6 A history of this work can be found in Laracy, Marists and Melanesians, 22-31 and Don Affleck, Murua or Woodlark Island: A Study of European-Murua Contact to 1942, BA (Hons) Thesis, ANU 1971.

7 The Australasian Wesleyan Methodist Mission was formed in 1855 and in 1902 the 'Wesleyan' was dropped, coincident with the union of the Wesleyans, Bible Christians and Primitive Methodists forming the Methodist Church of Australasia. In 1904 the name changed again, to Methodist Church of Australasia, Department of Overseas Missions until, in 1940, it became Methodist Overseas Missions. In 1977, with the formation of The Uniting Church in Australia, it was re-named Commission for World Mission.

8 The Anglicans commenced their work at Dogura just a few months later, on 10 August 1891.
landed on Dobu with what was then the largest pioneer missionary group ever assembled: sixty-nine people, comprising Bromilow, his wife and child, five single European men (four clergy), ten Samoan, four Tongan and six Fijian couples and their twelve children, with another nine unmarried Fijians. The area they sought to evangelise covered over 40,000 square kilometres of islands and ocean extending from East Cape on the northern peninsula of Milne Bay to Woodlark and the Laughlan Islands in the north-east, south to Rossel and west as far as Ware Island.

From the beginning the Wesleyans enjoyed acceptance and success and quickly expanded from their base at Dobu. Before the end of 1891 the Reverends James Watson and Samuel Fellows had commenced a mission in the Lousiades, at Panaeati, and the Reverend John Field at Tubetube in the Engineers. Fellows and Watson had at their disposal a whaleboat, the Waverley, and quickly moved around their region, settling two Samoans and one Tongan teacher on Misima. Fellows was the undoubted leader, a man of strong passions and emotions, who carried a gun and liked to ‘bash polygamy.’ In 1895 he was appointed to start the new mission on Kiriwina and was replaced by the Reverend J.R. Williams. Watson returned to Australia in 1894 due to constant malaria attacks and eventually became the pioneer Methodist missionary to Arnhem Land in Northern Australia. In 1898 Field and the mission at Tubetube were moved to the more populous Bunama on Normanby Island. He, too, had returned home by 1901, another victim of malaria. By this time, of the original party of whites, only Bromilow, his wife and daughter, remained.

By 1901 mission stations had also been established on Goodenough and at Kulumadau on Woodlark, the latter with the specific aim of evangelising the gold miners. It was a futile effort, not least because the appointees were single men, and the loneliness for them in what was a depressing and unconducive environment was too much for them. 1901 was the year that Reverend Matthew Gilmour arrived, to take over from Fellows at Kiriwina. The son of a Scottish entrepreneur who had migrated to New Zealand, Gilmour quickly made his mark on the people; within three years Kiriwinan church attendance had risen from 4,000 a week to 5,500. While little of his time there is on record H.M. Moreton, Resident Magistrate (RM) recorded his impression of the Mission in his 1906 annual report:
There are over 100 children living on the [Oyabia] station, and they all seem to be as happy as they can possibly be. There is not the slightest doubt but that this mission is doing an immensity of good in these islands.\(^9\)

In 1908 Bromilow departed and Gilmour took over as chairman of the district. Whereas Bromilow had been a preacher and teacher, Gilmour was neither. His interest and focus was as an industrial missionary for which his penchant was in building a number of mission boats, incorporating kerosine and then petrol engines. In 1919, with the Mission headquarters at Ubuya proving totally unsuitable - there was no river and very poor gardening soil - he prevailed on the Mission Board to permit him to step down from the chairmanship so he could build a new mission headquarters at Salamo on southern Fergusson and across the Dawson Straits from Dobu. Permission for a new headquarters was granted and Bromilow returned in 1922 to resume the chairmanship as he continued the final stages of his Dobuan Bible translation, for which he was to be given an honorary doctorate by Aberdeen University. In 1925 Gilmour, with the Salamo station fully functioning, resumed leadership of the mission and Bromilow took his final departure. By 1930 the mission had had only two chairmen, a remarkable achievement in such a malarial environment. Few of the other missionaries had stayed for a decade and a number of Pacific Islanders had died from malaria or been repatriated home because of it.

By 1930 Gilmour’s thirty years in Papua were beginning to have a deleterious effect on the missionary group. He was becoming increasingly eccentric and aloof and took on more authority than his colleagues thought justified, particularly when it interfered with their own work. Finally some of them, particularly Reverends Jack Rundle and John Dixon, urged the Mission Board leader, the Reverend John Burton to recall him home, an action Burton was reluctant to take. This study takes up at the point where this situation was beginning to develop.

To understand the importance of such issues it is necessary to comprehend the complex hierarchical structure of the Methodist Church. Each mission, of which Papua was one along with New Guinea Islands, Fiji, and Samoa, was a district of the NSW

\(^9\) Quoted in *Missionary Review (MR)*, October 1907, 7.
Methodist Conference. The annual district synod meeting was presided over by a chairman - usually the senior minister, appointed by the Mission Board - and the synod placed ministers in each circuit, prepared the financial estimates for approval by the Mission Board, and set local policy. While the Board had the final say it rarely interfered with synod decisions. Each circuit was under the control of an ordained minister who alone had authority to conduct the sacraments. All ministers were answerable to the Mission Board through the synod meeting and were required to write an annual report of their activities. The chairman was the conduit through which all communication with the Board’s general secretary passed so that, in practice, he had almost total power.

Arguably the most important figure in Methodist Overseas Missions was the Mission Board’s general secretary, of whom two - Reverends John Wear Burton and Cecil Gribble - were men of great significance. Both were former missionaries, in Fiji and Tonga respectively. Their tenures of leadership coincided with significant changes in trends and directions of missionary policy. This policy was formulated in the Mission Board of MOM and articulated in the editorial pages of the Missionary Review, a monthly magazine distributed in local congregations of the Methodist Church throughout Australia. Burton focused on issues such as missionary training, racial equality, the need for a well trained local clergy, and financial support for missions. Gribble advocated ecumenical missionary training, and the autonomy and independence of mission churches and their integration, along with the Methodist Church, into the emerging ecumenical movement through membership in the World Council of Churches.

During the twentieth century these two leaders influenced the Mission Board’s policy through four progressive stages. The first stage was the period of primary evangelisation when the focus was on translating the Bible and winning converts. In the second stage the structure of the church was developed through the training of pastor/teachers, ordination of ministers, advancement of locally trained people to

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11 The Missionary Review was a monthly publication up until 1967 when it became bi-monthly and then, in 1971, quarterly. It was renamed Mission Review in 1977 and ceased publication in 1980.
provide services in education and health, and the introduction of financial self-support, all pre-requisites for the time when the church would be fully localised. In this process the missionaries were counselled to develop in themselves cultural sensitivity and move towards devolution of authority and practice to national leaders. This was expressed when the Board, having seen many of its mission districts devastation by the Pacific war, told its returning missionaries:

We aim at building a truly native Church in all our areas, and leading the people to accept more and more responsibility. We work towards a raised status for women. We believe in the development and preservation of moral and social sanctions, customs, and traditions within native life.  

The third stage was a period of mutuality as the newly independent church related to its founding partner as co-equals, agreeing to share resources with and support each other. Ecumenism was a major part of this phase. The final stage was that of solidarity in which both churches would stand with each other whenever matters of justice, political oppression or poverty needed attention.

This study covers the Methodists from the second stage into the third stage. Burton, a strong advocate of localisation and indigenisation, was the archetypal 'second stage' mission leader while Gribble was a primary figure in ecumenical developments whether it was joint training of missionaries, independence for new churches, or organic union of churches.

Burton was born in Yorkshire in 1875 and grew up in New Zealand before he began theological studies, at the age of 20. In 1902, having a strong interest in missionary work, he was sent to take charge of the Indian work in Fiji where he remained until illness forced his return to Australia in 1910. His interest in missionary work continued and he helped form the National Missionary Council which he chaired for eleven years. In 1925 he was appointed head of the Methodist Missionary Society of Australasia, a position he held until retirement in 1945. He strode over the landscape of Methodism like a giant and his advocacy for issues - many, such as ending indentured labour, and pacifism - made him unpopular, but his strength of personality inevitably

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won the day. Burton exercised influence outside the church as well through his appointment as one of Australia’s representatives on the South Pacific Commission. He died in 1970, aged 95.

Gribble, after four years as principal of Tupou College in Tonga and then seconded to the government there as Director of Education for the Kingdom, returned to Australia in 1946 as Assistant General Secretary of overseas missions until his appointment as general secretary in 1949, a position he retained until retirement in 1972. He oversaw the process of autonomy and independence for all Methodist mission districts in the Pacific, a policy he was passionate about. He also precipitated new work in the New Guinea Highlands, and was a strong advocate for justice for Australian Aborigines. After his retirement he maintained his strong links with Tonga and was often consulted by church and monarchy there. He died in 1995, aged 92. Both Burton and Gribble occupied the most prestigious positions in the Methodist Church, that of Secretary-General and then President-General of the triennial General Conference.

Milne Bay was the place of choice when, in April 1929, the MSC was entrusted by the Sacred Congregation of Propaganda in Rome with evangelising the east. Like the Methodists, the Roman Catholic Church paradigm on missionary policy underwent change during this half century, a major catalyst being Vatican II. The process evolved from an emphasis on acculturation (that the church accepted the symbols of society uncritically) to adaptation of the gospel to culture to, in the 1970s, inculturation—‘an insertion of Christian life into a culture.’ The shift in emphasis about missionary work has been summarised:

Pre-Vatican II: To convert people to the Catholic Church through preaching, teaching, catechism, administering the sacraments.

Vatican II: To be a witness to God’s love, preach and form the Church among the people who do not yet know about Christ.

Post-Vatican II: To help man develop his own resources to fulfill total human needs, i.e. religious, educational, political.13

13 Gerald Arbuckle, *Earthing the Gospel* ..., 17; ‘Recent Historical Emphases in Roman Catholic Theology: Appendix B’ (as defined by Arbuckle), in Mary Taylor Huber, *The Bishops’ Progress*, 223-224.
There was a parallel change in how this should be done. Development of education, health and economic infrastructure was, prior to 1960, considered either 'dangerous' or having 'no direct connection with missionary work, but can be useful.' After Vatican 11, these became 'useful to show the people the Church is relevant', and now in the present time is seen to be an 'essential part of mission work.'

For the Catholic Mission in Eastern Papua there were two sources of authority. Episcopal leadership up until 1957 was from Yule Island in the persons of de Boismenu and his successor, Andre Sorin, and then from Sideia when this mission was raised from a prefecture apostolic to a vicariate apostolic, and Father John Doyle consecrated bishop. These changes in status paralleled changes in the Mission's name. Up to 1951 it was the Eastern Papua Mission, after which it became the Prefecture of Samarai then, in 1957, the Diocese of Samarai. Following Doyle's retirement and the appointment of Desmond Moore in 1970 as his successor, it was re-named the Diocese of Alotau.

The second source of authority was the Father Provincial at the MSC monastery in Kensington, Sydney. This office was responsible for the recruitment and appointment of priests and brothers, and for financial support. As part of the MSC province, the needs of the Eastern Papua Mission were considered along with the requests of the home parishes and, while this had the potential for disharmony, there was a consistent and harmonious cordiality expressed in communications, suggesting that the Papuan missionaries felt their requirements were given adequate consideration.

The monthly publication, *The Annals of Our Lady of the Sacred Heart*, was the vehicle for informing the Australian MSC churches of its policies. Its subject matter was more directed towards Australian society and its Eastern Papua Mission content was minor. It gives interesting insight into how some Catholics viewed social morality before the second world war, expressing attitudes that even wowser Methodists would disown. In a regular column entitled 'Woman to Woman' Margaret Grey answered questions from readers. Among her more extreme responses was this:

I am distressed about my daughter. A young man offered her a strong drink at a party.

*Answer:* ... Any man who offers a drink to a young girl deserves flogging. This drinking at dances, this hip pocket flask habit, these

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14 'Recent Historical Emphases in Roman Catholic Theology: Appendix B’, 223.
abominable mixtures called cocktails are deadly enemies of the womanhood of this country ... A cocktail is a coward’s drink when offered by men to young girls ... Catholic hostesses who serve these drinks to young people deserve public punishment. There should be stocks for them.

This was followed by marriage advice:

My husband insists on smoking cigars and his pipe in our home. I remind him over and over again that smoke blackens draperies and leaves a stale odour all over the house.

*Answer:* Marriage supposes consideration and helpfulness on the part of both husband and wife. Each should look to the happiness of the other. A loving wife will be pleased to see her husband enjoying an innocent pleasure in the home. She will prefer his happiness, after a hard day’s work, to the daintiness of her draperies. A wise wife knows that a husband contented in the home will not seek pleasures elsewhere. It is easier to wash a few draperies than to repair disunion and marriage quarrels.¹⁵

The following issue proposed making it illegal for any female under thirty to wear make-up.

The magazine was particularly strident in its sectarian bias. A great deal of exposure was also offered to the autobiographical story of a William Palmer, a layman whose claim to fame was as a convert from Protestantism. This was a theme taken up in the early fifties when one of MSC’s most famous sons, Father Dr Leslie Rumble, himself a convert from Anglicanism and the public spokesman in Australia for the MSC, wrote lengthy articles on the non-Catholic churches. His writings, critical in the extreme, were archetypal of the sectarian division then in Australian society. However, his views on Methodism, covering issues of *Annals* from September 1952 to April 1953, were comparatively mild and even at times laudatory. Of John Wesley he wrote:

No one can study his [Wesley’s] campaign for ‘Christianity in earnest’ without sympathy, and the kindling of the religious sense within his own soul. Whatever may be one’s ultimate judgement of the movement he set on foot, all must recognise in it that spirit of personal religion without which merely external observances would be but an empty shell.¹⁶


¹⁶ Dr L. Rumble, *Annals*, 1 September 1953, 201.
He accused Methodists of having departed too far from the conversion experience central to Wesley’s thinking, and of becoming anti-liturgical. His main criticism was they had substituted ‘fellowship’ for conversion. Rumble’s admiration for Wesley was patent, going as far as to hold him in the same light as St Francis of Assisi. He concluded:

Had Wesley had the advantages of the Catholic Faith, had he ever known the Catholic Church he, with his earnestness and zeal, would have felt quite at home within the Catholic fold, and found his apostolate for the good of souls appreciated, promoted and blessed in the way his generous heart ever hoped that it would be. And today, the Methodist who becomes a Catholic becomes what John Wesley would love to have been, and which, in the light of that fuller knowledge than any he possessed in this world, he now wishes he had been.17

Both missions represented ‘heart’ religion: the Catholics as an objective expression and the Methodists subjectively. From 1930 onwards there was an increasing return in Catholicism to devotional practice through the use of aids such as pictures and trinkets. The central focus was the heart of Jesus, usually illuminated by a bright light. ‘The sacred heart of Jesus’ was an object for worship. Scorning such aids as idolatry Methodists, espousing the experiential, called their people to follow John Wesley’s ‘warmed heart’ experience. The focus was on ‘my heart and Jesus’ and followers were exhorted to talk about their faith in what was a major focus in Methodism, the weekly class meeting where attenders were urged to confess their faults publicly.

Some Catholics did not understand the Protestant emphasis on the personal relationship a believer has with God and regarded this teaching as a serious flaw. For them, to deny the authority of the Church as the central authority was to accept an inferior faith. The MSC historian, the Frenchman Father Andre Dupreyat, put it in its clearest form when responding to some questions on policy in Papua:

It is just because they [Protestants] have no ‘rules’ neither in their beliefs not in their teaching of morals, that they do not touch the deep in their adherents’s souls. Their ‘Christianisation’ is superficial: their supporters are supposed to believe in our Lord - God or Superman, it all depends on the beliefs of the European minister ... Their main thing is to have the Bible, to read it if you can, or at least to pretend to read it if you don’t know reading. With such vague teaching, it is hardly possible to form

17 Dr L. Rumble, Annals, 1 April 1953, 104.
real Christians. Anyhow, there is one ground where all meet and agree: the hatred of the Catholic Church.\textsuperscript{18}

In response, a Protestant would say the doctrine of the priesthood of all believers was superior to that of one priest representing people before God, and that the Bible had authority over the Church for out of its message the Church was created. Dupreyat was presenting a central argument in this debate.

As a group missionaries have received much criticism from a wide range of people, including some within the church. Among the criticisms is that they, driven by ideology, theology and arrogance, destroyed the traditions of the people they sought to convert. While they are acknowledged as people motivated by altruism, their manner was condemned as paternalistic and their right to take a new religion to another race was questioned. But the claim of cultural destructiveness can show how paternalistic critics can be: it presumes that the people had insufficient strength and belief in their own culture to resist unwanted change, allowing others to coerce or dominate them. It is true that missionaries were agents of change who tried to protect their people from aspects of change that offended the missionaries own sensibilities. As such they were paternalistic yet for others to say they should let the people remain in their ‘natural state’ is itself paternalistic. How the Massim responded to these contrasting ideas determines the outcome of the missionaries work and becomes the answer to what this study examines.

\textsuperscript{18} Dupreyat to Father [J F] McMahon, 25 June 1945, SHM.
**Part One: The Missionaries**

**CHAPTER ONE**

**Spheres of Influence and Sectarianism**

The Methodists were entering their fifth decade of missionary endeavour in Papua when, in 1930, Father John Doyle, leader of the Sacred Heart mission on Thursday Island, and Brother Frederick Baker, arrived in Samarai to investigate the beginning of the Eastern Papua Mission. Those forty years had been very successful for the Methodist Mission which was established on all the major islands and on many of the smaller ones. Permanent expatriate settlements occupied by Australians and Pacific Islanders had been commenced at all the key locations. For their part the Papuans had welcomed these people and the majority of the population had some form of voluntary contact with the mission; in 1930 about 35,000 attended worship on a Sunday and 7,400 were enrolled in village and station schools\(^1\) while many others, especially women and children, received medical attention from missionary sisters.

The Methodist influence was bound to be a hurdle for the Catholics to overcome in establishing themselves, but it was only one of their problems. Of more immediate concern was the difficulty in securing leases for land, the result of the ‘spheres of influence’ agreement that had prevailed in Papua since 1890 and which was a major source of annoyance for the Sacred Heart hierarchy at Yule Island.

A ‘sphere of influence’ has been defined as ‘a determinate region within which a single external power exerts a predominant influence, which limits the independence or freedom of action of political entities within it’.\(^2\) In 1890 such an arrangement was entered into by the LMS, Wesleyans and Anglicans in which missionary endeavours by each body would be restricted to defined areas in Papua. The Wesleyan leader, George Brown, who had a penchant for islands and the sea,

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1. See Appendix I: Methodist Statistics

chose to work on the off-shore islands of the Milne Bay province (with the exception of Samarai and a few small islands, including Kwato, where the LMS was already established) and a small strip of the mainland from East Cape to Cape Ducie; the Anglicans the north-east coast of Papua from Cape Ducie to the New Guinea border and the LMS the whole of the southern Papuan mainland except where the Catholics were established opposite Yule Island. The Administration could enforce the boundaries by refusing to lease land to any mission violating the borders. Under this arrangement no mission would be allowed to secure leases outside their defined area. This effectively denied the Catholics access to places where they were not already working though they could expand inland into what was uncharted territory.

'Spheres of influence' was never official government policy, but an agreement between cooperating missions, with government approval. The Administrator, Sir William MacGregor, who sponsored the meeting that led to the agreement, was more than pleased with it and reported on it with obvious pleasure in his 1889–90 Annual Report. This had the effect, in appearance at least, of it being seen as government policy. MacGregor later compounded the misunderstanding when he said that 'the great distinguishing feature of the four missions of Papua is the division of the country into four working areas', implying Catholic support for it. Government policy was to keep missions separate and avoid religious competition, but the policy had no specific legislative backing.

The Catholics on Yule Island had never approved of the spheres of influence agreement, seeing it as an unwarranted restriction on freedom of religion and a denial of their right to be seen as the 'True Church.' With the support of their supreme body, Propaganda in Rome, the Catholics refused to be party to it. There was a certain irony in this when, forty years later, they wanted to commence work in Milne Bay. In 1885 colonial administrator Major-General Peter Scratchley had written to the head of the Yule Island mission, Bishop Navarre, proposing that the Catholics should move from there to either the north-east coast of Papua - the area

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3 Quoted in J.H.P. Murray, Papua or British New Guinea, London 1912, 27.

4 D. Langmore, Missionary Lives, 327.
the Anglicans were to take up as their sphere of influence - or the Louisiades, an important region in what was to be the Methodist area and to which the Catholics were to enter in the late 1940s. Scratchley died shortly after, but Navarre had already indicated that, while he was prepared to discuss it with him, the Catholics were opposed to any restrictions of movement.5 MSC bishop, Alain de Boismenu, was particularly scathing in his opposition to the agreement:

For the Catholic Church to enter such a compromise [spheres of influence] had been for her to renounce her own inalienable rights, and to give up her constant and undeviating practice. She can never agree to any scheme of 'spheres of influence' that would divest her of her inherent right to teach all men.6

At the heart of the agreement - and government support for it - was the desire to avoid the squabbling and divisiveness which missionary competition could create and the effect this could have on local political order. In the early days of the Catholic work the Methodist synod was prepared, as a last resort, to hand over part of its territory to the Catholics in preference to the 'competition and friction which results from overlapping' and as a justifiable action to avoid 'the perpetuation of denominational differences among primitive minds.' They saw such sectarian divisions as 'harmful to Papuan minds, subversive of the highest Christian ideals and should be avoided.'7 While the sentiment might seem laudable there was no attempt to carry it out, and the Board was not asked by the Papua synod to give an opinion on the idea.

International opinion, through the League of Nations, was opposed to spheres of influence policies because they cut across freedom of conscience and the free exercise of religion. On balance, the practice was unfair to the Catholics and discriminated against them. De Boismenu saw this as the central issue. As a Frenchman he had an appreciation of the Australian characteristic of 'fair play' but thought it 'strange' that their government was prepared to violate the principle of

5 D Langmore, Missionary Lives, 321.

6 De Boismenu, 'Note concerning the present position of the Catholic Church in British New Guinea, October 1904', SHM.

7 1934 Annual Synod minutes, MOM 202.
religious liberty because of politics. This ‘wretched system’ which was introduced ‘to guarantee peace, strangles freedom’ and was, he considered, contrary to section 116 of the Australian constitution.  

Though the 1906 Royal Commission into the Administration of the Territory had recommended against the agreement the Administration ignored the advice. The main concern was to pursue the pacification policy in Papua rather than be bothered following international conventions. Governments made it a *de facto* policy by the simple device of granting land to only one mission in any village.

There were a number of attempts to overcome the agreement by both the Catholics and the newly-arrived Seventh Day Adventist (SDA) Mission, who first challenged it in 1908. While Protestant MacGregor’s successor, the Catholic, Hubert Murray, had no problem with their requests to operate in areas where the ‘agreement mission’ had failed to establish a real presence, the Anglicans and LMS both successfully protested Murray’s proposal. The only way left for the SDA was to purchase land, a matter always fraught with difficulty. Unless it was expropriated holdings, who had the right to sell land was a complex matter, and where the land could be bought might not turn out to be a strategically good place. Even if they could buy a parcel of land, the problem would again arise if they needed to expand.

Leasing was the best way, and over the years granting of leases to missions underwent some administrative changes. After 1923 such leases, which had previously been referred to Melbourne, were decided by the Lieutenant-Governor [Murray] in Council. While this was a much better way, Murray and the Papuan Executive Council, who regarded spheres of influence as only a temporary arrangement,  were not prepared to dispense with it altogether, lest they create unnecessary resentment among the other major missions.

The MSC was confident, when it announced its intention to start a Mission that the government would support removal of this obstacle, going as far as declaring the governor [Murray] ‘has asked that the sphere of influence policy [sic]

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8 Quoted in Walderssee, *Neither Eagles nor Saints* ..., 303.
be abolished. This did not happen though the major challenge to the agreement came when the Catholics arrived in Milne Bay. An elderly Catholic expatriate widow in Samarai, Mrs Patching, gave 214 acres of land on the island of Sideia to Bishop Alain de Boismenu with the Roman Catholic Mission as trustees. When Doyle and Baker arrived in 1930 to explore the setting up of their new mission on this land they were seen as making a direct challenge to the spheres of influence agreement. Their failure to commence the mission at that time only delayed the inevitable response. It was when the Catholics did begin at Sideia in 1932 that the issue came to a head. As a Combined Missions Committee, comprising the three missions party to the original agreement, were meeting in Samarai, the situation presented by the Catholic attempt was put before them. They resolved:

That the Committee desires to point out to the Government that the abrogation of the policy of Spheres of Influence would have a very unsettling effect on the primitive mind in its present state of development which will militate seriously against the social life of Papuans. The Committee therefore asks the Government to do all in its power to support the Spheres of Work [Influence] for Missionary bodies. The Committee would point out that the Missions represented on the Committee have welcomed work in uninfluenced districts eg in the recognition (by the LMS) of the work of the U[nevangelised] F[ields] M[ission] in the West and also the work of the Kwato Extension Association in the Sagai Valley, as well as that shortly to be taken up in the Abau district, and the Committee would welcome an opportunity for consultation with all the missionary bodies working in the Territory to consider the question of Separate Spheres of Influence.

Murray was caught in a fight he never wanted. As a Catholic he was sensitive to any claims of bias, yet he did not consider the spheres of influence agreement as binding the government absolutely.

At first the issue had not been an important one for him. He argued that if there was to be any form of restriction on new missions, the limitation would best be based on language rather than geographic boundaries. The few challenges to the

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10 Father Donald Maclain to Father Superior, 7 November 1929, SHM.

11 Resolution of Combined Missions Committee 4 July 1934, AA (Australian Archives) G69 13/7; also MOM (Methodist Overseas Mission), file 202.

12 Murray to Minister of State for Home and Territories, 24 February 1927, CRS G69 13/6.
government had been easily defused but this move into the Milne Bay area by the Catholics escalated the issue into a major one. In August 1932 Murray wrote, following a meeting in Canberra between himself, the Minister [Major Marr] and the Secretary of the Department, McLaren, that no action on spheres of influence was pending and no application for land had been made. But a year later, with consistent calls for scrapping the agreement, and following the successful commencement of the Catholic Mission at Sideia, Murray was compelled to write of 'the apparently interminable subject of missionary 'spheres of influence.' At the same time Murray stated what had been his consistent view of the subject: 'the Papuan government is, and has been for the past 30 years, opposed to the policy [sic] of spheres of influence; but, of course, we realise it must be followed until it is definitely abandoned.' Murray conceded that the consenting missions should be consulted before the government abandoned recognition of the practice.

There were increasing ambiguities in recognising the agreement. Samarai was the commercial centre for the region and within the LMS sphere of influence but there was a tacit understanding that towns were exempt from the restriction. The Methodists had to transact business in Samarai and many of their people gained work there. There was no objection from the LMS to the Methodists building a house for its missionary staff or the commencement of a Dobuan-speaking congregation. Neither was there any objection to the formation of an Anglican congregation or even the building in 1926 of a Catholic chapel. Recommencement of mining at Misima and the recruitment of labour from other regions and Australia to work there would inevitably see the arrival of some Catholics and the likely request for land for a church and residence to serve them. No one could deny the freedom for spiritual help from one's own religion. Priests did visit Misima miners, but no permanent priest was allowed. In effect, where there were expatriate Catholics as in Samarai a permanent presence was allowed, but not where Papuan Catholics were concerned.

13 Murray, 'Note', 26.8.1932, CRS G69 13/7; Murray to Prime Minister, 1 November 1934 CRS G69 13/7.

14 Murray to Prime Minister 1 November 1934 CRS G69 13/7; Murray, 'Note', 26 August 1932 CRS G69 13/7.
Over time two factors saw the demise of the spheres of influence as a deterrent to Catholic expansion. One factor was the growing opportunity after the Second World War to purchase plantations and other holdings on the open market. In a major development, the MSC bought out Tagula Plantations with land on Sudest, Woodlark and Rossel and another purchase of the Eaglestaff plantation on Goodenough, all in 1949. The other factor was the post-war government policy of rapid development of the Papuan people, especially in education, for which the government subsidised the missions, and for which the people and clans were increasingly willing to make land available to the Catholics, as their policy was to commence English language village schools. Spheres of influence impeded accelerated development and this, together with emerging issues on the New Guinea side, made a rethink of practice a necessity. These issues included the experience of reasonable cooperation by different missions working side-by-side in New Guinea, the scramble by missions to be represented in the opening up of the newly-discovered highlands in the late forties and fifties, and the rapid migration of people to the towns, saw an end to both the spirit and the letter of the original agreement. It was recognised that, with much of the highlands being in New Guinea, the League of Nations (later United Nations) principles would apply and spheres of influence agreements would be unlawful.

While there could be no sustainable accusation of bias against Murray, there was a Methodist suspicion that he needed to be watched. In his early days Murray and his Executive Council accepted the request of de Boismenu that the title of the Sacred Heart Mission be ‘Catholic’ instead of ‘Roman Catholic.’ A few months later, following strong protests from the other three main missions - whose creed of ‘one holy, catholic and apostolic church’ was fundamental – Murray’s decision was revoked by the government in Canberra. This matter, and Murray’s lack of enthusiasm for spheres of influence, created mistrust for a while.

But this was only a temporary hiccup. Murray was aware of Protestant suspicions of a Catholic appointment. Early in his governance he expressed his own concerns about the ‘appalling’ Protestant influence on the Australian government. For himself he was proud to be a Catholic. When he met Beatrice Grimshaw – ‘a

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15 Quoted in Francis West, Hubert Murray: The Australian Pro-Consul, 91.
very nice woman, clever and interesting and not a bit superior; also she is Irish, Catholic and Fenian’ - the only thing left to be desired was for her to be Australian. Later he declared he could not imagine being anything but a Catholic.\(^{16}\)

If there was any truth in claims of bias it was incidental and not intentional. He clearly spent more time with Catholic missionaries than others, often dining with them. His published letters show he was quite familiar with them personally, attended their ordination services and offered them free passage on his official vessel. Various Catholics expected more of him than he actually gave. Bishop de Boismenu described Murray as a ‘good Catholic who is ready to help us and can do very much’, and Lyons commended him for ‘helping the Mission every chance he gets.’\(^{17}\) By contrast he only ever visited the Methodists by invitation, of which there were few. But on no occasion, in official communications, private correspondence, or public comment, did the Methodists criticise Murray, his dealings with them or his closeness to the Catholics.

Of greater moment for the expansion of Christianity in Papua was how the two missions would react to each other. The thirties and succeeding decades were not good times for sectarian relationships in Australia. As all the white missionaries in both missions were Australians the home situation was of major consideration in understanding how the two missions would relate to each other in Papua.

The period under study commenced in the Depression and its consequences - the debate on the merits and failures of capitalism and communism - and continued through the Second World War, and its aftermath, to the ecumenical movement and Vatican II. In the process, the Australian Church moved from a central role in informing and fashioning Australian public opinion to that of marginal influence. Protestant influence had been strongest in the twenties when its adherents in big business were closely allied with the United Australian Party, but that party’s demise and the economic turmoil helped to marginalise Protestants in public policy.

\(^{16}\) Murray to George (i.e. his brother Gilbert), 16 December 1907, in Francis West (ed.), Selected Letters of Hubert Murray, 47; to Rosalind, 13 April 1934, 165.

\(^{17}\) de Boismenu to Father Provincial, 15 January 1929; Lyons to Father Provincial, 8 April 1941, SHM.
For many Protestants the failures of the economic system and the Depression stimulated a desire to preserve the order, epitomised by the British Empire, and to defeat the enemy, communism. To do this they turned their attention to moral questions rather than political ones. A variety of issues, popularly known as 'wowserism' - with which Methodists were particularly identified - including total abstinence from alcohol and gambling, no dancing, and advocacy against women wearing make-up, were presented as proper Christian behaviour. Methodists were, to some extent, divorced from the 'establishment' in Australia and therefore from the main churches that influenced society, Anglican and Presbyterian. Yet Methodists epitomised the 'wowser tradition' more than any other denomination. As an example, only once in all its years did the Papua Mission figure in debate in its home conference in NSW. In 1962 questions were asked as to why the mission's main boat, Koonwarra, was allowed to carry alcohol as part of its commercial cargo. A resolution forbidding it was passed, a prohibition that caused considerable anger from some expatriate planters who depended on it for their supplies. Unsuccessful moves were made to get the authorities to remove the mission's right to carry commercial cargo.\(^\text{18}\)

Catholics were influenced by the Pope's promotion of Catholic Action, a movement that grew out of the re-alignment of temporal power in Italy and the Vatican in the twenties. It was meant to inspire the laity to join the clerics in fashioning a new social order, to take Catholicism from the church to the marketplace.\(^\text{19}\) Australian clerics knew what Catholic Action was against but were not agreed on what it stood for.\(^\text{20}\) The two main centres of ecclesiastical power were Sydney with Archbishop Michael Kelly and Melbourne with Archbishop Daniel Mannix, and each had a different interpretation. Mannix wanted to bring change through political and economic means, this being achieved through a Catholic trade union, banking and political party, a dream realised when the Democratic Labor

\(^{18}\) The matter generated some debate in the PNG community culminating in an editorial in the national daily *South Pacific Post* of 26 July 1963, headed 'Mission Trading Vs Church Policy' and a headline 'Carry all or nothing.'

\(^{19}\) Edmund Campion, *Rockchoppers*, 104.

Party was formed in the fifties. Kelly saw the Catholic Church's problem as an internal one brought about by a lack of discipline. Mixed marriages symbolised this lack of discipline and were condemned: absence from Mass was to be addressed by the formation of Catholic clubs, Catholic schools and Catholics marrying Catholics. Ironically, Kelly's position, even though it was insular - Catholics for the Catholics - was more akin to the Methodists in that the concentration was on moral rather than political issues.

The Catholic Church in Australia from 1930 onwards was involved in sectarian strife with extreme Protestant groups, and internally over the struggle against communism, especially in trade unions. The Melbourne-based intellectual, B.A. Santamaria, with the blessing of Archbishop Mannix, formed the secret Catholic Social Studies Movement - later known as 'the Movement' - for the laity. Its purpose was the take over unions from communist control, a task made urgent when the communists took virtual control of the peak body, the Australian Council of Trade Unions, in 1946. As Labor governments in NSW were already involved in a similar strategy to thwart communist influence the Movement did not have the same influence in that state. When some senior figures in the Labor Party refused to support Santamaria's objectives, the Democratic Labor Party was formed with strong popular support in Victoria.

In Papua, even though senior priests like Dwyer and Doyle were Victorians, the MSC followed the Sydney line. The Eastern Papua Mission epitomised Catholic Action. It developed Catholic schools, primary and secondary, a Catholic teachers college, Catholic hospitals, a Catholic credit union and the Catholic Young Christians Club. It was thus consistent for Doyle to use education as the focus for his mission; it was in keeping with the church at home as well as an entree into Papuan communities.

The Catholics decided to begin their Eastern Papua mission for two basic reasons: to take up the land at Sideia as a means of breaking down the spheres of influence agreement, and to strengthen the Australian foothold in Australia's only colony and to make a break from the French-based mother congregation with whom some Australians had difficulties of culture and identity.

21 Michael Hogan, The Sectarian Strand, 244-245.
The Methodists responded to the MSC arrival with considerable concern. Chairman of the District, Matthew Gilmour, 22 nearing the end of his thirty-two year service, feared an ‘invasion’ and called on his superiors in Australia to ‘take immediate steps to create public opinion that may help save these Papuan people from the confusion and discord which would inevitably arise from sectarian strife’, while one of his colleagues was ‘perturbed’ that the ‘invasion’ was being carried out with the approval of the government. 23

The permanent settlement of Sideia in 1932 generated hyperbole from their nearest Methodist neighbour, the Reverend George Lassam at East Cape. His report to Synod summed up what could be called a ‘popular response’ to Catholicism:

On Bwasilaki the Roman Catholics have erected several churches in close proximity to two of our own stations. Through bribery, presents of tobacco, biscuits, rice etc. coupled with the chicanery usually associated with that church a measure of success has been achieved, and many of the people attend the Catholic services, ignoring our own. With promises to teach them English many of the children have been taken to the RC HQ on Sideia Island adjacent to Bwasilaki. Perhaps the worst aspect of the whole matter is the fact that the loose RC standard regarding the observance of Sunday is raising doubt and uncertainty in the minds of our class members and church officers. In a land where gardening is of paramount importance it is readily understood that a religion that permits its followers to utilise the greater part of Sunday in garden work would be more popular than one which prohibits such conduct; and one that counsels fishing after Sunday services has a greater appeal to primitive [sic] people than Methodism. We thank God however that none of our church members have been defected [sic], but have, in spite of the inducements held out by the RC church stood firmly by our church. We have stationed some of our best teachers on Bwasilaki, and by constant supervision hope not only to arrest the drift, but also to build up our own cause. 24

This statement, though only one man’s response, was consistent with the general Methodist attitude as the Catholics ventured further into the province. After Sideia and Basilaki the Catholics moved to Ladava in Milne Bay (Kwato territory) in 1935

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22 Gilmour had once even described the Anglicans as ‘an antagonistic mission’, 1908 Synod minutes, UC Box 20.

23 1930 Annual Synod minutes, MOM 198.

24 Annual Report to 1933 Synod, MOM 201.
and built on land given by an expatriate planter, then in 1936 land was purchased from the Lumleys, a trading family at Gusaweta in the Trobriand Islands and a work commenced in 1937 in what was, up to then, the major expansion of the mission. Previous to this the mission had opportunity for contact with only small numbers of people but the Trobriands, with an estimated 8,000 people, presented better opportunities.

Further new work followed after the war - Nimoa in 1947 then Sudest (1949), Rossel and Goodenough (1950) and Budoya (Fergusson Island) in 1951. In each case there was similar rhetoric from the Methodists. The most common analogies used were militaristic: ‘propaganda’, ‘invasion’, ‘aggressive intrusion’, ‘determined infiltration’ and even ‘systematic attack’. To their Papuan colleagues, Methodist missionaries sought to denigrate ‘the low standards and easy living of Roman Catholicism’ and differences in religious practices were described as superstitious nonsense. Rosary beads were ‘trinkets’ and ‘charms’ and a means to gain immunity from accident. Lassam, whose sympathy with Papuan beliefs and practices was never very enlightened, saw an affinity between Catholic practices and Papuan beliefs: ‘Such superstitious practices [of the Catholics] surpasses many of the most primitive superstitions found among these people.’ It is quite likely it was Lassam who endeavoured to lay a charge against Lyons: ‘one of the Wesleyans [sic] has charged him with sorcery, the alleged acts of sorcery being the distribution of crucifixes and medals’ reported Murray who simply marked the papers ‘Seen.’ Another, Fred Guy, a long serving missionary at Bunama, spoke of the ‘robings, genuflections and strange tongue of the other body’ and there were unsubstantiated accusations of child abductions from East Cape, Goodenough and Rossel to populate the school at Sideia. What such claims did was infuse in the people a fear of the

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25 R.V. Grant, Report to Annual Board of Mission, February 1951, MOM 342.

26 Special Report to Board on boating difficulties, MOM 358.


28 Murray to Mary, 10 October 1934, in Selected Letters of Hubert Murray (ed. by Francis West), 173.

29 Annual Report to 1935 Synod, MOM 268.
Catholics. Priests often found people surly and afraid, with children running and hiding from them on visits to the villages.

The sectarian divide was wide and reached into the top echelon of Methodism. Although the overseas mission board had the advantage, in Burton and Gribble, of outstanding leaders, who did not engage in sectarian vitriol, there were others who were more aggressive, such as Burton’s successor, the Reverend Alf Gardner - a man whose only experience outside Victoria and Tasmania had been four years as an air force chaplain. He saw Catholic expansion as an ‘enormous bid for the conquest of the Pacific’ following ‘their irreparable blows in western Europe’. With superior manpower and money, they had ‘large numbers of workers desirous of migrating so the time for them is propitious.’ For how long, he asked, will Protestants ‘ignore the fact we are in their eyes ‘heretics’, that the Roman Church is exclusive in its aims, and that it declares that outside its fold there can be no surety of salvation.’

Catholic missionaries had their prejudices too. As a means of justifying commencing work in an area that had been largely missionised, some priests sought opportunities to denigrate Methodist results. Bishop de Boismenu believed that the ‘times are favourable; the Protestants seem unable to do too much’, the founder of the mission, Father Joseph Lyons, wrote that Kwato and the Methodists ‘have a very bad name’, the pioneer Catholic priest in Milne Bay, Father Arch Bryson, exulted that the arrival of the Catholics during the absence of Charles Abel had ‘upset his copra cart ... his reaction has been the time honoured one of our friend the heretic - persecution.’ Doyle told his superiors the whole district was ‘tainted’ by Protestants. The most outspoken priests, Fathers Nobby Earl and Jim Dwyer, were the most disparaging. ‘The enemy’ in the shape of the opposition has not much cockle at all here [Trobriands], ‘Methodism is feeble ... two more villages are on

31 de Boismenu to Father Provincial, 15 January 1929, SHM.
32 Lyons to Father Provincial, 18 April 1931, SHM.
33 Bryson to Father Provincial, 30 December 1937, SHM.
34 Doyle to Kerrins, 10 May 1954, SHM.
the verge of dropping into the lap of true Christianity and if they do ... [others] will succumb to the wiles of the Papacy\textsuperscript{35} were included among their offerings. After twenty years the Mission’s report was so bold as to declare: ‘If we win the battle against the Methodists in these islands we will soon be masters of all the territory’,\textsuperscript{36} itself a tacit acknowledgment of the strength of the Methodist mission.

The Methodists were keen to avoid any suggestion of friendly contact with their Australian counterparts in case it signalled to the Papuans that their opposition to Catholics was shallow. Over the fifty years from 1930 there was little social contact between the two groups though this began to change by the seventies. One reason there was little contact was the spheres of influence. With the Catholics largely restricted to the smaller islands until the early fifties the MSC was marginalised among small communities. Sideia and Basilaki had populations of less than 1,000 each, Ladava and the Sagarai Valley had no large villages, Nimoa is a tiny island in the Calvados Chain and nearby Sudest, in spite of its bigger size, has poor soil and few people; Rossel is isolated and rugged and the population of a few thousand was divided between Catholics in the east and Methodists in the west. Even on Goodenough the Catholics were situated in sparsely populated Wataluma on the northern, less arable side. Only on Kiriwina and then Budoya did the Catholics have access to large populations.

The consequences of settlement denied both groups any reasonable possibility of contact with each other. Some attempts were made to overcome this when a combined inter-mission sports carnival was held in Samarai in 1939, attracting cricket, soccer and athletics teams from five missions: LMS, Kwato, Anglican, Methodist and Roman Catholic. This was followed up the next year but the war saw its demise. Even in this carnival there was a jarring note when the Catholic leaders would not allow their representatives to sleep in the same quarters as the other teams.\textsuperscript{37} Yet it was a big advance in those times to get the missions together, especially with joint worship led by each of the missionary leaders.

\textsuperscript{35} Earl to Father Provincial, 11 March 1941; Dwyer to Father Provincial, 1 November 1940 and 22 March 1939, SHM.

\textsuperscript{36} 1932-1952 ‘20 Years Progress in Eastern Papua’, SHM.

\textsuperscript{37} Chairman’s Reports to 1939 and 1940 Synods, MOM 273; 274.
Sectarian division was fuelled among Papuan converts. The Methodist missionary Henry Williams, in his usual quaint style, encouraged his East Cape village teachers

... to keep their flocks, feel restrained to point out the differences between the faith they hold and that held by other sects working in the islands. This has had a reflex action on the faith of our people, and small outbursts of antagonism among the parties are not rare. These people previously lived together and were glad to call all the islanders their friends, but today an opposition exists which unfortunately had many hindrances to spiritual development. It will take some time to adjust relationships to these new presentations. In the meantime we feel that a very great responsibility rests upon us in directing them.  

The real problem of sectarian animosity occurred when two similar protagonists were placed in one location. This is why some of the more bitter divisions arose when Dwyer and Goodwin were stationed in the Trobriands at the same time, that is, 1949-51. In a test of stubbornness and mutual rejection, Dwyer declared that the 'Methodist Church was bad; Methodist schools were bad; Methodist character was bad' and admitted to ADO Hardy, who sought to bring peace between the two men, his view that 'the Methodist Church was not Christian', whilst Goodwin urged his teachers to 'stand up to the threatened violence and untruthful propaganda of the Roman Catholic priests'. A former long-serving missionary, Harry Bartlett, on a return visit to Papua on behalf of the mission board, voiced concern that staffing and infrastructure deficiencies on Sudest and Rossel had given credence to Catholic taunts that the 'Methodist Church is dead' and 'The Methodist Church has deserted you.' Some Papuan leaders joined in the fight. One of the first Papuan ministers, Yoafu Guniniei, objected when the priest on Goodenough attempted to 'indoctrinate kids about how bad the Methodist Church was' while he, in preaching one Sunday,
held a ‘parasite plant’ before his congregation and declared ‘See, this has no strength of its own - this is a Popey plant!’

When missionaries of a different temperament were together more charity was exercised. When some villagers erected a Methodist church in the Kiriwinan village of Teava, where the Catholics had a strong following, Hugh Tomlinson reported to his superiors on the ‘decency of Mr Shotton who pulled it down.’ Years later, when relations between the two missions were again strained, Ralph Lawton felt compelled to report his special appreciation of his many friends in Kiriwina, ‘especially friends in the Catholic Mission’ who frequently assisted him.

Only on Kiriwina and at Budoya were the two missions physically close; in the other places prejudices and appreciations could only be expressed at a distance. Ironically, it was changes in education - which had at first caused problems - that eventually helped overcome some of the tensions. In-service courses for teachers, inter-school sporting carnivals as well as joint efforts in leprosy management and surgery, helped overcome animosities. Protestant teachers spoke of the help they received from Catholic counterparts, of how Budoya was ‘a haven when hungry or in need of European company. [My] remembrance is of good food, tastefully prepared and served’ and how the Catholics were ‘open, friendly.’

One who was especially appreciated was Father Paul Jennings, originally a teacher and later headmaster of Hagita High School. Jennings, born in rural Mudgee in NSW, adopted an attitude of cooperation with Protestants arising from his ‘bush thinking - where people look after each other.’

Papuan leaders also acknowledged improvement in sectarian relationships. The first ordained Rossel minister, Libai Tiengwa, wrote to his old mentor, Ern Clarke, that ‘there is no problem now [1974] between churches Roman Catholic and

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41 Informant: Reverend Kingsley Bond (W.A.) 1994. Bond was Gunieiei’s superintendent minister on Goodenough in 1954-1955.

42 Tomlinson to Father Superior, 13 January 1938, SHM.

43 Annual Report to 1967 Synod, MOM 374.

44 Informants: John Jeffreys (W.A.); Jim Dawes (S.A.), April 1994.

United. Instead [of] troubles we all join in one and true fellowship in the church of Christ. Another United Church minister, Edward Taugonei, was given a motor bike by the mother of Father Tony O’Brien when both worked on Goodenough in the late seventies. They also had prayer together each week. It is claimed that priests on Goodenough reminded their Catholic members ‘they should always be grateful to the early Methodist missionaries for the good grounding in their faith in Christ and their knowledge of the Bible.’

However, despite individual examples of generosity and hospitality, the prevailing memory of most missionaries in Papua was the lack of any contact with ‘the other side.’ In my own experience there were only two occasions in eight years when I had any contact with Catholic missionaries.

Apart from the early years of Catholic entry the most difficult years for relations between the missions were the fifties and sixties. The catalyst was the arrival of the Catholics at Budoya on southern Fergusson, near the scene of Bromilow’s arrival at Dobu and the Methodist headquarters at Salamo. This entry into the heartland of the Methodists, and the granting of land by the government, effectively ending any lingering spheres of influence practice.

Some unfortunate practices by the Catholics exacerbated feelings. Medical work has always been a corollary to the commencement of a mission station. Methodist nurses had for decades done regular monthly patrols of the villages on southern and eastern Fergusson Island. Following the Catholic start at Budoya, Methodist nurses found that Catholic nurses had been on patrol through the villages the day before conducting the clinic. Much ill feeling was created and the government called upon to adjudicate. A compromise was reached which allocated certain villages to each mission, an arrangement the Methodists felt keenly, seeing it correctly as a calculated strategy by the Catholics to gain a permanent presence.

Further difficulties arose when the government brought in its national education policy in the seventies. This move was welcomed by all missions and

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46 Tiengwa to Clarke, 31 December 1974. Clarke family papers, held by Andrew Clarke, Adelaide.
churches, who had been the major providers of primary education and much of the secondary education. Under the new policy the government would pay all qualified teachers’ salaries and each school would be run by a council made up from the local community. Such councils would set school fees and oversee the proper conduct of the school, including the appointment of teachers. This required each school to nominate the agency they would work under: government or church and, if church, which denomination. Overwhelmingly primary schools nominated churches as their preferred agency.

In Milne Bay there was a scramble by the missions to be nominated. In most cases the mission that had started the school in a village was nominated, but in some villages there were two schools which had to be combined. Once an agency was nominated, there was nothing to preclude a change of nomination, though this was unlikely. What was important, therefore, was to secure for a mission the agency so it could have control, together with the provincial education board, over the appointment of teachers.

The prospect of Catholic trained teachers in a Methodist/United Church school upset the Methodists. When a suggestion was made to train Catholics at the United Church’s Gaulim Teachers College, the Papua synod argued against it:

Having regard at this stage to the unsatisfactory relationship of the Methodist Church and the Roman Catholic Church in this district, we re-affirm that while welcoming every reasonable opportunity for cooperation with the Roman Catholic Church, yet we are opposed to the receiving of Roman Catholic teacher trainees, believing that cooperation in the field of training educational staff could be detrimental to our work and would be widely misunderstood by our people.49

At the same time they expressed no problem in accepting students from other Protestant denominations.

It had become clear, by the early seventies, that the sectarian ill feeling had to be put aside. There was beginning to be cooperation in small ways - Catholic nurses assisted in leprosy surgery at Ubuya, a clergy laboratory was conducted at Begasi village (between Salamo and Budoya) and attended by eight United Church

49 1967 Annual Synod minutes, MOM 374.
ministers together with Father Martin Atchison from Budoya. When the Misima based vessel, *Gilmour II*, went on a reef near Nimowa and had to be salvaged, Father Kevin Twomey and his Catholic people gave great assistance. But such acts of cooperation were still the exception.

Eventually the United Church missionaries proposed a meeting between the two missions and an exchange of pulpits. By this time, 1972, the United Church had its first national leader in Bishop Robert Budiara, and the Catholic Bishop Moore had an ecumenical heart. The purpose of the meeting was to coordinate the education and medical services both churches were offering.

The meeting provided an opportunity for United Church missionaries and their Papuan leaders to get answers to questions that had long bothered them, and on which much of the antagonism was based. Principally these issues centred on how the Catholic hierarchy viewed them and what it taught its people. The questions were crucial, centering on claims of superstitions, baptism, ecclesiology and the church.

The meeting allowed considerable gains in understanding and cooperation. Myths were exposed and the results of Vatican II were clear in the Catholic responses. In the years that followed, significant numbers of Catholic teachers were able to teach in United Church schools and vice versa, medical services became coordinated, and suspicions at the village level were largely put aside. As an example of this, a United Church national minister, who for many years served as a village teacher, then trained in the vernacular as minister as a reward for long years of faithful service, retired. He went to live in the village adjacent to Budoya. When the irony of spending his last years in the company of Catholics was commented on he replied ‘But they are our friends. It is the charismatics who are the enemy.’

In 1980 the Sacred Heart congregation, unable to keep funding the work and finding recruitment of new priests increasingly difficult, handed over its work on Goodenough to the PIME Fathers and, in 1986, their work in the Trobriands as well. Now the Catholic people had to adjust to Belgian, Swiss and Italian priests who,

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50 See Appendix VII: Minutes of Ecumenical Meeting at Budoya.

51 Informant: Reverend Benjamin Sopiligai, Budoya, January 1980.
with their different cultural backgrounds, were to prove as difficult as the competing Australians.
Map 2: Sacred Heart Mission Stations
CHAPTER TWO
The Ordered Life - Catholics at Work

To become a missionary of the Sacred Heart was to join the order, for all members were missionaries. Most would serve in their homeland while some were sent abroad. No special training was undertaken for this latter group, but the writing of the Papuan pioneer, Andre Navarre, *Handbook of the Missionaries of the Sacred Heart among the Pagan*,¹ has been their manual throughout. Even though it was written in 1896 its instructions were, for the most part, forward looking. They provide a good test by which to assess individual missionaries.

Primarily, a missionary was a visitor, a temporary guest, there to win the confidence of the people. He or she should remain a ‘stranger in their midst’ ² who must endeavour to win the peoples’ affection by acts of kindness, with special concentration on children so as to win over the parents. It was imperative to become a friend before demanding ‘obedience.’ The process must move slowly and the missionary should seek out opportunities of supporting the people when other Europeans would exploit them. The sheer perseverance of the missionary would win the people.

Having won their confidence, the missionary brings ‘influence’ to bear on children and then adults, through instruction and preaching, and teaches the people to pray. At this point he can begin to modify their behaviour, starting with the easier changes, but eventually ‘accustoming them to obeying you ... [even if] it is sometimes necessary to mortify them in public.’ Navarre ordered his colleagues to take great care to understand village organisation, to learn the language and exercise caution so as not to offend the chiefs and big men. It was his particular concern that missionaries understand who were the powerful people in the village and avoid upsetting them. As to the rest he deemed it appropriate to deal with them differently but always to avoid public displays of dissent.

¹ The title was later amended to *Handbook for Missionaries of the Sacred Heart Working among the Natives of Papua New Guinea* (translated into English by Sister Sheila Larkin FDNSC and published in 1987).

With the others [non-chiefs] we may act more freely and even upbraid them in public but it is important to observe if the guilty person is likely to answer back openly or to rebel against the remonstrance; it would be better then and do less harm to put off the rebuke until another time.\(^3\)

His manual also gave instructions about developing chapels, training catechists, as well as school teaching methods and curriculum development. It was his ideas on the relationship between missionary and village that had the most enduring relevance. Clearly it was about winning influence and then power over people and their beliefs.

Navarre, whose experience of Papuans was among the Mekeo last century, portrayed a pessimistic view of the Papuan *persona*, declaring ‘although uneducated, and seemingly without a sense of honour, these people are, nevertheless, very jealous and sensitive in the matter of honour and rank; among themselves they never fail in this’ but ‘... unfortunately gratitude, love, respect are concepts, and very often realities, unknown to them.’\(^4\) It was the task of the missionary priest to father the people and any response is directly related to the level of interest he shows in them: ‘If he [the priest] identifies with them, they will love him, and if they love him, they will fear displeasing him and will obey him in almost everything.’\(^5\) When allegiance had been finally won, Catholic baptism could take place, symbolic of the entrance into the universal Church and then the assault on their traditional beliefs begins:

When the people are sufficiently instructed; when you have a greater authority over them and they begin to ask for Baptism, we must make a direct attack on their superstitions. Caution is no longer appropriate ... they will more easily abandon their former practices than if they had been obliged to do so in the beginning. They generally have a great fear of hell. You can say to them that, if they continue with their superstitious worship, they are honouring their enemy, and giving themselves to him; and having obeyed him during life, they will receive the same punishment after death, namely the fire of eternal torment.\(^6\)

Punishment might be meted out by God, but not by missionaries. The school policy

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echoed Navarre’s ideas on how to win over children:

We do not inflict any bodily punishment on our children. This is a very strict policy on the mission. We strive to render them docile and generous by full-hearted, loving kindness ... the object is not to change the children’s way of living, but with the object of preserving these young souls from contamination.\(^7\)

The MSC missionaries in Papua generally honoured these instructions, though a few did so more in the breach. In the period to 1980 there were 53 MSC and two diocesan priests, 35 brothers, and 54 nuns belonging to the sister community. Most came from working class backgrounds. Paternal occupations of the priests’ families show a majority from the trades - fitters, truck drivers, railway workers, mechanics, labourers, farmers, a saddler, a baker, a flour miller, a butcher, and a miner. Others were sons of clerks, accountants, a wool valuer and an ABC concert manager. One, Arthur Stidwill, was the son of a ‘Methodist farmer’, and another, Ian Langlands, the son of ‘an Anglican soldier.’ Amongst the brothers and nuns it was a similar story: many were children of labourers, carpenters, railway engineers and inspectors, truck drivers, tramway workers, a welder and a few from families of accountants, graziers and sales representatives. Among the brothers were included one who had trained as a bootmaker’s apprentice, another in tailoring, and others as carpenter and joiners, butchers, plumbers and mechanics.\(^8\)

The mission has had six resident leaders. The founding pioneer, Joseph Lyons, was born in 1905 and went to Papua in 1931 where, after a year at Yule Island he commenced the new mission at Sideia. A short, thick-set, bespectacled man, he possessed a stern personality and was not given to much humour. He was, in many ways, a loner capable of prodigious work which was evidenced by the rapid construction he undertook at Sideia. His inability to communicate well with the Brothers and then companion priests, and his withdrawal into himself as complaints about his style became a chorus, saw him overlooked as the first religious superior, something de Boismenu - who had championed his cause - was most concerned about. The bishop had little option

\(^7\) *Annals* ..., May 1938, 154.

\(^8\) Personal and family details taken from personnel files, SHM.
but to accept the entreaty of Kensington not to elevate Lyons. 9 The appointment of Hugh Tomlinson saw Lyons leave Sideia. He spent a year in Port Moresby and then time in New Britain before ill health forced his return to Australia. During the war he enlisted as a chaplain, most of which time was spent in Western Australia. He died in Sydney in 1946 at the age of 41. 10

Tomlinson did not seek high office but was destined for it. He was of a quiet, thoughtful disposition and one to whom people responded favourably, more because of his temperament than force of personality. A slim man of average height he was never physically strong. He arrived in 1934 but needed to be repatriated in 1936, ill from blackwater fever, before returning to Sideia in early 1938. He again succumbed to repeated bouts of malaria and his health declined further until his death from cerebral malaria in Samarai hospital in March 1939, one of only three white missionaries in the mission to die in Papua.

The contrast between these two leaders was marked. Both learnt the Basilaki language but performed their work in very different ways. Lyons’ relationship with the Methodists was almost non-existent; Tomlinson’s was quite cordial. This was helped by mutual respect and cooperation he had with the Methodist, Hedley Shotton, when both worked on Kiriwina. Both were of a similar nature and not given to sectarian bias. Tomlinson declared Shotton to be ‘very decent’ and they celebrated Christmas together. 11 Lyons was an outdoors worker while frail Tomlinson was a reader and thinker. A lot of Lyons’ difficulties lay in his aggressive and abrasive personality whereas Tomlinson’s gentleness and warmth endeared him to people. When Lyons encountered difficulties with the nuns at Sideia he ignored them and their work and rarely set foot in the convent. 12 It was the same with Papuans: their ‘respect, even love for him was very great’ but by the time of his departure he had little personal touch with

9 Father Provincial to de Boismenu, 31 October 1937, SHM. Problems about Lyons (‘he has not the confidence of his subjects’) were supported by others and it was the Provincial who advocated Tomlinson instead.

10 Annals ... July 1946, 196-199.

11 Tomlinson to [Father Provincial] Kerrins, 13 January 1938, SHM.

12 Tomlinson to Father Provincial ,19 January 1937, SHM.
them. His priests and Brothers believed he saw their duty was to 'obey' him and he was harsh in correcting them. Tomlinson's term was too short to compare as a leader but his appointment had been warmly welcomed by his colleagues whose respect for him was well known.

Following Tomlinson's death there was a brief period during which Father Gerard Doody was pro-Superior but it was clear that neither he nor the other priests, Bernard Baldwin, James Dwyer, John Flynn or Joe Docherty were suitable for the office. Doody lacked leadership strengths; he was 'better for temporal affairs than the general direction of missionary activities'; Baldwin had a difficult and touchy personality who, according to one colleague, 'had no appeal to the natives ... who were not drawn to him', an opinion Dwyer shared. Flynn was not good in dealing with Papuans and did not try to learn the language, whilst Docherty failed almost all of Navarre's criteria for the missionary life. While an excellent linguist, Docherty was 'difficult to work with' and was not a man 'to make contact with the natives'; his influence with them 'has not been for the best.' Behind these criticisms were stories of rough treatment meted out to children and when Vicar General Andre Sorin paid a visit, he and the nuns 'got pretty panicky' when only 13 children returned for a new school term '... all around the place there are terrible tales of Father J. Docherty beating kids, kicking them and so on.'

Dwyer would have been a good choice but he was going through a period of self doubt about his missionary vocation. Eventually Father George Taylor was appointed, a choice that met with approval from some and disappointment from Baldwin and Flynn. His term as superior proved short and, following the war-time evacuation, he did not

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13 Tomlinson to Father Provincial, 19 January 1937, SHM.
14 De Boismenu to Father Provincial, 27 April 1939, SHM.
15 Taylor to Father Provincial, 24 February 1941; Dwyer to Father Provincial 2 September 1944, SHM.
16 Father Provincial to Taylor, 25 September 1940, SHM.
17 Taylor to Father Provincial, 24 February 1941, SHM.
18 Dwyer to Father Provincial 1941, SHM.
19 Earl to Father Provincial, 2 March 1940, SHM.
return to Sideia. After the war, James Dwyer, his uncertainties resolved, was appointed superior and, like Taylor, vicar delegate for Bishop Sorin.

Dwyer was born in 1910 in Melbourne and arrived in Papua in 1937. A handsome, well built man, he was a bit of an enigma. He was well liked by his colleagues, understood them well, had a good intellect yet declared himself, contrary to Navarre’s manual, uninterested in studying the peoples’ lifestyle, stating ‘we are content to leave such highbrow sciences [anthropology, ethnography and comparative religions] to the specialists.’

The same man, after leaving this mission, went to Rabaul as parish priest and secretary to the bishop, becoming indispensable to him. When transferred back to Australia, a campaign was launched in Rabaul to have his transfer stayed. Even the Australian Opposition leader, Arthur Calwell, interceded to have him remain. Dwyer was appointed a founding member of the Papua New Guinea Legislative Council and a member of the Education Advisory Board. His dual capacities saw him become an influential figure in the development of education policy which eventually brought all mission schools under government control.

Dwyer left Sideia in 1951 to make way for the first Prefect Apostolic of Samarai, Monsignor John Francis Doyle. Born in Terang, Victoria in 1897, he was educated in the Catholic school system and in theology at Sacred Heart establishments at Douglas Park and Kensington, and ordained in St Mary’s Cathedral, Sydney in 1926. His first appointment was Thursday Island from where he went to Samarai in 1930 to ascertain prospects for starting the new mission. He had little regard for the idea and returned to the Torres Strait Islands until his transfer to Downlands College at Toowoomba. In 1947 he became parish priest of Randwick, Sydney from which place he went to begin his leadership of the Eastern Papua Mission.

Doyle was a stolid, uninspiring leader who worked hard and generally got on well with his colleagues. His limitation was that he had no clear vision of what could be, and lacked the charisma of his brother MSC bishops: Virgil Copas (Port Moresby, and later Archbishop), Eugene Klein (Yule Island) and Leo Scharmach (Rabaul). He had

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20 Dwyer, Annals ... January 1941, 13.

21 Waldersee, 'Neither Eagles nor Saints'... , 582.
a one dimensional approach for the mission: schools. His brief attempt to start the mission in 1930 contrast with the efforts of Lyons just two years later. Doyle cited lack of money and transport, factors faced by Lyons as well, yet the Depression was worse in 1932 than in 1930. This inability to see ahead was symptomatic of Doyle. His appointment in 1951 as prefect apostolic and leader of the mission was that of a conservative, traditional thinker who was already 54, and 60 when he was consecrated bishop. Doyle's humility was obvious in his elevation, as was his lack of imagination:

Last Friday I received word from the Delegation that the Prefecture has been created a Vicariate and that "I the undersigned" have been named Vicar Apostolic - Titular Bishop of Onuphis. This news is no doubt already known to you. There is nothing much more that I can add to it ... Seems that it eventually worked out that way and that is all. If I can be of any greater help to the mission as a Vicar Apostolic, the help will be welcome. The fact that now the mission is a Vicariate seems welcome news by the brethren here. I am all too conscious of my own shortcomings for this position but since the fact is accomplished in spite of myself I accept it as I am ...

What to do now? That is the reason of my writing to you. I sent a wire of acknowledgment, gratitude and acceptance to the Delegation. But I have done nothing else except smoke cigarettes and try to be unconcerned. I would be pleased to receive from you any suggestions. Though we are a first class band of missionaries here we seem totally unprepared for this eventuality and at a loss to know what to do about it.

This response was typical and his indecisiveness was, at times, a source of irritation to his colleagues. This was most evident at the end of his leadership when general direction was being sought by younger priests.

Doyle's single-minded pursuit of schools as the means to win people to the church led to major problems for his successor. Adoption by the government in 1970 of the National Education System made such a policy questionable but Doyle pursued his interest in the subject and his purchase of Hagita as the new high school site was because of the 'uncertain and unpredictable political future of the country.' Doyle was unrelenting in pursuit of the high school. However, debts multiplied and priests and

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22 Doyle to [Father Provincial] Kerrins, 12 December 1956, SHM.

23 Doyle to Kerrins, 28 March 1966, SHM.
brothers began to bicker. Central to the problem was Father Gregory Abbott, who arrived in Papua in 1947 and commenced the first mission station, Santa Maria, on Goodenough on the last day of 1949. He spent most of his years there but was transferred to Hagita in the late sixties. During the building phase of the high school in 1968 he clashed with one of the brothers and threatened to leave. Abbott was a loner, but by this time he was an old loner and the years of privation on his own at Goodenough carried a legacy. ′Greg is round the bend in some ways′, said religious superior Jim Fallon, ′There′s no room for logic [with him].′ He was not interested in the apostolate ′under the present regime ... He is wrong, to be sure, and unbalanced, but this mission made him this way ... The way he is at present can be layed [sic] at the door of those in authority.′  

Problems like this were compounded by Doyle′s financial management and failing health. There had been speculation for some time about the bishop′s grasp on affairs. He found it a ′terrible strain′ making public and official appearances; he had, in addition to his usual impatience when little things went wrong - such as children kneeling in the ′wrong places′ - of becoming ′fidgety′ in the extreme and was constantly ′fiddling′ with his rosary beads.  

Doyle submitted his resignation and retired in 1970. He went to live at de Boismenu seminary in Port Moresby where he died quietly, on 4 November 1971. His episcopal replacement, Desmond Moore, arrived at Sideia on 11 July 1970. Born in

24 Fallon to Father Provincial, 27 February 1969, SHM.


26 Doody to Father Provincial, 8 January 1966, SHM.

27 Doody to Father Provincial, 7 May 1967, SHM.

28 Fallon to Father Provincial, 23 March 1967, SHM.
Adelaide in 1926, the son of a baker, Moore was ordained in 1957 and told the MSC leadership on that occasion of his wish to work in the Eastern Papua Mission. He went to Port Moresby in 1961 where he worked until his elevation as bishop.

Moore arrived well aware of the debt problem but was horrified to learn of its extent. In July 1971 it stood at $139,000 of which $82,000 required immediate payment. There were debts to Burns Philp and Steamships Trading Company of $101,000, a plantation loan of $24,000, a further loan to an American source of $7,000 plus other smaller creditors. The mission required $4,000 more per month than it was receiving. The report concluded, 'The management of the mission (under Doyle, now retired) was most unbusinesslike and the accounting impossible.' Moore not only had to contend with the financial mess but also personnel problems.

A number of the older priests were asking for transfers or to leave Papua. Nobby Earl asked to leave Rossel where he had been since 1955, but Moore was not keen to let him go. Now aged 60 and with companion priests for only short periods in his 16 years, Earl had endured illness, depression, and a sister going 'raving.' He believed he was now not relevant to the new way: 'I'm not 'with it'’, he declared. He could not accept the resolution subscribed to by the Mission that 'socio-economic development has priority over evangelisation ... I don't doubt that it's me that's out of step.' Others were asking to leave including Doody, Raymond and Murphy; each was ageing while Raymond had become very attached to Doyle and wanted to move nearer him, which was agreed to. Moore reluctantly accepted Earl's reasoning:

While he [Earl] assured me [his request to leave] was no reflection on me or my policy I guess there was something in it of tiredness that arises from seeing things change from the fashion they are used to ... I will be sorry to lose him (it will certainly reinforce the opinion of someone at least) ... outside this diocese ... that I am trying to get rid of the old men, rather older men. Guess one has to live with this bloody nonsense.

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29 'Resume of Debts Owing by Diocese of Sideia', SHM.
30 'Resume of Debts ... ' , SHM.
31 Earl to Father Provincial, 29 March 1971, SHM.
32 Moore to Father Provincial, 11 June 1971, SHM.
Moore did not appreciate the difficulties people like Earl had to deal with in their isolation. At least one priest was an alcoholic and required treatment while Earl was a heavy drinker and others had a reputation for their drinking. This did not happen so much at Sideia where there were companion priests. At Rossel, Earl exercised a form of hegemony over the people. The Hendersons, European translators, would hear Earl say as he sat in his refectory at Jinjo ‘I am monarch of all I survey’ and living in a display of cultural superiority with power, hospital, permanent buildings and a boat.\textsuperscript{33} One of his nuns described him as ‘more like a pope ruling over his domain.’\textsuperscript{34}

It was not only departing priests that caused Moore pain; the younger generation were different in their disciplines by comparison and this also worried the bishop. Of particular concern was Father Jim Fallon, a much respected and intelligent priest. Moore’s concern was over Fallon’s observance of the Rule:

... he [Fallon] does not appear to pray, and does not seem to be regular
... I am worried about the effect on people such as young [Father] Joe Ensing in the Trobriands (whom I hear does not seem to pray at all, probably not even his office often). I think there is too much humanism, rationalism ... Call it what you will, in Jim’s apostolate, because there is too little prayer in it.\textsuperscript{35}

Senior priests such as Twomey found Fallon ‘hard to take’ and the nuns also protested their difficulties with such examples. Moore’s difficulty was leading his Mission in a time when the old ways had gone but the new ways were in so much opposition to the old it was hard to give a lead to what were two disparate ways of doing their missionary vocation.

The episcopal rules of Doyle and Moore stand in marked contrast, even allowing that Moore is still in office. In Doyle’s time only two new stations were opened: Kelologeya (1952) and Kurada (1956), both on southern Normanby. Neither has become a major centre of Catholic influence and they were usually the first to do without a priest in any shortage. A new church was opened, along with other denominations, at Alotau in 1967, when it became the provincial capital. What did happen under Doyle

\textsuperscript{33} Informants: Jim and Anne Henderson, Sydney, April 1994.

\textsuperscript{34} Informant: Joan Benbow, Currimundi Qld, March 1998.

\textsuperscript{35} Moore to Father Provincial, 22 December 1971, SHM.
was a proliferation of new schools, culminating in the high school at Hagita. The other major developments were the lay apostolate Sarto Brothers and the purchase of a few plantations. Apart from these modest developments there was little substantial growth.

Moore was very different to his predecessor: younger by thirty years, ecumenical in outlook (Doyle saw those touched by other missions as ‘tainted’)\textsuperscript{36}, interested in the emerging charismatic renewal influencing Catholic as well as Protestant churches, and less reclusive and more earthy than Doyle. Moore positioned the Catholic Church into a more central social role. The headquarters moved to Alotau to secure liaison with government, and the diocese was accordingly renamed.\textsuperscript{37} He overturned Doyle’s objections to another Catholic congregation sharing the work in the province by handing over the Catholic work on Goodenough and then the Trobriands to the the PIME Fathers. It was Moore who agreed to the important meeting with the United Church leaders at Salamo in July 1972,\textsuperscript{38} a successful effort to defuse growing sectarian strife generated by the opening of village schools on southern Fergusson.

The lifestyle of the missionaries was governed by the daily rule. The Yule Island Rule formed the basis of what was expected and it was to this Rule that attention turned whenever there were difficulties between priests and Brothers. The Rule was the basis by which the community lived, organised its life and which held disparate personalities and perceptions together; in fact it was meant to hold all things together. The Rule was as follows:

\begin{itemize}
  \item 6.15am Community rises
  \item 6.30 Morning prayers in common
  \item 7.00 Community Mass
  \item 7.45 Breakfast
  \item Recreation
  \item 8.30 Work
  \item 12.00pm Angelus. Cease work
  \item 12.30 Dinner. Recreation
  \item 2.00 Work
\end{itemize}

\textsuperscript{36} Doyle to Kerrins, 10 May 1954, SHM.

\textsuperscript{37} An example of this occurred when he seized the opportunity of the 1995 jubilee of the Coral Sea battle to secure Australian government funds for his new cathedral at Alotau even though the Catholic Church is a much smaller church than the United Church (who received no such funds).

\textsuperscript{38} Appendix VII: Minutes of Ecumenical Meeting at Budoya.
5.00  Cease work
6.00  Angelus, particular Examination, Visit
6.20  Night prayers
6.30  Tea
7.00  Spiritual reading (10 minutes)
      Recreation. Bed.

The program was amended during summer by commencing half an hour earlier. Yule Island rose at 5.00am but advanced their clocks by one hour.39

As a group, the Catholic missionaries enjoyed their work and place and expressed that much more than Methodists did. Nobby Earl described his missionary vocation as ‘a grand job’, it made him ‘the happiest man north of Sydney’ and ‘I wouldn’t swap this [life here] for anything you can name.’40 John McGhee wrote of the Trobriands as his home and ‘a very happy one at that’41 and most others spoke in a similar vein. Even the fractious and difficult Father John King wrote of how much he liked the place and his work.42 Neville Dunne, one of a newer breed of priest, also expressed ‘happiness’ in his work but complained of how difficult it was because of a failure to receive ‘definite’ direction from his bishop.43

At times there was friction between priests and brothers which was often brought about by brothers who, deliberately or otherwise, endeavoured to change the rigid stratification of the missionary body, in which they were in a subservient position. Dwyer alerted the provincial authorities to what he saw as an unwanted and dangerous trend among the brothers in the immediate post-war period, when they were cut and about scrounging for materials left by the armies:

   For months preceding my return the Brothers had been a good deal away collecting gear and working very hard, but had begun to know too much, discuss too freely and were heading for an independence that was not good for them ... [following some time with them at Sideia] they saw

39 Dwyer to Father Provincial, 8 August 1944, SHM.
40 Earl to Father Provincial, 2 March 1940; 3 December 1940; 2 March 1950, SHM.
41 J. McGhee to Father Provincial, 21 April 1956, SHM.
42 King to Father Provincial, 16 April 1946, SHM.
43 Dunne to Father Provincial, 22 October 1963, SHM.
clearly what I was driving at - their religious life first, and the rest a far second. Implicit in this was that the brothers needed to submit to the priests in their own labours, often the kind of work the priest knew little about. While acknowledging this would give them 'less latitude' in their work, it was thought necessary because it would help them 'exercise much humility regarding their judgment and obedience.'

There was the further complaint that some brothers read books without asking permission. The difficulty for some was the isolation of their work, particularly those brothers who needed to spend time on outstations where they were left to their own devices to maintain their religious observances. One was Pat Cantwell, who arrived in 1953 and spent some time the next year in the Louisiades overseeing small plantations. Not yet professed, he found the religious life 'too hard to live', became worried and anxious about it and was taken to Sideia 'where he can lead a regular [religious] life.' Cantwell needed community and, at the time for taking his final vows, went through a torment about his ability to follow a religious life, yet earnestly desiring to do so. His vacillation probably had more to do with the restrictions the brothers lived under, than anything else. Doyle’s report on Cantwell is revealing:

> It is unfortunate that Bro[ther] Cantwell has again changed his mind and it now appears he has definitely decided to leave. He appeared quite happy at the time I last wrote to you and after your letter was quite prepared to stay. I was very pleased with the talk he had with me on that occasion as he seemed to only want a bit of help or encouragement. He was anxious to stay - he feared leaving - his doubts only arose from the lack of spiritual help and consolation which he failed to receive in his own spiritual exercises. But he was prepared to accept this since he was trying to do his best in his spiritual life.

> Now however he says he could not face up to the obligations. He would like to go on but fears the obligations entailed are too great ... During the time of his temporary vows he kept going because he would see them

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44 Dwyer to Father Provincial, 14 July 1946, SHM.

45 Dwyer to Father Provincial, 14 September 1946, SHM.

46 McGhee to Father Provincial, undated 1957, SHM.

47 McGhee to Father Provincial, 15 November 1954, SHM.
out and had ever recurring doubts as to whether he would take final vows. He says it is only on the missions that he could possibly live the life and the thought of Religious life anywhere else appears just impossible to him. This is about all I could get from him. He has been an excellent Bro[ther] in all respects during his time up here. But now the way is open for him he cannot face up to final profession ... I am arranging for him to leave on the plane next Thursday from Sam<"ai.48 Doyle’s counsel proved effective, for the next day Cantwell had decided to stay, take his final vows and remain with the mission. This he did, was commended for his ‘good form and contentment’ in isolated places like Rossel,49 and his own brother, Jack, joined the mission in 1960 where both remained until retiring in 1969.

Priestly control over the brothers was not a concern to Dwyer only; it was a recurring theme but in Doyle the brothers had a strong supporter. When Father Martin Atchison was suggested as the new Superior, Doyle spoke against the appointment out of consideration for the brothers. While Atchison’s ‘high ideals’ were commended, his attitude towards them and his desire for ‘tightening up ... the life of the Brother’ was not. ‘I do not think it would be wise to push such a policy” Doyle continued. ‘Consideration of their life in mission circumstances with reasonable allowances and encouragement’ had greater value.50 Doyle’s concern for the personal needs of the brothers was used to effect when consideration was given to other appointments such as when Atchison nominated Father William Ryan as a provincial councillor against the claims of another who ‘has not such a good approach to individuals ... and with whom there has been some unpleasantness at times, particularly with the Brothers.51 The Brothers were in a most subservient position; they were in charge of the labour lines while at work but were to have no authority over the workers at other times - the priest was in charge.

This is not to say the brother’s life was always unhappy. Many stayed long periods in the mission and one, Joseph Vogt, was one of the real characters as well one

48 Doyle to Father Provincial, 21 July 1956, SHM.
49 Doyle to Father Provincial, 14 November 1956, SHM.
50 Doyle to Father Provincial, 7 December 1958, SHM.
51 Atchison to Father Provincial, 24 March 1960, SHM.
of the mission’s outstanding missionaries. Born in 1909, Vogt began his missionary work in 1935 and spent the rest of his life following his vocation, until his death in 1985. A small, thin man, his skills were in building in which he made life a lot more tolerable for all his colleagues by designing and building accommodation that survived the vagaries of tropical life. Vogt was a man of many interests, some eccentric. He collected an assortment of animals and birds which included a monkey, 200 chickens, 50 ducks, goats, and ‘many birds’ which included canaries. When he moved around he expected to take most of his menagerie with him; when this was not possible he became obstinate and difficult. It was the same with his importation of birds. Despite advice from his colleagues, the superior and customs department he insisted on trying to bring canaries in and became difficult when refused, writing to Canberra direct to plead his case. Doyle found him exasperating in this mood:

I understand that Bro[ther] Vogt is arranging for more birds (canaries etc.) to be brought to the mission. Customs laws are that the import of birds is prohibited. Brother insists that he will bring the birds and I understand he intends writing to Canberra and wherever else I don’t know to win his point. By his persistent way the matter can become very embarrassing for the mission and causes difficulties with the local Customs Department, as has been previously experienced. It can be more than a small matter for us and the departments concerned.

I was wondering if a word from you would have the desired effect ... Already we have a big collection of ‘birds’, many types, here.  

Vogt usually responded to such disappointments with bouts of agitation and outbreaks of nervous disorder. Early in his time Lyons had doubted the wisdom of his being there; declaring the country was too tough for him.  

However, Vogt was a survivor and indispensable to the mission so much that when missionaries were allowed back after the war it was Vogt whom Baldwin, then Dwyer and Earl, asked for. His colleagues esteemed him greatly. Dwyer described him as ‘full of life and great usefulness’, he had ‘tireless energy’, Earl spoke of his ‘high opinion of [Vogt’s] devotedness and ability ... he is so much ‘easier’ [and] less prickly

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52 Doyle to Father Provincial, 15 January 1964, SHM.

53 Lyons to Father Provincial, 23 November 1937, SHM.
and saving himself a lot of his previous nervous upsets', and to Doyle he, in spite of his difficulties, had many good qualities and to lose him would be a great loss. There was no brother who set a better example for regular religious exercises, he was 'most useful' in all spheres of work and there was no need to 'hunt around to find things in his favour.\(^{54}\)

Vogt's major need was to be valued. His nervousness and agitation usually stemmed from incidents which he interpreted as signs he was not wanted and usually occurred when he was to take holidays. Because he was often run down and exhausted it was suggested he should be given extended breaks to recapture his strength which he then interpreted with 'suspicion' that something was afoot to shift him.\(^{55}\) Once mollified and affirmed\(^{56}\) he returned to his usual good demeanour. A personal highlight was his jubilee in which he had over 2,000 masses said or offered for him as well as rosaries and many visits.\(^{57}\)

Another brother who has earned a place in the Mission's history is Stan Reis. Born in Toowoomba, Reis went to Papua in 1950 where he established a reputation as a good general worker, especially in building and carpentry. Doyle developed the 'greatest admiration' for him, for his simple faith, his love of hard work, his eagerness and his 'likeableness was nothing else than the goodness and simplicity of his life.'\(^{58}\)

Within a year of his arrival he went to Nimoa for a year to do building work and returned to Sideia where he built the new school. Due to tiredness and illness he chose to have some recuperation back at Nimoa. On 10 February 1956 the mission flagship, *Morning Star*, came from Sideia to go on to Rossel. On board were Sisters Paul, Xavier, Marie Marguerite (Margaret Collins) and Gerald, the latter a nurse. Reis and Brother Gerry King joined them for the onward trip. After a smooth journey they arrived

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\(^{54}\) Dwyer to Father Provincial, 24 September 1944; 14 September 1946; Earl to Father Provincial, 8 December 1944; Doyle to Father Provincial, 25 March 1956; 3 May 1956.

\(^{55}\) Doyle to Father Provincial, 3 May 1956, SHM.

\(^{56}\) Doyle to Father Provincial, 27 November 1957, SHM.

\(^{57}\) Vogt to Father Provincial, 22 February 1959, SHM.

\(^{58}\) Doyle to [Father Provincial] Kerrins, 16 February 1956, SHM.
at Rambuso (Sudest) at 5.30pm intending to anchor. Entering the anchorage, a crew
man gave wrong directions and the boat went on the reef. Strong winds and a rough sea
developed and the situation became dangerous. Orders were given for the sisters and
other passengers to go ashore. The boat was winched off the reef but then the engine
clutch stalled and they were back on it.

Reis was manning the winch when the ratchet holder broke sending the handle
flying back and hitting him on the head. He was knocked unconscious and began to
have fits. Brother King and two boys then rowed the dinghy back to Nimoa, a distance
of 24 kilometres across open ocean, arriving there at 5.00am next morning. With no
medical supplies the sisters spent the time in religious exercises, saying rosary after
rosary as well as litanies of the Sacred Heart and whispering in his ears acts of contrition
and renewal of his vows. Reis became progressively weaker and it was clear he was
paralysed down one side. At midnight, as they prayed over him, he responded enough
to say a single Hail Mary and then died a few minutes later.59 His death was greatly
lamented by all his colleagues and especially Doyle who commemorated his name in the
school at Sideia. This was the second of only three deaths in the first fifty years of the
Mission, the other two being from blackwater fever.60

There is a strong Catholic tradition of martyrdom and heroism but in this
Mission there were few opportunities for this. Facing the elements was one so there was
a desire to redefine heroism to conform to what they were doing. Writing to the church
constituency in Australia, Dwyer described the daily work in this way:

First, the great spiritual blessings which flow to the Mission by reason of
... exact observance of the Religious Life ... the fever, sickness, humidity,
discomforts and hazards of frequent journeying, makes the strict
observance a heroic thing in a tropical country.
2. The Mission School.
3. Catechism is taught in English or the native tongue and each year,
sometimes twice, there is a great reward, the compensating labour of the
'Baptism Class' for the better instructed, the more worthy.

59 Sister Marie Marguerite (Margaret Collins) to Father, 22 February 1956; McGhee to Father Provincial,
12 February 1956, SHM.

60 Father Hugh Tomlinson, 19 March 1939; Sister Verona (Edna Hounslow), 6 September 1959.
4. The care of the sick!
All this is heroic, is Christlike work.  

At no time were Catholic missionaries in any danger from the people, there was no incident when physical violence was threatened and there was no example of any confrontation or skirmish. If one sought martyrdom then Eastern Papua was not the place to be.

The only situation involving legal action was that of Harry Pierce who had arrived as a companion brother with Vogt in 1935. Born in Ireland in 1895, his main duties were in engineering and boat maintenance, meaning he spent most of his time at Sideia until left the mission in 1938 and returned to Papua in a private capacity, settling in the Louisiades. Here he entered a custom marriage with a local woman, ran a small plantation and trade store and did some trading with his boat and barge. He remained on good terms with the missionaries at Nimoa and Rossel when those stations opened and was useful in a number of emergencies.

In early December 1954, six weeks after his wife had left him, Pierce shot and killed two young Papuan men at Pantava village on southern Sudest. He, himself, was carried back to his home 'in a bad nervous condition' and a message sent to Nobby Earl to the effect he was sick. Earl arrived and shipped him across to Nimoa where he stayed for three days, obviously unwell, but he gave no indication of the killings. Within hours of his leaving to return home a message arrived at Nimoa of what had happened. Earl and Twomey went across to Sudest and found Pierce asleep in his house. They told him what had happened but he had no recollection at all whereupon Earl delivered him to the government office at Bwagaoia, Misima. He was shipped off to Samarai and then Port Moresby for trial on manslaughter charges. Doyle visited him at Samarai en route where he still had no recollection and seemed indifferent to what had happened. His trial took place quickly and he was found not guilty because of insanity. He spent the rest of his

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63 Doyle to Father Provincial, 16 December 1954; Twomey to [Father Provincial] Kerrins, 22 March 1955; J. McGhee, Australian MSC Missions ..., 65.
life, until his death on 1 August 1972, being cared for by the sisters at the Nazareth Convent in Port Moresby and generally making himself useful as a handyman.

The main difference in the brothers’ ranks over the fifty years has been in their work occupation. From the early decades up until the early seventies, brothers were the blue collar workers in the mission, engaged in building, carpentry, diesel mechanics and plantation management. The introduction of secondary education saw new brothers recruited as teachers for Hagita High School (along with priests), of whom one, Mick Puls, returned home to study for the priesthood before returning to the mission.

AS A BODY the missionaries were an eclectic group. Personalities ranged from the gentle, introspective types like Tomlinson and Reis, the gregarious Twomey, eccentrics such as Vogt, personable and friendly like Fathers Jim Moore and William Ryan, the thoughtful and intelligent Father Jim Fallon, steady and reliable types like Doody and John McGhee and his sibling, Brother Kevin McGhee, to bombastic characters like Nobby Earl and the ‘never shy’ James Dwyer. Many of them liked their beer, whisky and cigarettes and Victorian football was popular and a source of competition between them, especially when Richmond supporter Doyle was leader.

With some there were attitudes and comments not consistent with the spirit of the instructions of Navarre. This is especially so in attitudes to race. Nobby Earl was a prime example. He, over many years, referred to Melanesians as ‘coons’ and, writing under the pseudonym North-East, called them ‘boongs.’ Visitors to Rossel tell of meal-time conversations usually getting around to talking about ‘them’ - Papuans, when much fun would be made of their foibles and ideas. Joe Docherty held local beliefs up to ridicule when he wrote of their belief in ‘spooks’, Annals carried photos captioned

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64 J. McGhee, Australian MSC Missions ..., 40.

65 Earl to Father Provincial, 2 March 1940; 3 December 1940; 26 March 1944; 5 January 1945, SHM.

66 ‘One of the Boongs’, Annals, August 1947, 247.

67 Informants: Jim and Anne Henderson, Sydney, April 1994.

‘Ten Little Nigger Boys of Nimoa’ 69 and a senior prelate, writing on his impressions in the early days of the Mission, told of his response to their welcome: ‘God bless you my little darkies’ with other references to ‘darkies.’ 70 Racial references such as these were not typical of other missionaries and show a tolerance by the provincial authorities which was consistent with general community attitudes but frowned on by other churches of the time.

The other notable name in the missionary body was that of Maria Trapp, one of the famous von Trapp family of Sound of Music fame. During the final 1954 Sydney concert of the Trapp Family Singers they met Father Kevin Murphy, the pioneer priest at Rossel. Murphy was a good looking, blond man whom some felt was too handsome to be priest. He struggled with personal problems, particularly drink, but used his personality to entrepreneurial advantage. Learning some members of the family were keen to have some missionary experience in their pursuit of starting a Foundation of Lay Apostolate in the USA, Murphy invited them to his mission. Two daughters, Maria and her half sister Rosemary, and half brother, Johannes, arrived in November 1956 and settled at Budoya. The two sisters worked in the school and did some basic medical work while Johannes helped in building programs and doing catechetical work in villages. 71 He returned to the USA in 1959 and his sisters the following year. Maria, alone, returned to Papua, upgraded her teaching qualification and, after some more time at Budoya went to live in Port Moresby, where she remained until the mid-eighties. One who was influenced in his missionary vocation by Maria was Father Tony O’Brien through whom he was introduced to the charismatic movement. 72 Murphy’s initiative in securing the services of the von Trapps gave the work a good public image and had beneficial effects for at least one of the brothers, Kevin McGhee, then captain of the Morning Star. Invited by Baroness von Trapp to join their missionary training program in the USA, he accepted their offer, declaring ‘I’m sure I’ll have a better chance of

69 Annals, February 1951, 41.

70 Father Paul Fleming, ‘With the Missionaries in Eastern Papua’, Annals, May 1936, 179-182.

71 Doyle to Father Provincial, 14 November 1956; J. McGhee, Australian MSC Missions ..., 82.

saving my soul by doing further work for the missions than spending the rest of my life seeing the public are fed beer and lolly water.\textsuperscript{73} Upon his return to Papua, McGhee became the unofficial historian of the mission.

The major issue that still faces the missionary body is their longevity. Of the eleven priests still there in 1995 only one, Patrick Austin, had arrived since 1977. Of the other ten, two had been there since the fifties, five since the sixties and four since the seventies; of the brothers all four have been there since the fifties at least. The ages of those still there shows an aging and increasingly feeble priesthood: Kevin English was 84 in 1998, Bill Cunningham 73, Arthur Stidwill 68 with the youngest being Joseph Ensing at 55. Of the brothers Kevin McGhee, 76, is the oldest and the youngest is Colin Milne, 56.

As a group there is no one person whose endeavours have made them a household name in missionary history. They were a group of ordinary people who endeavoured to bring their faith and Church to a people they cared about. Some doubted the wisdom of starting this particular mission, one declaring that the displeasure of the Methodists was understandable because ‘we shouldn’t have gone there in the first place.’\textsuperscript{74} One who has made a reputation for himself in recent times is Father Mick Morwood. After serving at Hagita from 1970-1974 and then in 1978, he returned to Melbourne and has been engaged in parish work in blue collar communities. He has turned to writing theology for Catholic schools, a book the conservative Archbishop George Pell has banned. Morwood has also been banned from speaking on ‘certain theological issues in public.’\textsuperscript{75}

The experience of the Papuan people and their Catholic missionaries has been a positive, affirming one and each of the current missionaries, including the bishop, have chosen to be citizens of Papua New Guinea, itself a most obvious indication that Catholic missionaries see themselves as people of the Church rather than the nation of their birth.

\textsuperscript{73} J. McGhee to Father Provincial, 1 July 1957, SHM.

\textsuperscript{74} Informant: Father Kevin Twomey, Kensington, 1992.

\textsuperscript{75} \textit{Sydney Morning Herald}, 20 March 1998, 3.
Map 3: Methodist/United Church Mission Stations
CHAPTER THREE
Called or Sent? - Methodists at Work

Missionaries are a cross-section of people; they are not a particular type, removed from the rest of humanity. Their behaviour, attitudes and personalities are influenced by their Christian faith but neither that faith, their theology, nor the denomination in which they served ‘made’ them a particular type. Those who served in the Methodist Mission in Papua were almost all from a well educated, middle class background. This is seen in the clergy: of the 37 who served in Papua the majority had been teachers prior to ordination, others were bank officers, clerks, book-keepers with only three, Matthew Gilmour (carpenter), Athol Brooks (farmer) and Jim Dawes (carpenter and joiner) representing blue collar occupations. Twelve had university degrees and seven diplomas in theology.

Methodism in Australia from 1930 onwards was centred around Sunday worship and the mid-week Class meeting. This meeting was for church members and a place in which testimonies were shared and faith built up. Over the years this experiential approach declined though vestiges of it persisted into the sixties. Of more importance was theological thought, especially in Sydney. Theological training was a joint arrangement with Presbyterian and Congregationalists with classes at St Andrews College, University of Sydney. The appointment of Professor Samuel Angus to the faculty led to great turmoil and his removal following charges of heresy (laid by fellow Presbyterians) led to much questioning of the impact of liberalism in the Methodist Church. The division created was between ‘liberals’ and ‘evangelicals’, one which persisted until after the formation of the Uniting Church in Australia in 1977. The clergy that worked in Papua would have all have described themselves as evangelicals.

The arrival of a Methodist missionary in Papua was the result of a process of testing and training. Where once altruism had been sufficient for a deeply committed believer to be accepted, by the forties this was no longer the case. General Secretary John Burton, who introduced missionary training in 1928, was single-minded in his desire to demolish the negative missionary stereotype that often...
abounded. A candidate needed to possess good health and an even temperament, declaring ‘narrow-minded, irascible, fault-finding people were a liability ... very pious people can be very cranky and hard to place in a team.’ It was traditional for any aspirant to tell of a ‘call’ from God though Burton was not comfortable with this idea if such a call was used to try and predetermine the Board’s response to an application. Burton contended the Church was better placed than the individual to decide where a person was best suited, for too many ‘emotional types’ were attracted to missionary work and ‘experience on the mission field shows the emotionalist lacks staying power.’

For Burton, to be ‘sent’ by the Church was better criteria than a personal ‘call’, for the latter could be manipulative and was a hindrance to those who had no ‘supernatural’ sense of the missionary vocation.

The two most important requirements, for Burton, were a person’s certainty of, and relationship with, God, and for them to have professional skills.

Each applicant was required to indicate their motivation for missionary work. The most common reasons given by those who served in Papua in offering for mission work were talks by a missionary deputationist, local church influence, parental encouragement and the influence of special interest groups such as Victoria’s Methodist Young Men’s Missionary Movement, Christian Endeavour Society and the occupation-based Teachers Christian Fellowship and Australian Nurses Christian Movement, both evangelical and non-denominational groups which strongly encouraged the idea of missionary work as a higher form of Christian service.

After its introduction in 1929 Methodist Overseas Missions put a high premium on the need for missionary training, formally introduced through the creation of the George Brown Missionary Training College, in Haberfield, Sydney (in 1963, when Presbyterian and Congregationalists joined the Methodists in a joint training program, it was re-named All Saints). The Papua district was at first enthusiastic about such training and urged the Board to include both theoretical and practical subjects: anthropology, linguistics, tropical medicine and hygiene, Biblical studies and ‘simple’ theology, history, the science and methods of modern missions,

1 ‘Basic Qualifications of Missionary Candidates’, MR, October 1944, 10-12.

2 J.W. Burton, Modern Missions in the South Pacific, 199-200.
comparative religion, educational methods, book-keeping and marine mechanics. By 1953 the curriculum had changed little; ethics had been added and classes in anthropology and tropical medicine at Sydney University prolonged the course to a year’s duration. Once training was introduced it did not take long for the district to challenge parts of the program. As with other districts Papua wanted their new workers to come quickly and they saw the training course as an impediment to this. By 1935 they were advocating delaying the training of new staff until after their first four year term was completed. ‘Whilst in full accord with the principle of the special training of workers’ the synod declared itself ‘more strongly of the opinion that in the best interests of the workers and the work’ such training should be deferred. Their reasoning was that in such an unhealthy environment as Papua the first term was the testing time and those who survived it and wanted to return should receive their training prior to their second term. The Board rejected this idea and were justified when it was seen that, at that time, only five staff - all lay women - had resigned after one term and three of those did so, in accordance with Board policy, because they were to marry male colleagues. Ambivalence about pre-service training was a minor but persistent irritant between the district and the Board and a number of attempts were made by the synod to change the Board’s insistence on training. The 1949 synod expressed a differing opinion which says much about what they really thought of the value of understanding the culture of Melanesians as against the institution of the church:

All members of the synod who are familiar with the [anthropology] course are most emphatic that the value to them of the last term of the present course is of much less importance than the insight into all the branches of their work gained at the [annual] synod before going to their appointments.

3 1930 Board minutes, MOM 198; J.P. Jarman, Annual Report to 1938 Synod, MOM 271 in which he wrote of a four month long course of which two courses in anthropology and one in tropical medicine were taken at Sydney University, with supplementary courses in comparative religion, history of missions and child education and linguistics at the church’s George Brown Missionary Training College.

4 1935 Board minutes, MOM 268.

5 1949 Annual Synod minutes, MOM 357.
Pacific Islander missionaries received no special training as they were always viewed as natives and considered as so similar to Melanesians they had little to learn from such instructions.

Missionary training had been one of Burton's major contributions and Cecil Gribble saw it as just as important for his ecumenical dreams. When GBMTC became All Saints in 1963, the college trained 375 people between 1960 and 1970, at which time it closed its doors. This closure did not mean a decline in missionary activity; in 1971 Methodist Overseas Missions (MOM) had 255 people overseas supported through the Mission Board, a total that did not include those who were supported financially by the receiving church. Rather, it was planned that training would in future take place in the country or region of placement, a plan that was not realised.

In all 161 missionaries and their families served the Methodist Mission in Papua between 1930 and 1980. Up until 1968, all Europeans were recruited from Australia after which, because of the formation of The United Church, some came from churches in New Zealand, Great Britain and one from India. Included in the total number were thirty male missionaries from the various Pacific Islands: nine from Samoa, Fiji ten, Rotuma five and Tonga six.

The missionary body consisted of forty-eight ministers (including eleven Pacific Islanders), fifty-five lay men (nineteen Pacific Islanders) and fifty-eight lay women, the latter all Anglo-Celtic. The idea that Pacific Islanders were the front-line missionaries was not always true as these numbers from 1930 onwards show.

European lay workers, by occupation, were:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Occupation</th>
<th>Count</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Teachers</td>
<td>37</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Medical workers</td>
<td>31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(Nurses 28; Doctors 2; Laboratory technician 1)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tradesmen</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(Engineers, builders and technical instructors)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Office personnel</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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6 1973 Methodist General Conference Minutes, 22-23.

7 When the Mission began in 1891 a number of New Zealand Methodists served in Papua until, in 1922, the Church took sole responsibility for the work in the Western Solomon Islands. Additionally there were other white workers who served from the mid-60's onwards as 'volunteers.' These were recruited through two church programs; Go-New Guinea (an activity of the Methodist national youth network) and the Order of St Stephen. There were also government programs, notably the Australian government's Australian Volunteers Abroad (AVA) and the British government's Volunteer Service Overseas (VSO), who did likewise. A few also came through the USA Peace Corp. Some of the volunteers, after their one or two year placements were completed, elected to stay on as missionaries.
Pacific Islanders by occupation were:

- Pastor/Teachers: 15
- Doctors: 2
- Agricultural workers: 2.

The average tenure varied between occupation, gender and race. White ministers averaged a stay of 11.2 years, lay men 5.7 years and lay women eight years. Ministers had guaranteed employment whenever they returned home but lay people had no security of employment from the church in Australia; lay men included many who were married while all the women were single. Pacific Islanders had a much longer average stay of 16.75 years. Various factors that influenced this included the status their home churches put on missionary service and the not inconsiderable influence and power they enjoyed in Melanesian village life.

Arriving in the mission field was to join a diverse group of colleagues whose lives were circumscribed by social and religious practices, many of which Methodism was noted for. No missionary was allowed to drink alcohol or to engage in any form of gambling. Attendance at church by missionaries was not ordered; it was considered automatic. Each minister was questioned at the annual synod meeting on adherence to Methodist doctrine and practice and lay workers were similarly questioned in their quarterly meeting. Only once was it necessary to discipline an expatriate for breaking the code of abstinence. A minister from the United Reformed Church in the United Kingdom - a church not requiring abstinence - was told not to return after his 1974 furlough because he refused to abstain and accept what was the policy of the Assembly, the national United Church office. Use of tobacco was not prohibited and some missionaries indulged, especially in the earlier decades. Tobacco had been well established since 1891 as a trade item, and was in regular use for buying food and by many Papuan church workers for personal use.

The most important person in the mission was the chairman of the district, of whom there were seven; middle class, well educated, determined and with strong personalities. These men were appointed for their seniority and experience and influenced the work by their personalities and particular interests. All married, they
offered contrasting personalities but exercised their position in a similar, centralised, way.

Matthew Gilmour was a good example of the ’industrial missionary’ in that he sought to advance the quality of life of Papuan people by teaching carpentry, boat building and basic building techniques. The unhappiness of his latter years in Papua were of his own making but his reputation among them and contribution to the Papuan people is still venerated by them. For example, at the 1968 synod at Misima, debate took place on the naming of a new boat to serve the Louisiades, to replace the *Gilmour* which had perished on a reef. Despite strong efforts to call it the *South Seas* in honour of Pacific Island workers, including Isikeli Hau’ofa who took part in the debate, Papuan representatives were united in naming it *Gilmour II*. Such symbolism is a good mirror in which to see Melanesian priorities.

At the same time as Gilmour’s colleagues were pressing for his recall, they were asking for the appointment of a previous colleague, Ron Andrew, as chairman. A quiet, gentle and pastorally sensitive person, Andrew had previously worked in the Panaeati-Misima area (1919–28) where he had been fluent in the Panaeati language and done considerable translation work. He was also the pioneer of radio in the mission. Andrew had an insightful mind and a degree of self-effacement. His colleagues praised his leadership:

> His practical knowledge of so many branches of the work, his ability to think things through and clarify issues, his respect for those who hold different views to his own, and his manifest joy in fellowship with his brethren, have been features of his leadership. 8

Ern Clarke, who served under the chairmanship of Gilmour, Andrew, Rundle, Bartlett and Shotton, declared Andrew to be ‘the best chairman we have had in my twenty years in Papua’.9 But Andrew never expected his tenure to be long term, more a transition while looking for another. His chairmanship, from 1934-38, ended for the same reason as first departure - his wife’s poor health.10

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8 1938 Board minutes, MOM 271.

9 Clarke to Bartlett, 23 January 1950, Clarke Family Papers.

10 Mrs Andrew, whose poor health had necessitated their retirement from Papua on three occasions, died at the age of 105.
John (Jack) Rundle, who had been the most vocal critic of Gilmour, became chairman on Andrew's retirement. An 'emotional Celt', Rundle, a freemason and lover of cricket, was a strong, resilient and 'muscular' leader who did not engender warm affection from his colleagues but was much respected by them. A missionary since 1928 he had spent most of his time on Goodenough Island. His time as chairman was limited: he assumed the reins in 1938, went on furlough in 1941 and remained there when the Australian missionaries were evacuated because of the war. He joined the chaplaincy ranks of the Army and died in 1944 in North Australia, due to complications from a motor vehicle accident.

After the war Harry Bartlett, an evacuee and missionary with thirteen years experience at Misima-Panaeati, returned and became chairman until illness forced him home after a further two years. Committed to missionary work since he was fourteen Bartlett, a clerk, went to Papua following his ordination in 1929. He became fluent in the language and translated most of the New Testament into Panaeati and enjoyed a good reputation for his hard work and inter-personal skills both among his colleagues and with Papuans; Isikeli Hau’ofa described him as 'the man of long patience.' Illness forced his retirement from the mission whereupon the Board once again prevailed on Andrew to return, which he did in 1945 until his permanent departure in 1947.

Hedley Shotton, missionary in the Trobriands from 1932 until he retired 1938 was, like Andrew, urged to return to Papua after the war. He did so in 1946 and was appointed chairman in 1947. Formerly a teacher and the only one in the mission's history to hold a postgraduate degree, in Arts from Melbourne, Shotton was highly esteemed by his colleagues. He translated large portions of the New Testament into Kiriwinan, wrote and published devotional and theological works in the same language, had a passion for personal evangelism and encouraged and taught Papuans to share this same vision. His colleagues described his as 'a life lived in a spirit of personal devotion, full of meekness, and amazingly patient with his brethren, brown or white' and 'one of God's special gifts to our church.'

11 *MRS*, November 1944, 10.
12 1953 Board minutes, MOM 361.
13 Clarke to Bartlett, 23 January 1950, Clarke Family Papers.
regard in which he was held was modified by his impractical nature, a source of frustration at times. He was one who fitted the mould of being ‘almost too heavenly minded to be of earthly use.’ He would travel anywhere on a boat regardless of its condition; as long as it started he would go. But he lacked the ability to know what to do if it broke down. On one occasion he took a newly-arrived missionary on the Tolema from Salamo to Woodlark. Upon arrival his crew told him they had used forty gallons of oil and only had a few left. To go to sea in that condition was foolhardy but Shotton pressed on when some old oil with a lot of sludge in it was found. On the return journey the engine cut out and boat drifted for three days. Eventually it was started and travelled at one knot. 14

Shotton’s chairmanship was not without personal problems. Ralph Grant had expectations he would have been appointed chairman and, having missed out, made life difficult for Shotton who had no ambition for high office and was not well equipped to deal with animosity. The fact that Shotton was always gracious and conciliatory towards Grant earned him profound respect from his colleagues.

Ralph Grant finally realised his ambition when the Board appointed him chairman following Shotton’s retirement in 1953. A South Australian, he had trained as a bookkeeper before entering theological college prior to ordination in 1930. A few days after marrying Dawn Uren, a pre-school teacher, the couple left for Papua. His early appointments were to Dobu, Bwaruada and Bunama. As acting chairman when the unfortunate order for evacuation came it fell to him to order his staff out.

As soon as the Board was able to send people back to Papua Grant sought to join them but, despite repeated attempts, the Board refused his application. At first it said its concern was for his ‘domestic arrangements’ - his children’s schooling - then told him his work at Broken Hill was too important to leave. Finally they rejected his application because ‘younger men were the priority.’ 15 But these were excuses rather than reasons for the Board had prevailed on men like Clarke, Andrew, Dixon and Shotton to return, all of whom were older than Grant. As well,


15 Board minutes 14 August 1944, MOM 340; A&T (Appointments and Training) committee minutes 10 May 1946; 5 July 1946; 9 December 1946, MOM 340.
the Board had a policy of meeting the costs of missionary children living away from their parents, and the Broken Hill appointment was a normal circuit ministry and not needing special consideration. It was not until pressure from his own state was brought to bear that Grant’s return to Papua was eventually agreed to by the Board. His former colleague and now South Australian state secretary for overseas missions, Harry Bartlett, warned the authorities there could be ‘unfortunate consequences’ for the Board’s income from his state’s annual offerings in support of overseas missions if Grant was to not return to Papua. Permission was then given and the Grants finally returned in 1947, and were stationed at East Cape where they remained until their retirement in 1961.

Grant’s replacement, Leigh Swaby, had difficulties with colleagues just as Grant had but for very different reasons. Grant’s problem with his clergy stemmed from his overbearing manner; Swaby had no problems in personal relationships. He was universally liked and respected; his difficulty lay in his inability to get his colleagues to go all the way in the reforms he sought to introduce. This led to his resignation when his proposal to move the headquarters away from its traditional location in the Dobu region was rejected. His desire was to break the mission away from its conservative heritage and take it to Kwato, putting it in the vicinity of the government offices at Samarai. In so doing he was acknowledging the Catholics had been right all along in basing themselves so close to the seats of political power. This was a battle Swaby could not win for he not only failed to get full support from his missionary colleagues but influential Papuans did not want it either.

Swaby’s replacement in 1965 was Colin Garlick, who had been in the mission since 1956. An electrical draftsman by training, Garlick was influenced in missionary work by the Christian Endeavour movement and his training in Bible College as well as in theological training. A quiet, gentle man and self-effacing to a considerable degree, Garlick was fiscally very conservative but totally committed to Papuan control over the mission. He, more than any other, gave control to Papuans. He was the first to hand over his circuit to a Papuan, he spent a large amount of his time in villages preparing the people for taking over, he would sit in meetings and wait for hours for a single Papuan response to an issue. His colleagues saw this as paternalism but as Garlick himself said ‘the last act of paternalism was to decide not
to be paternalistic!"\(^16\) It was Garlick who prevailed on the synod and the Board to appoint a Papuan chairman, and for that person to be the signatory for the district in the deed of Union.

Unlike their Catholic counterparts, Methodists had no compulsory personal devotional regime to follow but there was an expectation they would adopt one for their own sakes and the sake of the work. ‘A minister’s own behaviour and character are constantly observed by his people and therefore should be constantly guarded’ one of the first synods at which there were Papuan ministers present was told.\(^17\) When, as happened in the war, there was an air of pessimism among the missionaries, the solution was simple: personal devotions.

‘... it would be well if we spent more time in devotional exercises ... It would be well if we could set apart a day when all could gather at a quiet place and spend the hours in prayer and quiet time. We cannot afford to allow anything to interfere in our daily devotions in the home. Realising that it is easy to let it slide, let us cling to it with resolution ... A half hour spent in prayer, preparing each day’s routine, may well spell the difference between a day wasted and a day redeemed.’\(^18\)

The need was a common one and to be shared with Papuans as well: ‘... time must be taken to develop a truly devotional life, and that more and particular attention must be given to our [Papuan] pastor teachers.’\(^19\) When Janie Pearce, a missionary since 1916, retired in 1950 her colleagues described her as ‘perhaps the most outstanding worker in our Papua district’ because they knew ‘the source of her dynamic living and devotional life founded in personal prayer and a dedicated understanding of spiritual things ... Her example will live with the Papuans when much else is forgotten.’\(^20\)

Methodists had two responses to difficult times. After one of the more satisfying annual synod meetings it was reflected the reason was to be found in their particular doctrine of perfection. ‘The future is clouded but we shall move on until

\(^{16}\) Informant: Colin Garlick, May 1997.

\(^{17}\) 1961 Synod minutes Dobuan [language] session, MOM 368.

\(^{18}\) 1940 Synod minutes on ‘Pastoral Efficiency’, MOM 273.

\(^{19}\) 1957 Synod minutes on ‘Pastoral Efficiency’, MOM 365.

\(^{20}\) 1950 Synod minutes, MOM 358.
the Light shines unto the Perfect Day. There was more emphasis on Perfection and
the need for it to meet the New Order' the synod declared. The second response in
trying times was the class meeting, a time given for personal sharing and public
prayer, held on a Wednesday evening, and which was the communal opportunity for
missionary and Papuan to share together. The class meeting is a distinctive
Methodist contribution to Christendom and was picked up after the war when the
returning missionaries resolved to 're-emphasise to our people the centrality of the
Class Meeting for the building up of the life of the church and urge the mid-week
meetings for Christian fellowship and instruction be held in all places where it is
possible.'

Generally speaking the missionaries were strong personalities - they had to
be to survive the loneliness, climate and many frustrations they experienced - and
not given to much introspection. This was especially the case with the men; women
were more prepared to talk of their feelings about their time in Papua and their
relationships with Papuans. One nurse declared:

Throughout the year I have been very conscious of the working of the
Holy Spirit in my own heart. He has led me to a fuller consecration
of all my powers in his control. He has been impressing on me the
great need for intercessory prayer here on the field, and I pray that I
may not fail Him in the days to come in this work for Him.

He has also spoken to me about the need to get closer to the people.
Somehow we must seek to break down this big barrier that there is
between us and them. Perhaps invite them more often into our homes.
Only He knows that it can be done, and I'm sure He has a way.

This theme of getting close to Papuans was a recurring one amongst lay missionaries
but there was little personal relationship between them and the locals until the early
sixties, a situation not confined to the mission alone. The cohabitation of nurses at
Salamo in one house, _Anua Sister_, was claimed to be 'the first time in the life of
our Mission and in government hospitals that sister and nurse have fraternised (by

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21 1941 Synod minutes, MOM 274.
22 1946 Synod minutes on 'The Work of God', MOM 354.
23 B. Shelton, Annual Report to 1956 Synod, MOM 364.
24 _Anua_: Dobuan for 'house'.
sharing the same house). Another, Reta Berry, who reminisced on how children placed their small brown feet in my larger footprint [in the sand]. I pray that I may ever walk that little brown ones will ever be led in the way our Master would have them take and for Bruce Walkeden-Brown a year was successful when it brought him ‘closer’ to Papuans. A nursing sister spoke of how her ‘heart ached for the people and I long to be able to help them more’ but it was Greta Secomb who revealed most of her struggle to come to a fairer understanding of a proper Christian relationship with Papuans. Reflecting on her reading of Albert Luthuli’s book Let My People Go and her relationship with her Papuan minister, Wilson Yareki, she wrote of being ‘very conscious of my own guilt regarding racial discrimination and this book has caused me to think a lot ... As far as I can see the only reason Wilson calls me Sister is the colour of skin.

The lifestyle of the missionary was dominated by isolation and loneliness. The response was a silent stoicism, especially by the clergy, none of whom made any reference to it in their annual reports. It was the medical practitioner, Gordon Heaslip, who gave the clearest picture of the difficulties and consequences of living in Papua. Writing in the Missionary Review he said:

There are some aspects of mission work that are very difficult to convey to people at home. Most of those interested do appreciate the difficulties of the work but the nature of the difficulties is not easy to grasp ... Perhaps the worst of one’s difficulties is the fight one has to overcome depression and to maintain one’s enthusiasm in the face of a series of disappointments. What makes it much worse is that there is justification for the feeling that one is not in any way to blame for these mishaps, and that if one had the equipment and facilities they could be limited. This ... results in a sense of futility and exasperation that makes it very difficult to maintain a true perspective. Irritability is another inevitable result and this has to be not only curbed but hidden away behind an imperturbable exterior. Otherwise there would surely arise that nightmare of missionaries, friction amongst the staff both white and brown, and in the case of

25 Marjorie Thurstun, Annual Report to 1961 Synod, ALX 3/61, NGC.
26 R. Berry, Annual Report to 1955 Synod, ALX 3/56, NGC.
28 N.L. Pitty, Annual Report to 1941 Synod, MOM 274.
29 G. Secomb to Cecil Gribble, undated circular circa. 1964, ALX 3/61, NGC.
the latter there would be a lessening of the confidence so painstakingly built up.

Another thing ... is the development of cynicism. It would be very easy to let oneself feel that it was not at all providential that our red-letter day has come just when it was badly needed, but was simply a coincidence resulting from frequent depressions. This repression of our less desirable emotions and the constant guarding lest they catch us unawares, is very exhausting. There is probably nothing so conducive to depression and irritability as exhaustion and so we move in a vicious circle gradually progressing towards a breakdown. 30

Depression, frustration, irritability and cynicism were constant companions for generations of missionaries. For some it happened because they had no interests outside their work. To overcome this some, like Rundle, championed cricket as an outlet. Even girls were encouraged to play cricket and football. Behind Gilmour’s house at Salamo a croquet court was laid and well used. It was still visible in the seventies, forty years after Gilmour’s departure. Sporting carnivals involving other missions were begun ‘to bring together the separated tribes of Papua into one national unity.' 31 The sense of isolation was pervasive especially for those away from the main centres of population. Fred Guy at Bunama, a keen cricket fan who, without a wireless, depended on letters from colleagues like Rundle to learn the latest test scores. It took weeks between reading one day’s score and the next, and months to learn the final result. For people such as him isolation meant either developing an interest in botany or similar science or having no outlet beyond work. Guy did develop such an interest and collected myths and legends as well.

The frustrations felt were exhibited in different ways, according to the personality of the individual. Most kept them to themselves with occasional bursts of anger. Others, such as Grant, showed it by a persistent refusal to accept Papuans as equals. It was Grant who did not want Papuan ministers to be able to wear the clerical collar, who insisted no minister should use betel nut, who washed after shaking hands with Papuans, who had his clothes washed again if villagers brushed against them and who was a constant critic of Papuan abilities. Yet the same man

30 Dr W. G. Heaslip, MR, November 1930, 3.

31 J.C. Rundle, Annual Report to 1940 Synod, MOM 273.
was an excellent teacher of his workers in the printing press at East Cape and had an enviable reputation for hospitality amongst the non-mission white community. Among the Pacific Islanders there were more explosive acts of anger. One was sent home after assaulting a white female teacher and others had reputations for hitting and kicking people when frustrated. The Samoan pastor, Solipo Faga, was one who endeavoured to come to terms with his negative feelings and his role as a missionary. He desired to be friendly with Papuans and ‘not look down on them because they may have dirty habits’ and sought not to ‘continually scold them’ in his sermons. Yet his frustrations were clearly evident. Disobedience through failing to turn up for work, not attending church services, his own ‘heart-sickness’ - waiting for news from home - and other ‘sects’ were his ‘enemies at work.’32 While he advocated calmness and personal piety to deal with frustration and anger, in practice he was rather seen as part of the problem. Grant felt his appointment

was unfortunate for [he was] Samoan, for that fact has been prejudicial .... For Solipo is an old man and new ways and new languages have not come easily. There has been some friction there [Bunama] and we have lost some of our older students from the station. We have since gained a few new ones but the loss of the older ones was a severe blow to the staffing needs.33

How one dealt with such privations was part of the mark of being a missionary and the chairman was expected to give the lead. Matthew Gilmour was often harsh in dealing with staff. In their early days in Papua Norah Gilmour, because of isolation from medical help, suffered a miscarriage which left them childless. Their experience seemed to Gilmour to be the standard for all who came after. Walter Enticott, a single missionary, was travelling from Panaeati to his home at Rossel by small boat when it hit a reef. He made his way by dinghy to a small uninhabited island where he remained for two weeks until help arrived.34 Gilmour showed no sympathy and made no allowance for the ordeal and asked, at the synod seven weeks later, for Enticott’s removal from the district because he found him moody and difficult.35

33 Ralph Grant, Annual Report to 1949 Synod, MOM 357.
34 Walter Enticott, Annual Report to 1916 Synod, MOM 184.
Other chairmen earned support because of how they dealt with their colleagues’ various crises. Ron Andrew was described as a leader 'who helped us work as a team ... he trusted [us] to carry out our own work and [has] given us inspiration to do it ... and his respect for those who hold different views to his own and his manifest joy in fellowship with his brethren' were features of his leadership.\textsuperscript{35} Hedley Shotton also earned praise and was described as a man 'full of meekness and amazingly patient with his brethren.'\textsuperscript{36}

The burden of isolation began to break down through the advent of two-way radio, first introduced by Ron Andrew through an appeal for £300 ‘to mitigate the loneliness and reduce the danger of some of our stations.'\textsuperscript{37} By the following year regular radio contact existed with the commercial port of Samarai and in 1937 daily contact took place between Andrew at Dobu and the outstations at Bunama, Salamo, Bwaidoga and bi-weekly with Kiriwina.\textsuperscript{38} By the sixties all major stations including distant Loaga (Misima), Oyabia (Kiriwina), East Cape, Bwaruada and Kalokalo had radio schedules with Salamo three times daily as well as daily contact with Samarai. However this limited contact required a working power plant to charge batteries and there were lengthy periods of even years when this was not possible. It was not until 1954 that a permanent power plant was established at the Salamo headquarters, the cost of which was to be paid for by the missionaries.\textsuperscript{39} But the most dramatic factor ending isolation was the advent of light aircraft. As well as a Catalina sea-plane service (which ended in the early sixties), by 1968 there were four air strips in the district, at Gurney (Alotau), Goodenough, and Kiriwina (all war strips built by the Allies), each taking commercial aircraft up to DC3 size, and another smaller commercial strip at Misima. By 1980 there were additional strips capable of taking twin-engine aircraft, at Salamo, Esa’ala, Sehulea (near Bwaruada), Kalokalo,

\textsuperscript{35} 1938 Synod minutes, MOM 271.
\textsuperscript{36} Annual Board minutes, 16 February 1954, MOM 344.
\textsuperscript{37} MR, May 1935, 6.
\textsuperscript{38} MR, March 1936; February 1937.
\textsuperscript{39} 1954 Synod minutes, MOM 362; 1954 Synod Daily Record, ALX 3/55, NGC.
Woodlark, Sudest and Rossel, serviced by government charters, Missionary Aviation Fellowship and Summer Institute of Linguistics.

Isolation exacerbates problems in relationships and illness. The Mission Board's selection process was strict and, as far as Papua was concerned, effective. In the ninety years overseas missionaries served there, only one marriage, that of a high school teacher, ended in divorce and that was many years after the couple had left Papua. Papua was sometimes described as a marriage bureau: five single ministers sent there from 1930 onwards married women they met on the field\(^\text{40}\) and the only other single minister, Gordon Burley from England, who arrived in 1971, married a Papuan girl employed within the mission. This marriage, and that of an Australian volunteer and a New Zealand missionary to Papuan female employees of the mission, created no adverse public comment. As well, three single lay-workers met their Australian wives in Papua with only six bachelor laymen returning home without a spouse. It is clear these marriages contained many loving liaisons, correspondence that exists between spouses when separated as a consequence of the evacuation and its aftermath are almost uxorious and filled with endearments like Dearest mate of mine; dearest wife o’ mine; dearest on earth; my darling girl.

There were, from 1930 onwards, relatively few deaths: four Pacific Islanders from malaria-related illnesses; two Europeans, one from heart attack, the other by accident and, in the whole history of the mission, only one died from violence. Seluvaia, the wife of Iosaia Fai’apia, a Tongan teacher at Panaeati, was killed in 1895 by a local villager who had learnt of his wife’s adultery with a man from another place. The husband vowed to kill the first ‘foreigner’ he found, who happened to be Seluvaia.

Methodists, in common with other Protestants, were not advocates of martyrdom yet to die in serving Melanesians was considered a heroic sacrifice. There were among the missionaries some outstanding examples of personal sacrifice. One was Dorothy Glasson who had come to Papua in 1932 as the chairman’s secretary/bookkeeper. Colleagues remarked on her ‘bright disposition and poetic genius’ and her reputation amongst Papuans remained for decades as one

\(^{40}\) Em Clarke married V. Worrall; Jack Rundle m. Jessie Henry; John Dixon m. Olive Fielding; Harry Robinson m. Vera Pearson; Fred Kemp m. Eileen Davis. Laymen Frank Earl m. Ivy Curran; John Beasley m. Ruth Hanna; Volunteer Keith Sharples m. Dorothy Nix.
who was a favorite of small children. She became ill from sciatica in 1937 and sent home ‘after she had trodden the way of much physical suffering.’ She was permitted to return in May 1939 ‘apparently one of the miracles of modern science’, as Rundle facetiously put it, exclaiming ‘How medical men could pass her is a mystery.’ Almost immediately her problems returned and within three weeks she found walking almost impossible. The necessity for her to return home once again ‘broke her up completely’ but she decided to hang on until synod in October. Her pain was so great it made her work accuracy ‘impossible’ and the short walk to the office a major ordeal. At night people would hear ‘moaning and weeping, sometimes all night long’ from her pain. Upon her return to Sydney she was advised she had only a few months to live; she died in February 1940.

Another remarkable person was the Samoan pastor, Ioane Siatua, who first arrived in Papua in 1895. Badly crippled as a child his friends had urged him not to go to Papua fearing he would be cannibalised ‘owing to his inability to run away.’ Early in his time he was wounded, and on another occasion was offered human flesh to eat. Ordained in 1919, he was widowed the following year. In all his 26 years in Papua he had not returned to his native Samoa once. He was ordered to take furlough in his homeland during which time he remarried before returning to Papua. He finally retired in 1930 but only after more years of suffering. A small man, he was so incapacitated in his final years in Papua he needed to be wheeled around in a barrow or else carried. He was so weakened his wife carried him into the pulpit each Sunday. When he left Papua at last he did so protesting ‘that in the mercy of God he would try to come again.’ He died in Samoa in 1936, giving instructions for his family not to engage in traditional weeping and mourning.

The Reverend Jonathon Meleke Fonua arrived in Papua from Tonga in 1936. His wife Mary was the great-niece of the slain Seluvaia. Described by his theological college principal as ‘quiet, sincere ... and a very trustworthy lad ... who

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41 1940 Synod minutes ‘Obituary of Miss Dorothy Glasson’, MOM 273.
42 1939 Synod minutes, MOM 273.
43 1930 Synod minutes, MOM 198; MR, March 1931, 3.
44 1930 Synod minutes, MOM 198; MR, February 1936, 16.
will do his utmost to succeed' he was thought to be only of average ability.\textsuperscript{45} Along with the other Pacific Islanders, he was left without his white colleague following the war-time evacuation. Stationed at Goodenough, during the war he took his family by foot to Salamo then returned alone to supervise the risky evacuation of 2,500 villagers to Fergusson Island from the site where the Allies were building a huge airstrip at Vivigani on Goodenough and within close proximity to an encampment of Japanese. It fell to him to be the only one at times to defend the villagers from looting and excesses by Allied troops.\textsuperscript{46} Upon the return of the whites Fonua was declared to be ‘head and shoulders above the other war time leaders of our people.’\textsuperscript{47} The results of his work were prodigious, including the building of eleven new churches.\textsuperscript{48} Fonua wrote beautiful English in a clear hand, he loved flowers and had a reputation as a landscape gardener, having turned the Dobu headland into ‘a veritable haven of beauty.’\textsuperscript{49}

Fonua had been overdue for furlough in 1942 but by 1946 the Mission had still made no provision for him to take it. Tired and weary Fonua continued with his work on Goodenough but was increasingly homesick for Tonga. Before furlough was arranged he became ill and died from pneumonia on 8 September 1946. His death caused his former teacher Harold Wood in Tonga to say ‘Ten years in Papua without a rest ... We may feel ashamed of anything we have tried to do when placed alongside the record of shining sacrifice left by this noble young Tongan minister.’\textsuperscript{50} Chairman Ron Andrew sheeted the blame for Fonua’s death onto the Board and its lack of support:

He [Fonua] had faced great difficulties during the war’s worst period
We cannot view the circumstances of his death without at least some sense of guilt, in that we allowed him to attempt too much and our

\textsuperscript{45} The Reverend A. Harold Wood, \textit{MR}, April 1936, 16.

\textsuperscript{46} Letters and correspondence of J.M. Fonua, ALX 1005, NGC.

\textsuperscript{47} 1945 Synod minutes, ALX 3/46 NGC.

\textsuperscript{48} \textit{MR}, November 1947, 5.

\textsuperscript{49} \textit{MR}, October 1946, 4.

\textsuperscript{50} \textit{MR}, December 1946, 14.
shortness of staff and lack of transport left treatment unavailable to him soon enough to give some hope of saving his life. 51

Fonua may have been the outstanding leader but each of the Pacific Islanders showed his/her worth during the evacuation period. There was the Tongan, Isikeli Hau’ofa and his wife Mary, whose war-time experiences on Misima 52 showed a high degree of courage and leadership; his countryman, David Mone, who conducted ‘hundreds’ of concerts for the troops at Salamo and received many letters from families of soldiers for his efforts; and the Samoan, Filemoni Faiteli at Bunama, who was commended by the authorities as having been ‘very instrumental in keeping up the morale of the people’ after the evacuation. 53

Sacrificial service was not applicable to missionaries alone; their Papuan colleagues were just as willing. Such a bonding of faith, life and fraternity was best exemplified in the drama that surrounded the sinking of the Bromilow in 1930. An auxiliary-powered three masted ketch, the Bromilow was the Mission's main vessel. At 4.00pm on Thursday 10 July 1930 it left the anchorage at Gawa Island in the Marshall Bennetts en route to Bwaruada on Normanby Island, a journey expected to take sixteen hours across open ocean. On board was a crew of six, plus a teacher and three students from East Cape, together with the East Cape minister, George Lassam, as passengers. A powerful south-easter was blowing and a strong tide running with the wind. Good progress was made even allowing for the mainsail having to be lowered because of damage to the chain plate. By 2.00am land was in sight, the captain believing it was Normanby but Lassam knew it was too soon for that and ordered the course be changed more towards the south. It was full moon and with the new course the land receded from view. At 4.00am Lassam and others were awakened by three solid bumps as the boat hit hard on a reef.

Attempts to get off the reef almost succeeded but it eventually stuck fast. As the vessel began to bump badly and then break up Lassam wrote a note to the Salamo missionary, Arthur Scrivin, and sent it with two of the boys in a dinghy to a nearby island, Dumdum, which they believed was about eight kilometres away, with

51 J.R. Andrew, Annual Report to 1946 Synod, MOM 355.
52 See pages 115-117.
53 District Officer F.I. Middleton, ANGAU War Diaries 1/10/1, AWM.
instructions to get a canoe and go to nearby Fergusson and then overland to Salamo. All wanted Lassam to go in the dinghy as his best chance of rescue but he refused as did the two students who were ‘begging to be allowed to stay’ with him in the boat.\footnote{54 For full story see Appendix VI: ‘Report on the sinking of the Bromilow.’} On the day that followed the boat began to break up so a raft was constructed, the engine dismantled and a water jar filled. The raft was floated but not all could fit on board so turns were taken to swim behind. To their great regret the water jar was overlooked in the departure from the wreck. The wind and waves had greatly increased and the raft made no headway. Various members of the crew and passengers began to suffer from exposure and drinking sea water. Lassam yielded to pressure and allowed the two fittest to swim to Dumdum (which, it transpired later, was not eight but forty kilometres away) while the remaining seven tried to paddle to land.

In the course of the next twenty-four hours three of them, suffering from exposure and drinking sea water, died. Then, without warning, the raft was upset by a large wave. To their great surprise they found themselves standing waist deep in water, on a submerged sand bar with two protruding coral pillars onto which they clung at high tide. In the days that followed two more died. On the tenth day of the ordeal, the vessel \textit{Tolema} came into view and rescued the remaining two, Lassam and the youngest of the students, Dinana. A search of Dumdum showed that the two who had swum for help had also perished. Of the original party only four survived: the two who had gone by dinghy and reached Salamo to raise the alarm, and Lassam and Dinana. What stood out for Lassam was the courage and consideration of his Papuan companions for his welfare and their insistence on looking after his safety at all times. He took personal comfort from the fact that when the vessel was abandoned they particularly wanted to take their Bibles and hymn books with them. The finding of Lassam and Dinana in such an open ocean was partly due to the skill of a part-Asian villager and trader from East Cape, Charlie Dolla. He was on a trading journey when the \textit{Tolema}, with Arthur Scrivin on board, intercepted him. Upon learning of the emergency Dolla calculated where the tides would have taken them and it was that course Scrivin followed and which
brought them directly to the spot where Lassam and Dinana were found, otherwise it is doubtful they would have been rescued.\textsuperscript{55}

While this was the most notable experience at sea it was not the only one, for sea travel was the most dangerous aspect of missionary life. The Tongan minister, David Mone, was awarded the Royal Humane Society's medal for saving the lives of the three-man crew of a double canoe which sank at sea, an ordeal in which he and the crew spent thirteen hours in the water.\textsuperscript{56} Then, in early 1953, in response to a desperate need for better boats, the Board purchased a new vessel, a forty-foot rigged ketch with a full set of sails and an auxiliary Perkins diesel engine, \textit{Muroro}, for the large Misima circuit. As it sailed north along the Queensland coast in August, with new missionary Robert Imms and his wife on board, it ran into cyclonic conditions at about 8.00pm on 27 August. In rough seas and with no visibility the vessel ran onto rocks at Five Rocks, 70 kilometres north of Rockhampton. The accident was largely due to the Board's poor planning. They contracted a 79-year-old man to sail it to Papua. On the night of the accident Imms became anxious about the motion of the boat and, looking out the main cabin, saw in the moonlight, rocks and breakers only six metres abeam. The skipper later declared he had seen or heard nothing which Imms declared 'rather unsatisfactory ... how do you get twelve miles [seven kilometres] off course in only four hours?'\textsuperscript{57} With difficulty, the ship's complement got ashore on an isolated headland where they were stranded with little food for six days.\textsuperscript{58} With the whole complement becoming 'very weak', one of the men walked south for 35 kilometres for help.\textsuperscript{59} The loss of the vessel was not only a serious emotional trauma for the people on board but a

\textsuperscript{55} Informant: Charlie Dolla, East Cape, 1971. Dinana I knew at East Cape when he was an old man. He was known as a nervy man, no doubt because of his ordeal. He died sometime in the late seventies. Lassam returned to Australia and served in Victoria and Tasmania until his retirement and later death. He is also remembered as a nervy person and a smoker of cigars.

\textsuperscript{56} Board minutes, 8 October 1948, MOM 342.

\textsuperscript{57} Imms to Carlyle [a relative], 14 September 1953. Imms family papers. Copy in my possession.

\textsuperscript{58} Board Executive Committee minutes, 16 September 1953, MOM 342. \textit{Muroro} is Misiman for 'generosity, giving'.

\textsuperscript{59} Imms to Carlyle, 14 September 1953. Imms family papers. The day after their rescue, 4 September, was Miriam Imms' 21st birthday.
long-term devastation for the Louisiade people who had long sought a boat on which
to fly their flag in a time when Catholic expansion into the area was proceeding fast.
Worse was to follow when the replacement vessel, Gilmour, was also wrecked on a
reef near Nimoa, in October 1964.

There were numerous other experiences in which missionaries drifted at sea
for hours and even days, or went through seas so huge they despaired of ever
surviving while others knew the vessel they travelled on was unseaworthy or sailing
against harbourmaster orders to remain in port because of strong winds. Yet, in
spite of them all, in the history of the mission up to 1980, loss of life was restricted
to those on the Bromilow.60

An issue that existed in the Methodist Mission was stratification. Pacific
Islanders did not have the opportunity for missionary training, they were designated
as ‘natives’ in mission nomenclature, they were not, until the early seventies, given
control of their own circuits and their salary scale was considerably lower than the
whites but higher than Papuans. In 1969, for example, European ministers and
married lay men were paid $3,856, single males $2,752, single women $2,316 whilst
Pacific Islanders received a base salary of $248 plus a food allowance of $104 per
adult, a children’s allowance of $52 per child, a clothing allowance of $30 per adult
and $15 per child plus a $40 entertainment allowance. An average Tongan
missionary with four children would thus receive $824. Papuan ministers were paid
$175 with the bishop receiving $550.61

While it is true the Methodist Mission in Papua did not produce any name,
apart from Bromilow, of significance in the annals of missionary history, the
Mission itself created history in Methodism as the first Mission to employ single
women. The first were Jean Tinney and Eleanor Walker who arrived in 1892 in
response to pleas from Lily Bromilow. This began a long tradition which has seen
women missionaries play pivotal roles in the development of local leadership among
women. Of particular note here is Mollie Hodge whose long tenure in Papua

60 There was a later death when, in 1983, Skeeta Tagelani, skipper of the flagship, Koonwarra, was
killed when crushed endeavouring to untangle a tow line as his boat towed another vessel. Tagelani
was a graduate of Wesley High School and son of one of the first Papuan ministers.

61 Board minutes, 15 August 1966, MOM 352; 1968 Synod minutes, MOM 375.
(1918-39) was occupied in one task: the teaching and training of the wives of teachers.

Another group of women deserving acknowledgment is the wives of missionaries. Although unpaid, they were nevertheless examined as part of their husband’s selection process and were required to be as sure as he in their desire to serve. Their daily life in Papua was spent rearing their children - often for long periods on their own - and educating their offspring in home schooling. As well, most of them spent considerable time with village women teaching sewing and western-style cooking. The enormous energy and contribution such wives made is epitomised in the activities of Georgine McKenzie Hicks.

Neville and Georgine McKenzie-Hicks went to Papua in 1961 when Neville, a trade teacher from Sydney, was appointed to take over the Technical Training department at Salamo. This entailed responsibility for the Mission’s buildings, sawmill, boats and mechanical services as well as teaching a growing number of Papuan trainees. At any one time in the sixties and seventies there was a minimum of 100 in training, all receiving rations and pay. Georgine, a trained home science teacher, home-taught four of their five children through to the completion of high school. As well she translated into Dobuan, and then into braille, weekly Sunday School lessons for two blind young men and taught the lessons to them. When correspondence high school for Forms 1 and 2 became available for Papuans, Georgine offered to supervise any technical department trainees who wanted to advance their education. Over 80 took up the offer, requiring nightly marking of papers. For many years, after her family was put to bed, she marked these by the light of a hurricane lamp.62

The McKenzie-Hicks, while a special example of missionary vocation, were but a part of a group of ordinary people who felt inspired to share their faith and life with another people. Like their colleagues, the McKenzie-Hicks desired nothing

62 On their return to Sydney, Neville again taught at a TAFE college before retiring. Both of them represented at seniors world swimming championships. Neville died from a brain tumour in 1992 after which Georgine went with World Baptist Federation to help start a high school among the Karen in northern Burma. When SLORC, the Burmese government forces, destroyed the school she returned to help start it up again. Even though well in her seventies she has made regular trips since in her desire to help a persecuted and marginalised people. In 1998 she has spent a further period with the Karen.
more than to do what they believed their God called them to and where the church had sent them.
The head of the Sacred Heart Mission on Thursday Island, Father John Doyle, and Brother Frederick Baker, left Sydney on the *Morinda* on 25 June 1930, arriving in Samarai on 6 August. Their immediate task was to survey prospects for developing a work amongst the Europeans of Samarai and then secure a site among the local population. On both matters they were to be disappointed.

Doyle and Baker set themselves up in Samarai in an old, disused butcher’s shop which lacked even toilet facilities. With little money to live on and none to purchase the obligatory small boat, they quickly became paralysed by inactivity. It was September before Doyle was able to charter a boat and visit Milne Bay, Dawson Straits and Goodenough Island. The visit was not productive, as the people had been warned by Kwato and Methodist missionaries to have nothing to do with Catholics. They also visited the land given to the mission by Mrs Patching but Doyle was understandably unimpressed; ‘a poor piece of land and miles from anywhere or anyone’.¹ Sideia is a relatively large island with a population of less than 500. The site was swampy and surrounded by tracts of mangroves.

Financial stringency compelled Doyle to go to Australia to try to raise money, itself a thankless task during the Depression. A trip to Cairns and further south achieved no result, leading Doyle to urge his Sydney superiors to abandon the project until sufficient money was available to purchase a launch and one of the plantations on the market in Milne Bay. He also suggested a more radical step - that this new mission area be added to the established work on Thursday Island and in the Torres Strait. This idea was promptly rejected.

The Provincial Council in Sydney agreed to suspend the work from early 1931 until a more opportune time. Baker was recalled to Sydney and Doyle returned to

¹ Doyle to Father Provincial, 22 September 1930, SHM.
Thursday Island. Doyle was to return to Milne Bay in 1951 and become its first bishop. Priests from Port Moresby continued to make sporadic visits to Samarai, and these visits, together with Doyle’s abortive efforts, actually created the impetus for an early permanent start. Father Lyons was chosen for the task.

The MSC had chosen the Milne Bay province as their new mission field for a number of reasons. Consistent with their refusal to acknowledge the spheres of influence agreement and the restrictions it imposed, Catholics felt it was open to them to go where they wanted to. Wherever they went they knew they would encounter opposition from at least one of the major missionary bodies: the LMS, Anglicans or Methodists and the latter posed the least problems for them.

Already, through their Yule Island headquarters in the Papuan Gulf, they had many difficulties with the LMS whose area traversed the whole Papuan mainland. Being unable to procure land except by gift or through purchase - and having scant resources to do that - the MSC had secured some sites in coastal villages opposite Yule Island, but decided to move inland towards the unexplored mountain ranges where no mission activity had yet taken place and which were not necessarily part of the spheres of influence agreement. The result was costly in terms of loss of life through endemic diseases like malaria, a rugged environment, inability to recruit enough priests and brothers, and the financial cost of working such a large, rough and sparsely populated area. It was inevitable there would be disputes with the LMS over the years yet it is true that bad relations were, in comparison with other countries, minimal and that while relations were not always cordial ‘they were not surrounded with the degree of bitterness and intensity’ of other countries. 2

The MSC had no desire to enter into a new round of squabbles with the LMS who were established from Suau in the east to Daru in the west and who had a major presence in Port Moresby. Realistically any place west of Port Moresby was not suitable and was probably not far enough away from Yule Island. The western end was sparsely populated and presented many problems for habitation and health. The Gulf region was just as difficult, and the MSC was already established at Yule Island and its hinterland.

2 Patricia Prendergast, quoted in Theo Aerts, Romans and Anglicans in Papua New Guinea, 9.
If the new mission was to be an Australian work, it would want to have some distance from the mother French mission. To go east of Port Moresby would invite further problems with the LMS. Land had already been given in three places: Cape Rodney on the coast between Port Moresby and Samarai; at Samarai, where a small chapel was built in 1925; and Sideia Island east of Samarai, where there was the 214 acres given by Mrs Patching. Cape Rodney was a strong LMS area and the surrounding region held no real hope for a new mission. This left Milne Bay which had the better prospects for purchasing alienated land, much of which was in small parcels.

The choice of Milne Bay, where Anglican, Kwato and Methodist missions had designated areas, was not difficult. The Catholics did not want disagreement with the Anglican mission, on the northern coast, whom they saw as being close to their own ecclesiology and more cooperative (justifiable thinking in the light of developments). In the immediate post-war years the MSC historian, Father Andre Dupeyrat, summed up the post-war relations between the missions as:

With Anglicans: Good. They are very High Church. Ready to help OUTSIDE their own areas.
With Methodists: They are in the eastern end ... They are hostile to Catholics.
With LMS: Bad. They have started a kind of ‘counter offensive’ in trying and occupying positions in our own areas ... This is a reply to our own encroachments into their spheres ... They seem to have let drop the policy of spheres as far as we are concerned. This is hardly an ideal situation for peaceful relations.3

De Boismenu, who grew to accept that the MSC could not cover the whole of Papua, and Anglican Bishop Newton, had a warm personal relationship and wrote to each other on a monthly basis, leading de Boismenu to say of the Anglicans, ‘They are so near, so near to us. And it is comforting when one thinks of these immense territories we cannot reach.’4 Individual missionaries also had a warm regard for each other. Years later even Father James Dwyer, one of the more confrontational priests to work in Milne Bay, wrote to his bishop:

3 Dupeyrat to Father McMahon, 25 June 1945, SHM.

4 Quoted in Georges Delbos, The Mustard Seed; From a French Mission to a Papuan Church, 169.
As the latest arrival in the field our advent has not been welcomed by the Protestant sects but gradually any engendered opposition is breaking down; with the various ministers of religion our relations are cordial enough but not over friendly. Socially we are careful to give the ‘signa communia’.

A further reason Milne Bay was chosen was the standard Catholic strategy of establishing a major presence in towns among European population and government administration centres and using expatriate goodwill and any lay Catholics as a means of gathering support. As one prominent prelate put it:

... it seems to me a matter of importance ... to have within reach a European centre in which to win sympathy from the Europeans and secure the benefit of an opinion that may back up apostolic activities and, if need be, to defend it.

A ‘civilised’ port was to be preferred; such could serve as an axis for activity and assure communications with Australia and the rest of the colony.

In Papua there were only two ports of entry: Port Moresby and Samarai. As the motivation behind the spheres of influence agreement had been to avoid religious competition and confusion it had nevertheless been accepted that Port Moresby would be a place of religious pluralism. The desire by the Australian province to have their own work in Papua was supported by de Boismenu who realised that the capital would be an ‘Australian town’ requiring Australian personnel to create an effective link with the colonial government and commercial companies, mostly Australian. It was imperative that an Australian priest be there, for without liaison between the Church, business and government the cause of propaganda would be lost. The MSC had a Port Moresby presence from late last century and Australian priests worked there from 1912.

De Boismenu lamented the removal of the first of them, Father Edward Bailey, to Rabaul in 1917 because ‘he filled the difficult position of being our agent, not only in dealings with the government, but also with major trading companies with whom the mission has continual dealings’. A presence in Samarai was just as important. The

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5 Dwyer (Superior, Vicar Delegate) to Bishop Sorin, 1 September 1949, ‘Prefecture Apostolic of Samarai Official Report for year July 1948-June 1949’, SHM.

6 Report from Vicar Apostolic to Sacred Congregation for the Propagation of the Faith (1925–30), SHM.

7 De Boismenu to Father General Eugene Meyer, 3 December 1917, quoted in McMahon and Waldersee, MSC Missions in Oceania, 2.
The strongest supporter for an Australian mission was de Boismenu who understood better than anyone that the Australian province could achieve more in relationship with the colonial government by such a move.

There were also some cultural and personality difficulties between the French and Australian co-workers and a growing feeling that the Australian province would be best served by having its own mission enterprise, though there was a certain touchiness by the French to the suggestion that Yule Island was a French mission.

For heaven's sake, Father, do NOT call our Mission: the French Mission. It is NOT. True, the Papuan Field is entrusted to the French Province, but we are from many parts of the world. Besides, there is no such thing as national Missions. I know you do not mean anything by using an easy qualitative [sic]. But other people could have some objections to it. 8

Others had a different view. The disinterested Australian soldier, Eddie Stanton, wrote in his diary of the hospitality offered at Yule Island before adding

One thing, however, I did notice. They continually stressed that France (which had capitulated to the Germans) was not at war with Japan and they were, therefore, neutral. It was a French Order and obviously they wanted to secure favoured treatment if the Japs captured Papua and New Guinea. 9

The decision by Rome to allow the Australian province to start its Eastern Papua Mission was greeted with euphoria:

Souls are souls, whether clothed in ebony coils of mortal flesh or robed in folds of kingly splendour. This is the reason for our presence on Papuan soil. This alone explains the purpose of our latest venture and our latest commission.

Rome has spoken. The call to arms has been sounded in 1930 as in 1881. A spiritual mandate has been entrusted ... extending from Port Moresby to Samarai with its adjacent islands included.

The letter from Propaganda authorising this apostolic work has thrilled the hearts of every member of this Province in this Great Southern Land. The letter: '.. In this new mission field many difficulties will be encountered from its very inception. As there is no Catholic missionary post throughout the whole of this territory now entrusted to your care, your young apostles will have to establish and build up mission stations.

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8 Dupeyrat to McMahon, 25 June 1945, SHM.

9 Diary of Eddie Allan Stanton, 23 February 1942. Copy in possession of Dr Hank Nelson.
This pioneer work will call for much courage and sacrifice and considerable financial outlay'.

But, as with Woodlark, once again the Catholics were disappointed as this new attempt ended in failure. The cause of that failure was to be found in Rome’s inability to follow its own advice of providing a ‘considerable financial outlay’.

Joseph Francis Lyons was ordained into the priesthood at St Mary’s Basilica, Sydney, at the age of 26. He journeyed to Yule Island to begin his missionary work. He was then sent, together with three Papuan mission workers, a Kuni man Camillo Loula, a Yule Island couple Basilia Obi and her husband Solomon and two young children, and a young man, Edimodo, to Sideia to try to re-start the work. They arrived on 22 April 1932. In a report to Rome that year de Boismenu presented this not so much as a definite new beginning; rather he suggested it was an accident of public perception that had to be met:

[After Doyle’s departure] a priest [Lyons] did go back there and spent some time; this was necessary for building a temporary dwelling. However, his presence was considered by all, black and white, Catholic and Protestant, as a definite resumption of a Catholic foundation. In the light of this general opinion, and fearing his departure would be considered by friends and foes alike as a new piece of Catholic deception, the missionary thought he should stay there and take up residence. He has therefore been living there for six months on the island of Sideia ... and in its July issue of Annals the Australian province has announced it to the public, at the same time stressing its purely Australian nature: ‘The first Australian mission has already begun at Sideia’ ... We are therefore presented with a fait accompli - the establishment of this new mission of Eastern Papua officially made public. I don’t think we can withdraw.

That there was any suggestion that Lyons’ arrival was anything but a new attempt at a permanent presence would have been news to Lyons and the province in Australia. Just why de Boismenu suggested otherwise is curious. Even Murray had formed the view that Lyons was being ‘broken in for Samarai’ by mid-1931. De Boismenu had been

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10 Annals ... , September 1930, 528-30.
11 De Boismenu Report to the Sacred Congregation of Propaganda, September 1932, quoted in Waldensee, ‘Neither Eagles Nor Saints’ ... , 32.
12 Murray to ‘Unnatural Cat’, 31 July 1931, in Selected Letters of Hubert Murray (ed. by Francis West), 133-4.
disappointed that Doyle's sojourn had ended in failure. In all likelihood he was avoiding possible criticism from Rome, who had not given specific permission for Lyons' venture to begin, though the residual of Propaganda's original authority could have been expected still to be relevant. As far as the Australian province was concerned this was the start of the new mission. Such an understanding had been advanced when, two months before he arrived at Sideia, Lyons was informed by letter that, after consultation with de Boismenu and following a visit to Samarai by Lyons himself in late 1931 'we are prepared to make a start in East Papua - according to our slender resources. And our wish is for you to undertake this work ...' 13

The first decade began with inadequate resources and ended with little results. Materially, though, Lyons performed a herculean task and achieved remarkable results in the first year. Within the first few weeks he had purchased the Stella Maris a 'good and serviceable' thirty-foot launch. With a ten-strong group of workers made up of those who came with him and a few inquisitive Sideia islanders, he began the huge task of building a station, clearing the mangroves and preparing living quarters and a church. By Christmas 1932 four acres of mangrove had been cleared, a 150-foot long deep water jetty of casi-casi piles and mangrove slabs, a church, four houses and a large bungalow made from local materials, had been built. 14 This was only part of his achievements: in September Lyons started a school of twelve pupils and made regular and long trips to other islands to recruit pupils. By December 1932 he had twenty-three students; by March 1934 there were forty-three and by the following February, fifty-seven.

By now only twenty-seven years of age, Lyons had to fight two personal battles. One was lack of money; the other lack of company, for it was twelve months before Brother Joseph Dixon arrived to share the load. The only other white company was in Samarai, ten miles and nearly three hours away by boat. A visit by the bishop led to expressions of real concern for Lyons' situation and he urged another priest be sent. 'He [Lyons] is quite alone and almost penniless', the bishop wrote, 'Should anything happen to him through poverty or ill health, the whole work would fall down at once. His

13 Father Provincial to Lyons, 24 February 1932, SHM.
14 Father E.J. Donnelly, Annals, April 1934, 201.
position is too precarious to be maintained as it is for a long time. 15 On his own Lyons was responsible for the daily oversight of the school; together with the building program, buying food and carrying out his apostolic work this was more than any one person could do. And there was the need to circumvent the Protestants. There was some hope for a regular financial commitment from Rome when support from the Delegate, the General and the Procurator in Rome was promised. But this was not forthcoming and Rome declared there was to be no subsidy for any new work. 16

Without money no new missionary staff could be recruited (though people were available) and no money was forthcoming because the situation was new. And, as de Boismenu knew, there was no plan for financial self support. 17 But the situation was remedied to some extent in late 1933 when a subsidy of £500 was granted by Propaganda. 18 This was to pay a debt of £200, with the balance to cover all expenses for twelve months including purchase of land for new stations and all travel costs. However this subsidy meant that the annual grant to the Yule Island work would be reduced by the same amount.

In 1934 the expatriate staffing grew with the arrival of two priests, Fathers Bernard Baldwin and Hugh Tomlinson, and the first four sisters from the sister congregation, Daughters of our Lady of the Sacred Heart (FNDSC): Mary de Pazzi, Mary Finbar, Mary Stanislaus and M. Berchmans, who were to take over the school. In all, ten white people were together at Sideia, for which the subsidy and any other income from mass stipends was the only income. Costs in the depression were high with clothing, food (and even £15 for teeth!) having to be provided. 19 The difficulties were so acute that stipends were cut by one-third, causing Lyons to say with humour: 'Am I but worth 8/9 per week? O perdition!' 20

15 De Boismenu to Father Provincial, 2 December 1932, SHM.
16 De Boismenu to Lyons, 13 April 1933, SHM.
17 De Boismenu to Father Provincial, 27 April 1939, SHM.
18 De Boismenu to Lyons, 12 September 1933, SHM.
19 Lyons to Father Hoy (Bursar at Kensington), 9 May 1935, SHM.
20 Lyons to Hoy, 21 June 1935, SHM.
While celibate Catholic missionaries lived in community, in convent, presbytery, and brothers’ house, and domestic costs were lower as a consequence, this lifestyle also created another cost. Where one priest may be enough for the work, it was desired that he have a companion priest. This was even more needed in the Eastern Papua Mission with its isolation and large distances between islands. During the first decade the practice was followed which concentrated the few priests in just a couple of locations, proving costly in personnel terms. Consequently in the first decade six priests occupied just three stations. When compared with the Methodists the costliness of the celibate life is obvious: in 1951 there were twenty nine missionaries serving 2,700 Catholic people while the Methodists employed twenty seven (including Pacific Islanders) to serve 46,000.\(^{21}\)

The heavy financial cost was even more apparent in infrastructure. Lyons would not allow his colleagues to live in unhealthy ‘native huts’ and set about erecting permanent dwellings; by 1936 the ten missionary staff were trying to live on the same income as when there were only Lyons and Dixon to support.\(^{22}\) Two years later Dwyer was forced to write to his superiors in Sydney to explain ‘how really badly in the woods’ they were financially. In those six years they had an accumulated debt of £1,100 with stores and the bank. All priests had, by January, used up their personal subsidies which were meant to support them until June.\(^{23}\) The relative size of the debt can be gauged when the annual estimate for the two outstations, Ladava and the Trobriands, was £250 and £150 respectively. By 1939 the Mission’s total debt had risen to £1,406.\(^{24}\)

The major sources of income for the mission were the annual subsidies from Rome, from the provincial headquarters at Kensington, and from mass stipends. The obligations for financing the mission were fairly narrow and included the inability of the Province using its own funds - provincial help could only come by special fund raising appeals. The Province was to guarantee £750 but the money that came through *Annals*

\(^{21}\) See Appendix I (Methodist) and Appendix III (Catholic) statistics. Before 1951 statistics for the Eastern Papua Mission were included as part of the Yule Island figures.

\(^{22}\) Lyons to Hoy, 3 June 1936, SHM.

\(^{23}\) Dwyer to Father Provincial, 8 February 1938, SHM.

\(^{24}\) De Boismenu to Father Provincial, 27 April 1939, SHM.
was to form part of that amount; it was not an extra. Through *Annals* an Eastern Papua Mission Club was commenced.

With single membership of one shilling and families at half a crown, the club’s goal was to sponsor the ‘earnest endeavour’ of bringing ‘the light and grace of the true faith’ to Eastern Papua by prayer and raising money through memberships. Benefactors would have a weekly mass said for them. By 1938 the club was broadened to include the work amongst Aborigines in northern Australia. By 1940 little money was coming in from this source; and the club appears to have ceased after the war.

A few other strategies were devised to alleviate the financial suffering. In Samarai a small group of Catholics had planned a Great Art Union with ticket selling to take place across Australia, but it was aborted when the Papuan government refused permission. In the fifties, this strategy was revisited when an Art Union was run in the Sydney *Sun* newspaper with a ‘Dream House’ in a Sydney suburb as the prize. Another way was devised by Father Arch Bryson, considered a good fund raiser, who raised money through ABC national radio broadcasts of his exploits, for which he was paid £7.7.0 per broadcast lecture which would also be ‘good propaganda for our mission’. But such strategies could never provide adequate finance for a growing mission.

If staffing is a sign of growth, then this Mission began to grow from 1934. From three priests that year the number grew to six by 1937 with six brothers and a similar number of sisters. New stations were commenced in Milne Bay in 1935, at Ladava on land given by the Tanby family (whose children had been in the first group of children at the Sideia school), and in 1937 in the Trobriands on land purchased at Gusaweta. This work on Kiriwina was long sought after as it comprised what the Catholics had always wanted - a large, centralised population.

The three mission stations of Sideia, Ladava and Gusaweta and a 99-year lease of a 1,000 acre rubber plantation in the Sagarai Valley in the hinterland of Milne Bay were the extent of the MSC Mission expansion up to January 1942. The Mission also

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25 *Annals*, December 1934, 33-35.

26 Father Provincial to Taylor, 11 December 1940, SHM.

27 Bryson to Father Provincial, 15 February 1940, SHM.
owned three powered boats, thirty-foot long *Stella Maris*, twenty-two-foot *Pius*, and thirty-four-foot *St Joseph*. There were six priests (with another four, including Lyons, having died or returned to Australia), five brothers and ten sisters at their posts when the evacuation took place.

The mission soon needed a leader. With ecclesiastical jurisdiction coming from far-off Yule Island and the provincial Superior even further away in Kensington, the arrival of more priests and brothers soon turned the bishop’s thoughts to who should lead the mission. A superior for the mission would, de Boismenu said, hasten the autonomy of the Mission which would enable financial support from Rome and Australia.  

Negotiations to appoint a superior began in 1937 when de Boismenu reported to the Provincial that he had secured the agreement of the missionary priests for his nomination of Lyons. But it was a visit to the mission by the Provincial in late 1937 that identified for him the problems should Lyons be elevated to superior. As Tomlinson had already left the mission because of illness the Province sought his thoughts on the leadership. In a long and compassionate letter, Tomlinson set out the issues.

Tomlinson and Bernard Baldwin had arrived at Sideia in April 1934 where they lived with Lyons until the latter’s departure on furlough in October that year. It was, on the whole, a ‘fairly happy time’ though Lyons was, at times, ‘rather harsh in correcting’ them and unsparing with regard to work. While Tomlinson’s relationship with Lyons was ‘cordial’ it was clear the same did not hold for Baldwin. But it was Lyons’ treatment of the brothers that was more disturbing. He was ‘unduly harsh’ on them, his corrections were ‘disproportionately severe, made in a bullying and insulting way’ and often in front of Papuans. After working all day the brothers were often ordered to work at night. Illness was not taken into account. The nerves of one began to suffer but no allowance was made. His falling out with the sisters in 1935 only added to his already blemished reputation.

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28 De Boismenu to Father Provincial, 13 July 1937, SHM.

29 All quotes are from the report from Tomlinson to Father Provincial, 19 January 1937, SHM.
After Lyons returned from furlough in March 1935 his interest in the whole work of the mission appeared to wane and he became preoccupied with the material work such as remodelling the priests' house, the equipment level of the launch and the building of a house in Samarai. At the same time he refused requests for fuel to take priests to other places for Mass. It was this spending that created the debt faced in 1937; most of it was for building materials.

Following his visit the Provincial, already acquainted with the problems Lyons was causing, wrote to the bishop of his intention to nominate Lyons but he could not find him to be a ‘suitable’ candidate. He ‘did not have the confidence of his subjects and is not an easy man to approach or work with’ and within the mission ‘there was no spirit of union and cooperation’.30

By this time Tomlinson’s health had improved so much he secured a medical clearance to return, and Kerrins urged the bishop to consider appointing him as the Superior of the Mission. The bishop reiterated his confidence in Lyons but acknowledged that the lack of confidence in him by his colleagues meant he would ‘lack the authority and influence’ the position required. Reluctantly, he agreed not to pursue his original nomination but to give the jurisdiction to Tomlinson.31 The bishop’s concern then was the reaction of Lyons who, naturally, expected to occupy the role.

Other events took over. Lyons was forced to leave the mission in early 1938 because of ill health and Tomlinson returned in March that same year and assumed the role of the first Religious Superior of the Eastern Papua Mission.32 Tomlinson’s leadership was brief; he died from cerebral malaria in Samarai on 19 March 1939. The bishop was now even more concerned about the future: ‘One feels strongly that the mission has lost its head and is somewhat wavering and upset, while none of the present staff seems particularly fit for the position’.33 Gerard Doody was appointed acting

30 Father Provincial (Father J.M. Kerrins) to Bishop de Boismenu, 31 October 1937, SHM.
31 De Boismenu to Father Provincial, 16 December 1937, SHM.
32 Lyons returned to Papua in late 1938 as priest in Port Moresby and then in 1939 to Rabaul as Secretary to the Bishop there. Ill health forced him home again but he once more returned as a chaplain during the war. He died in Sydney in 1946.
33 De Boismenu to Father Provincial, 27 April 1939, SHM.
Superior until February 1940, when Father George Taylor, unfamiliar with Sideia, arrived to take up duties as the newly appointed Superior.

Taylor’s appointment identified problems in the missionary ranks, his difficulties beginning as soon as he was appointed Religious Superior. Friction developed between him and Baldwin, who showed ‘resentment’ at the appointment, by what the latter saw as a lack of appreciation of his work. Baldwin spoke Kiriwinan and considered himself as the Mission’s authority on language. When he prepared a grammar and catechism for publication, Taylor refused permission for publication because he accepted the criticisms that the manuscript contained too many inaccuracies and inadequacies. He hoped that a few more year’s reflection would enable Baldwin to ‘either correct some of the matter or have more knowledge to make the work more useful’. Baldwin did not take rejection well, and relations deteriorated.

Taylor’s decision had depended on the advice of Father Joe Docherty. Sent to Papua to ‘take charge of the language business’, Docherty found no redeeming feature in Baldwin’s work: the grammar he considered was ‘not only embryonic but abortive’ and ‘nothing short of a comedy of errors’ and the translated catechism was a ‘tragedy of errors’... It would be a most disagreeable task for one to have to operate upon this child of his [Baldwin’s] predilection and excise his malformations. The effect of such criticisms was for Baldwin to withdraw into himself and, given the isolation of the Trobriands, to become increasingly angry with those in authority. Relations between the two became so bad that Taylor became convinced that Baldwin’s ‘lack of cooperation is at the stage almost of positive and direct opposition’.

Taylor’s dissatisfaction with his staff was not confined to Baldwin. His concern was that, apart from Earl and Dwyer, the mission had no ‘real active Missionaries in the true sense ... though each of the other members of the staff have their particular uses in

34 Taylor to Father Provincial, 30 May 1941; Baldwin to Kerrins, 3 October 1941, SHM.
35 Taylor to Father Provincial, 18 August 1940, SHM.
36 Docherty to Father Provincial, 26 October 1941, SHM.
37 Taylor to Father Provincial, undated, SHM.
the mission'. Baldwin, apart from his knowledge of the language, 'had not the appeal of the missioner to the natives, who are not drawn to him', Flynn made no impact on the people, Docherty should not be a 'contact person' with Papuans. Opposition to Taylor's leadership was not confined to Baldwin: Arch Bryson, declared Taylor's appointment one reason he chose not to return to Papua; and another, John Flynn, 'courteously' informed Taylor he thought 'he was not the man for the Superior's job'. The problem for Taylor was that this group of malcontents constituted half the Mission's complement of priests.

Taylor was a man of ability. A good administrator, a shrewd judge of people and a good lateral thinker, he had strong passions not only about his staff but also his position. He resented Sorin's 'officious and presumptuous interference in [his] authority' when it had been suggested that Yule Island had authority over Taylor's administration and Mission. Taylor showed a steeliness that enabled him to win that argument. He did enjoy considerable support from the rest of his staff. Earl, in particular, grew to appreciate him when his initial inclination, based on reputation, was to oppose him. Taylor demanded a high degree of ability and effort. His leadership was soon sorely tested when the order came to evacuate.

THE MAIN CRITERIA to evaluate the Mission's early success are the statistics for baptism. There were three categories considered for this sacrament: the dying, the students, and adults. At school the catechism was taught daily and competent students who did well in it and desired it, were baptised. The first seven baptisms, in 1933, were of school pupils. For adults the process was longer and more rigorous. De Boismenu counselled Lyons that, with the Protestant influence being strong, candidates for Catholic baptism 'need a much longer training of the intelligence and of the will than elsewhere ... The first groups of our Christians should be exceptionally equipped and

38 Taylor to Father Provincial, 24 February 1941, SHM.
39 Taylor to Father Provincial, 24 February 1941, SHM.
40 Taylor to Father Provincial, 30 May 1941, SHM.
41 Taylor to Father Provincial, 'Unofficial and Confidential note' attached to correspondence 12 September 1940, SHM.
strong. But no amount of teaching or persuasion could sway some Protestants. An old woman, sick and dying, was ministered to by Nobby Earl at Ladava. In Melanesian fashion the conversation had been circuitous until it was time to mention baptism. The woman, who had years before attended a Protestant school and ‘knew the essentials of Christianity, said No’.

In 1933, out of an estimated 8,000 people within the reach of MSC missionaries, 14 children and 12 adults were baptised and 86 people were described as ‘Catholics’. By 1940 this number had grown to 12,500 in Catholic reach with 171 as Catholics. In those nine years a total of 155 children and 141 adults had been baptised.

These results were very disappointing for the effort, personnel and money put into the mission, not least because letters to Australia were replete with notions that great success was close at hand and that the Protestants ‘have a very bad name’ or ‘are making a very poor show’, or had ‘lost a great deal of influence’, that at Kiriwina ‘Methodism is feeble’ and other such judgements. The reality was that at Kiriwina by 1939 there were only four baptised Catholics, all of whom had died. Given the strength of Kwato in Milne Bay and the Methodist Mission on all the main islands together with the marginalisation of the MSC to islands with small populations, the Catholics had to develop a strategy that met a recognised need. This they did by focusing on education, especially the teaching of English. Their method of evangelisation was described as: ‘contact; the natives ask for a priest and build a temporary building; the language is learned; a school opened and placed under the care of nuns or a catechist. The rest follows’. The Methodists used the vernacular in their village schools with only a little English in the station schools. Part of the Catholic strategy was to focus on children who were considered open to influence; adults were perceived to be more difficult - too pagan - and too old to learn. In effect the Catholics

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42 De Boismenu to Lyons, 8 September 1933, SHM.

43 N. Earl, Annals, October 1940, 335.

44 Statistics, File 0728, SHM.

45 Father James Dwyer, Annals, September 1939, 301.

46 Contained in an internal report ‘The Eastern Papua Mission’, page 18, SHM.
gambled that the people desired to learn English. In this they were proved correct.

'Our schools are looked upon as proper schools', one missionary declared, 'these six boys have done a great deal of silent propaganda by learning to speak English so quickly and so well'. 47

But concentration on schooling required the priests to spend much time on their stations. Sorin, for one, had been critical of this 48 and Taylor saw it as a 'terrible waste' of the apostolic opportunity:

Too much time and energy has been spent in the home stations and the important work of visitation of villages and instruction of natives after they have been contacted by repeated visits has not been done thoroughly. 49

However nothing was done to redress this. Within a year the mission was to undergo its most dramatic experience when its missionaries were evacuated following the Japanese attack on Rabaul. After the evacuation Taylor did not return, and leadership fell to some of the staff who had followed a 'schools policy'. Indeed, such a policy became even more central in the decades that followed. The return of the missionaries from April 1944 onwards was to show that to survive in any realistic way they would have to restructure their administration and expand their work. Here they would have more success.

47 Father Gerard Doody to Father Provincial, 2 February 1938, SHM.

48 Father Provincial to Taylor, 25 September 1940, SHM.

49 Taylor to Father Provincial, 24 February 1941, SHM.
CHAPTER FIVE
Methodists: The Conservative Years

The arrival of the Catholic missionaries was an opportunity for the Methodists to evaluate their achievements and look at how they could become more progressive in the face of competition and speed up their often-claimed objective of giving power to indigenous leaders. This was not the case, however, and the period from 1930 until the war - and beyond - was a time of conservatism for which there were a number of reasons.

First and foremost was the leadership of the Mission, especially the role of the chairman of the district. From 1930 to 1942 the Papua district had three chairmen: Matthew Gilmour, Ron Andrew and John Rundle. Each had distinctive abilities and left his own legacy. In each of these personalities, and their lengthy periods of service in Papua, lay the seeds of conservatism that pervaded the district. Gilmour’s long tenure in Papua was notable for his commitment to the idea of ‘industrial mission’ in which he subsumed most of his efforts into developing technical training and infrastructure in the district.

Technical training had a strong advocate in Burton and much of his philosophy was echoed by Gilmour. Burton described the philosophy of such training as having a ‘mental and ethical value that does not appear on the surface’ and the means to change a lifestyle. Where a Papuan is seen as ‘lazy, shiftless, unreliable and untruthful’ it is because he has not had the opportunity to exercise opposed virtues of industry, work and punctuality. However, technical training provided discipline, ‘the discipline he sorely needs’, declared Burton. Because the Papuan measures things by the stretch of his arm or the width of his hand he is inaccurate. The two-foot rule is exact and by introducing him to it truth is introduced, and this truth can then be applied to his life. Modern tools are reliable and therefore ‘truthful’ and can simplify house building and its accommodations. By their use the man can achieve better results, and the conclusion to the process is for the man to stand back from his work and say: “I did that!” but he will feel “I am this - a new and better man!”  

1 J.W. Burton, Modern Missions in the South Pacific, 144.
well after Gilmour had left Papua, are the same ideas that Gilmour and Andrew had long preached.

Gilmour was not willing to advance Papuans into positions of leadership. While he had trained them in the trades he could not accept that they were capable of any excellence. The most he felt they were capable of was to be ‘generally useful with tools, not perhaps as carpenters pure and simple [but] handy men’² While this was an early assessment it was one he never changed. Later he rationalised why Papuans could not take over leadership of the technical training, declaring them to be ‘very neat and expert craftsmen, capable of executing accurate and well finished work but their difficulty will lie in their lack of a spirit of steady plodding enterprise.’³ His difference with Burton was that he did not introduce his trainees to the ‘truth’ of rulers and the like. When the government introduced financial grants to support technical training an inspection report on Gilmour’s work at Salamano was extremely critical because he offered no formal classroom instruction and even technical drawing was not properly taught - students were told the index finger represented three inches - and a Mission Board report on Gilmour’s boat construction was even more damning. Conducted by Charles Sparrow⁴ the report declared the boats were ‘deplorable ... there is nothing tying the sides [of the vessels] together.’⁵

Gilmour’s leadership was autocratic and domineering. Even when a qualified medical practitioner was appointed to Salamano, Gilmour still exercised final authority over medical matters just as he did with all other branches of the work. Inevitably this led to friction and then outright hostility from his colleagues. Advancing age (in 1930 he was 58) and some irritating eccentricities coupled with widespread disaffection with his leadership led his colleagues to request the Board to remove him. Of particular concern was the treatment given to one colleague, the Reverend Ron Walker, who had arrived in Papua in 1927. To Gilmour he was an ‘earnest young man’ but was not

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² *MR*, June 1907, 16.

³ Matthew Gilmour, Annual Report to 1925 Synod, MOM 193.

⁴ Charles Sparrow was later to be superintendent of Australia’s premier boatyard, Cockatoo Dockyard.

⁵ Annual Report to 1933 Synod, MOM 201.
considered physically strong enough for the work, a judgement based on Walker’s impractical nature and his detestation of sea travel. Arising out of his wife’s medical emergency many years before and the lack of compassion by the Board at that time, Gilmour had become intolerant of such weaknesses so that when he appointed Walker to conduct the quarterly meetings at Woodlark - a long and often unpleasant journey from his home base at Bwaruada on Normanby - another colleague, John Dixon, one who enjoyed sea travel, offered to go in his place, an offer Gilmour categorically refused.

In 1931 Walker was appointed to Kiriwina when one day his wife was horribly burnt by an exploding kerosine ice-box. The only vessel available for hire was a local sailing cutter in which Walker, his wife and four year old son set sail for Salamo hospital. The journey took thirty-six hours with only aspirin to ease the pain of burns that covered 80 per cent of her body. Upon arrival at hospital, and with the doctor away on patrol, the nurses prepared to operate but Mrs Walker died before further help could be given. When one of the sisters, due for furlough a month later, requested permission to accompany Walker and his traumatised son to Sydney on an earlier boat, Gilmour refused and his dismissal of the family’s ordeal as ‘a few hours of suffering’\(^6\) angered the staff.

Conscious of the ill feeling, which was evident at the annual synod meeting which he described as ‘very poor spirited, very panicky and very distrustful’\(^7\) Gilmour offered his resignation to Burton, a friend from their younger days in New Zealand, but he refused to accept it, hoping a longer stay would resolve the differences with his colleagues and put Gilmour in a more ‘dignified’ position, an action he and Gilmour later regretted. ‘I hope you won’t mention dignity again’ Gilmour wrote, ‘I know you meant it kindly, but it does grate. Bolstered up dignity I hate ...’\(^8\)

Gilmour was eventually recalled, leaving in July 1933 and his impending departure gave rise to a sense of jubilation among the missionary staff. Jack Rundle,

\(^6\) Annual Report to 1932 Synod, MOM 200.

\(^7\) Notes on the 1931 Synod Minutes, MOM 199.

\(^8\) Gilmour to Burton 20 December 1932, UC (United Church archives, University of PNG), Box 35 file 4.
always outspoken, suggested they should sing ‘O for the skin of a rhino and the heart of a lion,’ going on to say:

It will soon be over and then the resurrection of Salamo will commence but I think it will be preceded by a Golgotha of a sort. There will be weeping and gnashing of teeth here if the [Papuan] teachers have their way. I don’t know if we can stop it so we expect a flood.  

In withdrawing Gilmour the Board recognised the Mission had failed to advance adequately. There was, after forty-three years, still no Papuan training for ordination and none likely. Under Gilmour the leadership had become secretive, absolute and lacking in vision. The Board decided to do its own investigation into affairs in the district, a review conducted by Burton himself and a leading Methodist layman, F.W. Kitto. They found Salamo ‘lacking buoyancy with rather an air of discontent among the population.’ In their findings, contained in a twenty-two page report of ‘objective and impersonal observations’ Burton and Kitto presented a litany of woes.

The basic recommendation was that ‘men with expert knowledge’ be placed in charge of those operations for which they were appointed. The role of chairman was never again to have the same power as Gilmour and Bromilow had given it. The financial books were the area the commissioners found to be most disturbing and were to be removed from the chairman’s control. The books were found to be full of inaccuracies and proved to be beyond the comprehension of experts in Sydney. No personal advantage to Gilmour was suggested or found but the Board felt it had been misled by Gilmour’s tactics. Estimates for new boat constructions were approved, the full cost drawn but examination showed the actual cost to build was less than the estimates. Excess moneys were diverted to projects the Board had previously refused to approve. The growing cost of boat running was criticised for, while all vessels were auxiliary craft ‘unfortunately the auxiliary is the sail not the engine.’

The other major criticism was that the development of Salamo as a centre of training of teachers had not been realised. However, the technical department had developed well with a two-storied building and large bulk store, both permanent

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9 Rundle to Dixon 1 June 1933, UC Box 35, file 5.

10 The Commission of Enquiry full report is found in MOM 201. Unless otherwise noted all quotes are from this report.
buildings. The district teacher training institution or DTI, besides having no classroom, the church was used for this purpose – 'a native building with a gravel floor and entirely unsuited for the purpose of a classroom' - had, in 1934, only 27 teachers in training and a further 57 in the whole district. This contrasted with Gilmour's 1919 proposal for the Board to fund the building of Salamo as the new head station and training centre, in which he predicted an additional 97 teacher trainees. In 1933 in the three training departments - DTI, hospital, and technical - there was a total of 55 trainees compared to 138 in the New Guinea district.

Over the years there was a maximum enrolment of 40 students in any one year doing the DTI three year course. It was not until after the war a proper classroom was built which, with the move of the DTI to Bwaruada in 1958, became the Wesley High School. Through its existence the DTI had one missionary minister as its principal with a second as a tutor, and one female missionary as a teacher of the students' wives. The curriculum for the Institute, as for the CTI's, was quite basic and fairly casual as far as class work was concerned. Classes were only held in the mornings and much time was spent on gardening. Instruction was in Dobuan.

Further criticism was levelled at Gilmour over the failure to develop any financial plan for self-support, and that his total control over affairs meant that, when synod was held, the DTI closed down for six weeks. In addition, other necessary work, especially publication of educational resources, was non-existent. Consequently the schools had no printed materials.

Each of the criticisms were, to some degree, the fault of Gilmour. The Board, despite Gilmour's strenuous objections, accepted the findings and immediately changes were introduced including the installation of a printing press, the complete overhaul of the boat fleet and introduction of an entrance standard for the DTI.

Gilmour's departure, like his last five years, resulted in further negative feelings from his white colleagues. He made a final trip around the district to say farewell to those in the Trobriands, Louisiades and D'Entrecasteaux Islands, timed to end at Samarai in time to catch the boat to Australia. When he left Salamo the DTI students and the Circuit Training Institution (CTI) students from Dobu asked John Dixon for the boat Gilmour had promised them so they could go to Samarai to see him off. No such
promise was known to Dixon or any other so the request was refused, whereupon the
students, fifty in all, went on strike.\textsuperscript{11} Investigation into this disturbance only helped
inflame the missionaries' anger towards Gilmour. By not informing his missionary
colleagues of what he had promised, he ensured the students' anger would be directed
towards them for, as Rundle saw it, Gilmour's plan was to draw 'the affection of all to
himself to the disadvantage of others.'\textsuperscript{12}

At the urging of the white missionaries the Board recalled Ron Andrew to be the
new leader. By his appointment the Board was both appeasing the missionaries and
ensuring a continuation of conservative leadership. In his first report as chairman he gave
a clear indication of his conservative and gradualist approach to change:

> The greater part of our district has been missionised continuously for a
long period. Government and commercial influences have also played
their part, and one cannot help but feel that the next decade or so will see
big changes in native life and outlook.

... Christianity has proved, in many a native heart, the new power for
righteousness and love that can transform and uplift the people. That it
has a large and ever growing influence in moulding native thought is
evident, and it is a matter for deep thankfulness. It is our task and
privilege to do all we can to foster this inward growth in Christian ideals,
till it has spread itself through all the ramifications of native custom and
belief. This quiet intensive work is the task of the Church in this District
today, and it calls for our best in sympathy and understanding, in
consecrated effort and devotion.\textsuperscript{13}

Andrew was, like Gilmour before him, one who advocated dignity for Melanesians but
denied them responsibility. Both men were exponents of a theology that had been
influenced by liberalism in which there was less of a 'passion for souls' and more of a
language that spoke of 'divine progress; divine things; forming ideals; following the
Master'; and of the need to 'smile, live and weep religion.'

Given that Gilmour was chairman for twenty-two years and Andrew for nine and
they, together with Bromilow, led the mission for its first fifty years, (and for some of

\textsuperscript{11} Dixon to Rundle, 22 August 1933, UC Box 35 file 5; Andrew to Burton, 12 August 1933, UC Box
35 file 4.

\textsuperscript{12} Rundle to Dixon, 17 July 1933, UC Box 35 file 5.

\textsuperscript{13} Report to 1934 Synod, MOM 202.
that time all three were in the district together) it is not surprising there was little change in direction and process. Bromilow’s shadow lingered long over the mission and as both Gilmour and Andrew were ‘followers’ rather than pioneers innovation and inspiration were not likely. Following the departure of Andrew in 1938 Jack Rundle was appointed the new chairman, a role he had little opportunity to develop and which he filled for a brief time only for, while on furlough in late 1941, ill health delayed his return and before he could return, the war-time evacuation was ordered.

A second factor in the conservatism of this period was the missionaries themselves. In 1934 there were eleven ministers and nine lay workers in the mission, the latter all female; in 1941 there were eight ministers and seven laywomen. Of the 1941 ministers only two were new since 1934 as were four of the women. More importantly than these numbers might suggest is the long periods of service by those ministers: twenty-two years in the case of Andrew, thirteen years for a number of others, to nine years for the most recent arrival, Hedley Shotton. The implication was to be proved in fact: that, in spite of the removal of an unpopular chairman - who they could blame for all the shortcomings - what followed was a continuation of the same policies. There was a shift away from concentrating on the technical department but more pressing problems, especially the training of village teachers, were ignored. After all these missionaries were the people who ran the system.

After Gilmour’s departure two of the commissioners’ concerns were addressed. One was the issue of financial self-support. In 1935 Rundle announced his circuit, Goodenough, had developed a plan to raise the funds locally to pay the stipends of their teachers and any Pacific Islander workers. Up until this time these payments came from the annual grant from the Board. Rundle’s plan was so successful that within a couple of years it had been adopted by the five other circuits. 14

The other development was in printing. Two hand-operated platen printing presses had been purchased and installed at Salamo, one from the government, the proceeds of confiscation from a forgery case involving the printing of money. Within four years John Dixon was reporting a prodigious output by his four trainees. Primers in two different languages, hymn books in Panaeati, Dobuan and Keherara languages,

14 See pages 229-230.
Sunday School materials, a text book on the Old Testament, literacy readers and other school resources, and quarterly issues of a Dobuan-language news-sheet, *Tapwaroro Teterina* - with more than 300 subscribers - were being produced. Up to 1,000 copies of each were manually produced.

A third contributing factor to conservatism were external pressures. One was the world economic depression which caused missionary retrenchments and a decline in financial support from the Board. Staff, such as Henry Williams, offered to go on half stipend and others, including the bookkeeper, a nurse and the boat builder were retrenched. The implications went beyond the loss of staff; as well money for boats was greatly reduced. In 1930 the Board funded Papua with a grant of £11,200 but by 1932 this was reduced to £7,550, in 1936 it was £8,730 and never rose to its 1930 level until after the war. The self-help income to pay for local teachers was not, in the scheme of things, a large amount and had little impact - a DTI graduate was paid £11 per annum, a helper (untrained but with some schooling) £8. The Board’s grant was for the payment of missionaries, travel, boats and other costs.

The financial plight of the Board was strongly stated by Burton in the *Missionary Review*. In 1924 the Board received £66,834 in donations from church members; in 1934 this had declined to £40,799. By October 1933 only £17,450 out of an asked-for total of £50,750 for the year had come in.\(^{15}\) At times Burton’s pleas took on a decided eschatological flavour:

**THINK CAREFULLY**
Our Foreign Mission year nears its end, and we need to make a Big Effort so as to reach our Objective. We must not wait too long before our Final Endeavour.
BETTER BEGIN NOW; THEN KEEP IT UP TO THE LAST DAY.\(^{16}\)

By 1936 Burton was able to announce the position was beginning to rectify itself – ‘Having Turned the Corner’\(^{17}\) - as he reported an increase of £4,923 for 1935.

A second external factor influencing the district was disease, of which the period after 1930 was particularly affected. In 1932 an epidemic of ‘pneumonic influenza’

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\(^{15}\) *MR*, 5 December 1933, 4; 5 February 1936, 2-3.

\(^{16}\) *MR*, November 1933.

\(^{17}\) *MR*, 5 February 1936, 2.
devastated the district, in which 255 Methodist members and 300 catechumens ('seekers') died, followed by a second wave in 1936. In all, an estimated 2,500 people died in the district. In 1938 another epidemic, put down to returning labourers and 'lax' whites, caused major dislocation in the D'Entrecasteaux. Venereal disease was so widespread special camps for infected men were set up. Chairman Ron Andrew reported on its impact:

Most sections have been disturbed by sickness and dismayed by the mass treatment campaigns made by the government to combat the appalling spread of venereal disease. The Mission has in some cases been blamed for calling the attention of the govt. to this trouble, but the real source was the fact that some 60 percent of native labour recruits were found to be infected. Two large camps, one on Goodenough and one on Normanby have dealt with many hundreds of natives and medical officers are still investigating as to the best methods of treatment.... It has been borne in on us again this year that one of the greatest problems affecting the welfare of the people is that of health. Medical aid is perhaps the most valuable thing that can be offered them at the moment. Our staff and equipment is pitifully inadequate, valuable though the work they may be doing is.

Bwaruada and Bunama were two of the most affected areas, both popular anchorages which Ralph Grant saw as the major contributing factor. Of 598 in the Weyo’o camp near Ubuya, over 400 came from these two places, and in one place only 14 men were left out of a male population of 98. The disease was blamed for the declining birth rate on eastern Normanby: out of a population of 4,000 the birth rate over four years (1933–1937) was 77, 72, 71 and 51; the death rate 79, 91, 108 and 130.

Indentured workers was a reminder of an ongoing difficulty the mission was having recruiting enough suitable men for the various training departments. Opportunities for travel and earning money meant young men were not seeking training in the Mission - this was seen as more of a factor than the lack of finance for the small numbers entering the institutions.

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18 1932 Synod minutes, MOM 200; 1936 Synod minutes, MOM 269; MR 5 September 1941, 4.
19 Chairman’s Report to 1938 Synod, MOM 271.
20 Ralph Grant, Annual Report to 1938 Synod, MOM 271.
21 Chairman’s Report to 1938 Synod, MOM 271.
Experienced, conservative-minded ministers, lay workers who had been many years in the work, financial stringencies and retrenchments as well as disease causing death and disruption contributed to the direction of the mission and why the opportunity presented by the arrival of the Catholics to re-examine policy was not changed. Part of the reason was that the missionaries did not seem to be aware of some of the signs why change was needed.

The signs were there in education. Aware the Catholics were offering English in schools, the Methodists determined to stay with the vernacular. While Catholic influence up to 1941 was limited to Sideia, Basilaki and, from 1937, Kiriwina, and while these had not made much impact on attendance at Methodist schools there was, nevertheless, a significant decline in the school population. In 1930 there were 7,371 pupils in village schools; in 1933 there were 6,482; in 1936 there were 7,048; and in 1940 there were 7,277. In a decade an increase of just 100 should have told the missionaries the system had problems. If it did they failed to respond. While Gilmour had been held responsible because there were only 27 teachers in training in 1934, by 1938 this figure had risen only marginally, to 30, and when the evacuation came there were just 29 being trained. The poor standard in schools was recognised by Andrew, whose comment that ‘many of our teachers painfully lack the ability to teach even the simplest things’, was accurate and concurred with Henry Williams’ observation that the village schools at Kiriwina were ‘mediocre [with] lowness of teaching standards mainly responsible.’

However, there was no change in general direction in the mission but this did not mean the church was in decline. Church attendance in this period was healthy and growing, from 35,000 in 1930 there was a gradual increase to 41,500 in 1941. This increase was supported by the other two indicators of spiritual growth: trial and confirmed members. In 1930 there were 1,447 trial members - people who attended class meetings and after church ‘seeker’ classes in preparation for baptism and full membership - and by 1941 this number was 2,236. Full or confirmed members increased from 3,070 in 1930 to 4,950 in 1941.

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22 Chairman’s Report to 1936 Synod; H.T. Williams, Annual Report to 1936 Synod, MOM 269.

23 See Appendix I: Methodist Statistics.
In June 1941 the jubilee of the Mission was celebrated. It had been planned to have a major event but the war in Europe was not going well and was casting a pall over the missionaries, especially when one, Harry Robinson, a Cockney by birth, joined the Australian Imperial Forces as a chaplain. Nevertheless, a celebration was held at Dobu on 19 June at which the guest of honour was the Administrator, Leonard Murray and his wife. Chairman Jack Rundle cabled Burton: ‘Wonderful day, 3000 present, fervent inspiring worship.’

Celebrations were also held in Sydney which acted as a gathering place for former missionaries to reflect on what had happened. Foremost among them was James Watson, the sole survivor of Bromilow’s pioneer group. But it is the reflections of Rundle that most indicate how the missionaries saw the situation after fifty years.

Writing in the *Missionary Review*, Rundle saw the difficulties of the future as the geography of isolation, endemic malaria and the multiplicity of languages. But his two main concerns were indentured labour which, he claimed, ‘breaks up family life, causing much immorality and much bitterness’, and ‘family religion’, in which the teacher’s family may become ‘a secluded cell using religion for its own purposes.’

This is a reference to the influence of the Oxford Group, influential at Kwato, which emphasised strict Christian discipline in the family and communal decision making by believers. Some of the Methodists had welcomed the movement’s influence while others, like Rundle, were opposed.

Whatever Rundle’s concerns, they soon came to nothing. He took furlough and was kept home by recurring illness, Ralph Grant was acting chairman, and then the Mission and its staff entered its most critical moment, the entry of Japan into the Pacific war and the evacuation of the Australian missionaries.

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24 *MR*, 5 July 1941, 2.

CHAPTER SIX
Evacuation and Consequences

When the Japanese attacked Pearl Harbour and made their speedy advance into the western Pacific a scene was set for what was to be the most difficult time for the missions in Milne Bay. On Saturday 15 December 1941 acting chairman Ralph Grant and Religious Superior George Taylor received telegrams ordering the evacuation of expatriate women and children. It read: War Cabinet directs evacuation Australia women and children except missionaries who wish to remain and nurses stop Fares may be paid by government stop Glad you advise all your district also Timperley and notify me numbers missionaries wishing go Woodward. The Methodists immediately prepared for their people to go and all the wives and children left for Samarai on 22 December. There was no controversy about this event though no-one questioned why the Pacific Island families - of whom there were five - were not included or even, it appears, considered.

There was an expectation of a fuller evacuation and radio messages for the single women were received ordering them to wait on Dobu for the government vessel Elevaka. However the boat was diverted to an emergency off Woodlark and the women, comprising five Methodists and the three Catholic sisters from Kiriwina, remained on Dobu for Christmas day. Planes overhead were now a regular occurrence and it was decided the Catholic sisters would go on to Samarai to meet up with their colleagues as the Methodists prepared contingency plans to go inland to Salakahadi and Ebedede, the highest villages in the mountains behind Salamo. Taylor was inclined to send his younger Sisters (Catherine, Vincent, Pancratius and Berchmans) away as some were already in poor health, and suggested that the others - de Pazzi, Stanislaus and Paul - stay in Milne Bay at Ladava and the hospital at Daio.

1 A fuller account of these and subsequent events is found in Ross Mackay, ‘The War Years: Methodists in Papua 1942-1945’, JPH (vol.27:1) 1992, 29-43.
2 R. V Grant, ‘Copy to all Fellow-workers’, from Salamo, dated 15 December 1941. Copy in my possession.
3 Correspondence from Janie Pearce to ‘Dear Friends’, undated but early February 1942. Copy in my possession.
The absence of wives and children had a big psychological effect on the male expatriates in Samarai, who were described as 'jittery' not helped by the actions of the Assistant Resident Magistrate Sydney Elliott Smith, who wanted all Europeans out, making 'ponderous pronouncements about the horrors to come' and predicted imminent Japanese attacks. On 24 January the stores in Samarai closed down and the bank staff departed.

Then, following the bombing of Rabaul, on 25 January 1942 a second telegram ordering the departure of all remaining missionaries was sent. Ralph Grant immediately issued instructions for the white staff to leave. The same order was seen by Taylor at Sideia who endeavoured to make contact with de Boismenu at Yule Island for his response and, failing to receive that in time, also instructed his people to leave. The priests and brothers announced their intention to stay, though Taylor was inclined to withdraw them as the number of Catholics in the general population was so small and the opportunity for missionary work was now quite limited. By the following day the situation had intensified. Elliott Smith told Taylor that if they 'did not get out now, the military would certainly move to have us go soon.'

Taylor radioed his bishop: 'Consider evacuation staff urgent. Please instruct or advise otherwise.' The bishop replied on the 27th: 'Priests to stay, others advised to stay' but, with Samarai's wireless mast dismantled and then shipped out on the 28th, Taylor did not see the reply until his arrival in Port Moresby on 2 February. Taylor acknowledged that he would have obeyed the instruction but reiterated his view that, with stores, shipping, the bank and transport all stopped, and communication between islands no longer possible, together with the further difficulty of obtaining food supplies, it was more appropriate to leave; 'Against the good we might do at Milne Bay among the few Catholics there, (there were few if any elsewhere) I decided it better to

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5 Taylor to Father Provincial, 24 January 1942, SHM.

6 Taylor to Father Provincial, 25 January 1942, SHM.
withdraw. Earl was one ‘definitely prepared to stay and risk the consequences of an invasion’ but was eventually persuaded to leave.

The priests and brothers went to Port Moresby from where Docherty went on to Australia, the others to Yule Island. Dwyer was already in Australia on furlough, from where he joined up as a chaplain, as did Earl. Baldwin and Brothers Hugh Fraser and Arthur Bushe asked to stay on at Yule Island with the agreement of the bishop, whilst Taylor made his way south, calling at Hammond and Thursday Islands to find them almost deserted.

When the second order came the Methodist women, already weary and emotional from the changing situation but wishing they had gone into the bush as planned so they could stay, were ready to comply, and boarded the Tolema on the morning of the 26th to go to Samarai and meet up with Harry Bartlett and others from Misima. On board was an ill planter, Fletcher, who died en route and was buried at East Cape.

On arrival at Samarai they found the place almost deserted. The Misima contingent arrived and the whole group was moved on to Port Moresby but not before a few questions were starting to be asked about the legitimacy of the evacuation order. Bartlett was annoyed when it appeared he did not have to leave and announced he intended to return but was forbidden by the authorities.

A subsequent Royal Commission on events that led to the suspension of civil administration in Papua concluded the order to evacuate was not legitimate. The conclusion was that the radio officer in Samarai, Alan Plowman, sent the instruction but did so on the orders of Elliott Smith, who believed his superior, resident magistrate Woodward, did not appreciate the seriousness of the situation and was apathetic about it. Elliott Smith tried to force his hand by sending the telegram. Despite his denials about this Commissioner Barry was unconvinced and concluded:

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7 Taylor to Father Provincial, 2 February 1942, SHM.
8 Taylor to Father Provincial, 25 January 1942, SHM.
9 Correspondence from Janie Pearce, addressed to ‘Dear Friends’. Copy in my possession.
I am thus driven to the conclusion that instructions to Mr Plowman to send this radio originated with Captain Elliott Smith and that his version relating to this matter in evidence is not reliable.\textsuperscript{10}

It was established by Defence Force leaders and Administrator Murray that the Samarai authorities did not have power to order the missionaries to evacuate.\textsuperscript{11} But that knowledge was too late for the Methodists and Catholics who had already left.

The Anglicans, under the coaxing of Bishop Philip Strong, refused to leave. Strong noticed the telegram they all received had no official number on it and his suspicions deepened when he questioned why. It was at this point the Navy and Murray confirmed there was no specific order. Strong gave his staff the opportunity to leave but made it clear he hoped they would stay, which they chose to do.

The Methodist evacuees went on to Port Moresby and then to Thursday Island before travelling by train from North Queensland, arriving in Sydney on 12 February. The trip from Samarai to Port Moresby gave a glimpse into some issues that were to have their conclusion years later. The \textit{Tolema} was a small vessel of nine metres length with no bunks. There were seventeen on board, comprising five women and four male missionaries\textsuperscript{12} plus five Papuan men and three Papuan crew. Each night they anchored. With the weather hot and showing the effects of an eight-month drought, mosquitoes were so many the group found sleeping almost impossible. Such privations showed up differences in the group. Even though Grant was the leader it was Harry Bartlett who provided stability. As the only one conversant with navigation as well as the most resilient seaman, he earned the admiration of the women. Janie Pearce, a veteran missionary and a woman of considerable toughness and durability, wrote of her observations: ‘Mr Bartlett was the life of the boat with his quiet humour and we admired his practical way of attending to menial tasks, without a word ... Poor Grant is no leader in any sense of the word, either at Salamo, or in any capacity as chairman.’ Of another

\textsuperscript{10} J.V. Barry, \textit{Commission of Enquiry into the Circumstances Relating to the Suspension of Civil Administration in the Territory of Papua, 1942}, 19.

\textsuperscript{11} D. Wetherell, \textit{The New Guinea Diaries of Philip Strong}, 80.

\textsuperscript{12} Misses Edith Twyford, Daisy Coltheart, Hetty Muir, Nell Petty, Janie Pearce and Revs. Harry Bartlett, Ralph Grant, Henry Williams and Athol Brooks.
male she wrote 'it would be good [for him] to go into Camp.' Overall, this trip and the following one from Port Moresby to northern Australia, was a time of great difficulty and endured in trying circumstance. The feelings about Grant contributed to the Board's later hesitation in sending him back to Papua and, later, appointing him chairman.

The arrival of the group in Sydney created considerable debate within the church and led to mutterings of cowardice and desertion by people within the church. General Secretary Burton defended the missionaries but was critical of them on two grounds: that the order to evacuate was not legal and therefore not binding, and that the Pacific Island missionaries had not been included in the evacuation or their position considered by their white colleagues.

Burton was being unfair to Grant who, as acting chairman, gave the order to leave. While Strong was correct in his interpretation on the legality of the order to evacuate, he was in a position to make the enquiries he did which Grant was not. Isolated Dobu had no communications with anyone but Samarai from where the instruction had come. His arrival in Samarai was after it was virtually deserted. He knew nothing but what he had acted on, including the fact that he had no transport and supplies would be difficult. In his communication on 15 December Grant had told his staff the government had already acted on the recommendation of the oil companies and 'severely rationed' kerosine and rice, which would be reserved for Europeans and 'special needs', and the situation was now far worse than then. However, Strong was particularly critical of the missionaries leaving, which he called desertion, and claimed their motives were to 'save the white man and never mind about the natives.'

Probably the harshest critic was Rundle. In private communication with Burton he made some 'serious' charges that caused Burton to contact colonial officials Murray in Port Moresby and Woodward in Samarai. Rundle's anger was based on his friendship with Strong and his criticisms were because of Strong's advocacy of the non-evacuation of the Anglican staff. Whatever was said in these communications a special

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13 Correspondence from Janie Pearce, addressed to 'Dear Friends'. Copy in my possession.

14 R. V Grant, 'Copy to all Fellow-workers ...'.

Board meeting resolved that the missionaries deserved no blame and Rundle was called on to accept that decision.\footnote{Minutes of Special Executive Meeting, 27 May 1942, MOM 339.}

Burton publicly supported his missionaries but, in the privacy of the Board meetings, showed he was not convinced their actions were justified. In the \textit{Missionary Review} he wrote in apparent support of Keith Gordon, missionary at Kiriwina, who had left his post only after bombs had fallen ‘a few miles away’ on Kitava, he being one of the last two to leave the island and then, on arrival in Port Moresby, had experienced the first bombings there.\footnote{MR, March 1942, 5.} Gordon managed to secure a plane seat to Sydney the next day. Yet Burton showed displeasure by ordering Gordon to repay the cost differential between a boat passage and an air fare.\footnote{Board minutes, 13 March 1942, MOM 339.} When the main party arrived in Sydney the Board recognised they had ‘no option but to obey’ the evacuation order and declared it was convinced they had acted ‘in the best interests of our mission work and of the native people.’\footnote{Emergency Board minutes, 27 February 1942, MOM 339.}

But Burton had a larger issue to face. The church was hearing ‘unfounded and unthinkably cruel criticism’ of the missionaries from within and support for missions could be irrevocably hurt if it continued. By declaring the Board’s ‘fullest enquiries’ led it to conclude to its satisfaction there were no grounds for the ‘unkind and hysterical statements’ circulating\footnote{MR, March 1943, 1.} he again hoped to appease his constituency but he showed some equivocation when defending his staff against claims of cowardice, saying ‘it may appear, on careful investigation, that their decision [to leave] was too hurried, but this has yet to be determined.’\footnote{MR, April 1942, 13.}

If Burton was not fully convinced he was not the only one. Isikeli Hau’ofa at Misima told his teachers the departure of the whites was indicative of Jesus’ parable in which, when the wolf appears, the shepherd stays but the hireling runs away.\footnote{Taped interview with Isikeli Hau’ofa, 1971 and 1987, in my possession.} Another,
the Samoan Filemoni Faiteli, often told his children of the ‘betrayal’ of his white colleagues and in Fiji students were told Papua was where ‘the missionaries run away.’

On reflection the departure of the missionaries was correct even though later events showed they would not have been at risk. With all the boats taken over by ANGAU, no communications available and with no adequate food supplies, to have stayed would have placed too great a burden on the local populations and on ANGAU. In the Catholic community there was no similar criticism of their decision to go and Taylor’s justification for doing so was similar to Grant’s. Where criticism of the Methodists was deserved was for leaving their Pacific Islander colleagues behind. They rationalised this by variously declaring the order only applied to Australians and that being black meant the Japanese would not know they were not Papuans. Hau’ofa could accept this but his harshness was because the wives and children were not taken out. It was apparent that Grant never entertained such a consideration. To him Pacific Islanders and Papuans were all ‘natives’ and treated alike.

The Mission and the people benefitted greatly from the presence during this time of the Pacific Islanders, in particular Isikeli Hau’ofa. The evacuation at Misima left behind two problems: 900 indentured labourers from the mainland, and three recalcitrant whites. Before the first group could be dealt the latter created trouble. Alfred Downey, Arthur le Boutillier and George Brett refused to leave the island and the day after the evacuation le Boutillier and Brett forced their way into the magistrate’s house and that of the Burns Philp manager, forcing employees to hand over keys. They declared themselves the new government, arming themselves to stop others from looting. Brett declared himself magistrate with le Boutillier his assistant. Downey then joined them and made gaoler. When two local policemen attempted to arrest the three men one was shot and killed and the other escaped wounded.

This unrest was fuelled by growing trouble between Misimans and the foreign labourers who were living in caves and temporary shelters near the shore waiting for

Informants: Sunema Auva’a, daughter of Faiete; Dr. Alan Tippett, Canberra 1987.

Details of events at Misima were supplied by Isikeli Hau’ofa (on tape) and an unpublished paper by Dr Michael Rynkiewich. It should be noted a fourth white man, Charles Coppard, also refused to leave because his Papuan wife and their daughters were not included. He played no part in the disturbances and enjoyed a good reputation among the people of Misima.
boats to pick them up. A major confrontation developed between these labourers and Misimans until Hau'ofa intercepted a large group of the indentured workers marching to take on villagers:

I went out [to the fight] and made to pass through the midst of the sign-on boys, holding my lantern and calling out, 'Friend, friends' I spoke to them in haste for the other side was marching quickly in our direction, and were not very far distant. One of the boys said, 'Speak to the other side. We hear you and accept your reconciliation. But if they will not hear you, please let us go and fight to the end.' I went to the other side and spoke to them, but they were worse than the first. However, they stopped and listened to me. Praise the Lord they both accepted the reconciliation in His name's sake.25

Hau'ofa and the senior government clerk, Kenneth Kaiw, a native of the Northern District, arranged for 30 of the labourers to be repatriated and, with the help of the medical officer, Ernest Whitehouse, and a labour recruiter, Laurie Henderson, the remainder were taken home a few weeks later. The repatriation of these workers ended this event but the behaviour of the three whites continued to cause major problems. They continued with brutal assaults on prisoners, some being chained upside down and beaten. With fear taking over everyone, a group of villagers decided to kill the whites who they blamed for the trouble. The whites killed one of the attackers and announced their intention of going to the villages to kill more. The warriors hid in caves where Hau'ofa found them and asked them to stop any further actions before going on to Bwagaoia to plead with le Boutillier and Brett to stop. They accepted his plea but continued their brutality against prisoners, in one case taking two prisoners to a small island near Panaeati and leaving them there.

The growing movement around Buliga26 began to occupy the time and attention of Brett and his cronies, as well as that of Hau’ofa and Kaiw, though the former tried to avoid causing conflict with the movement by refusing to incarcerate Buliga. In May 1942 Brett, whose reputation with the ANGAU officers was such they ‘regarded him with suspicion’,27 together with his Papuan wife and two army spotters, was captured

25 Isikeli Hau‘ofa, quoted in unpublished paper by Dr Michael Rynkiewich.
26 For full details see pages 183-186.
by the Japanese at Nivani near Nimoa when he boarded a vessel believing it to be American. As a prisoner of war he ended up on the *Montevideo Maru* and died when that vessel was sunk off the Philippines. For his part in the killings le Boutillier was put on trial after the war but acquitted for lack of eyewitness evidence.

There is no doubt that Hau‘ofa’s presence stopped more killings and protected the safety of the three white men, something le Boutillier acknowledged to Ern Clarke upon his return in 1946.

The ANGAU authorities delayed permission for missionaries to return to their work for almost two years. As early as July 1942 Burton wanted to negotiate with the authorities in Papua for the return of the male missionaries.28 This was just prior to the main hostilities in the district: on 22 July the Japanese landed at Buna and Gona, and five weeks later they were in Milne Bay itself. That the Board persisted with its efforts even after the Japanese attacks suggests Burton still considered the January evacuation unnecessary.

A major obstacle in their return to Papua was the attitude of some military authorities in Port Moresby. Strong described one senior officer as ‘obstinate, pigheaded, prejudiced and anti-missionary’ while others he accused of instigating ‘petty persecutions’ against missionaries.29 The Board described the authorities’ refusal to their persistence as ‘obdurate’30 and when the Anglicans, whose women had finally been evacuated in late August 1942, but only after some had been killed by the Japanese, gained permission for their women to return by December 1943, the Methodists cried foul when their women were not allowed to return until January 1945.

There was an understandable keenness for the missionaries to know how the Papuans felt about their evacuation. When leaving, Henry Williams at East Cape, had unwittingly suggested the safety of himself and his colleagues was the prime motive for the departure:

> I do not think it possible for us to remain here. If we did wish to stay [the Japanese] would take us away from you, perhaps to our death. If

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28 Board minutes, 10 July 1942, MOM 339


30 Executive Committee minutes 17 September 1942, Board minutes 18 March 1943, MOM 339.
that was so you would not see us again. If we depart we can come again to you in a time of peace.³¹

Bartlett and Clarke were the first to return, to Misima in late 1943, followed in January by Henry Williams (East Cape), John Dixon (Salamo) in November 1944 and then Ron Andrew and the first female contingent of six in January 1945. Robert Duigu, son of Bromilow's main translation informant and later to be one of the most respected ministers, claimed that the missionaries should have stayed 'to help us' and were told by Papuans when they returned they were cowards.³² However this is not what the returnees said at the time. Clarke was quick to write of his welcome back: 'There is no evidence here [Misima] of any resentment because of the evacuation ... It is abundantly evident that the talk of native opposition to the return of the evacuees is all 'hooey.' The opposite is very evident here, both from conversation with the people and also from their evident joy at seeing us.'³³ He further justified the evacuation by claiming Papuans supported it because the absence of white people gave no incentive to the Japanese to land on Misima.³⁴ Dixon likewise wrote of the 'tumultuous reception' he received at Salamo.³⁵

The conditions they found on their return can be seen as symbolic of the acceptance of the Methodist Mission by the people. In no location where white missionaries lived - Misima, East Cape, Salamo, Goodenough and Kiriwina - had there been any looting or loss of goods or any item from any house. In fact, Harry Bartlett was amazed that at Misima not even a box of matches left on a table or any of his children's toys had been taken. At East Cape the furniture in the house had been moved into nearby villages for safe keeping, not from Papuans but Allied soldiers keen to souvenir. However, the same did not apply to the MSC house at Kiriwina, which was denuded of all its provisions soon after the departure. These contrasting fortunes simply

³¹ H.T. Williams, 'Letters to Pastors and Teachers', Papua District 1934-1947, MOM 499.
³² Interview: Begasi village near Salamo, 4 April 1989.
³³ Ern Clarke, MR, December 1943, 8; March 1944, 14.
³⁴ Clarke to Dixon, 16 December 1943. Clarke family papers.
³⁵ Board minutes, 8 December 1944, MOM 340.
illustrates the difference between a Mission well established, known and accepted and another quite new and not yet a part of the local community.

Whereas the Methodists had their problems because of their departure, the MSC found their main problem came with the conclusion of the evacuation episode. Through some means two of the missionaries, Baldwin and a brother, Hugh Fraser, returned to Eastern Papua within a month of the evacuation. All along Baldwin had declared his intention not to evacuate and gained de Boismenu’s permission to stay at Yule Island, eventually going back to Sideia sometime mid-1942\(^\text{36}\). Basing themselves at Sideia, Baldwin and Fraser moved around Milne Bay as much as possible but at considerable risk, at times being strafed by enemy fire. What they did was resume the schools, offer medical aid and conduct Mass. The strain became too much for Fraser, who was repatriated home in late 1943, protesting his desire to return to the Bay.\(^\text{37}\) The Australian province then wanted to arrange a companion priest for Baldwin but their preferred choice, Earl, had just been sent somewhere else with his unit and Taylor, in addition to his previous problems with Baldwin, was considered unsuitable as his health would not stand up to another term in the tropics.\(^\text{38}\) In the end no one was sent.

The MSC supplied a number of military chaplains for the war effort, including some who were killed, and other priests were just not available. Baldwin, never the easiest person to get on with and capable of many moods, found the isolation difficult, not surprising given the danger he found himself in. He developed a sense of paranoia about what he saw as neglect by his superiors in Sydney and wrote to them in a way that clearly showed the strain of twenty months of privation:

> If you want me to help you to know and understand [what is happening here] please answer my letters, meet the points I bring up otherwise I haven’t the heart to write. Remember I’m nearly dead with the strain of trying to be a whole institution on my own. If you don’t do that, - well, I’m Eastern Papua mission to you just now - it means you are not interested, it is my life, I’m cut off.\(^\text{39}\)

\(^{36}\) The only indication as to when this happened is a comment from de Boismenu dated 18 September 1942: ‘Baldwin and Fraser are now in the place where the Mission first started.’ SHM

\(^{37}\) Chaplain Gerard Smyth to Father Provincial, 16 October 1943, SHM.

\(^{38}\) Father Provincial to de Boismenu, 11 October 1943, SHM.

\(^{39}\) Baldwin to Kerrins (Father Provincial), 11 December 1943, SHM.
When he had no quick reply he again wrote, in January, asking for someone to come and 'ease the ache of so much mental and spiritual isolation' but by April he was still waiting for an answer to his December correspondence. It was another three months before the first of his colleagues returned - May 1944 - and what ensued was a continuing argument between Baldwin and the Provincial in Sydney. The bad feelings generated did credit to no-one but a great sympathy has to be felt for Baldwin whose courage and endurance were heroic in proportion.

The evacuation showed a Papuan 'ownership' of the church. As much as possible the regular routine of class meetings during the week, Sunday School and church services were conducted in each place. On Goodenough, a place affected more than most, church meetings were, at times, conducted in secret places like caves when the Japanese were around. Schools were conducted though resources were lacking and attendances small in just about every place, due to the males being absent and the poor quality of teachers in village schools.

Papuan church members played their part in the war effort. Some, especially those trained such as printing press workers, were recruited by ANGAU, and others acted as interpreters and local advisors as well as helping refuel seaplanes. On the whole, the people had little heart for the implications of war, especially the killings. Henry Tauwaigu and a Kiriwinan teacher, Ulayaisi, joined a warship but his distaste for killing unknown people led him to seek permission not to go ashore at Kilia in the D'Entrecasteaux where Japanese were being hunted, a request refused. Another mission leader, William Tagelani, was mortified when two Japanese airmen were captured near Salamo, blindfolded, tied up and 'tortured' with 'a lot of water' until one died and the other taken to a concentration camp in Milne Bay.

40 Baldwin to Father Provincial, 27 January 1944, SHM.
41 See Chapter Seven, 122-4.
42 Letters of David Mone (Tongan missionary), Bwaidoga 1942, NGC ALY 3/501.
43 ANGAU recruits including men who were later to become Papuan church leaders: Robert Budiara, Robert Duigu, Ben Sopilagai (all became ministers); Onesimo Sinabu, Nelson Kainamale, Polonga Edoni, Simeon Busia and Saulo Guininiei (laymen). Ben Sopilagai refuelled seaplanes while most of the others went to Port Moresby.
Incidents such as these, perpetrated by white people, including the execution of followers of Buliga at Misirna, left Papuans with a sense of disgust. Ern Clarke recalled five years after his return the legacy of the war time and the executions at Misima:

The execution took all day to perform. This event left a very bad effect on the people and brought us as a race into contempt. It was not uncommon in those days to find myself ignored or even snubbed by the people of the island [Misima]... Because of its association with the white race our church itself was in some disrepute. 44

While it can be argued the reception Clarke felt was also associated with how some people felt about the evacuation, experiences in the war meant Papuan perceptions of white people had changed. As the missionaries started returning it was important they realised the people they came to work among were different and there was greater need to hand over to them the church they had created. But the opportunity was not taken up.

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Part Three: After the War

CHAPTER SEVEN

Catholics: Problems and Prospects

When the period of enforced departure was over the immediate problem of staff relations among priests was also resolved. Bryson and Flynn did not return and, more importantly, neither did Taylor, for health reasons. Baldwin remained in Papua until 1960 and, while he had difficulties with other superiors, they were never again so intense. It is not that Taylor was a poor leader. He was a good administrator, an organised person who wanted things done in good bureaucratic order whereas Baldwin, a loner and given to strong passions, reacted strongly to those who disagreed with him.

When his colleagues returned to join Baldwin, they found the war had destroyed most of the material resources of the Catholic Mission. Although it had only three established stations - Sideia, Daio, and Kiriwina - it had, nevertheless, reasonable material assets. ANGAU had taken over the boats and almost all the buildings belonging to the Mission were destroyed: at Sideia, only the church and an old school shed remained; at Daio all the buildings were destroyed; and in the Trobriands - where there had been only a small work - the buildings remained but everything else, such as the punt, furniture, household possessions, building materials, books and educational resources, was gone.\footnote{Baldwin to (Father Provincial) Kerrins, 27 January 1944, SHM.} Returning missionaries were faced with resurrecting the small remains of their pioneer work and creating new opportunities to grow a mass movement. They faced the same problems as before - inadequate staffing, limited access to land and financial insecurity.

The missionaries began returning in May 1944. Fathers Earl and Dwyer together with Brother Joseph Vogt were the first, and their arrival went a long way to relieving Baldwin's anxieties, not so much for who they were as for who they were not! In his isolation Baldwin had much time to dwell on matters that contributed to his state of mind. It was only when Fraser returned south that the provincial leaders became acquainted with what he and Baldwin had been doing during the evacuation period. Whatever was said, it caused the authorities to consider sending back missionaries to
join Baldwin as a matter of urgency. When they informed Baldwin the news they received from Fraser came as ‘a shock’\(^2\) it only heightened his sense of neglect by his superiors. He replied:

> I wonder you did not realise what I was doing up here. It seems to me I have advertised more than enough, and am abashed at myself ... You say you hope that it won’t be long until the mission is well staffed again and given the opportunity of carrying on its work in full strength. I find it hard to take that as anything but a pious aspiration.\(^3\)

Baldwin’s pessimism had a lot to do with what he saw as the weak state of the mission, a condition due only partly to the war years. ‘This mission has to be rebuilt practically \textit{ab initio} ... Tell yourself there is no Eastern Papua mission yet, some four hundred baptised merely constitute an obligation to see about it.’\(^4\)

Baldwin was not averse to giving advice on how to go about ‘rebuilding’ which contained echoes of his unfortunate problems with Taylor:

> A successful mission cannot be built by amateurs and birds of passage. It is a vocation and profession, it takes years of training. And the head of the mission more than any other, needs to make the mission his life. If he does not damn few others will ... What is needed now is a man to Father the whole work, some one who would be to it what de Boismenu has been to the Yule Mission as a whole ... it is the moment when, if you want an Eastern Papua Mission, it is most imperative to supply him.

And, before he could get any response, he returned to his feelings of hurt and neglect by putting the success of the work in the control of the provincial leaders.

> I can do no more than I am doing, [he complained] If you are given to thought, and I suppose you are, you might bring Eastern Papua within the ambit of your cogitations. There are more souls possibly depending on the province here for their salvation than all the rest of the province’s external works combined. Certainly their need is greatest. I take it for granted that you have spared no pains to do what you could. But a man’s utmost is relative and if you had seen what I have, know what I know, your efforts would have borne fruit. If you find this letter salty it does not mean I am unappreciative of what you have done, but only that I expect more and better ... \(^5\)

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\(^2\) Father Provincial to Baldwin, 24 October 1943, SHM.

\(^3\) Baldwin to Father Provincial, 11 December 1943, SHM.

\(^4\) Baldwin to Father Provincial, 11 December 1943, SHM.

\(^5\) Baldwin to Father Provincial, 11 December 1943, SHM; Baldwin to [Father Provincial] Kerrins, 27 January 1944, SHM.
Dwyer was another to offer advice on the suitability of priests and what was needed. The person of the priest was, he considered, of primary importance. While the good Catholic in Australia would go to Mass out of duty, in Papua attendance was more likely only if the priest was liked. Each personality defect was widely reported and good qualities remembered by the people whose judgements were never wrong. The result of this was a priest was either 'good' or 'no good.' This required Kensington making a ‘most careful selection’ of candidates for Papua. Dwyer’s concern was because ‘over the last ten years we have had four or five men whose time would have been spent more profitably South.’

When a new superior was appointed it was not a priest in the image that Baldwin had sought; rather, it was one of the returnees, James Dwyer. Dwyer, discharged from war-time chaplaincy, returned to Sideia and Kensington appointed him pro-Superior. There were rumours that Taylor was prepared to return, a suggestion that ‘cheered me greatly’, said Dwyer, who counselled that should it happen it would be wise for all concerned to offer Baldwin to Yule Island where he had ‘staunch friends’ amongst the French Fathers. For his part Dwyer wanted Baldwin to remain if he, Dwyer, was in any position of authority.

The return of his colleagues was the opportunity for the Father Provincial, the influential Father Mort Kerrins, to put an end to Baldwin’s bitterness:

In your last letter you make reference to the fact you have not received letters from me for some time ... I think you should understand the reason for the silence. I did not answer your recent letters because I did not consider them deserving of a reply. Apart from the lack of respect and poor spirit they displayed, most of what you had written was too unreliable and fantastic to warrant reasonable comment, and I feel it my duty to ask you to refrain from carrying on this type of correspondence ... Such conduct achieves nothing and definitely hinders the work of the Mission. I regret having to write in this strain to you, particularly since you have given so many years of devoted service to the Mission, but the correction is made only because it is necessary and has been deferred as long as possible.

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6 Dwyer to Father Provincial, 2 September 1944, SHM. Those he named as unsuitable were Flynn, Docherty, Doody and Baldwin.

7 Dwyer to Father Provincial, 10 April 1944; 8 May 1944, SHM.

8 Father Provincial to Baldwin, 10 May 1944, SHM.
Taylor and Baldwin had asked for missionaries who had qualities that had not been evident in most of those who had already served: Taylor wanted one who was prepared to operate outside the mission station - comfortable in the village environment and willing and able to learn the language - while Baldwin looked for a leader with some charisma who would give lifetime service.

The problem for the authorities and the missionaries was that there was no cohesive plan for the mission so the returning missionaries continued doing what they had done before. However the context had subtly changed. The new colonial administration never rejected the spheres of influence agreement, but neither did it enforce it like its predecessors. At the same time, there were now more plantations on the market and at prices that appealed to the Catholics. Consequently the mission went through two decades of expansion which, however, was not due so much to pioneering work by the missionaries as it was to a small number of local people who, exposed to Catholic teaching elsewhere, brought the religion to their home islands.

The first new place to receive resident missionaries was the Louisiade archipelago where, in 1947, Father Kevin Twomey arrived to open a station at Nimoa. Some years before the war a Catholic Filipino, Florentin Paulisbo, had purchased half of this small island, married a local woman, fathered one son and adopted another. He sent his wife and children to Yule Island to be instructed in the Catholic faith and, on their return, his sons started village schools. Twomey’s arrival enabled this work to be harnessed and then to extend the Mission’s activities to neighbouring islands in the Calvados Chain and beyond to the extremity of Rossel. The commencement of the Catholic Mission on this most distant island is the story of a most remarkable man.

In the very earliest days of the mission a handful of Rossel boys had been taken to the Sideia school. When the Nimoa mission started they were there to help but their ambition was to have a Catholic mission on their home island. After the war they and the ‘grand old man’, Camillus Tebi, started a mission station on Rossel, at Jaru, and commenced a school. When the war began to affect Port Moresby in 1942 Camillus, who was working there, walked the whole distance to Milne Bay, secured passage on

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9 Kevin McGhee, *Australian MSC Missions* ..., 60. Son Joseph was the father of the first Premier of Milne Bay province, Patrick Paulisbo.
a launch from Samarai as far as Nivani (near Nimoa) where he was captured by the Japanese, who operated a sea-plane base there, and put to work. Following heavy Allied bombing the Japanese left and Camillus made his way to Misima from where he became the only known person to go by canoe to Rossel\textsuperscript{10} where he opened the mission station, school and became a lay missioner by baptising the dying. Twomey visited the station and conducted the first Mass, in 1947, then Bishop Sorin visited the school the following year. Father Kevin Murphy arrived in 1951 as the first resident missionary to find two hundred and fifty people ready for baptism.\textsuperscript{11}

The next major expansion was to Goodenough Island when a mission station, Santa Maria, was commenced on the last day of 1949, again following the influence of a few men who had experience in school and work at the Sideia headquarters. The site was Wataluma on the north-east coast, where the Methodists had made an abortive attempt to move their Wailagi station in 1940. The attraction of Wataluma to both missions was the amount of available land; the weakness was the poor quality of the soil. Having secured 700 acres, Fathers Gregory Abbott and Nobby Earl landed there on 31 December 1949 and conducted the first Mass on New Year’s Day 1950. There were not the initial numbers Murphy had found at Rossel for, although Goodenough had a larger population (approximately 10,000), not many lived in the Wataluma area: most lived in the south-east where the Methodists had been since 1894.

The last station to be opened was Budoya on south-east Fergusson, in September 1950. Of all its stations this was the most prized, the ‘jewel in the Catholic crown’, because it put them in the Methodist heartland and mid-way between Dobu and the well established headquarters at Salamo. At first Nobby Earl lived on a boat as did his successor Father Martin Atchison when he took over in April 1951. Again, the nucleus they worked with were locals who had been educated at Sideia together with some young men recruited through the Commonwealth Reconstruction Training Scheme by the Mission’s most enduring tradesman, Brother Joseph Vogt. Within a few years this mission had extended its outreach to another station at Kelologeya on southern

\textsuperscript{10} Kevin McGhee, \textit{Australian MSC Missions ...}, 72.

\textsuperscript{11} Kevin McGhee, \textit{Australian MSC Missions ...}, 72.
Normanby, and from there a further outpost was started at Kurada on south-western Normanby which, though not far away, could only be reached from Kelologeya by a most difficult walk or by a hazardous sea journey. Each new station was occupied by a priest whose pioneer activity was to cement the work of local converts who had started a school and given elementary instruction in the Catholic faith.

By the late fifties the extension had been completed and the main task was to consolidate. With the exception of Kiriwina and Budoya the new stations were distant from Methodist stations or were in places of smaller population than Methodist areas. To this extent the spheres of influence agreement had been effective in keeping the competing missions apart and restricting Catholic influence.

The growth in Catholic activity brought its own prospects and problems. To deal with them there were ecclesiastical changes made but major financial and staffing deficiencies were never overcome by the province. Leadership was an issue, as it had always been. After the war this issue was resolved with more equanimity and grace than it had before. James Dwyer's appointment as Religious Superior on 1 August 1946 elevated a leader who both had ability and commanded respect from his colleagues.

Dwyer was a reluctant leader. He had periods of doubt about his worth as a missionary, particularly before the war, but these were dissolved by his willingness to be one of the first to return. Out of a mixture of humility and doubt he asked not to be considered for leadership: 'if there is any chance of my appointment as permanent boss - you can rule me out - not enough sanctity, example or knowledge. The Administrator or Prefect has to be capable of running a small diocese - definitely rule me right out. The Bishop seems to think we are shortly to be cast adrift [from Port Moresby].' Dwyer's request was refused and he was duly appointed, an appointment that coincided with the decision in 1946 to make the Port Moresby mission a Vicariate and the Eastern Papua Mission a Prefecture Apostolic, commencing the devolution of administration from Yule Island that de Boismenu had first advocated in 1930. It had been de Boismenu's

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12 Father Provincial to Dwyer, 18 July 1946, SHM.

13 Dwyer to Father Provincial, 25 November 1947; 24 March 1948, SHM.
strategy that the mission should have its administration where there were major ports. By making Port Moresby a vicariate separate from Yule Island, the process of dismemberment was started. Along with his appointment as superior, Dwyer was Vicar Delegate for the Prefecture, in effect Bishop Sorin’s representative and thereby local leader of the Mission.  

Coincident with Dwyer’s appointment as superior there was steady growth in the Catholic presence in eastern Papua, particularly after the start at Goodenough, and prospects of strong growth when approval for a land grant in the Dobu area was given. Dwyer laid out his personnel requirements: an ‘experienced [priest] ready to take on a big job ... a man of some years ordained and with good judgment’ for a new Dobu station for which ‘the land grant will go through’, three more priests - one to be bursar and trainer of catechists - and two brothers.  

One priest, Gregory Abbott, and two brothers were sent. With its growing staff, the Mission needed to be more autonomous. Episcopal leadership as far away as Yule Island was a recipe for slow responses to new opportunities. 

This feeling had been reinforced by the elevation, in 1945, of Andre Sorin as bishop to replace de Boismenu who had, after previous attempts failed, at last secured papal permission to retire. Sorin made Dwyer’s task more difficult by requesting Earl’s transfer to Port Moresby. Like his predecessor, Sorin wanted a strong Australian presence in the capital and with increasing government interest in education, Missions were appointing Education Officers, yet the vicariate had not yet done so. An Australian priest was considered a necessity for this role, ‘He [Sorin] judged his need was greater than ours’, Dwyer lamented. The frustration for Dwyer was that he was preparing for the new work at Dobu and Rossel, work that needed experienced staff and for which Earl was earmarked.

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14 Andre Sorin, Open letter to Fathers, Brothers and Sisters of the Prefecture Apostolic of Samarai 18 July 1946, SHM.
15 Dwyer to Father Provincial, 1 October 1947; 25 November 1947, SHM.
16 Dwyer to Father Provincial, 22 May 1947, SHM.
17 Dwyer to Father Provincial, 22 May 1947, SHM.
It was clear that the Eastern Papua Mission would need to be separated from Port Moresby, which would mean the creation of a permanent leader, either an Administrator or a Prefect. This, and the growing rift with Yule Island, never rancorous but often frustrating, was resolved when, in 1951, the Samarai Mission, now with ten priests, seven brothers and sixteen sisters as well as a number of Melanesian workers, was given its own administrator, Father John Francis Doyle - with the title of Monsignor - as its first Prefect Apostolic. It was the same Doyle who had made the abortive attempt to start this mission in 1930. The new arrangement saw the departure of Dwyer to the MSC mission at Rabaul where he had considerable influence in educational policy and was a foundation member of the Legislative Council of Papua New Guinea.

Doyle’s leadership was lengthy, from 1951 to 1970. When the mission was made the Vicariate Apostolic of Samarai in 1956, he became Vicar Apostolic and was then elevated to the episcopacy as the first Bishop of Sideia, in 1957. He retired in 1970 and was replaced by the South Australian, Father Desmond Moore. The reorganisation over those years saw the mission change from Eastern Papua Mission to Prefecture Apostolic and then Vicariate Apostolic of Samarai to Diocese of Samarai and then to its present status, Diocese of Alotau.

Doyle arrived when the expansion to new places had already taken place, but the results were meagre. There were only 2,700 Catholics belonging to the Mission. The first twenty years had been spent establishing stations anywhere it was possible within the constraints imposed upon them. Schools had been about the only viable entry point into local communities, along with regular village visitation by priests. Some priests were reluctant patrol padres, unwilling to learn local languages, and more comfortable on their stations. A steady increase in the number of brothers and nuns to work in the schools released the priests from educational responsibilities although Doyle wanted priests to be willing to teach in school.

Under Lyons, Taylor and Dwyer there had been no particular policy for the mission apart from establishing the work. Under Doyle, education became that primary focus. The state of the mission disappointed him. What he had read in Annals and elsewhere had convinced him the mission was in a ‘satisfactory and optimistic’ state but this assessment was ‘not just’: they had ‘scarcely succeeded in scratching the surface of
the population’ and ‘for this reason the policy of education is put forward as a possible means of progress.’ It was established thinking in the mission that children educated in their schools would go home and establish their own school, ‘with twenty or thirty children ...That way lies success’, and through its schools ‘gradually build up a Catholic people.’ Doyle’s singular thinking was not confined to his oft-expressed concern over the influence of Methodists but of government as well; when at a Mission and Government Conference it was announced that government was intending to open as many schools as possible in all areas, he felt ‘threatened’ as such a move ‘would be no good for us as they make their schools so attractive’ but he would ‘hang on as this is the only way we have of getting future Catholics’ because Catholic schools ‘must be the nursery of our propaganda.’

It is questionable whether the focus on education did advance a strong Catholic presence. Over twenty-five years there was a 700 percent increase in the Catholic population but in raw figures it was an increase of only 12,000 people:

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18 Doyle to [Father Provincial] Kerrins, 10 August 1953, SHM.
19 Dwyer to Father Provincial, 2 September 1944, SHM.
20 Doyle, Policy comment on 1953 Annual Report ‘Prospectus Status Missionis’, SHM.
21 Doyle to Father Provincial, 24 November 1954, SHM.
22 Doyle, Additional comments to 1952 Annual Report ‘Prospectus Status Missionis’, SHM.
The policy of depending on schools to increase the Catholic population was shaken when, in 1970, the government brought in its National Education System. All schools had to be registered to receive any government financial support, including the payment of salaries which had, hitherto, been paid by the agencies who conducted the school, and who had been able to claim subsidies for certificated teachers. One problem for missions now was that the Milne Bay Education Board would appoint the teachers. This meant Protestant teachers could be appointed to Catholic schools and vice versa, and teachers with no religious affiliation, and even those opposed to religious values, could be appointed to a mission school. While each primary school had its own management committee, which set the moral standards for teachers, the provincial education board could override it in appointments. What applied to primary schools also applied to the small but growing number of high schools.

What was important for the missions was to get the support of the village communities in order to secure the agency rights to conduct their schools. Education authorities were aware that parents of primary children preferred a Christian mission to run their school especially, as was often the case in Milne Bay, when the school included a number of boarders. It created a new opportunity for the Catholics to expand into new areas if they could secure local support in opening schools where there was no Catholic presence. On Goodenough, Father Kevin English concluded ‘My impression is that the mission can’t survive or grow unless we have schools .... How to get to the leaders except through the schools has me beaten.’

Implementing his educational policy created Doyle’s biggest problem. It was not simply the cost of providing a good education system that caused the mission to endure penury and debt; that would have happened to some extent anyway. Schools required qualified teachers and quality resources to compete with other missions and government and the cost of these added to other considerable expenditures. The mission depended on external sources for its money, such as the Australian province, fund raising in Australia, Propaganda in Rome and from plantations, (there was one from the pre-war

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24 This was to ensure that Papuan teachers would be given priority in employment.

25 English to Father Superior, 21 March 1971, SHM.
period, the 1,000-acre 99-year lease purchased in 1939 at Sagarai. Rome had decreed that the home province assist the mission financially but not from provincial funds, only through appeals. Some time later it allowed the province to give the mission the small annual sum of £350.26

After the war the Mission did well from the disposal of army stock, from which they rebuilt their infrastructure and bought back the 26-foot *St Joseph* from the army. The Baumata plantation was in good shape and there were no debts to pay. Dwyer declared their finances sound, and Kensington was advised that the province ‘is in a better position financially than it has ever been, so the war is not without its benefits.’27 War damage claims realised a further £2000. It was an opportunity to go on a spending spree and the most vital need was boats. Dwyer, apart from buying the *St Joseph*, and having the *Stella Maris* also in service, went to Australia to buy a larger vessel. He arranged for a Taree boat builder to build a vessel, for which the keel was laid in August 1945 and the boat launched the following August, named *Morning Star*. It has remained the flagship of the mission ever since, the equivalent of the Methodists’ *Koonwarra*.

By 1947 the situation had changed as the finances were getting low and reserves being used up. One hundred pupils and station workers at Sideia were dismissed because it cost £1 per month to feed them.28 By 1951 the mission had a fleet of five boats and was looking for another in preparation for the new station at Budoya. Doyle’s schools policy committed the mission to heavy financial responsibilities because centralised establishments were necessary. In 1951, for example, there were 220 boys and 70 girls in the Sideia school alone, most of them boarders. With the soil there unsuitable for large-scale agriculture, food needed to be purchased or gathered from the sea. The annual cost of the mission was £20,000, for which there was an income of a little over half that: £8,500 from Propaganda and grants of £5,000 from other sources.29

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26 Father Provincial to Taylor, 11 December 1940, SHM.

27 Dwyer to Father Provincial, 11 June 1944; Father Provincial to Earl 30 April 1944, SHM.

28 Dwyer to Father Provincial, 1 October 1947, SHM.

29 Doyle to Apostolic Delegate, 21 July 1951, SHM.
By 1953 the cost of running the mission was £1,500 per month, an amount which only covered running costs and did not include anything for maintenance and repairs. In the mid-fifties the Mission invested in a copra and cocoa plantation, Lilinakaia, on New Britain. Dwyer, now well established in Rabaul, had urged the purchase as a means of financial self support. Purchased for £74,000 the Samarai Mission was the major stake-holder with an investment of £40,000, but it was acknowledged that there would be no return for years. Dwyer was optimistic and reported to Kensington that, once paid for - ‘this will not be for another couple of years’ - the full income should meet all requirements of the mission. But the sixties showed that copra was not a reliable economic proposition and cocoa was prone to diseases. The Samarai Mission failed to receive many of the promised benefits of this investment.

In 1956 Doyle was again asking for help. Instead of the £13,500 expected from Propaganda, government grants for education and medical work and a further donation from the Holy Childhood Seminarians Fund, only an amount of £750 for medical work had been received by mid-year. Even when the rest arrived it would only write-off debts and leave enough for two more months, so by year’s end they would be £10,000 in debt. Kensington had no solution, but assured him they would find the capital to allow the ‘normal advancement’ of the work. Apart from the regular subsidy of £8,830 from Propaganda, a further £2,500 had also been granted.

Doyle’s tenure was punctured by financial crises for which the only chance of reprieve was special grants from Propaganda in Rome, although some innovative schemes were tried at home. Debts kept mounting. In 1958 £8,000 was asked for to help maintain the 500 children in station schools and the mission’s eight boats; in 1961 a request was made for £22,000 for a new boat with engine, a sawmill, electricity plant

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30 Balance Sheet of Lilinakaia Plantation as at 30 April 1959, SHM.
31 Father Provincial to Doyle, 24 June 1958, SHM.
32 Doyle to Father Provincial, 19 June 1956, SHM.
33 Father Provincial to Monsignor [Doyle], 5 July 1956, SHM.
34 One of the more interesting ones was the ‘Dream Home’ where, in the mid-fifties and in conjunction with the Sydney afternoon newspaper The Sun, the MSC ran a lottery for a new house in the Randwick area. It produced little economic benefit for the Eastern Papua Mission.
and a truck. (Propaganda granted £18,500 towards these),\textsuperscript{35} and a further request for £15,000 for another boat in 1966. His colleagues were perturbed by Doyle’s increasingly erratic budgeting which, coupled with a desire to purchase more land, created debt that was almost out of control.

By 1967 there was an imperative to move the secondary school from Sideia. With its growing numbers, the poor land, and increasing isolation from the government offices which were moving from Samarai to the more distant Alotau, the mission purchased Hagita plantation, an unproductive property whose land was its best asset. Owned by Burns Philp, its coconut trees were 60 years old and the estate had been badly run for years. Covering 5,000 acres, an inspector’s report concluded that it was not a commercial proposition but, if purchased for other purposes, it would be a good asset.\textsuperscript{36} The sale was completed and on it was built Hagita High School, which was operating by 1969. This was good propaganda for the Catholics but the school was appallingly short on facilities. With 300 pupils and 22 staff it had no water, toilets or staff quarters yet Doyle was considering buying Waigani plantation.

Doyle’s leadership was not devoid of progress altogether. The idea of localisation had been given some encouragement. The first occasion was the formation in 1952 of an order of local teaching brothers, an initiative of Doyle’s. Responding to a request by a young convert, Doyle named it the Society of the Sarto Brothers, in honour of Giuseppe Sarto or Pope Pius X, and so named by Doyle because his appointment as Prefect Apostolic was announced on 6 June 1952, the first anniversary of the beatification of Pius X. The training for the brotherhood was drawn on a similar Australian model with allowance for the lesser educational background of the candidates. In 1968 it was decided to move the Society to Port Moresby as a means of opening it up to candidates from other parts of the country.

A second indication of localisation was when Doyle returned from the first session of Vatican II. In a lengthy letter to his staff\textsuperscript{37} he stated what the Council

\textsuperscript{35} Doyle to de Furstenberg (Apostolic Delegate), 22 August 1961, SHM; Waldersee, \textit{Neither Eagles nor Saints’} \ldots, 344.

\textsuperscript{36} Doyle to Kerrins, 28 March 1966, SHM.

\textsuperscript{37} Doyle to Fathers, Brothers and Sisters 7 March 1963, SHM.
meetings had taught him about the decolonisation process that even Papua New Guinea would one day enter.\(^{38}\) Of major concern to him was the lack of involvement by the people in the liturgy of the church, which particularly referred to the failure to use local languages and the 'silent, non-participant congregation at Mass.' It would seem that his instructions had little impact on some older priests. Jim and Ann Henderson, linguists on Rossel (1970\(^{87}\)), lived in the village of Cheme near the main Catholic station in the east at Jinjo. In 1977 the Methodists opened a new church at Damenu on the western end, their main station. It was made an ecumenical occasion with Bishop Moore and Father Kevin English from Jinjo invited. Over 1,000 people attended with the Catholics ‘greatly surprised’ to hear their Protestant friends reading and preaching, not in English or praying in Latin, but in the Rossel language, and with much lay participation, in contrast to Catholic worship being in English and ‘priest dominated’.\(^{39}\)

An allied concern was the failure to develop local leaders in both ecclesiastical and lay fields. With no local priest in the offing, Doyle took seriously what other bishops had said to him: ‘that success of missionary endeavour is judged by the number of indigenant [sc indigenous] clergy of the country.’ While the growing number of registered school teachers was encouraging, he admitted that very little was being done to develop lay leaders as helpers to the ecclesiastical workers.

A hopeful sign of localisation was the ordination in 1969 of the first local priest, Father John Sinou. A native of Tewara Island off the eastern coast of Fergusson Island, Sinou had left a Methodist school to go to Sideia and, having expressed interest in the priesthood, was sent in 1954 to Chevalier College, Bowral, for secondary schooling leading to theological studies in Rabaul and Bomana. His ordination took place at Sideia on 7 March 1969. By 1980 there was only one other local priest, Father Sam Miyon, ordained on 17 June 1977 and since then no other.

\(^{38}\) How slow Doyle was in acknowledging this is obvious when it is realised the Foot Report to the United Nations and major decisions to create the House of Assembly and the University of Papua New Guinea had already taken place.

\(^{39}\) Informants: Jim and Ann Henderson, Sydney, 6 April 1994. Similar reference to this is made in communications from Reverend Libai Tiengwa (Rossel-born United Church minister) in letter to Reverend Ern Clarke 24 July 1977, Clarke family private papers in possession of Andrew Clarke, Adelaide.
By 1970 it was recognised in the mission that Doyle was getting too old - he was 54 when he became its leader and 60 when made bishop in 1957. One of his older priests remarked, in the context of the Waigani plantation proposal, 'I think he is hardly normal... his sickness seems to have made him depend more on Divine Providence than before.'

His retirement in 1970 led his successor, Bishop Desmond Moore, to examine the extent of the debt. His report found a situation akin to insolvency.

Of a debt at 31 July 1971 of $139,000 and the need of another $20,000 to see them through to the end of the year, the report showed they were spending $4,000 more per month than their income and that the management of the mission was 'most unbusinesslike and the accounting impossible.'

Moore lost little time in addressing the problems. In a lengthy, confidential letter to his missionaries he wrote that the financial situation was 'a matter of life and death as far as the mission is concerned' and a halt was called to all capital expenditure 'just to survive.' Spending had to be reduced by $22,000 a year, yet better wages must be paid.

Moore, just as Doyle had done when he returned from Vatican II in 1963, called for a communal response and introduced a centralised system of ordering and accounting which would inevitably lead to a loss of some independence by individuals.

Among the stringencies introduced by Moore was a maximum $50 per person per month allowed for all purposes. Tony O'Brien, assisted by gift parcels from his mother, had no money for fuel for his motor bike, and missionaries were urged to run small trade stores to provide support and to charge people for boat passage.

A graphic picture of the effect of financial stringency on missionaries is contained in a communication from Father Kevin English who, in advocating support for the idea of a regional superior so missionaries would have a 'fatherly and friendly type' to give them encouragement and sympathy, gave the example of colleagues:

'It's happened in the Eastern Papua Mission that fellows have lived on rice and parrots and one fellow lived on wallaby. They are decent fellows...

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40 Doody to Father Provincial, 7 May 1967, SHM.
41 'Resume of Debts owing by Diocese of Samarai', SHM.
42 Confidential letter to ‘My Dear Fellow Missionaries’ 1971, SHM.
and a bit heroic to do that but I feel it is asking too much from generous hearted fellows. A hippie could live on such stations and feel the pinch a bit. Here [Wataluma], by the way, the only meal is the evening meal. The other two are just snacks. Poor [Father] Kev. Young’s relations seem to keep the place going.44

Moore’s concern was not just for the immediate reputation of the mission but for the possible future handover to the people. He was concerned to leave them a system of stewardship they understood and could operate. In contrast to the Methodist/United Church practice, and what happened in Australia, the MSC did not ask worshippers to give financial offerings on Sunday.

Political independence in 1975 was influential in the formation of the Pacific Islands Provincial Administration of the MSC, which took place a week after independence. This came about by Rome’s decision that the MSC missions in Papua New Guinea should be independent of the home provinces. The Australian congregation handed over the Port Moresby and Milne Bay regions to the new body, though they agreed to continue their financial and personnel support and transferred the title deeds of various properties to the new Province.

By 1980 the problems over finance and, to a lesser extent, personnel saw the agreement to transfer some of the MSC work to PIME which, ironically, was the religious order that had attempted to start the first Catholic work in Papua New Guinea at Woodlark Island, in 1850. The PIME Fathers arrived at Goodenough in 1981 to take over and others arrived later to take over the MSC work on the Trobriands. After half a century there was an acknowledgment that the dream of Australia’s own mission could only continue as a joint work.

44 English to Father Provincial, 21 March 1971, SHM.
CHAPTER EIGHT
Methodists: Towards Autonomy

After the military authorities gave clearance the Methodist men began returning at intervals. First came Ern Clarke and Harry Bartlett to Misima in November 1943, then Henry Williams to East Cape the following January. Salamo welcomed John Dixon in November 1944 and in January 1945 Ron Andrew again returned, together with six single women. The authorities did not open up Kiriwina until Hedley Shotton arrived in 1946. Of those who returned at these times only the women, Bartlett and Williams had been evacuees. Dixon, Clarke, Andrew and Shotton had all retired from missionary service before January 1942.

The fact that the post-evacuation mission was led by former missionaries ensured its conservatism. Andrew had again been prevailed upon to return and he and his colleagues were faced with almost insurmountable obstacles. ANGAU had conscripted all the mission’s property into the war effort. Its plant and equipment at Salamo were unserviceable after the war, the hospital had been denuded of its furnishings and the boats, though returned, were in poor repair and mostly unseaworthy. It took many years to begin to get the boats in regular service. In 1951 boat maintenance and repairs totalled £9,336 whilst the cost of missionary staff was £8,214.¹

At the time of the evacuation it was claimed Salamo had the best hospital in the country² but its equipment was all removed during the war to furnish and equip a new government hospital at Mapamoiwa on north-west Fergusson. Also at Salamo the technical workshops were stripped of all their plant and equipment leaving ‘forlorn empty buildings, depressing indeed.’³ By 1949 there were still only a few tools and no machinery in the Technical Department. The War Claims Commission eventually paid the Board a total of £7,000 for the boats (though the Board was required to pay £1,800

¹ Annual Report to 1952 Synod, MOM 360.
² E. Kettle, That They Might Live, 98, 117.
³ J.R. Andrew, Annual Report to 1945 Synod, MOM 353.
of it to buy back three of them), 4 £4,500 for plant and £2,780 for ‘deterioration and occupation.’ 5 Needless to say such amounts were inadequate to rebuild the whole infrastructure of the mission. Consequently the mission was always operating from a position of weakness.

The return after the war should have caused the leaders of the Mission to rethink its future, especially in the light of fewer missionaries to meet greater needs elsewhere, and the Board’s oft repeated call for development of local leadership. However, this did not happen primarily because those who came to lead the mission were the same people who had been its pre-war conservative leaders. Whilst the returnees were all men of ability the district gained little of substance from their return. The reason was simple: none was young and their earlier retirement from Papua was because of the heavy physical toll missionary life exacted. They were only exposing themselves to more of the same and they did not last long. Henry Williams had gone by January 1944 and Harry Bartlett six months later. John Dixon soon followed and when Andrew departed in late 1947 only Clarke remained of those who first returned. At times there were only two ministers to administer the whole district.

With John Rundle having died in 1944, the Board again prevailed on Ron Andrew, now approaching sixty, to return for another period as chairman, from 1945 to 1947. With him and the team of tried and proven male missionaries one thing was obvious: they would not change the way things were done.

Another prevailed on to return, in 1946, was Hedley Shotton, former missionary at Kiriwina (1932-38) who returned there until moved to Dobu in 1947 to become chairman, a position he held until his retirement in 1953. His chairmanship was notable for his gentle and compassionate nature though his quiet, academic manner sometimes confused his colleagues, used as they were to a more rugged style of chairman. There is no doubt about the respect he was given but some did not know how to take him. His desire for all people to develop a daily devotional relationship commended him to the lay staff but when he ventured to suggest a change in political perceptions some were

4 Board minutes 14 June 1946; Executive Committee minutes 10 July 1946, MOM 340.
5 Executive Committee minutes, 11 September 1947, MOM 341.
confused, such as when he suggested to one that ‘a little [political] pinkness wouldn’t do any harm’ her response was to become puzzled and say ‘I tread warily. I’m not an MA.’

Following Shotton was Ralph Grant. There were three likely reasons for the Board at first refusing Grant’s return. He was still held responsible for the evacuation and judged a poor leader. He was not well liked by his missionary colleagues who saw him as too ambitious to be chairman which, if he was to be successful in achieving that position, would mean his wife Dawn would use that role to exercise her considerable and dominating personality. The other reason was that the Grants were inflexible people and not willing to change their racial attitudes which were a constant source of embarrassment to their colleagues.

Yet the Grants were people of considerable charm and ability. Ralph Grant was an outstanding linguist, perhaps next only to Dixon in his knowledge of the Dobuan language and better than any in translation. A prolific worker, over the years he translated and printed, on the small hand-platen press at East Cape, thousands of books. He proved to be an excellent printing teacher, so much so that ANGAU took his five printing press workers to Port Moresby for the duration of the war. His personal influence on these five was formative. One, Robert Budiara, became the first Papuan chairman and then bishop; another, Robert Duigu, was one of the first Papuans to be ordained whilst a third, Simeon Busia, was one of the first certificated teachers. The other two, Polonga Edoni and Nelson Kainamale, remained leading laymen in the church. This teaching by Grant was in addition to his regular circuit duties and his office of chairman, both of which required extensive sea travel.

Grant’s chairmanship was exercised from East Cape, the first time in the mission’s history the seat of power had not been in the Dobu area. Unkindly, but probably accurately, it was suggested this was because no one at Salamo wanted the tensions the Grants brought to be near them.

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6 Rita Berry, correspondence to Peg 11 July 1949, uncatalogued papers in Mitchell Library.

7 Correspondence: Rita Berry, 15 November 1947. Copy in possession.
The Grants were highly regimented in their household. Dawn trained women in household duties in her own home with precision, tasks timed to the minute. The experience of a newly arrived missionary wife gives a clear picture of the problem the Grant's presented. Miriam Imms, newly married and just turned twenty-one, had survived the shipwreck of the mission's new boat on its delivery voyage from Australia. After a short recuperation in Tasmania she arrived in Samarai to join her husband, Bob. The Grants accommodated her in the mission's transit house. Miriam Imms, with her anthropology lectures still clear in her mind, was clearly shocked by the Grant's behaviour towards their Papuan domestic help:

The Grants have four girls in the house - it seems strange to me to have them waiting on the tables and washing up. I feel quite uncomfortable, especially about the manner of speaking and acting towards them that we are surprised to observe. Her experience was the experience of others. The manner of speaking was seen as demeaning and colleagues sought to avoid contact with it. Yet Mrs Grant's reputation in the small European population of Samarai was a byword for hospitality and style not usually found in the tropics. Their service in Papua was clearly costly for them, separating them for years from their children - a sacrifice they were prepared to pay but which nevertheless was costly.

Their colleagues respected the Grants but the problems they had with them outweighed anything else. One wrote of their 'terrible jealousy' over Shotton's appointment as chairman which 'almost wrecked the 1948 synod meetings.' On another occasion it was suggested their purpose in being in the district was to be 'grace producers' amongst the rest of the staff. They attempted to dominate peoples' private lives, offering gratuitous advice and determining when staff could visit the doctor. On one celebrated occasion Dawn intercepted an urgent visit by a missionary wife to the Samarai doctor by turning the boat around as it passed East Cape. Having already endured a ten-hour trip from Kalokalo in rough seas, the couple were not prepared to

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8 For details see page 77.

9 Miriam Imms to Carlyle, 14 November 1953. Copy in my possession.

10 Rita Berry to Peg, 27 November 1948; 15 November 1947, uncatalogued papers in Mitchell Library.
obey her order but the Papuan skipper was too frightened of Mrs Grant's anger to continue. This Papuan fear of the Grants was not an isolated incident. East Cape villagers were subjected to embarrassment from harsh verbal assaults, sometimes for things that baffled the victim.

As chairman, Ralph Grant's problem, apart from his manner and personality, was his lack of leadership skills and vision for the future. On the occasion he petitioned the Board to prohibit ordained Papuan clergy from wearing the clerical collar he was reminded that it was proper for the indigenous church to decide such matters, and admonished that it would appear to be an 'invidious distinction' to deny Papuan ministers the right to wear a clerical collar if their European colleagues wore them.

Grant's leadership was a time of proscription rather then prescription. The District had a set of By-Laws, regulations begun in 1938 which governed the requirements for church membership, training procedures for all church workers, criteria for selection of every educational, medical, technical and theological candidate. Grant fought hard against any relaxation of these regulations which had strong moral strictures including the instruction that no female not a family member could sleep in the house of any 'native agent.' In 1940 the synod had decreed that all ministers and candidates for the ministry 'shall give his promise' that he will abstain from betel nut chewing and be questioned on this each synod. Against Grant's strong objection the 1953 synod overturned this by a one vote majority, substituting instead that ministers be required to promise the use of betel nut 'in moderation only.'

These forms of discipline held back the development of indigenous leadership as did the requirements for candidature. To become a minister a Papuan needed to have been a catechist for at least five years - amended in 1955 to two years - then six years of probation while he studied. But the road to being a catechist was a protracted one.

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12 One such incident involved Sikaru, the captain of the chairman's boat, Eliam. In an interview in 1970 he told how, coming in to the anchorage, Mrs Grant berated him in a loud voice, declaring his brain was 'like a rock.' He never had any idea what she was referring to.

13 Executive Committee minutes, 11 July 1956, MOM 345.

and usually took about ten years for a village teacher. In addition all teachers, catechists and ministers were forbidden to undertake any new obligation in the *kula* and should resign from it 'as soon as he receives his own' return. So difficult was the process that the first Papuan minister, Kelebi Toginitu, was not ordained until 1946. Prohibition on betel nut was the major impediment and relaxation of the rule in 1953 helped encourage candidates to come forward. By 1957 there were six Papuan ministers.

Shortage of staff and an inability by the Board to appoint new staff undergirded the conservative years. Between 1943 and 1953 only six new ministers were recruited for Papua and of these two, with trade skills, were appointed to the Technical Department at Salamo. Of the other four, one returned to Australia after three years and was not replaced. The repeated requests for new staff were met with the standard response of 'not possible.' The Board had taken on a new responsibility to missionise in the newly opened Southern Highlands of Papua New Guinea and this, with the need to replace almost the entire male staff in the New Guinea Islands district who had perished when prisoners-of-war aboard the *Montevideo Maru*, took most of the energy and recruits the Board had.

The conservatism of the mission, especially in the post-war years, was due to a number of inter-related factors: shortage of staff, not enough new staff, unfortunate chairmanship appointments, almost complete loss of its material assets, and sectarian strife. Consequent to this there was a very poor education system and development of regulations rather than indigenous leadership was inappropriate yet it was the direction the leaders were taking.

Post-war the two kinds of schools still operated as before: vernacular (village) and the CTI. Vernacular schools were preparatory and conducted in each village where there was a pastor or paid helper. It was a good idea that produced little. In 1951, for example, there were 8,433 vernacular school students in the district of which Duau had 1,655 and Bwaidoga 1,741. Yet neither place had seen a trained teacher except for one year at Bwaidoga. The result of such a policy was 'the appallingly low standard of so-called teachers and paid helpers. Those who have never had the opportunity of good

15 1940 Papua District By-Laws.
schooling are in no position to educate others', the Synod declared.\(^\text{16}\) Seven years later the same criticisms were being made. On Kiriwina the government Education Officer recommended that the third to fifth grade students be dismissed and younger children be concentrated on. Youths aged ten to fourteen were turning up to start school, a practice common in all parts of the district.\(^\text{17}\) The practical problem here was that a proper education meant many children would need to become boarders and parents were most reluctant to let their children go away from home before puberty.

The Board fully understood the problem but its response was inadequate. Board General Secretary Alf Gardner visited Papua in 1947 and described the village education system as ‘rudimentary’ and the results as ‘lamentable.’ Gardner was no great thinker and had no missionary experience but he correctly saw that the only way forward was through education in English.\(^\text{18}\) His successor, Cecil Gribble, likewise reported on the poor level of education and its inadequate standards and the corollary, ‘the weakness of the trained ministry.’\(^\text{19}\) There was considerable resistance in the D’Entrecasteaux Islands to education in English; after all their language had been chosen by Bromilow as the mission’s lingua franca. Those missionaries working in the area saw teaching in Dobuan as preserving the culture and an important way of transforming the culture from within. But at Misima there was a keenness to get away from Dobuan. Yet the standard of English teaching in the CTI there was poor. When a volunteer missionary, Stan Richardson, tested the highest grade, in a class of 35 there was a total vocabulary of 104 English words. The best student knew only 14 words and sentence construction was not possible. After three months of instruction in sentence construction using vocabulary already known, 17 students could correctly use a total vocabulary of 216 words.\(^\text{20}\)

The situation in the Misima school did not happen in a vacuum. Richardson had been called on because the school was often left without its main teacher, the Reverend

\(^{16}\) 1951 Synod minutes, NGC ALX 3/52.

\(^{17}\) Marj. Ladd, Annual Report to 1957 Synod, NGC ALX 3/58.

\(^{18}\) Report on General Secretary’s visit, Executive Committee minutes, 11 September 1947, MOM 341.

\(^{19}\) Report to Executive Committee, 15 June 1949, MOM 342.

Fred Kemp. On many occasions he would be given instructions to go to the outer islands for meetings and to do patrols, orders given by his superintendent, Ern Clarke. These trips began to occupy more and more of his time with the result the school had no teacher with competence in English, the language of instruction.21

The Board’s response to the education morass was in 1946 to appoint a fine educationalist, Bruce Walkeden Brown, to do ‘special education work.’22 But the Board was unable or unwilling to provide the resources needed and the missionaries failed to heed Andrew’s earlier warning that education could no longer be just for those who wanted to work in the church.23 Shotton had tried to force the issue, the only result was the commencement of the Boys High School at Dobu in 195124, which was moved to Bwaruada and then to Salamo in 1958 and became co-educational. But under Grant there was no attempt to change the policy that had existed since early in the century: village schools were to feed the brighter students into the CTI with the hope that some would then enter the DTI to train as village pastors and then go back to teach in the village school.

Two changes in the district forced the Methodists to face the real issues on education. One was government educational policy. The greatly expanded government budget for Papua New Guinea after the war saw education given top priority even though the missions provided the overwhelming amount of primary schooling. Government policy was to work through the missions by offering grants-in-aid to agencies employing qualified teachers.

This government policy was to have English as the language of instruction and in 1956 it introduced a tri-level register of teachers. ‘A’ certificated teachers, qualified to teach the lower grades, attracted a subsidy of $80 per annum, ‘B’ certificate $120 and European teachers (later, as Papuans became qualified to teach Standard 6, known as ‘C’ certificate) $800.

22 Executive Committee minutes, 10 July 1946, MOM 340.
23 J. R. Andrew, Annual Report to 1946 Synod, MOM 354.
24 This school was well received. This was due to two factors: it’s instruction was in English and its principal, Bruce Walkeden Brown, was a popular teacher. It had a student intake of around 20.
This policy was the only way to induce the mission to raise its standard. Two years later the government tightened its regulations by a reclassification of schools which required the closure of any school which did not have a Papuan certificated teacher or a permit to teach. As the Methodist schools had a very high proportion of pastors who had never been trained - Dobu, for example, had its first certificated teacher in 1957 - the new policy meant the beginning of the end for the village school. Within a decade they had ceased to exist.

The introduction of local government councils was a second major external initiative and one that helped create an environment in which the people began to speculate about self government. Councils were progressively introduced around the province from the late fifties onwards. For the first time western democracy in the form of the opportunity to vote and stand candidates was presented to the people. The new political order was to quickly prove a challenge for the church which had provided the prime opportunity up to then for anyone who wanted to advance themselves in the public arena. Lay preaching gave men and women the chance to advance their oratory skills and earn status - an important factor in a society where, for men, the traditional means to becoming a ‘big man’ had been prowess in warfare and magic, both of which missions had endeavoured to stop. Councils gave a new way for people to gain status, prestige and power.

Missionaries welcomed the devolution of political power councils brought though they were also aware the role of the church would be changed. There was a certain ambivalence as Colin White, minister at Misima, noted when the Louisiade Local Government Council was introduced there in 1958. He noticed that, while most councillors elected were church members, the councillor was looked upon as the new leader of the village rather than the pastor-teacher as before. Some were concerned the preacher would now become just a voice in the wilderness.25 Local government councils, which often introduced cooperatives, besides being the first tangible sign of local control over change, also met peoples desire for some control of their own destiny and, by implication, their own church.

If, for proponents of localisation and an indigenous church, the fifties were a funereal decade then the sixties were positively bewildering bearing in mind the rapid changes that took place. External pressures had begun to bring change and were about to impact irreversibly upon the mission. Additionally, missionaries of the sixties, profoundly affected by these external changes and influenced by the emphasis on developing indigenous church leadership presented in their missionary training, brought to fruition a Melanesian church in an incredibly short period of time. Within the mission words such as ‘localisation’ and ‘indigenisation’ were being used with increasing urgency and their meanings put into concrete action.

In six years from 1961 to 1967, culminating in the inauguration of The United Church in Papua New Guinea and the Solomon Islands on 19 January, 1968, there was a transformation from ‘mission’ to church, from dependency to autonomy, from a regional body to being part of a transnational Melanesian organisation. It was an era when the career missionary largely disappeared, and with the new arrivals, an acknowledgement that the church’s aim in education was to educate for the sake of the whole society, not just for the church’s needs.

Externally, the decade of change began with the decolonisation process in Africa and the Pacific. The Port Moresby government introduced an enlarged Legislative Council (1961) with a non-official majority and then the impetus of the high-level United Nations Mission (1962) headed by Sir Hugh Foot - which strongly urged preparing the people of Papua New Guinea for self government - led to the first national elections for the House of Assembly in 1964. While these events had only a limited effect on the daily life of people in the Papua district they, and other political decisions such as implementation of changes proposed in education, made similar moves towards local autonomy in the church inevitable. Gribble and his Mission Board, who had for so long advocated autonomy for its mission districts, clearly supported the moves towards national independence, noting:

The Board expresses its appreciation of the place the church and our staff have taken in the development towards independence of the people of Papua and New Guinea. Because the Board is impressed with the reports of the Chairmen of the rapidly changing social, economic and
political situation it appoint a consultative and advisory panel to be available to help in the Districts.26

By 1961 Ralph Grant had been recalled by the Board. With his departure, but not necessarily because of it, a great transformation was about to overcome the Mission that resulted in its independence and then its integration into the United Church of Papua New Guinea and the Solomon Islands. Irreversible change began with the retirement of Ralph Grant, the last of the long-term pre-war missionaries. His departure was instigated by the Board who considered he was not the one to take the mission into the new era of localisation and autonomy. The Board acted with little grace in his departure, refusing Grant permission to take up a generous offer of financial support that would have allowed him to stay on for a further year in Samarai to complete some translation work. Apart from publishing hymn books and catechisms in a number of languages, he had written, translated and published at the East Cape printing press many books including Bible commentaries, books on Bible introduction and history, Bible stories for children, two biographies and some theological works as well as a regular church newsheet, TAPWARORO TETERINA. With a growing educated population the mission needed more resources in local languages and the refusal to support Grant disadvantaged the people in what proved to be the last opportunity to increase vernacular publications.

The departure of Grant forced the Board to give the Papua district the close attention it had denied it for a long time. Its executive looked at the missionaries' annual reports, talked with recent returnees and with some from its own ranks, which included a few who had never been happy about Grant's appointment as chairman in the first place, and concluded the mission was in a poor state of morale and resources. Its pessimistic conclusions, for which the Board itself was largely responsible by its own neglect over the years, were summarised thus:

1 The District is in a dispirited state, real recovery never having been made since the war.
2 Material rehabilitation is still needed - houses, boats etc.
3 The District has not been able to achieve any measure of self support and there is room for agricultural development, timber development, co-operatives etc.

26 Annual Board minutes 31 August 1964--2 September 1964, MOM 349.
There is a need for spiritual leadership as well as the above material needs to strengthen the whole life of the Church in Papua.  

The Board’s first emphasis was required to handle the leadership question. Various missionaries’ reports urged the ‘need for a creative and dynamic leader in the district ... a leader who can command the respect of his fellow missionaries and unite them in a common task.’ What they needed was a leader who was cognisant with the Board’s desire for localisation and who would encourage a new generation of missionaries who saw their role as ‘doing themselves out of a job.’

After some protracted discussions the Board appointed the Reverend Leigh Swaby as chairman. With the experience of Grant’s style of leadership in their minds the Board was quick to rule out those of whom there were ‘certain hesitations on questions of personal relationships,’ a euphemism for those who would exercise an autocratic rule. No candidate from within the district was considered as the idea was to bring in a completely new culture of leadership and development. There were, as subsequent events showed, some who could do it but the Board was determined to bring in somebody who was not influenced by past practices in the district.

Swaby was an excellent choice. A trained agriculturalist prior to ordination, he had commenced missionary work in 1958 when appointed to Nakanai in the New Guinea Islands district where he remained until transferred by the Board to the Papua district as chairman in 1962. A quiet, gentle person Swaby and his wife were, in many respects, the antithesis of Ralph and Dawn Grant. A thinker about strategy and a man who set achievable goals, Swaby knew his appointment was to try and drag the Papua district, and especially its missionaries, into the prevailing mainstream of localisation and self support. He knew he had the full support of the Board and his colleagues not only

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27 Executive Committee minutes, 6 December 1960, MOM 348.

28 General Secretary’s Report, A&T Committee minutes, 13 March 1959, MOM 347; H.K.Bartlett Report, Board minutes, 21 November 1960, MOM 348.

29 A&T Committee minutes, 12 January 1961, MOM 348.
welcomed him but gave him great loyalty. To Grant’s credit he, too, gave Swaby his maximum assistance in taking over.\footnote{Informant: Leigh Swaby, June 1989.}

Swaby’s first declared priority was for evangelism and a renewal of the church’s life. ‘There must be’ Swaby told his first Synod, ‘a renewal of a programme of … inclusive evangelism, related to all of life.’\footnote{Chairman’s Report to 1962 Synod, NGL ALX 3/62.} This meant a change of methodology, away from school education. For all its history the mission’s evangelistic focus had been the village school system in which the teacher was also the pastor of the village church. The aim was to teach literacy, mostly in the vernacular, and encourage Bible reading. The only translation of the complete Bible was in Dobuan. All of Dixon and then Grant’s prolific printing of books were in the Dobuan language. The only exception to this was the printing of hymn books in various other languages.

Village schools had always been an adjunct of the village church. Church membership required knowledge of the catechism and of basic Biblical history and the school was where these things were taught. However, with government policy now requiring all formal schooling to be in English a serious problem was created for the Methodists. By pursuing their policy of preserving the local language they had almost no-one trained in English; it was 1957 before the first certificated teacher, Olive Baloiloi, was teaching in a Methodist mission school. By 1966 there were only three Standard 6 primary classes in the whole mission. As well, with government providing increasing financial support for accredited schools and thereby creating a mission dependency on government, education was going to lose its religious base and become more secular.

In a very real way the village schools provided education for social reasons; western education would now provide for intellectual, economic and political advancement. Competitiveness rather than community building became the norm. The dilemma facing everyone was well summed up by Marjorie Ladd, senior teacher at the primary school at Oyabia, Kiriwina:

I have noticed that the children who are boarding at the station are very conscious of family loyalties and I think these family ties should be strengthened wherever possible by encouraging the children to regard
their home and village as of primary importance, and their school to be a training ground so they may be better people at home. It is sometimes a temptation to regard school as an end in itself.\textsuperscript{32}

With the missions no longer the sole providers of education Swaby's idea was to renew the 'role and authority of the office of preaching',\textsuperscript{33} to its usual primary function in traditional Protestant evangelism but which, in Papua, had assumed a secondary role to vernacular education.

The reasons for this change of direction were quite clear. The steady decline in average weekly church attendance indicated that the mass appeal of the church was over. By 1961 the average weekly attendance had dropped below 35,000 for the first time in over thirty years. Ironically there was an increase in church membership after 1962 with a continuing decline in weekly attendance.\textsuperscript{34}

This decline can be explained by two factors. One was the demise during the sixties of village schools which gave some people no further reason for associating with their village congregation. Williams makes the point that there was a 'common understanding' by the people that when there was talk of closing down a village school 'if the school goes what point is there in having the church?'\textsuperscript{35} Conversely others who associated with the church for its message rather than its provisions responded to the evangelistic call for commitment to the faith by going on to formal membership.

When compared with its sister district in New Guinea (New Britain, New Ireland, New Hanover, Duke of York islands), the picture of decline is more marked. Comparatively, in 1946, the Papua district had a larger weekly attendance at worship, which declined 16 percent by 1963. In that same period attendance in the New Guinea district rose by 58 percent. By 1967 the trend was even more marked: full membership in Papua was up 100 percent from 1946 but attendance was down 25 percent while in

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\textsuperscript{32} Marjorie Ladd, Annual Report to 1962 Synod, NGC ALX 3/62.
\textsuperscript{33} Chairman's Annual Report to 1962 Synod, NGC ALX 3/62
\textsuperscript{34} See Appendix I: Methodist Statistics.
\end{flushright}
New Guinea membership was up 136 percent and attendance up 177 percent.\(^\text{36}\) The New Guinea district had been quite severely decimated by the war, its white male missionaries had, but for two, been killed and its local population badly dislocated. It is not surprising that its 1946 statistics were a low base but its growth was consistent and persistent while in Papua there was decline.

The other explanation for diminishing attendances in Papua was increasing religious competition with the Catholics.\(^\text{37}\) With sometimes only one boat in service the Methodist missionaries found it impossible to travel their large circuits. Jim Dawes (Misima) lamented that for his first nine months there he could not visit his teachers on Sudest and Rossel who therefore received no salary in that period and, just as importantly, no personal support from their \textit{tonugana} (leader). Catholics, with resident missionaries on Rossel, taunted the people with ‘The Methodist Church is dead’ and ‘The Methodist Church has deserted you.’\(^\text{38}\) Even Swaby, arguably the most tolerant missionary to have served in Papua, talked of a ‘prepared propaganda’ by Catholic leaders ‘designed to shake the confidence of our people.’\(^\text{39}\) Another complained of a ‘sour note’ engendered by Catholics on Kiriwina for entering a government primary school and teaching religious instruction to a class of all Methodists, ‘only one of a number of similar attempts ... the Roman Catholic Church are using some methods not in accord with the ecumenical spirit at present in the (wider) Roman Catholic Church.’\(^\text{40}\)

The Methodists realised their position of historical strength was under challenge. The Board was held responsible for some of it by not providing adequate resources, particularly boats. It was thus impossible for the missionaries to give adequate time and attention to their circuits. It was in 1952 the Board made a most significant investment in the District’s material future when it purchased the fifty-eight-foot \textit{Koonwarra}, a trading vessel well known along the coast of Papua. It did not come near to solving the

\(^{36}\) See Appendix I: Methodist Statistics.

\(^{37}\) In New Guinea both missions had worked side-by-side since 1881.

\(^{38}\) J.A. Dawes, Annual Report to 1960 Synod, MOM 348.

\(^{39}\) Chairman’s Report to 1962 Synod, NGC ALX 3/62.

\(^{40}\) Ralph Lawton, Report to 1965 Synod, NGC ALX 3/65.
overall problem of transport but it became the visible symbol of the church all over the
district. The boating problem was not helped when the *Gilmour* I sank and then its
replacement, *Muroro*, suffered the same fate.

With Swaby’s arrival there were seven European ministers in the Papua District,
one of whom was based in Port Moresby. There were six circuits (including Port
Moresby) each under the control of a European with the seventh as principal of the new
vernacular theological college at Bwaruada. In addition there was one Tongan, Isikeli
Hau’ofa, and nine Papuans either ordained or on probation. With the missionaries’
emphasis being concentrated on training village pastors at the various CTI it had been
left to the village pastors to do the main teaching and pastoral work.

Under Methodist law only the ordained could conduct the sacraments which, as
far as holy communion was concerned, was reserved for confirmed church members and
trial members. In practice, relatively few had received communion and this, more than
any other single issue, led to the administrative changes. Colin Garlick reported that, in
1958, he had administered the sacrament to all church members in the Bunama and
Bwaruada sections of the Dobu circuit on Normanby Island, in most cases for the first
time in living memory. 41 Garlick continued his village-by-village teaching program on
the sacraments when he moved to Kalokalo on north-west Fergusson Island resulting
in ‘some very significant worship services’ 42 in villages where people claimed they had
never before seen the sacraments conducted.

But Garlick’s experience was not shared by his colleagues who felt too tied to
their CTI. What was needed to bring the sacraments among the people was for more
people authorised to conduct them. ‘This District is almost a church without the
sacraments’ Swaby declared when he asked for the necessary permission for senior
Papuan pastors to be authorised to preside, ‘and there is no reason that sacraments
conducted by Papuans should be any less effective. It is not a matter of race or

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41 Colin Garlick Report to 1957 Synod, NGC ALX 3/58.

42 Swaby to President of Methodist Conference, 25 February 1963, NGC ALX 3/185.
theological education at the ministerial level but of education at the pastor and congregational level.\textsuperscript{43}

Under Methodist law lay people could be permitted to conduct sacraments by permission of the Conference, such permission being reviewed annually. Swaby sought to take advantage of this by asking for senior catechists and head missionaries be given this authority. Swaby went further, arguing that those given permission to conduct sacraments should also be considered for ordination, acceptability for one being adequate qualification for the other.\textsuperscript{44} He was changing the order in which things were usually done and in so doing was consciously moving the advent of a Papuan-controlled church forward. Garlick, very much in tune with Swaby, forced the process further when, prior to taking his six months furlough, left his circuit in the control of a Papuan minister, the first time a Papuan had been given such authority.

To meet its challenges the Methodist synod decided, in the mid-sixties, to make administrative changes, particularly the creation of smaller circuits. What had previously been ‘sections’ within circuits now became circuits in their own right. East Cape circuit, which consisted of the northern peninsula of Milne Bay, south-western Normanby (Bunama) and the Engineer Islands plus Ware Island, was now divided into three circuits: East Cape, Bunama and Ware (including the Engineers). Likewise Misima, Panaeati, the Conflict Islands, Sudest and Rossel became four circuits with the Conflicts being divided between Misima and Panaeati; from the Dobu circuit was created Dobu, Bwaruada, Salamo, Ubuya and Woodlark circuits. Similar changes were made on Goodenough and the Trobriands.

The effects of these changes were not just cosmetic. Now people away from the large mission stations where the European resided saw the control of the local church was in their hands. With such a change also came two important considerations: adequate pastoral care and, because Methodist law required a circuit must be under the charge of an ordained person, the need for many more ministers.

\textsuperscript{43} Swaby to President, 25 February 1963, NGC 3/185.

\textsuperscript{44} Swaby to President, 25 February 1963, NGC 3/185.
The effect of such moves saw an immediate growth in the number of candidates for the ministry, six being accepted for training in 1964 alone creating a ‘lively interest’ in the circuits about the meaning of this for the development of the Papuan church.\(^{45}\) When Swaby’s proposal that a Papuan chairman-elect be chosen was accepted there was ‘confirmation of the feeling among the people that the church to which they belong, is the church of Papua.’\(^{46}\) Financial support through the *ebwaedaita* (to give with no thought of return), the annual church offerings, always a reliable barometer of support, clearly showed this; between 1962 and 1967 these offerings more than doubled from $9,656 to $21,104.\(^{47}\)

The missionaries who arrived in the sixties were generally younger, accepted they were there for a shorter term, and more specialised. The average length of stay was five years compared with eight years for those who had come in the fifties. In all, of the European missionaries who served in the late forties and the fifties, eighteen (including five ministers) spent a decade or more in Papua; of the sixties arrivals there were only four who served for more than ten years, none of whom were clergy.\(^{48}\) The encouragement given in the new order to the development of a local clergy was realised more concretely by the commencement in 1962 of the vernacular theological college at Bwaruada. This, and the devolution to smaller circuits under Papuan control, was the beginning of the end for the long-term ministerial missionary.

In the laity there were also changes. The new requirements in education meant the end of the altruistic missionary, that person motivated by a desire to serve God amongst people less sophisticated, but who did not have adequate professional, if any, qualifications. Up to this time many of the teachers were untrained. With the new government education requirements from 1959 onwards, soon there were fourteen expatriate teachers whereas, prior to those changes, there were only seven. The development of Wesley High School, fully accredited in 1963, saw a great influx of one

\(^{45}\) Chairman’s Report to 1964 Synod, NGC ALX 3/64.

\(^{46}\) Chairman’s Report to 1964 Synod, NGC ALX 3/64.

\(^{47}\) See Appendix II: Methodist Finances.

\(^{48}\) See Appendix II: Methodist Finances.
year volunteer teachers from Methodist youth in Australia and through the government’s Australian Volunteers Abroad program, a trend which lasted for the best part of a decade. Clergy were no longer required to be involved in formal education. The chairman had always acted as treasurer and controlled the accounts; in 1962 a business manager was appointed for the first time to take full control of the finances. Likewise the Technical Department had been under ministerial control but from 1961 it, too, was placed in the hands of a properly qualified lay person. At no time in the sixties were there more than six clergy in the district at any one time compared to an average of twenty-two lay people. The clergy-dominated, career-oriented missionary service had come to an end.

Coincident with such changes within the district and the commitment to localisation was an even more radical external proposal - organic church union. In Australia the Methodist Church congregations were already studying the proposed Basis of Union with the Presbyterian and Congregational Churches. The missionaries in Papua were aware any union in Papua would have profound effects on the church in Melanesia as well as their place in it.

The process started with a plan to create a separate Methodist Conference out of the mission districts in Melanesia. In 1962 the chairmen of the four Methodist Districts - New Guinea Islands, Southern Highlands, Papua, and the Solomon Islands (associated with the New Zealand Methodist Conference) - met in Port Moresby to discuss the possibility of recommending a Melanesian Conference be formed as a constituent part of the General Conference of the Methodist Church of Australasia. This would mean mission districts would no longer belong to the NSW Conference. The Mission Board’s annual meeting gave general assent to the idea of a United Synod and expected to bring a proposal to the triennial General Conference in 1966 to create a separate Conference of Melanesia.49

Events in Port Moresby moved more rapidly than that and in a different direction. At their 1962 meeting the chairmen agreed to the request of the Reverends Percy Chatterton and Eric Ure, president and secretary respectively of the Papua

Ekalesia (which had grown out of the work of the London Missionary Society), to talk with them on the possibility of church union. These discussions took on a life of their own and any thought of a continuing administrative link with the ‘home’ churches in the United Kingdom, Australia and New Zealand were put aside, with the enthusiastic support of the Mission Board in Sydney. Internal accommodations in Papua New Guinea were made to advance the process; Kwato rejoined the Papua Ekalesia, Kiribati (LMS) residents in the Solomons joined the Methodist Church there as did the Papua Ekalesia settlers in Rabaul and Lae, and the Methodist people in Madang joined the Papua Ekalesia.

Serious discussions began with the formation of the Standing Committee on Church Union in 1964. The Lutherans and Anglicans, both interested in union themselves, soon found the pace too quick for their liking but remained as observers. The rationale for the proposed union was common to all participants, active and observers. Growing urbanisation and the need to provide ministry for such people from different church traditions in growing towns meant cooperation was necessary. All had been through similar experiences during the war, and the adjustments it and the post-war developments made necessary, required a togetherness rather than separateness. The spheres of influence agreement had lapsed with no mission or church pursuing it. Similarities in church order and the positive role of lay leadership in both the Methodist and Papua Ekalesia, together with similar traditions and styles of worship, naturally drew those two missions together. Both bodies had considerable numbers in public service employment who were required to move around the country. To meet the needs of their members was best done as one church, not the least because there was not an adequate supply of suitably qualified clergy to serve separate congregations in every place. However, the spiritual justification for union for the participating bodies was the Biblical prayer of Jesus for unity within the church.

The whole process was completed in three years. For their part the Mission Board allowed what they had long preached to their missionaries - that the church in Melanesia should determine its own future. It organised the Methodist General Conference to give its approval as soon as the church in Papua New Guinea requested formal assent. When the documents and the Basis of Union itself were sent to the
overseas churches, including the World Council of Churches, for comment and approval, the Methodist Church in Australia was the only one who did not offer any comment. This gesture was looked upon with approval by the committee who rightly saw it as an indication the Australian church had full trust and confidence in them.  

Within the Papua district there was a concern that the process needed to be ‘owned’ at the grass roots. It had to be seen that the process towards organic union was not only driven by expatriates; the local people had to want it as well. ‘Our planning and decisions to be effective must ultimately be rooted in the congregational life of the church, and not imposed ‘from above’,’ wrote Harold Taylor, one of its more progressive missionaries. Nevertheless some wanted to go slowly, asking for time to translate the materials into various main languages - Dobuan, Kiriwinan, Misima, Bwaidogan, Muyuw and Keherara (East Cape) - to allow every interested person to fully understand; others felt this was unworkable and would only hinder the inevitable. After all, the missionaries had always made the major decisions before; Papuans did not have full representation in Synod until 1959. It was decided not to delay which proved correct. By 1966 Papuans were in a majority at synod and they unanimously endorsed union.  

Missionaries such as Swaby, Garlick and Taylor realised that the church needed to capture some of the mood. Synods in 1964 and 1965 supported church union and in 1966 this was finally confirmed and the Reverend Robert Budiara, a native of Dobu, (and, in his younger days, one of Ralph Grant’s specially chosen printing press workers) was chosen to be the Papua district signatory on the Declaration of Union. He was also appointed Chairman-elect and inaugural Bishop at union.  

However, amid all the frantic changes going on, the mission still remained truly ‘Methodist’ on one important social issue. It was in Swaby’s blueprint that Christians should take a leading role in the social developments of the country. Alcohol use and abuse was an issue the Methodists could never ignore so when, in 1961, the government proposed changes to the laws that would allow Papua New Guineans to consume

Informant: Fred Kemp.

Harold Taylor, Annual Report to Synod 1964, NGC ALX 3/64.
alcoholic beverages, the Mission Board was quick off the mark. Claiming drinking in other Pacific territories had proved harmful, the Board advocated a policy of ‘complete abstention’ for the ‘physical and moral health’ of the community. ‘The welfare of the great majority of inhabitants must take precedence over the personal enjoyments of small racial and class minorities and over the commercial interests which would gain financially’, the Board declared.\(^5^2\)

As chairman at the time, Grant’s response was to tell the Board, while abstinence might seem to Methodists to be the only answer, it was unlikely to happen, given that the largest missionary body, the Lutherans, opposed prohibition arguing it took away the right of free choice. Likewise, Europeans argued they shouldn’t go without their drink just because they lived in Papua. Grant’s solution was quaint and quite unique. ‘Papuans are not very interested in beer’ he claimed, ‘it does not give them a kick until a lot is drunk and often they are feeling full before it does, whereas with spirits only a small amount is needed’ to get drunk. It might be another angle of approach to fight for total prohibition of the sale of spirits to the Papuans \(^5^3\).

The government’s decision to go ahead with liberalised liquor laws was no surprise.\(^5^4\) When the *South Pacific Post* editorialised on the Methodist refusal to carry alcohol as commercial cargo it declared it was ‘another example of a higher authority forcing an Australian pattern on a country which cannot yet accept such standards’.\(^5^5\) It went on to claim the Methodist faction was ‘causing more harm than it can ever good’ by its policy. There was no chance, even in a period of rapid policy changes, the Methodists would relent in this matter and it always required its missionaries, ministers, pastors and paid church workers to be abstainers. Some things could not be changed and this was one of them! The previous policy of prohibition on betel nut was simply

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52 Response to Draft resolution on Liquor Policy, NGC ALX 3/180.


54 Administrator Donald Cleland acknowledges the positive role of the Missions Conference in this matter. The Conference moved from a majority decision in 1959 to uphold total prohibition to a unanimous decision in 1961 that the will of the indigenous population should prevail. D. Cleland, ‘An Administrator Reflects’, in *The History of Melanesia* (Second Waigani Seminar).

an extension of standard Methodist social concern, more so since Pauans would call betel nut ‘Papuan whisky.’

From church union in 1968 onwards there was one objective in mind: to localise all positions in the church. A period of rapid change was entered upon and the role of the Mission Board to help or hinder those changes ceased. Expatriate staff ceased to be exclusively Australian Methodist and personnel came from New Zealand, the United Kingdom, India and Switzerland and there were others who came from other parts of Papua New Guinea, expatriates and nationals.

Of the three main occupational groups - clergy, teaching and nursing - ministers were the first to reach the goal of full localisation. This is not surprising as, with up to 22 circuits in existence, the college at Bwaruada had been producing both village pastors and ministers in some considerable numbers. It was also a vocation that did not have the same educational requirement as teaching and nursing. While the national church assembly’s Rarongo Theological College near Rabaul required a four-year high school standard for entrants, it was allowed that remote regions like the Papuan Islands could continue with its established practice of giving additional training to village pastors with many years experience and then ordain them. Rarongo did train a small number of Papuan Islanders but never anywhere near enough to satisfy demand. The region was the first to train and ordain a woman minister, the Reverend Atelini Fred who trained at Bwaruada in 1973-75.

By 1975 there were no longer any expatriate teachers in primary schools, a declining number in secondary education and a similar pattern in nursing. The Salamo hospital continued training nursing aides - who did, and still do, provide the majority of primary medical care - while government recognised certificated training was available at other United Church hospitals such as Fife Bay and Iruna and the Anglican’s Dogura hospital. Expatriates were still needed from time to time, especially to assist with the growing administration of health services, but by the mid-eighties this was no longer required.

With all its rapid changes and entry into a Melanesian church, with no power held over it by the Australian church except to respond to its requests, the Papuan mission was now a church. It alone would decide which, if any, missionary staff it
would have. It would set its own policy on everything from salary levels to social and political issues and it would do things in its own way. By 1980 it had met all the criteria to be considered an autonomous Melanesian church: it was self governing, self funding and self propagating.
Central to the missionaries' interest in, and understanding of, the lives and customs of the people was those areas that were pertinent to their own vocation. Here the two missionary bodies differed in their approach. Methodists wanted to transform Melanesian culture from within and bring into being a Papuan church; the Catholics wanted to bring into Papua the universal church with its traditions and practices. The Catholics were much less concerned with cultural context; their ambition being to make Papuans, Catholics. How each mission pursued their objectives was determined by how they viewed Melanesian society and responded to it.

While anthropological studies of the people of Milne Bay have been at least as thorough as for other people in Melanesia, Bromilow's arrival preceded any of the major studies such as that by Seligman. He, and a number of his colleagues and successors, became amateur anthropologists but only he and Gilmour published papers. In the Catholic Mission there was a similar dearth of intellectual studies by missionaries with the exception of Father Brian Baldwin who wrote on the Trobriands. Missionaries' understanding of, and fascination with, the customs and culture of the people was generally limited to their own interests and ambitions for their missionary labours.

From anthropologists we have come to call the people of the Milne Bay province Massim (north and south), their languages - with the exception of Rossel - are Austronesian, their kinship patterns are mostly matrilineal, and their world view is centred on magic, sorcery, feasting, trading and mortuary rituals. The Northern Massim, especially the Trobriands, has hereditary chieftainship while in the South cannibalism was widely practised prior to pacification.

What the Methodists understood and acted upon was tied irrevocably to the
idea of transforming Melanesian society from paganism into a Christian community. It was Bromilow who articulated this desire: ‘We aimed at saving ... not by reconstructions from without but by regeneration from within; we sought not to abolish but to redeem.’

This was a reflective comment, written seven years after his missionary career ended and just before his death. It was a sentiment endorsed by his successors and articulated by his superiors in Sydney. The missionary in the Louisiades, Harry Bartlett, interpreted it in this way:

As missionaries we respect native customs. There are many beautiful things that must be preserved, often they provide a foundation on which to establish Christian truth. Other customs are degrading, some are definitely harmful to the natives and repulsive to us. We do not condemn such things, but by Christian example try to lead people to higher plains of living. To condemn age-old custom as an evil thing, often is to antagonise the folk whom you seek to help.

Bartlett’s contention that some customs ‘provide a foundation on which to establish Christian truth’ was not unfamiliar to Methodists whose doctrine of prevenient grace - the idea that God is present in people even before they hear the gospel - allowed it. However, little effect was given to this because of the greater consideration - and fear of syncretism, so many opportunities presented in custom on which to develop a Christian theological framework were ignored. Three examples support this.

First, the sagari, the final and most important of the bwabwale or mortuary feasts. Traditionally held a decade after the death of an important person, it is celebrated by all the villagers and their relatives including in-laws. It is both a remembrance of the deceased and a celebration as mourners are welcomed back into the daily routine of village life and freed of social restrictions placed on them as mourners and as a display of ‘bigmanship.’ To Protestants, holy communion is both a sacrament of remembrance for the death of Christ, and a celebration that believers are freed from ‘sins that bind’, to lead renewed lives. However, there was no attempt to understand the sacrament in terms of the sagari and, apart from the use of coconut flesh and coconut milk as bread and wine, no indigenisation of communion was ever attempted.

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2 WE Bromilow, *Twenty Years among Primitive Papuans*, 113.

Second, the concept of life after death and the idea of an eternal abode are common to both Christian doctrine and Massim belief. Dobuans accept that the spirits of the dead, those who lived according to proper custom and respected the living and the dead, go to Bwebweso, a mountain top on southern Normanby. There the spirit of the ancestors live on and those who survive them are engaged in many activities to maintain a link with them. The Christian teaching on heaven as an abode for the spirit of the deceased believer has many parallels. Again, no attempt was made to understand one through the other. In fact, there seems to be a definite effort not to: when ‘heaven’ was translated in Dobuan it was as ‘garewa’ (sky).

Third, the sacramental act of baptism by which a person enters the ‘holy, catholic and apostolic church.’ To Methodists this catholicity is the world-wide communion of believers, to which any baptised member belongs irrespective of language, race, denomination or nationality. Any baptised believer is considered safe in a ‘strange land’ as many Allied soldiers discovered in Papua. Belonging to a totem (as in traditional Dobuan society) has many similarities. A person at birth inherits his mother’s totem, usually named after a bird. If a warrior, for example, belongs to the white cockatoo totem and is captured in a raid, he is safe if one of his captors is also a white cockatoo. This totemic connection means he will be fed and accommodated and his life preserved until such times as he can escape back home. Baptism is a symbolic entry into the Church as birth and its totem is into Dobuan or other Massim society.

Each of these customs was quite capable of being ‘a foundation on which to establish Christian truth’ but there was little attempt to do so. What was at stake was to distinguish between God and culture, the mind of God being understood in Scripture. This makes translation of the Bible into the vernacular crucial. The West African born Lamin Sanneh recognised that the adoption of the vernacular was the major missionary indicator necessary for acculturalisation: ‘Missionary adoption of the vernacular, therefore, was tantamount to adopting indigenisation far greater than the standard

4 In the Trobriands it is Tuma, a small island of the same name, and in the Louisiades it is another Tuma, on Misima.

5 At East Cape signs were put about with bounties paid for the capture of alive Japanese soldiers – ‘nothing for dead ones’ – and for the safe passage of Allies because ‘they are our brothers in Christ.’ Informant: Apolakata, a village constable at East Cape.
portrayal of mission as Western cultural imperialism. For Sanneh, missionary success was dependent on translation

... Christianity was committed to monotheism but, unlike both of them [Judaism and Islam] it found translation to be the method best suited to spreading the gospel. However, translation made Christianity vulnerable to secular influences and to the threat of polytheism. The degree to which Christianity became integrated into a particular culture was a useful means of assessing the success of Christian preaching. But it was also a means of determining the level of compromise. Compromise was not a comfortable thought to Methodists, nor to Sanneh:

When we have rightly and properly distinguished between the desire to do mission in other cultures and the designs of cultural imperialism, we are left with a substantial body of material in the Gospels that justifies adopting a profoundly critical stance towards culture by putting the interests of God above those of culture ... The claims of God, however successfully mediated and embodied in earthly structures, must ultimately be seen to be in radical tension with them, for obedience to God overthrows other rival sovereignties that make their home in culture.

This was a view Methodists would have endorsed. They agreed with the European theologian, Richard Niebuhr, that there was an inherent tension between Christ and culture. What they did not consider was how much their own culture had compromised the Gospel that they presented to Papuans. In the end there was no attempt to ‘indigenise’ the sacraments or fundamental theological doctrines because there was not the will to do so. Prevenient grace might be preached, but it could not take away or deal with cultural compromise.

A major reason Methodist missionaries in Papua did not challenge this - if they had a mind to do so, which is doubtful - was the dominant figure of General Secretary John Burton whose thinking on customs, culture and race had undergone its own transformation and he clearly desired his missionaries to avoid his own mistakes. In his earlier years he had taught cultural evolutionism, describing the Pacific Island people as

6 Lamin Sanneh, *Translating the Message* ... , 3.

7 Lamin Sanneh, *Translating the Message* ... , 37.

8 Lamin Sanneh, *Translating the Message* ... , 32f. Sanneh, himself, was a convert from Islam when a school student in his native West Africa. He has held professorships at Cambridge and Yale Divinity School.
child-races - wicked and vulgar at times, behaving with child-vice, cunning and
treachery - whose very need makes it easy [for the white races] to forgive. To Burton
the people of the western Pacific were a ‘lower type’ than Polynesians, with the
Australian Aborigine being the ‘lowest’ human on earth. But Burton apologised years
later for these ideas and claimed it was his recognition of anthropology and personal
acquaintanceship with Aboriginal people that made him change:

I humbly confess that in my salad days, when I was green in judgment,
I thought and even wrote, of the Australian Aboriginal as being the
lowest human on this planet, but I came to read of the marvellous
intricacy of his social life and of his skill in utilizing the world about him,
and above all that I actually met him face to face in his natural
environment, I had to revise my opinion, for I found a brother-man for
whom I had respect, not untinged with admiration.

Not all his thinking changed. He still saw non-western man as ‘less-evolved and more
primitive’ who revealed in their art ‘crude attempts to express deeper feelings.’

If ‘transformation’ was the objective then missionary training was the means by
which recruits were instilled with the right ideas. From the mid-twenties the Board
made missionary training compulsory in most circumstances. However, there were
constant tensions between the Board and the receiving mission districts who wanted
their recruits immediately. Burton’s response was to admonish that, no matter how dire
the need, it was better to ‘allow time for the recruit to sharpen his sword.’ The
missionaries in Papua argued that training would best be done after the first term of
service: malarial Papua was a trying place and many missionaries did not stay more than
one term. It was those who understood something of the people, whose health stood
up to the climate, and who intended to return, who would receive most benefit from
training. However such ideas begged the question why the training took place - to equip
and educate people for cross-cultural life from the beginning and to instill in them

10 J.W. Burton, The Call of the Pacific, 3, 16.
11 J.W. Burton, ‘The Value of Social Anthropology’, MR (November 1933), 2; Modern Missions in the
South Pacific, 156.
appropriate attitudes.

Over the years the duration of training changed. For many years it was six months (though the few going to India did twelve months), later it was three months until, after independence, it was as little as three weeks. Even though the curriculum included subjects covered in much greater depth in their theological training, ministers received the same training as lay workers because anthropology was seen as the central focus of the training.

The curriculum contained core subjects: Bible knowledge, ‘simple’ theology, history and methods of mission, linguistics, comparative religion, tropical medicine and hygiene, basic medical knowledge, and anthropology. A close relationship was established with Sydney University’s Anthropology Department and Professor Elkin as well as the School of Tropical Medicine. From the early fifties Mabel Wylie, a well known figure in the Methodist Church and a teacher at the government’s Australian School of Pacific Administration, taught anthropology. Wylie had already established a reputation for advanced views on Aboriginal dispossession. 

But it was general secretary Burton whose influence was most pervasive. For him the purposes of missionary endeavour and social anthropology were linked. Anthropology told the story of the human condition and the missionary was there, where ‘necessary ... [to] assist the primitive, for his own good and even for his preservation, to change his modes of life; but this must be done in harmony with sound knowledge, else disaster ensues.’

Burton’s supreme role in the Mission Board meant his ideas not only influenced policy but also the practitioners. Methodist missionaries entered the field having been taught assimilation for Australian Aborigines and transformation for Islanders. In Papua this centred around membership of the church. Stages of entry began with attendance at worship and, after one year of regular attendance, joining the after-church catechumen or ‘seeker’ class, before progressing to trial church membership and then full membership at which time a person could take holy communion. The process might take

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13 As, for example, when she wrote on ‘The white invasion’ of Black Australia,’ MR (February 1948), 2.

a number of years but retention of membership was conditional on not breaking prescriptive church rules.

The thinking of the Catholic church was based on a very different premise. MSC members - priests and brothers - belonged to a missionary order in which the mission field included Australia itself. As a consequence the training of priests and brothers equipped them for local more than cross-cultural mission. They received no special anthropological education and were not necessarily volunteers for service in Papua. While many were keen to go others were simply sent, and not all those who wanted to go were allowed to. Often the work at home was considered more important and some of the best men, who wished to go to Papua, were not sent.

Navarre’s instructions on cross-cultural evangelism called for his missionaries to respect indigenous ways, learn the language and create an ‘influence’ through good character that would gain peoples’ confidence. He told his members it was best to win over the children first because they are ‘very sensitive, receiving only little [affection] from their parents. Through the children the missionary will attract the parents and his courteous manner, though sometimes directed to people of little sensibility, will always touch their hearts to some degree.’ In a similar vein, Navarre declared the people uneducated and ‘seemingly without a sense of honour.’

There were other instructions, some dealing with learning village organisation, how to handle sorcerers, reciprocity and gift-giving, and while the tenor was to respect and not antagonise, once a person wanted baptism then it was time to attack their traditional beliefs.

Missionaries were, like any agent of change, sometimes torn between two challenges: maintaining the customs and culture of the people, and improving the peoples’ quality of life. The introduction of newer food crops, more sophisticated agricultural techniques, improved house building methods and materials as well as motorised transport were major contributions. Then there was technical training which was advocated as a barometer for the successful transition from ‘savagery’ to civilised state:


To the average Australian the Papuan native is visualised as a primitive, untutored savage, incapable of rising much above his environment. How far some of these brown people can respond to training is seen in the skill and workmanship shown in ... building ... 17

When faced with a choice between the two challenges, missionaries favoured improving the quality of life. But, as experience showed, they often failed to understand the nuances of the culture they wanted to change. Some changes - such as moving burial places from the centre of the village - were ordered by government but enthusiastically supported by missions.

For Methodists the main arena for change was in the moral and spiritual world; in how people behaved and what they believed. It was quite logical that sex and marriage were a major focus of their interest. Any sexual behaviour considered analogous to pagan practice was sufficient cause for loss of church membership. What was required was celibacy when single and fidelity in marriage or at least sexual abstinence before marriage and monogamy thereafter. In the earlier decades of the Mission polygamy was forbidden, though this view was relaxed in time to allow a man with more than one wife to be admitted to membership provided he did not take more wives.

Methodists acknowledged the validity of custom marriage but sought to make it conform to Christian practice. It was not marriage itself or the nature of the ceremony that was a problem; rather what preceded it most offended and required change or, as one put it, ‘the Christian form’ of marriage was needed ‘rather than the usual native custom wrapped up as it is with immorality.’ 18

Adolescent sexual activity began soon after puberty, entering what has been aptly called a ‘trying out’ period. 19 On Dobu and surrounding larger islands, when a boy reaches his mid-teens he finds it socially unacceptable, for fear of gossip, to sleep at home if he has sisters there. He will seek alternatives, either the home of an elderly widow, a bachelor’s house or, more likely, a home in which there is a girl who attracts

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17 MR, July 1929.

18 G. P. Lassam, Annual Report to 1933 Synod, MOM 201.

19 Debbora Battaglia, On the Bones of the Serpent, 108.
him. He approaches her parents for permission to call on the girl and presents them with betel nut and tobacco. He visits at night but must leave before daybreak to avoid being seen and so avoid gossip. While people know what is going on, it is being seen that is considered wrong. In time the boy’s parents will send their own gift of betel nut to the girl’s parents who, if they chew it, indicate approval for an engagement. It is also likely the boy has already received an indication of their acceptance of him when one morning he prepares to leave but finds the girl’s mother blocking his departure. From the time of the exchange of gifts between parents, the couple is engaged and cannot be seen in public together nor eat or drink in the presence of their future in-laws.

In other parts of the province there are variations on this custom. For example, in the Trobriands, the adolescent male will sleep and have his sexual liaisons in the bachelors’ house or in a small room in the yam house. The bachelors’ house (and the complementary unmarried girls’ house) are important institutions in the process leading to marriage as they provide couples with temporary residence and newly adolescent youth with a perfect amorous hideaway. Missionary influence, though, was credited with leading to a decline in the number of such abodes and even their location in the village.21 The more public liaisons in the Trobriands contrasted with the equally promiscuous but more secretive attitude of the Dobuans.

The Dobu experience is similar to that in the Louisiades where, in the smaller island communities such as the Conflicts, there is a limited choice of prospective partners and where marriage within the village is preferred.22 Compared to Misima, in smaller communities like the Calvados chain of islands, greater emphasis is placed on obligation such as the bride’s parents being given a canoe to cement the marriage. This ensures their daughter has married a good provider and her family will have the most important economic asset for such a community, one which provides for their sustenance (fishing) and trading.

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20 Malinowski’s (Argonauts ... page 42) claim that Dobuan girls remain ‘strictly chaste’ cannot be supported.

21 Bronislaw Malinowski, The Sexual Lives of Savages in North-Western Melanesia, 60f.

22 Debbora Battaglia, On the Bones of the Serpent, 108.
The major exception in adolescent and pre-marital sexual behaviour in the province is on Goodenough Island where such liberal behaviour is strictly forbidden. Instead of playing around, the adolescent Goodenough boy will leave home and work 'abroad', in Samarai or Port Moresby or on some distant plantation. Before he goes he will be betrothed and his girl will be expected to behave appropriately. She may even move into the boys parent's home before he returns. In so doing she is on show and her worth as a daughter-in-law is judged according to her industry as well as her companionability.

It would be expected that missionaries in both missions would seek to change what, to them, was promiscuous behaviour and there was a similarity in their attitudes. Lassam wrote in approval when 'certain senior men' asked for the mission station bell to be rung at 9.00pm so that young people would 'retire [for the night] and so prevent the usual philandering ... wrapped up as it is with immorality.' Many of his colleagues over the years wrote of 'lax marriage customs' but there were degrees of sympathy for the tension the mission put on young people caught between custom and church. Andrew, always among the more pragmatic missionaries, put it this way:

In many villages almost all those eligible under our rules are members of the church. Yet there are some who, through moral fault of years before, usually in connection with the lax marriage customs of the people, cannot go beyond the catechumen class. One feels that we have come nearer the spirit of Christ in making it possible for such to enter our membership, where couples have been living in harmony with one another and with their neighbours for a number of years, irrespective of earlier moral lapses. Thus the church tries to meet the expressed longing of some people for full fellowship, while not desiring in any way to lower our standards.

Catholic missionaries expressed an even greater concern about sexual behaviour than did Methodists. Their criticisms were mostly reserved for the Trobiands, probably because such behaviour there was so public. One despaired of 'a terrible lot of immorality up

23 Michael Young, Fighting with Food, 50-51.

24 George Lassam, Annual Report to 1933 Synod, MOM 201.

here [Trobriands] which will take years to eradicate\textsuperscript{26}, another that 'immorality is more openly planned and contrived at ... They are indeed a very hard people\textsuperscript{27} while Doody again commented years later that the 'immorality of teen aged girls and boys' seemed an insoluble problem for which there was no solution 'yet.'\textsuperscript{28} There seemed only one answer: change would have to come through Catholic parenthood,\textsuperscript{29} or by 'Catholicity putting some real charity in their lives.'\textsuperscript{30}

The missionaries judged the purpose of marriage - and therefore its practices - by their own Judeo-Christian understanding. They declared that marriage was about family life and procreation, monogamous, indissoluble and requiring fidelity.\textsuperscript{31} In a discussion at synod on pastoral efficiency the European missionaries' position was that 'marriage is ordained by God for the mutual help of husband and wife, and the marriage tie was intended to be a life long union between husband and wife.'\textsuperscript{32} What was missing from this understanding was a Melanesian perspective, for whom marriage was not only monogamous but also created alliances, political and economic.

Catholic missionaries also looked at marriage as an issue. One of their two local priests, Father John Sinou, had objections to the way marriage had been presented by the church. Marriage in church was a sacrament and it included the western symbolism of a ring. As far as Sinou was concerned the marriage ring had no significance for Melanesians but shell money did and its use in the marriage ceremony would hold more meaning and made the marriage more binding. The marriage ceremony in a church was foreign, a better way would be for it to be included in the village feast, the traditional

\textsuperscript{26} Gerard Doody to Father Provincial, 28 December 1937, SHM.

\textsuperscript{27} John McGhee to Father Provincial, 1 August 1946, SHM.

\textsuperscript{28} Gerard Doody to Father Provincial (J.M. Kerrins), 6 December 1955, SHM.

\textsuperscript{29} Doody concluded by acknowledging similar behaviour in Australia but suggested it happened only amongst 'the average non-Catholic boy and girl.' Doody to Kerrins 6 December 1955, SHM.

\textsuperscript{30} John McGhee to Father Provincial, 1 August 1946, SHM.

\textsuperscript{31} 1961 Synod minutes, MOM 368.

\textsuperscript{32} 1961 Synod minutes, MOM 368.
Methodist missionaries, to whom marriage was not a sacrament, did not strongly advocate a church ceremony though they did not discourage it either. What they did propose was a marriage blessing (*ai tapwaroro*) in a Sunday church service in which the couple, often custom-married for many years, exchanged consensual vows in a Christian form.\(^3\)

A second and more pervasive issue in the arena for change was magic and sorcery. Magic was involved in marriage because young men saw it as the way to gain a girl's affection. Magic in the Massim was the means to all things good and the way to punish your enemies. It explained the inexplicable. Magic harnesses the spirits, good and evil, so that life can be lived to its greatest potential. It is concerned with gardening, fishing, health, house and canoe building, love and attraction, weather, travel, harvesting - anything that will work to a person’s advantage. It is also the explanation for, and means to secure, misfortune for an enemy - or the cause for one’s own failure. Magic and sorcery are practised by both men and women but each gender performs specific forms. Some, such as love magic, is practised by both. The most feared magic of all is that of the *werebana* (flying witch) whose activity is at night while people sleep. Illness overnight, premature death and death during childbirth are examples of *werebana* activity and the unwillingness of people to go to sleep until late is to avoid such a fate.

The Catholic missionaries’ attitude to magic was similar to their view of marriage. They did not seek to reform the people’s views but, through instruction and baptism, have the believers reject customary beliefs, though they acknowledged that this would take ages to achieve. The prevailing view of the priests was that the people were ‘indolent and full of superstition’, ‘godless and [with] depraved habits’ and they were the object of cynical humour for their fears, such as when Nobby Earl told of the collapse of a villager during holy communion because ‘some four years ago a coconut

\(^3\) Transcript on Co-responsibility seminar, Sideia, January 1971, SHM.

\(^4\) *Ai tapwaroro* was introduced in the very early years of the Methodist Mission and is referred to in Seligman *Melanesians ...,* 714. In 1977 - the last year such a statistic was recorded- there were 178 such marriage blessings and just 4 marriages by government ordinance. See 1977 Synod minutes, Statistical returns. (cf. 1967 196 marriage blessings and 4 by government ordinance. In my 8 years I conducted 5 marriages by government ordinance and no marriage blessings which were seen to be the role of the Papuan pastor to conduct. Each of the 5 marriages involved one party being from another place.
fell on him and the devil got into him but the devil was only small then. This is the first showing of its mature powers. Funny, as soon as this devil talk starts it races all over the place. I’ve heard more talk about devils in this past week than I have in all the rest of my time here. Trobriand Islanders came in for most comment. Though they were ‘a conservative race sunk in magic’, progress was being made, even if it was inevitably slow. However, their ‘primitive religion of magic’ was the main obstacle to conversion. Brian Baldwin, who served in the Trobriands longer than any other, knew the language well, translated songs and catechisms and wrote lengthy notes on customs and beliefs described them as having ‘no moral sanction on their conduct ... and [they] have the reputation of being the very bottom rung of the moral ladder.

Conversion meant the rejection of traditional beliefs and a full abandonment of ‘paganism [and] demands a complete disruption of age-old chains of tradition which bind him mentally and socially.’ Acceptance of Catholicism gave the believer a new way of life, requiring the rejection of all traditional ties and beliefs and the ‘big sacrifice’, the ‘surrender of his prestige in society’ described in this way:

In native society, authority, prestige, power, importance, are not matters depending on wealth or blood ... but uniquely upon his familiarity with some or all aspects of native beliefs. Native superstition may seem horrible to us but, alas for us, they are intertwined, as our religion should be to us, in every conscious thought and act. Spells, witchcraft, evocation of evil spirits and of the dead, ... across the sordid borderline of black magic with its fantastic and horrible rites and its malevolent effects, the field of native religion goes; and the native lives in a world peopled by devils and ghosts and half-animal spirits. The Papuan convert

35 George Taylor (Religious Superior) to Father Provincial, 12 September 1940; Father Provincial to McGhee, 26 May 1946; Earl to Father Provincial, 15 April 1946, SHM.

36 John McGhee to Father Provincial, 1 August 1946, SHM.


38 Many of his notes and descriptions are held in the archives at the Sacred Heart monastery in Kensington NSW.

39 Annals, June 1937, 222.

40 ‘Strong in the Faith’ by North-East, Annals, February 1947, 46. ‘North-East’ was a pseudonym used by Father Nobby Earl.
has to exile himself from the ancient home of his spirit, yet live ever in its shadow.41

The process of conversion was not meant to create a void; the new Christian would replace old ways with new: where a mother might whisper an invocation to the spirits for protection from evil, her Catholic child would make the sign of the cross instead.

Methodist missionaries were just as critical as their Catholic counterparts about traditional beliefs, but they sought to change the hold they had on the people by the process of transformation by demonstrating the lack of power of such beliefs. A favorite word for the past was ‘darkness’ and the transition was to ‘light.’ So popular was this image that the major women’s fellowship was called maedana, Dobuan for ‘light.’ The process for change was a battlefield where good wins out:

The sphere of influence of Christianity is being extended both laterally and vertically ... The leaven of Christianity is set over against strange and incongruous customs and beliefs, but slowly these change and group themselves around the challenging ideals of Christianity, gradually the savage, dark elements lose their forces, and new and kindlier motives underlie the daily routine of village life, outwardly little changed. Thank God that in many places the leaven has really become dominant, and dark and savage customs have become the alien elements in village life, surviving, to some degree, but definitely losers in the battle.42

Such claims were often hyperbolic. Often missionaries wrote of their inability to overcome their ‘great opponents ... village life and customs ...’43

There were cycles when the power of magic and sorcery was stronger than at other times. The mid-fifties was one such time and coincided with an extensive drought. A number of missionaries, each with strong village grass-roots contact, commented on the resurgence of magic. Bruce Walkeden-Brown, the senior educationalist, noticed a greater number of deaths than usual in the Salamo area where relatives claimed sorcery to be the cause; Reta Berry on Goodenough likewise noted the assertions of a woman who claimed responsibility for the unexpected deaths of a number of young men; and Colin White at Misima noted a ‘wave of worldliness’ involving night-long ‘orgies of

41 ‘Strong in the Faith’, Annals, February 1947, 46.
42 Chairman’s Report to 1936 Synod, MOM 269.
43 Discussion on Pastoral Efficiency, 1955 Synod minutes, MOM 363.
‘dancing’ leading to a major decline in attendance at church services.\textsuperscript{44}

It was the power of magic and sorcery that concerned missionaries more than anything else in Melanesian culture; their ability to instill fear and death motivated much of the medical effort, determined the development of education and made imperative the training of Papuan pastor-teachers. Most missionaries had first-hand experience of a victim of sorcery. Bruce Walkeden-Brown told the story of his friend Pita:

He became ill and we were not informed for quite a long time. When we visited him we found him weak and emaciated and he complained of a stomach ailment. Later we found that he believed he had an eel in his stomach - the result of sorcery. Apparently he had eaten from a tree with a tabu on it. Although he was given adequate treatment he got no better. Then, one by one, the other people in the village closed their houses and moved away to live with their relatives, until Pita’s house was the only one occupied. They wouldn’t pass through the village after that, even to walk to church. The next time we visited we noticed rows of breadfruit leaves tied under the house, gyrating in the wind. These were to ward off the feelings of lonesomeness that attacks people who have been left by others who were customarily near by. The other people had left fearful lest his disease go across to them, frightened by his ‘bad blood’ would somehow enter their system. Of course Pita died. Then there was a controversy as to where he should be buried. The village cemetery was fairly close to the gardening land and the relatives - those especially susceptible to their kinsman’s sickness - refused to have him buried there, as they believed that his disease would carry over to their food crops. In spite of threats by the village policeman, Pita’s body was taken well away and buried up on a mountain.\textsuperscript{45}

A further example was of a ten year old school boy from a village two hours walk from East Cape.\textsuperscript{46} At the end of the school holidays he did not return to the station boarding house. Enquiries revealed he had been taken ill in the village as soon as he had returned home on holiday. A request to his widowed mother to allow the nurse to look at him saw him brought in by canoe and admitted to the dispensary. He was gravely ill. Semi-conscious, his symptoms gave no clue to his sickness and he died the following day. Enquiries revealed that, on his return to the village, his mother was embroiled in

\textsuperscript{44} Bruce Brown, Annual Report to 1955 Synod, MOM 363; Rita Berry, Report to 1957 Synod, MOM 365; Colin White, Report to 1957 Synod, ALX 3/58.

\textsuperscript{45} Bruce Walkeden-Brown, Annual Report to 1955 Synod, MOM 363.

\textsuperscript{46} Personal recollection, East Cape 1970.
a bitter argument with a woman from the next village. In the dispute the boy’s mother had brought shame or embarrassment to the other woman whose only recourse was to ask a local sorcerer to punish her. Nothing was said to the boy but, from subtle indications, the sorcerer let it be known the boy was to be punished. From that point on nothing could keep that boy alive and he died from fear of the sorcerer.47

Sometimes Papuan people would show a willingness to take on the power of magic. At Rossel Island there was a *yaba*, an outcrop of coral rock that, because of its danger to canoes and boats, was feared as possessing special powers. Excessive noise near it would cause the sky to crash down and Rossel would be destroyed. In an attempt to refute such claims, a Misiman Methodist teacher, Mataio Gamaina, fired two shots from a 12-gauge shotgun at the *yaba*. The old men predicted that a severe penalty would fall on the people though Mataio, as a foreigner, would not be affected. This incident has remained in the story of the Rossel people for it has often been referred to and visitors were made aware of it. The linguist Jim Henderson, in 1970, was told that ‘there was a sacred place where a *misinari* [teacher] shot at it, so it was not sacred any more.’48

Mataio then attacked an eel in a nearby creek which people believed would lead to his blindness.49 Missionaries usually saw such incidents as signs of a transformation from fear to faith, but Bartlett, more pragmatic than most, stopped his pastors from continuing in such a vein. Unfortunately Mataio was a leper and his illness, which had been dormant for some time, immediately flared up and within days he had difficulty walking and his hands became so ulcerous that he could not grip with them.

While missionaries sought to come to terms with such beliefs they only understood them through their own filters. A good example is that of Bartlett. Over a period of time he wrote of the fear among the Rossel people of *ome*, a Sudest word for the bark of a certain tree found only on Rossel. Bartlett’s understanding was:

Those who follow *Ome* call it ‘religion.’ They say there are two

47 This cause was the view of a Dobuan doctor, Lester Simulabai, who performed an autopsy.


religions, *Ome*, which is on the ground amongst them, and therefore to be feared; and the religion of God, who is far away in the heavens, and not a source of present danger. *Ome* forbids laughter and singing and games such as football. *Ome* says ‘die’, and the victim dies. *Ome* says to a strong man, ‘A sickness will eat you’, and at once he becomes ill. *Ome* says for the payment of money he will recover. The sick man pays up and is well almost at once. Children are terrified at the mention of *Ome*. It is a vague something, sinister and terrible. At Wolonga Bay [Rossel Island] five deaths were attributed to *Ome*, and one man has a withered arm which he says is due to it. There is a law forbidding the use of such magic and no doubt our capable Resident Magistrate will deal with the matter on his next patrol. At the September Q[uarterly] M[eeting] it was encouraging to hear Buiena, a young Rossel Island local preacher, denounce *Ome* as an evil thing, and appeal to the people to turn to God, who casts out fear, and in whom there is no darkness.50

Bartlett’s understanding was incorrect. *Ome* is not a religion and has no adherents or worship associated with it.51 As a bark, *ome* is used like the *kelala* and *pepelo* trees that are native to Duau on southern Normanby and which came to the Louisiades through *kula* expeditions. Rarity of anything often guarantees special magical properties. In the case of *ome* the bark has many positive uses. It could be made into perfume by cooking it in coconut oil and extracting the scent; it had a strong soothing odour and was used for massage; it could be chewed with betel nut to freshen bad breath or as a pre-emptive medicine and a means of warming a cold body.

It was also used in magic and sorcery because spirits are said to reside in trees and bark. It is not always used for malevolent purposes; often it is used for good. Whether for good or evil, the spirits of *ome* are invoked. Bartlett saw it as a power in itself, whereas its power and efficacy is in the spirits that *ome* was used to invoke. What was feared about it was that men could carry it hidden in their baskets, treasured as a fetish, enabling them to invoke supernatural powers at any time.

Catholic and Methodist missionaries experienced much of the customary life of the people of Milne Bay, often unconsciously. The sense of community was always felt, languages were learnt, put into writing and taught in schools, friendships of enduring

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50 Harry Bartlett, Annual Report to 1941 Synod, MOM 274.

51 Informant: Reverend Simeon Namunu, previous United Church Bishop of the Papuan Islands Region, correspondence 10 October 1994.
quality were formed and the lives of expatriates were changed forever. For their part
Melanesian people were introduced to new foods, gardening practices, technology and
mechanisation and a new religion that was very different to the beliefs they had
developed over centuries.

One of the more thoughtful Methodists, chairman of the district, Ron Andrew,
best summed up the result of this culture-clash when he observed:

In their outer aspects, tribal organisation and native custom have been
little touched by the coming of the white man, but one feels that, in the
inner realm, the bases of native belief have so altered that the driving
force has gone. Christianity has proved, in many a native heart, the new
power for righteousness and love that can transform and uplift the
people. That it has a large and ever growing influence in moulding
native thought is evident, and it is a matter for deep thankfulness. It is
our task and privilege to do all we can to foster this inward growth in
Christian ideals, till it has spread itself through all the ramifications
of native custom and belief. This quiet intensive work is the task of the
Church in this District today, and it calls for our best in sympathy and
understanding, in consecrated effort and devotion.52

If Andrew was correct, many of his contemporaries and successors would have felt well
pleased.

52 Chairman's Report to 1934 Synod, MOM 202. (Italics mine)
CHAPTER TEN
Millenarian Movements

The arrival of Europeans, with their superior material and technological resources, had an immediate impact on the Melanesian world. When a significant number of them also presented a new world view it was to be expected that any effort to accommodate new religious ideas would have a pervasive influence. Such a clash of ideas and religious values and symbols brought forth interesting phenomena which can be described as millenarian movements. The one constant in the manifestations was the hope to bring a new, materially better world into being for the people. The Milne Bay province has been the scene of a number of such movements.

Just how much the Christian teaching was responsible for these movements is problematic but that it was a major factor is beyond dispute. It was shortly after the arrival of the first LMS missionaries in Milne Bay that, in 1893, Tokeriu of Gabagabuna village prophesied a flood to be followed by a new, idyllic island of food and departed spirits. The emergence of such a phenomenon so soon after expatriate arrival suggests that these spirit movements could well have been in existence already. If so, the explanations for them need some revision.

In the Methodist Mission area there was a manifestation at Begasi village near the mission headquarters at Dobu in 1905 but there are no further references by the missionaries to any other until after the arrival of the Roman Catholic missionaries in 1930.

In order to understand the relevance of these so-called cult movements to the missions we might examine four of them, each of which can be classified as millenarian in that they address the idea of a new world, but in the location of the existing physical world which cares for them by enriching their lives and making it easier to live as well as connecting their lives to the spirits of the dead. In reviewing these four cults it is

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necessary to describe what the missionaries understood about them and, where possible, compare that with anthropological perspectives.

It is important to clear up a few classificatory matters. First, the issue of terminology. Cargo cult and millenarian movements are distinct from each other. The former is a generic term accommodating all manifestations where there is expectation of a better material existence through the arrival of cargo. Millenarianism goes further and aligns this better life-style with the arrival of a new world order in which power roles are reversed and the Melanesians (often confined to devotees of the cult) become the repositories of knowledge and resources and take the power and places of white people.

These movements are cults in that there is a strong, central leader whose word is binding, and on whom the whole movement rose or fell. Acceptance of the leader and membership of the cult often included payment of dues while disobedience met with exclusion from the benefits and, on some occasions, fines.

A second matter for consideration is the explanation for these movements. A considerable literature presumes the arrival of European influence as the catalyst. This literature ranges from problems created by outside influence in internal exchange systems, to the effect of missionisation, to the cults being indigenous responses seeking political self-determination. What is lacking here is the suggestion that such movements existed in these societies before the arrival of outsiders. It is contended here that the examples to be examined show these movements to be logical local ways of coping with cultural re-adjustments in the face of outside influences.

In this context it is not the intention to account for these movements or to define their purpose, but rather to show how missionaries understood and responded to them. In their responses we get some understanding of the acculturation of missionaries and how they understood the people they lived amongst. It should be noted that each of these four manifestations were noted by Methodist missionaries; there is no record of such phenomena being noted by the Catholic Mission.²

² In the few published material on the MSC and in all their extant correspondence, there is only one reference to any ‘cargo cult’; in Walderssee, ‘Neither Eagles nor Saints’ ... Appendix II: Cargo Cults, 647-653, a reference to the Asisi or Mast cult on the Papua mainland.
The first of the four cults under examination occurred on Goodenough Island, as noted by Jack Rundle, the resident Methodist missionary. It had its origins on the mainland in the Wanigela area. In July 1932, Kitore of Uiaku village, had a vision of two paths, one leading to God and the other to Satan. Kitore’s followers were known as the ‘Asisi’ men and it was by this title it became known to Rundle. Its followers erected twenty-foot high wireless masts, a feature borrowed from the better-known Vailala cult of western Papua, to enable God to converse with the Asisi men. Another feature was the sniffing of the air in front of each house to detect poison.

These remarkable features were either lost in the transition of the cult across the sea to Goodenough, or were not appreciated as part of the lore by Rundle. Such cults contained a great deal of secrecy so it is quite possible that Rundle was only told those things that would interest him. Whatever happened, his record describes only the outward manifestations of the cult and nothing about its motivations:

About Christmas time there was much excitement in our immediate district. For sometime previous it was reported that a great chief, Asisi by name, was to arrive on the island from Iaseia on the mainland to celebrate Christmas. On his arrival a complete revolution of native life and custom was to take place. The white men were to become stones if they had not returned to their own land before Asisi came. The entire population were to enjoy perfect happiness, and live together forever. European houses were to be allocated to all. There would be no necessity to garden as rice and meat would be supplied in abundance with tea, milk and sugar. European clothes would displace native garments. Launches and whaleboats could be had for the asking.

Besides its call for a new world to replace the existing, harsher one, it held out the promise that the spirits of the departed would return and complete for all time the tribal circles. Its followers were called to lead a moral life. Serious crimes such as lying and stealing were to receive the same punishment that would befall all white men: perpetrators would turn to stone. Other sins would cause suffering and sickness to the violators. Mission teachers were ordered to recant under threat of exclusion from the benefits of the cult and would receive severe punishment. Scriptural overtones were

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3 David Wetherell, ‘Christian Missions ... ’, 241f.
4 Jack Rundle, Annual Report to 1933 Synod, MOM file 201.
evident throughout, even to the claim that Asisi would likely come as a thief in the night, and that days of intense darkness would herald his coming.

Rundle visited his teachers and urged them and church members to continue their gardens, which many had not planted in expectation of the arrival of goods, to stop killing their pigs, and 'to stand firm and to warn the people not to be deceived.'

The cult apparently had little, if any, long-term impact. Rundle claimed responsibility for this, declaring 'That I did not immediately become a stone created doubt in many minds. Today it is the joke of the year. That some are without food and others have no pigs is a tragic reminder, and a very practical lesson which will not soon be forgotten.' As there are no references to it in government patrol reports it would appear that Rundle was right. But Goodenough and neighbouring north-west Fergusson Island experienced a number of small outbreaks over many years, and it just as likely that this particular manifestation emerged in another form, for the story is not the important thing; what was important was the purpose. Here that purpose was to participate in a new world order and not to be left behind.

The second cult, with little immediate effect and no apparent long-term impact, took place on northern Fergusson Island, not far from Goodenough. Its genesis followed the evacuation of the white people in 1942 and was told to John Dixon, missionary at the Methodist at Salamo, by a young Dobuan teacher, Manoa Matawiwina, who had been sent to open a new village mission school at Basima. That a woman was the leader was unusual and gives it special interest. Manoa’s story as told was:

On my return from visiting the far end of the islands - it was in 1943 - my wife told me that all the coastal people had left to gather in a bush village where a prophetess had decreed that all people should assemble to hear her story. She then told them that they were to pay her tribute of pigs and yams and do exactly what she said. Shortly the world would be convulsed and the upper crust of the earth would be covered by a deep subsoil and yams then grown in this new soil would be larger than the white mens kerosene cases. But for those who disregarded her - well, they would be buried when the convulsion took place.6

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5 Jack Rundle, Annual Report to 1933 Synod, MOM 201.
She had a second claim, that the spirits of the dead would return from the spirit-land. Manoa went to the village and was ‘amazed’ at the large crowd who had gathered for feasting and dancing. People paid the prophetess’ arbitrary fines of two shillings cheerfully. But the teacher had approached the situation with the intent of discrediting it. Despite attractive offers of food and claims that he was ‘one of her men’ Manoa called on the woman to show him the spirits.

She tried to stop him leaving the village, claiming him as one of her group, whereupon he demanded that she produce evidence of the spirits or declare herself a fraud. The prophetess went to the village boundary and began scratching the ground, declaring the imminent arrival of the spirits. Their non-appearance was declared to be the result of ‘someone inside the earth lying across their way.’

The teacher saw that the woman’s credibility was now undermined, and made her return the money fines. The movement seems to have collapsed at that point. A few Sundays later, in a church now full, even the prophetess resumed her place in the congregation.

While feeling satisfaction at the outcome, and his own role in it, Manoa was wise enough to acknowledge that, even if the people felt ‘foolish now’ with ‘smiles’ on their faces at any mention of it, should another prophet or prophetess arise the same people would flock to her.

The third cult was by far the most serious. It had its origins in the Louisiade Archipelago under the leadership of a young man named Buliga. A 22-year-old married man with three children, from the Misiman village of Siagara, Buliga began to preach his ideas at home and in the smaller surrounding islands of Motorina, Kimuta and Bagaman. It coincided with the evacuation of white people from the region during the Japanese advance in World War 2.

7 There are varied spellings on his name. As ‘l’ and ‘r’ are interchangeable in most Massim languages, including Misiman and Panaeati, I have chosen the spelling most common today amongst the people.

9 Details are gleaned from the following sources: Martha Macintyre, ‘Christianity, Cargo Cultism, and the Concept of the Spirit in Misiman Cosmology’, in John Barker (ed.) Christianity in Oceania: Ethnographic Perspective, 81-100; Ross A. Mackay, ‘The War Years: Methodists Missionaries in Papua’, JPH,(Vol.27,
One day, sitting outside his house, Buliga claimed he received a visit from St Paul the Apostle, the Old Testament prophet Ezekiel, and St James, the brother of Jesus. They were Hitler’s men to whom Buliga’s father had gone when he died. Under Hitler’s orders the three men came to Buliga, bringing with them a belt sent by his father. Hitler had ordered the traditional grave at Nenakanarai, five kilometres inland from the village of Eiaus, to be cleaned. The act of cleaning would make them into a people of a different race and colour.

Consistent with other manifestations of its kind, European hardware goods and clothing were to be destroyed. Pigs and dogs were to be killed, gardens abandoned and unmarried adolescents and adults were to quickly marry. Hitler had given to him all ships and planes around Misima, at that time a considerable number of both Japanese and Allied craft.

With the break-down of law and order at Misima following the evacuation, and the usurpation of magisterial office by George Brett, Buliga was brought before the court where Brett freed him, claiming his story of a dream was a matter for the mission, not government. Brett was soon captured by the Japanese and le Boutilier assumed the magistrates office and ordered Buliga’s arrest - he was busy travelling around the other islands telling his story. A small posse went to Ebora, the most distant village on Misima, where they smashed canoes and set fire to houses in an abortive attempt to catch Buliga.

The Ebora people turned on their Methodist pastor, Sailoia. They threatened to kill him, destroyed his house and possessions and chased him out of the village. The Tongan missionary, Isikeli Hau’ofa, decided to confront Buliga with the intention of attacking his credibility. But Buliga had by this time gone to Motorina Island.

In November 1942 the government station at Bwagaoia was re-opened with an Australian ANGAU officer, Lt. R.G. Mader as Acting District Officer. Mader was an arrogant man who quickly developed an unsavoury reputation for destroying property and mistreating people who would not stand to attention as he went past. He was not the kind of person to listen to non-whites and when Hau’ofa warned him of the dangers

No.1); ‘The Story of Buliga’, unpublished paper from recollections of Platten Parascos of happenings at Misima in 1942, copy in my possession.
of going to Motorina to capture Buliga, Mader rejected his advice. Mader and a small party arrived at the village of Pakitan on December 31 and when he ordered the village constable to arrest Buliga, the people turned on Mader and killed him and his party.

Buliga returned to Misima with his wife and children, sporting a .303 rifle and ammunition and Mader’s pistol. He was arrested on 15 January 1943 at Eiaus village by the village constable, Egarutawina, and village constables from Awaibi and Ebora. Placed in a cell at Bwagaoia he allegedly hanged himself. He had told his cell mates that he would rather kill himself than be shot by the government in front of his own countrymen. By 8 February twenty of Buliga’s followers implicated in Mader’s murder were in custody. Twelve months later, on 9 February 1944, eight were executed for ‘wilful murder’ in a public ceremony at Bwagaoia. Hau’ofa and the recently returned missionary, Ern Clarke, could do nothing to stop the executions but saw the hangings as a reaction to a loss of white ‘prestige’ which had apparently ‘fallen so low that not only do they need eight lives to restore it but ordered the execution to be made public and asked natives to attend.’

There was no further reference to this movement by the Methodist missionaries after the hangings, but Martha Macintyre puts Buliga in a much larger context in which the movement he created has become an enduring symbol for the people of Misima. It still exists today, albeit in a very different manner. Macintyre this movement by its local name Losevasevan, ‘to make, or do, spirits.’ This puts the whole ideology firmly in the area of spirits, one which is central to any understanding of millenarian movements.

In the Melanesian world all activity is governed to some extent by the activities of spirits. Childbirth, even conception, accidents, travel, fishing and gardening, health

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10 Buliga’s suicide has been challenged by Macintyre who claims he was murdered by fellow prisoners who blamed him for their plight. Martha Macintyre, ‘Christianity, Cargo Cultism, and Spirits in Misiman Cosmology’, in John Barker (ed.), Christianity in Oceania, 86.

11 The eight were: Bona; Liwa; Tumbila No. 1; Tobarikei No. 2; Mesian No. 1; Torlausi; Gabin; Dibura Ruma. The Officer in Charge was J. H. Theckston of the Royal Papuan Constabulary. HQ ANGAU memorandum LS 25/272 of 22.2.1944 to HQ NG Force. AA A1978/109.

12 Minutes of Board Meeting, 17 March 1944, MOM 340.

13 Martha Macintyre, ‘Christianity, Cargo Cultism ...’, 81-100.
and well-being, natural disasters and their avoidance, sickness and death are all due to the activities of good and evil spirits. The provision of goods - cargo - is similarly an activity of the ancestral spirits. The spirits of the deceased desire to send their living relatives the cargo and to empower them to take control over their own destinies.

The role of the leader of a cargo cult was to have direct access to these ancestral spirits, to communicate with them and to share those messages with the people. This was the role Buliga fulfilled. Communicating the ancestors' wish for social and economic transformation which would mean, in part, the transfer of such powers from the white community to the Melanesians.

The myth - the story of the dream - might change, but the aim of the movement did not. It was precisely this fact that kept Buliga's movement going well after his death and will undoubtedly continue until the people are satisfied they are in control. What has been required from the myth is some evidence of its validity. Macintyre points out that Buliga's support increased dramatically when, after conducting a 'service' to Jehovah, a large boat was seen in the distance and then a dinghy was lowered and was paddled towards shore. Near the landing it turned and went away and vanished. This was observed by those present and substantiated, for them, the claim of communication with ancestral spirits.  

The fourth cult under examination also occurred on Goodenough Island. Here a sickly and neglected ten-year-old boy, Gimaula, from the small island of Wagifa, told of a visitation from a white stranger - the ghost of his dead father - who directed him to a cave where there were large deposits of tinned foods and bags of rice. The boy also claimed communication with crabs on the shore who told him of hidden cargo. His words came to the attention of government officers who sent him away to the government school at Esa'ala but his mantle was immediately taken up by a former Methodist lay preacher, Isikele. By claiming contact with the spirits of dead ancestors, Isikele focused on a religious message that exhorted Bible reading, repentance for sin,  

14 Macintyre, 'Christianity, Cargo Cultism ...', 87.

15 For a full account see Michael W. Young, 'Goodenough Island Cargo Cults' in Oceania ..., vol.42 No. 1 (September 1971), 42-57.
a strong moral code and denunciation of sorcery. After a good reception and acquiring a steady following from Wagifan villagers, Isikele developed his millenarianism with the promise of a cargo-laden steamer whose arrival from the underground was confidently predicted to be 22 August 1959 (but later amended to 25 August).

By mid-1959 Isikele’s following had grown to more than one hundred per night at his meetings. The content of the story began to be enlarged with reference to Elizabeth, who would arrive on board the steamer; her presence would announce the rising from the dead of the ancestors, bringing the cargo. The senior missionary in the area, Colin Garlick at Kalokalo, understood this to be a reference to the English queen, but on this point Young is more ambivalent.

It was at this point, according to Young’s account, that Methodist missionaries became involved when the district chairman, Ralph Grant, was met with a hostile demonstration on his arrival at Wailagi, the head station on Goodenough. The ill feeling centred on allegations that the mission was extracting too much from the people in work and money. Isikele was sent to hospital in Samarai suffering from pneumonia and a thyroid condition and missed the 25 August deadline.

This probably saved him from accountability for the non-appearance of Elizabeth and the cargo. His return from hospital in September saw him continue his preaching - Elizabeth had been too busy to appear - but later he blamed the white people for her non-appearance and the failure of the cargo to arrive. The people of Wagifä, probably the only ones to fully embrace Isikele’s teaching were, by October, beginning to feel the effects of neglecting their gardens, and this coincided with the crucial phase of the cult.

In Young’s record, (which, according to one of the two white women missionaries central to subsequent events, is ‘pretty right’ and ‘good’, 16) 12 October marked the pivotal point. The two missionaries at Wailagi, nursing sister Joan Cashin and teacher Reta Berry, reported an allegation that two Wagifan men were seen, armed, under their house at night. This climaxed what for these two, and neighbouring women traders, Ailsa Hall and Mrs Gribben, had been nearly two weeks of uncertainty and

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rumour. From Joan Cashin's diary a full account from their perspective can be gleaned.17

From 1 October an increasing number of patients from Wagifa were being seen at the Wailagi hospital and three died on the one day. Two nurses were sent, 19 injections given and many 'very sick' people were seen. On 5 October Cashin herself visited the island which consisted of 10 villages. In some it was clear she was not welcome, at another people looked at her as though 'she had come from the moon', but other places appeared friendly. She and her helpers passed twenty men, papers in hand, going off to a meeting. The papers consisted of Bible questions they wanted Isikele and his disciples to answer. By this time Colin Garlick had stopped all lay preachers from preaching; only the village missionary (pastor) being permitted to. Church attendance was still at its usual level after which the same people went to the cult meetings which, according to Cashin's information, consisted of worshipping the leader, the spirits of the dead, and then a prayer to God.

At this same time Garlick, whose wife was at Salamo awaiting the imminent birth of a baby, delivered his two-way radio to Wailagi as he made his way to join her. Garlick decided to stay and try to defuse the situation at Wagifa and declared himself pleased with some success. This proved premature. On Sunday 11 October Cashin heard from one of the village pastors at Wailagi that cult members had declared all whites 'would have to be wiped out' because they had prevented the arrival of the cargo. Consistent with Young's account, it was said that fire would destroy towns and cities elsewhere (Goodenough was going through a dry spell and fire was always a fear): Sydney and Port Moresby had been burnt out; the next Sunday it would be Samarai, Monday would be a rest day, then on Tuesday the Sisters house at Wailagi, Cribben's trade store and then the rest of Goodenough would go up in flames. Only Wagifa would be left.

On 13 October two events occurred: one was the birth of Garlick's daughter at Salamo with him in attendance; the other the revelation that two men were found under the Sisters house at Wailagi, an event that triggered a great deal of activity leading to the

17 The following is compiled from Joan Cashin's diary entries dated 1 October 1959 to 23 October 1959; original in my possession.
intervention of the government officers and the arrest of some people among whom was the man who first claimed to see the intruders. Young, quoting Spencer,\textsuperscript{18} says the men were armed, one with a shotgun the other with spears. However Cashin’s record was less dramatic: in her diary she said that one had a spear, the other a club.

The intruders were seen to board their canoe and head towards Wagifá. The two women were not overly concerned, at first seeing it as ‘just another story’, but persistent claims by Wailagi residents and the local village pastor, that it really was intended that the intruders had come to kill, saw Cashin and Berry ‘lose our confidence a little.’ By this time the four white women in the area began to feel more and more isolated in what was a lonely location. Cashin expressed in her diary a concern that the government officers had not been treating the whole movement - of which she had been aware since January - with proper seriousness appearing to ‘dodge’ it and ‘ignoring it to see if it would die down.’

The nursing staff were encouraged by the response of the villagers. Bwaidoka was, by far, the largest village on Goodenough with well over 1,000 residents. When 120 children out of an expected 127 turned up for the regular medical clinic, Cashin saw this as a sign of solidarity. They learned from the mothers that five groups of men had guarded all five entry points to the Wailagi station each night.

By Thursday 15 October Colin Garlick had reached Wailagi, followed early next morning by government officers on the vessel Poseidon. By this time the sisters were being told reasons for the threats to their lives. Prominent among them was some anger at the lower than usual price they had paid for fish purchased in the bartering process at the front door. With a surplus of fish available, the sisters had continued to buy to keep people happy but gave the fish to dogs. The rule of supply and demand seems to have been lost on Wagifans. The government officers, together with eighteen police, spent two days on Wagifa arresting the two men allegedly seen under the house, a young boy and fifteen others for other cult-related activities. But within two days the two ‘intruders’ had been released: the young boy testified it was not them but spirits he had seen that night and, as the two men had alibis, their innocence was accepted. Ironically, for all the perceived threats to the white women and the general state of anxiety that

\textsuperscript{18} Margaret Spencer, \textit{Doctor’s Wife in Papua}, 111.
resulted, only one man - the church steward who had raised the alarm - was incarcerated. He served a sentence of three months for spreading rumours.

The episode had been stressful for Cashin and Berry and their white neighbours and one of Cashin’s last records of the events summed up the difficulties they personally faced: ‘We ourselves are tired’, she wrote, ‘and have been trying to sort out spirits from real people, and truth from gossip, for so many days, that we hardly know what we believe ourselves.’

Another account of these events is from Colin Garlick. He mistakenly states that the cult ‘first began’ on his daughters birthday, 13 October.¹⁹ Informed by mission radio schedule that day of what happened on the night of the 12th, he and a colleague, Ralph Lawton, departed in rough seas for Goodenough, arriving shortly before the government trawler. Garlick talks of a ‘list’ of names of white people that were to be killed. Included were Cashin and Berry at Wailagi, Mrs Gribben and Ailsa Hall at nearby Nounou, Clem Rich of Nuatutu plantation, half-way up the coast towards the government station at Belebele, and the Garlick family at Kalokalo. Government officers, unnamed, were to be included as well. Garlick called in the misinaris (pastors) in the area to instruct them with ‘some teaching’ on cults and later he went to Wagifa with Yoafu Guniniei, the Papuan minister at Wailagi.

Guniniei, though not a native of Goodenough, had spent most of his adult life there. He was held in high esteem and is buried on village land in a special grave which is, even today, equivalent to a shrine. A large degree of respect came from his activities in opposition to this cult. In one action he, learning the cargo had already arrived at Wagifa and was in a cave guarded by spirits, decided to investigate inside the cave. The people were very agitated at his behaviour and fearful for his safety but when he successfully entered and left the cave without harm the effect was to make the people sullen and angry. This is most likely the cause of the physical harm threatened against him in Young’s account.²⁰

¹⁹ This narrative is based on a tape recorded in 1995 by Colin Garlick, in my possession.

²⁰ Michael Young, ‘Goodenough Islands Cargo Cults ... ’, 52.
At Wagifa, Garlick and Guniniei found men sitting around having left their gardens unattended for some time. The Papuan minister, holding an empty basket, asked the men to give him his share of the cargo and then asked them to show him the grave of the dead man whose spirit had returned. After a good deal of persuasion, and with the people obviously fearful, he was shown the grave and challenged the spirit to come out to him. The two ministers then went to another point on the opposite side of Wagifa where 200 angry people were assembled to confront the church representatives.

This was a major confrontation in which speaker after speaker criticised and condemned earlier white missionaries, including how they had made the people build schools but paid them nothing. In response Guniniei spoke for many hours until he could go on no longer, whereupon Garlick took over until he, too, was unable to speak whereupon Guniniei, now recovered, spoke on. After many hours extending over two days and with much to-ing and fro-ing, Guniniei, to everyone's surprise, stood up and faced the main spokesman, extended his hand and - to the relief of all - both men shook hands. Thus, in a confrontation that had centred on the role of white missionaries and the peoples desire to resume control of all aspects of their life, it was the European custom that symbolised the end the danger.

The mission people then returned, (still a little fearful as they were followed by a large number of men), to their landing point and made their way to Wailagi. The role of Guniniei was pivotal to the safe outcome. Garlick described his action as 'the most courageous act I have ever seen.' At meeting points on both sides of Wagifa he had used Biblical images, especially and tellingly the story of Elijah on Mount Carmel when the prophet threw down the gauntlet for the people to choose between two, mutually exclusive, ways to God, a persuasive means well understood by the people.

Within the cult itself Isikele had begun to lose credibility and when it was discovered that he had hoodwinked the people by mimicry and deceit to take the food villagers had sent to their ancestors, the people, including some from his own village, rejected him. Again the government stepped in and he was arrested and sentenced to

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22 1 Kings 18.16-46.
six months gaol. After release he found his influence had waned, but he did try to start up his activities again, for which he was again arrested and sentenced to another six months, a term extended when he escaped from custody.

The legacy of the movement was felt much longer and his followers, the mission and government all suffered. Unattended gardens meant famine. Wagifa was poor soil and an even poorer water supply. The main crop, yam, requires a nine to twelve-month cycle which, coupled with a prolonged dry spell, created much hardship, not helped by the realisation that so much food given to Isikele for the ancestors use was wasted. The money economy had also been affected; Goodenough had been closed to labour recruiters in early 1958 because of concerns at the loss of young men to distant places, Goodenough Islanders being considered good workers and favourite targets for recruiters.

The government experienced a good deal of anti-administration resentment and a high level of tax defaulting, although this was just as likely due to the drop in cash income from the ban on recruiting. The government officers did not endear themselves at first to the white women of Wailagi who saw the local patrol officers as tardy; to Cashin they were ‘such ‘little boys’ these two that we wonder what they will do.’

The mission suffered severely, especially on Wagifa. A partial church census immediately after the events of 13 October showed that at Wagifa there were only five church loyalists left, at Yamawa nine and at Lauwela (on the south-western coast of Goodenough) there were none. ‘There are only a few [on Wagifa] who have stood out against the whole thing’, wrote Cashin ‘the numbers who have stood firm are few but we are proud of them and Colin [Garlick] is going to rebuild from these few.’ But the mission also took heart that, even though the story had spread over the whole island of Goodenough, the main trouble was contained within the relatively small population of Wagifa and some neighbouring villages. In particular, the largest village of Bwaidoka actively supported the mission and the missionaries and there is no sign that Isikele gained any strong following in distant places. The movement obviously made no impact

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23 Joan Cashin, diary entry, Wednesday 14 October 1959; copy in my possession.

24 Joan Cashin, diary entry, 19 October 1959; copy in my possession.
on the Catholic population at Wataluma and there is no reference to it in any of their correspondence or records.

Some little time later Garlick dealt with what he considered a continuation of this cult. At Wadelei on north-east Fergusson a man had set himself up as a messiah and gathered twelve young men as disciples. They travelled through the mountains gathering a considerable following in a sparsely populated region. His message was a mixture of eschatological visions, in which the world order was reversed when Jesus returned to earth, and evangelical fervour in which honorary BA - or ‘born again’ - degrees were issued to followers.

Missionaries saw these movements as a form of distorted thinking; they were minor distractions and sources of humour and responded to by offering ‘proper’ teaching, warnings, and by demonstrations to disprove the power of the spirits. The effect on the followers created antagonism, usually described as sullenness. Apart from what happened at Motorina, none of these movements threatened the physical safety of Europeans, and the murder of Mader and his party was not indicative of Buliga’s aims. No one in that cult as it has continued has used threats to kill. As Macintyre is at pain to point out, Losevasevan encourages its adherents to be involved in their church, includes Christian activities such as prayer in its meetings and supports what the mission has done for the people in its advocacy for peace and harmony. It is the church pastors and ministers who force people to have to choose between church and cult. At Wailagi we see there was no real threat to the safety of Europeans; claims to the contrary were shown to have been baseless. There were many opportunities to harm the missionaries, yet no such actions were attempted. Most importantly, neither Cashin nor Berry ever felt their lives to be in danger.

The one certainty is that the missionaries did not understand these movements. In one degree or another all but one saw them as separate and disparate activities. For them there was no unity in the manifestations. According to Garlick such movements had their beginning in the Second World War when Goodenough served as a large air force base for the Allies. A great deal of military equipment was left behind and then reclaimed by the colonial authorities. These materials were, the people said, meant for
them and had been sent by their ancestors. Elizabeth would correct this and, with the imminent arrival of the cargo, everything would be restored as it was meant to be. The veracity of this was attested by the resurrection of the spirit of a dead man who also promised these things.

But each event was separate, arising out of the war experience. Thus Garlick spoke of three cults: Gimaula, the young boy who started it all, Isikele; and Elizabeth. For this reason he saw the events of 12 October as the start of the Wagifan episode. However, Joan Cashin saw a series of events from January 1959 impinging on the Wagifa population, such as the increasing level of sickness and hunger, as all related to the millenarian outbreak. But, in retrospect, each of the missionaries acknowledged failure to understand what was happening. With more knowledge, they might have handled the situations better.
CHAPTER ELEVEN
The Church Visible

The more visible indicators of mission work and success in Papua were in three areas: education, health care, and communications, of which the school, hospital/aid posts, and boats were potent symbols. Engagement by both missions in these activities were a result of conscious decisions to emulate proven fields of endeavour in other places. Neither the Methodists nor the Sacred Heart missionaries questioned such an approach; they entered into them without question because preaching the gospel was not, in the introductory stage, considered sufficient, by itself, to win the interest and support of the people. The provision of services to meet a wider need was necessary. Education was a means to enter the wider world; medical services were provided as acts of human concern and altruism; whereas boats were necessary to move around and were the visible symbol of the church in these isolated and extremely scattered small island communities.

For the Methodists education was the central focus of its policy ‘to maintain and extend our Mission stations for evangelism, educational, medical, agricultural and industrial work’,¹ while Catholic evangelistic strategy was described as

first [make] contact; the natives [then] ask for a priest and build a temporary dwelling; the language is learned; a school opened and placed under the care of nuns or a Catechist. The rest follows.²

In their respective pursuits for allegiance, education was the propaganda weapon as both missions eagerly pressed their own merits according to enrolments, results and government inspection reports.

While Methodists acknowledged their own education was ‘lamentable’, ‘rudimentary’ and having an ‘appallingly low standard’ the reasons it was so were not investigated with any rigour. The reason for the poor standard had its genesis in two factors. The first was the language issue, with Dobuan the language of instruction.

¹ ‘Restitution’, undated, post-war publication of Methodist Overseas Missions, quoted in Tony Austin, Technical Training and Development in Papua 1894-1941, 141.

² ‘The Eastern Papua Mission’, unpublished report, page 18, SHM.
This created two problems. While it was known in the kula trade circle and was the adopted lingua franca of the Methodist Mission it was, especially after the war, increasingly less suitable as the language of instruction in non-Dobuan communities, though the Dobuan speakers resisted instruction in English. Burton’s successor as Board general secretary, Alf Gardner, tried hard to get the synod to accept the necessity for teaching in English\(^3\) and his successor, Cecil Gribble, saw that unless that happened the situation would lead to a larger problem - ‘the weakness of the trained ministry.’\(^4\) No matter how idealistic the notion that language was the embodiment of the peoples’ culture and needed to be preserved at all costs, it was not fair to non-Dobuan speakers to learn in a language that would have little value for them outside the classroom.

A further issue in the language matter was a serious lack of competent teachers in English and a shortage of teaching resources, itself a product of the absence of printed materials in any language other than Dobuan. However, there was the dearth of suitable educational materials even in Dobuan itself. This was despite the prodigious labours of Ralph Grant and his workers at the East Cape printing works where, apart from hymn books and catechisms in various languages, the only other publications were in Dobuan, most of which were prepared for the training of village teachers at the DTI. The schools were thus poorly resourced in materials with a subsequent effect on the quality of instruction. The printed materials in Dobuan are indicative of the paucity of appropriate educational resources - books such as Aggrey of Africa, Little Red Riding Hood and The Three Bears - were the kind of resource that was on offer.

The second major factor in the Methodist education policy was the legacy of Gilmour’s leadership when priority was given to technical training. It was during his time that the major advances were made in house building, development of Salamo as the new head station and the building of many boats took place. As controller of finances he was able to favour the things that interested him most. School education suffered as a consequence and a number of his colleagues were annoyed with this, concerned at the amount of time devoted to technical training as against formal

\(^3\) Report on General Secretary’s visit to Papua, Executive Committee minutes, 11 September 1947, MOM 341.

\(^4\) Cecil Gribble report, Executive Committee minutes 15 June 1949, MOM 342.
education. 'A great deal more time should be given in school work,' declared one 'as it is in this that our success rests' and John Dixon, tutor in the DTI recalled 'How often has one heard a student say 'Give us more of the Bible. It is our very existence.'

Gilmour's inclination to support technical training to the detriment of formal schooling, was one of the areas of growing dissatisfaction between him and his missionary colleagues that led to his removal. The legacy of Gilmour's neglect of school education persisted for a long time. Money to remedy the problem at Salamo was not forthcoming, there were staff retrenchments as the Depression continued, the Board could not recruit new staff and then there was the war-time evacuation. It was not until the fifties that the issue was addressed in any real way and by then, because of the war, there was a growing desire by Papuans for English instruction. The Catholics provided this and as they were opening up more and more stations and schools they were becoming widely accepted. Overall enrollments in Methodist schools show that, while the desire for schools was growing, the relative numbers attending declined:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Number of schools</th>
<th>Pupils</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1930</td>
<td>125</td>
<td>7,400</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1940</td>
<td>150</td>
<td>7,300</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1950</td>
<td>184</td>
<td>7,900</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1960</td>
<td>208</td>
<td>8,000</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

What these figures indicate is the strong desire of villagers for a school of their own but a relative decline in those attending, reflecting disappointment with the quality of education offered as well as showing the effects of the emergence of the Catholic expansion.

Another outcome of the Methodist system was the incestuous nature of the


6 See Appendix I: Methodist Statistics.
policy. It had been accepted for a long time that education was primarily for church workers and their families. After all, the education on offer was to train men as pastor/teachers and the women in domestic sciences such as cooking, needlework, sewing and mat making as well as in literacy. Ron Andrew was the first to raise the issue that education primarily for those who wanted to work in the church or for the family of church workers could no longer be sustained. Because children of church workers were given priority the result was that ‘dynastic’ church families began to emerge. Amongst them were the Baloiloi, Tauwaigu, Tauwaole and Duigu families. Each of them included members who were important informants and confidants of missionaries: Eliesa Duigu was Bromilow’s main translation informant who then became a minister as did his son, Robert, who was a special favourite of Ralph Grant; Madiu Baloiloi was close to John Dixon, and his cousins, Noeli and Isako, were among the first to be ordained; Apenai Tauwaigu succeeded Robert Budiara as bishop, his sister Yetibi was the only nurse chosen to study in Australia and their cousin, Henry, is, in 1999, bishop. Benjamin Tauwaigu has made a major contribution as the United Church national education secretary, national secretary of the Assembly, and Papuan Islands regional secretary and regional education secretary.

Changes, especially the growth in government schools, meant exclusive entry for church members into schools could no longer be sustained and caused the Methodists to look at how to preserve religious influence in all schools, declaring ‘with the rapid growth of government schools, the Church may need to look to other methods [for religious education] than the direct control of education.’ Government abolished grades seven to nine, introduced a standardised exam for standards six and seven from which only those who passed at an ‘upper level’ were able to continue on to high school Form 1; Wesley Boys School became a coeducational Junior High School.

Years later, as government exercised even more control over education, real fears began to emerge amongst the Methodists about the Mission’s survival. As

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7 JR Andrew, Annual Report to 1946 synod, MOM 354.
Williams has noted, it was not uncommon when there was talk of closing down village schools for the people to ask, 'if the school goes what point is there in having the church!'\textsuperscript{10} Chairman Leigh Swaby's report to the 1965 Synod, titled 'God turns the tide in Papua', argued the churches had two main objectives for remaining in education: the Christian Church could make a unique contribution, and because government 'is absorbing almost 100 percent' of graduates from the highest levels of secondary schooling for the rapidly growing public service, the Mission needed to educate its own group of higher level graduates from which might come a better educated clergy.\textsuperscript{11} The difficulties in doing this were apparent; in 1965 Methodist schools had only five Standard 5, two Standard 6 primary classes, at Wesley Junior High one class for each of Forms 1, 2 and 3. The Mission's best expectation was to send two students for tertiary education but that could only be afforded with scholarship help from the Australian and Fijian churches. The depth of the problem is seen when it is realised that, of the 8,400 students then in Methodist schools, less than 20 percent had any schooling at a level recognised by government, and less than 100 in a recognised Standard 6.\textsuperscript{12}

Over the years Wesley Junior High (later Wesley High School) became an important symbol as it educated a significant number of students who rose to national prominence in education, medicine, public service and trade unionism. Yet it, too, at the beginning, struggled to provide a proper education because of inadequate staffing unable to deal with the growing need. In 1964 it had a staff of just two Europeans, a student population of 53 with three classes: Standard 7, Forms 1 and 2. By 1967 - with Standard 7 now abolished - the school had an enrollment of 140 including two Form 1 classes. In the following years the influx of a considerable number of volunteer teachers from Australia, New Zealand, the United Kingdom and one from India, helped Wesley to provide an excellent education and to eventually appoint two locals, Patrick Lepani (Kiriwina) and Isaboma (Misima) as headmasters. The school also sent a considerable


\textsuperscript{11} Chairman's Report to 1965 Synod, MOM 372.

\textsuperscript{12} Chairman's Report 1965 Synod, MOM 372.
number of students to Gaulim Teachers College near Rabaul as primary teacher trainees which enabled, by 1973, all United Church primary schools to be fully staffed by qualified local teachers.

The Sacred Heart incursion into education was its entry point into a predominantly Methodist world. Its concentration on English as a means of instruction was welcomed by the people; it needed such a strong appeal to parents in the early years for them to be willing to hand over their child’s upbringing for years to a group of expatriates who were being strongly criticised by their better known Protestant counterparts. From the beginning Lyons had made long launch trips as far as the Trobriands, bringing back one or two children at a time for his school even allowing ‘it is somewhat different here [Sideia] to village life and they seem to realise that.’13 Within a year of starting the mission the school had forty-three pupils but held no regular classes or appointed teacher. Lyons began to push for nuns to come - ‘we urgently need Sisters ... we need organised school work. I would not like to see our first batch badly educated’14 - but it was June 1934 before the first nuns arrived in the form of Sisters de Pazzi, Finbar and Stanislaus and then, in the following February, Sister Paul. Finbar had already spent thirty years in the Yule Island mission while de Pazzi, the youngest of the group, quickly established a reputation as a character because of her penchant for hard physical work and her small stature. Known as ‘a small bundle of missionary energy’ she donned rubber boots and blue overalls and spent much of her time wading in mangroves to clear the small piece of land available to the mission and, with the school children, embarked on a ‘one tree a day’ clearance policy.15

The influence of ‘proper’ teachers was soon apparent. School Inspector Colonel Hooper’s visit in July 1935 examined thirty-one students, of whom all passed: ‘Sideia

13 Lyons to Kensington, 6 December 1932, SHM.
14 Lyons to Father Provincial, 20 August 1933, SHM.
jubilant, Colonel delighted.\textsuperscript{16} This they believed placed them ‘right in the foreground’ of education and they were being urged by resident magistrates to secure land in places like Misima so they could replicate the Sideia results.\textsuperscript{17} More requests for nuns to work outside Sideia were made but it was clear a major motivation for these schools was to secure the future of the mission itself. Gerald Doody in the Trobriands wrote:

> Our mission here is making really great headway, but it will of necessity go comparatively slowly until the sisters come. A boarding school is absolutely imperative here, to make any headway, not with the teaching of the three Rs, but with the teaching of religion. And although we could possibly run a boy’s boarding school, though not until next year owing to lack of buildings, yet the sisters alone can make a complete job of it. This is not caused solely by the fact that teaching the boys only is but half the work, but perhaps even more by the hold the very name of our sisters has over the native mind. Owing to the success they have had at Sideia and Milne Bay, and of course elsewhere, their schools are looked upon as ‘proper schools’, and of course the six boys at Sideia who come from this group have done a great deal of silent propaganda by learning to speak English so quickly and so well.\textsuperscript{18}

The needs of the populous Trobriands grew. In early 1939 the school had 18 students and, in just two weeks, two villages went over to the Catholic Church and the roll increased to 60 with the expectation of at least one more larger village following which would deliver a school of over 200. Sisters Finbar and Paul and a new arrival, Catherine, arrived in mid-1939 to take over the school where they remained until the evacuation in 1942.

After the war the MSC looked to the effectiveness of a policy to encourage the intermarriage of former students who would then commence small schools in their marital villages. ‘Many who were previously at school here’ wrote Dwyer, ‘are now married and willing to help by establishing small secondary stations, each with twenty to thirty children in their schools. That way lies success.’\textsuperscript{19} Such schools would cost £40 a year, paying the teacher and supplying rations to the children. Each new

\textsuperscript{16} Tomlinson to Father Provincial, 20 July 1935, SHM.

\textsuperscript{17} Father Paul Fleming to Father Provincial, 20 September 1935, SHM.

\textsuperscript{18} Doody to Father Provincial, 2 February 1938, SHM.

\textsuperscript{19} Dwyer to Father Provincial, 2 September 1944, SHM.
missionary saw the school as the means to evangelise. As already seen the missions at Nimoa, Rossel and Wataluma were commenced through such a strategy. Before the pupils were taught to read and write they learnt the catechism - it was a de facto test for admission to school. School and religion were so intertwined that one was not possible without the other. Newly arrived Father John McGhee, sent to the Trobriands, gave as his initial observations:

There is any amount of work in the educational line. The children know nothing. Church means nothing to them, nor the Mass, prayers or catechism. Here at Gusaweta there are about ten children in the school who were at school with the sisters before the war. They are the leaven to start with. It is my first experience of people who know nothing about God and to whom religion means nothing. Of course all have heard of God, since the Methodists have been here for years, but as far as I know He means absolutely nothing to those outside the natives who have been to a mission school.\(^{20}\)

By the early fifties the MSC policy of all education in English was being challenged. School in the Trobriands was a part-time activity. McGhee taught for three hours two mornings a week and not in English. With over ninety children in his one class his only resource was a small reader which Baldwin had translated and which McGhee labouriously typed, 120 copies, three at a time. Class time was occupied with prayers, catechism, alphabet, some figure work, reading, writing and physical drills. Baldwin was never convinced of the desirability to teach in English and clearly influenced McGhee who declared ‘So far I have taught them no English. Most Trobrianders haven’t the least desire to learn it’ before going on to say, ‘Baptism is the main thing, and I hope by the end of next year to have my first lot ready.’\(^{21}\)

Paradoxically it was the fifties when the Catholic schools came into prominence and excited most attention. A Native Teachers Training School was commenced at Sideia in 1950 and quickly had fifty male trainees, rising to more than 100 by 1953, all males. It was clear the Sideia school was being used primarily as a pool from which to draw teachers in pursuit of the goal of increasing the Catholic population which ‘will grow only in proportion to the number of schools in each area and the number of pupils

\(^{20}\) McGhee to Father Provincial, 21 April 1946, SHM.

\(^{21}\) McGhee to Father Provincial, 1 August 1946, SHM.
who attend.' Doyle rightly saw that the government would become more involved in education, confirmed when he attended a Mission-Government Conference in Port Moresby in 1954, after which he expressed his fear that government schools would be so attractive it would be 'no good for us ... however we must hang on as this is the only way we have of getting future Catholics.' In effect the Catholics also had the same two-tiered school system as the Methodists: the village or 'small secondary station' school and 'higher schools', one on each main mission station. In addition there was the Sideia Teacher Training School, the equivalent of the Methodist DTI at Salamo.

By the mid-fifties results in external exams gave evidence that the confidence placed in education as propaganda was paying off. Of 150 students across the country who sat for twenty-one government scholarships Sideia's two students were successful, the first time ever for Catholic students. The following year Sideia was overcrowded with 180 students, all boys, and in 1957 Sideia was registered as an 'A' class teacher training establishment, eligible to train the newly-created 'A' certificated primary teachers. Accreditation was based on government inspection reports - 'the inspector's report [on Sideia] just 'laid it on with a trowel!!', wrote one of their teachers, ... some marks were the highest ever recorded in Papua.' Sideia was one of relatively few to be accredited; the alternative for those who failed the inspection was closure. In 1958 the mission was able to report that, among the priests and brothers there were seven qualified teachers and ten registered teaching nuns. When twenty out of twenty-four students, including nine doing the upper primary or 'B' certificate training, passed - a result hailed as superior to government candidates - the pride in the 'considerable' standing of their village schools was palpable.

No real comparison can be made with Methodist schools for it was not until the fifties that the Catholics had completed their expansion, allowing them less than fifteen

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22 Annual Report of Prefecture of Samarai, August 1953, SHM.
23 Doyle to Father Provincial, 24 November 1954, SHM.
24 Dempsey to Father Provincial, 9 December 1957, SHM.
25 McGhee to Father Provincial, 19 February 1958, SHM.
26 Doyle to Father Provincial, 22 January 1959; Dempsey to Father Provincial, 26 January 1959, SHM.
years before the village school system was discontinued. However the growth in the
school population is indicated below, the figures inclusive of ‘higher schools’ and village
schools, the former being the main station school where nuns taught:

Table 3: Catholic School Attendance

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Central Stations</th>
<th>Schools</th>
<th>Pupils</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1950</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>781</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1955</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>929</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1960</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>1,996</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1965</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>2,456</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The transition into the new government accredited school system was relatively
easy for the Sacred Heart mission as about half its teachers had government certificates
whereas the Methodists had very few. Even allowing the Catholics had less than a third
of the number of students compared to the Methodists, the quality of education, and
therefore results, was far superior.

The last act of the education propaganda to be played out occurred when, as a
result of the 1972 National Education policy, all schools were to be conducted by a
recognised agency, either United, Catholic or government, the agency being the choice
of the local community. At this point there was considerable activity to secure the
permission of villagers by both missions, not least because the local school management
could choose the teachers. While there were a number of disagreements, usually
centering on accusations about ‘rice Christians’ - the act of giving rice or other items to
villagers to secure their support - the transition was successful largely due to the pre­
emptive discussions that took place at Salamo in 1972. 28

From the beginning, for both missions, medical work was a secondary activity
to education and evangelistic work. Yet it was a work they could not avoid. Methodist
missionaries received a basic medical knowledge as part of their training because, as part

27 The 1960 and 1965 figures include 702 and 870 ‘non-Catholic’ boys and girls.
28 See Appendix VII: Minutes of Ecumenical Meeting at Budoya.
of their calling, they would need to follow the Biblical injunction to 'heal the sick.' No missionary could ever turn away from offering healing and succour to any in need. Medical work was inescapable.

By 1930 there was an extensive but basic medical work in the Methodist Mission. A large, new hospital had been built at Salamo and opened by Murray in 1926. This represented the completion of Gilmour's major development of the new Mission headquarters. There was a smaller hospital at Wailagi and a pervasive network of clinics conducted all over the D'Entrecasteaux Islands as well as on the Trobriands and at East Cape. Misima also had nurses but it was better serviced because the mining companies and government provided a better resourced service.

After 1930 Salamo had only one qualified European medical practitioner, Gordon Heaslip (1930-35), and two Pacific Islander 'native medical practitioners', Wilson Lagi (1924-31) and George Niumeitolu (1949-54), both trained in the Suva Medical School. It was the nursing staff who provided most of the basic health services, consisting of midwifery, emergency procedures including, if necessary, surgery, treatments, and training of orderlies and clinic first aid workers. The hospital at Salamo also operated as a nursery for babies up to two years of age. In time, further nurseries were commenced at Wailagi and Bwaruada.

The major illnesses faced by the people were malaria, tuberculosis, leprosy and influenza, which was particularly severe at times. The various flu epidemics of 1932, 1936, 1940 and 1958 were responsible for thousands of deaths; in 1932 1,500 people died from it and the 1958 occurrence caused a decline in church membership blamed on 'the vicious flu visitation.' Both the 1936 and 1958 outbreaks were noted by the Sacred Heart missionaries as the causes of many deaths, the earlier one being a complicating factor leading to the death of Hugh Tomlinson. There were also outbreaks of measles which led to villages and islands being quarantined.

It was in the area of infant and maternal welfare that the Methodists mostly concentrated, building on the tradition started by Lily Bromilow. Children, as has been

29 1932 Synod Minutes, MOM 200.

30 1959 Synod Minutes, NGC AL/X 3/59.
shown, were a traditional focus in this mission,\footnote{Michael Young, 'A tropology of the Dobu Mission', \textit{Canberra Anthropology}, 3 (1980) 86-104; 'Suffer the children: Wesleyans in the D'Entrecasteaux', in Margaret Jolly and Martha Macintyre (eds.), \textit{Family and Gender in the Pacific}, 108-134.} not because they needed to be ‘rescued’ to the extent that has been suggested, but rather because women’s health needed addressing at a village level, where government services were not to be found. Women travelled little, in contrast to men, and needed medical services to be delivered to them. A glimpse into the reason the mission made women and children a priority can be gauged from this incident reported by Ralph Grant:

One of the pitiable [examples] was that of a mother who steadfastly refused any advice from us, let alone treatment of any description. She passed on leaving a babe of four and a half months. We begged for the child, there being no one in the village able to care for it. The father refused to let it come even to a married couple on the station. We sent milk down to it for several weeks. It never really got enough suitable nourishment. But for three weeks the father held out. His plea was ‘I have promised not to let anyone take it, I will try and rear it. If it dies, it dies.’ We talked with him and we talked with others in the village and just a short while ago the father brought the baby girl along, and said he would be glad to take it to the hospital. It interfered too much with his gardening for one thing, and our approaching departure to synod aroused fears that no proper supplies of milk would be available. So the baby girl gets its chance and our hospital enters upon probation as far as the village is concerned. Should all go well then our work will receive more encouragement from the natives in that vicinity, and a wider door will be opened.\footnote{Ralph Grant, Annual Report to 1936 Synod, MOM 269.}

Medical services, when compared with other activities, played a different role in the policy of the mission. Whenever, as happened from time to time, the synod took stock of its directions medical services never figured; such discussions looked at education, social policy, structural issues and training of pastors and clergy. Yet medical services touched on many of the issues inherent in such matters. One such issue was concern over depopulation, which was variously claimed to be the result of sorcery,\footnote{Bruce Walkeden-Brown Annual Report to 1954 Synod, NGC AL/X 3/55.} the absence of pre- and post-natal care, and indentured labour recruitment.

Another issue in depopulation was claimed to be the effects of venereal disease.
which was blamed on boat crews and returning indentured labourers. Missionaries such as Ralph Grant had doubts about the ability of village pastors to deal adequately with the problems such diseases caused, declaring the disease is ‘[on] certain stations proving a severe test of the Teacher’s faith. These stations are in those sheltered havens that form anchorages for vessels.’ The most affected area was Normanby Island where the government instituted a temporary camp.34

However, where disease was concerned, even the mission hospitals were not always safe places. Marj Thurstun at Salamo bemoaned the ‘alarming’ death rate amongst the babies there - 28 percent died before leaving the nursery, down from the pre-war figure of 43 percent, the improvement due solely to the wider use of antibiotics, while at Wailagi Joan Cashin expressed her concern at the inability of babies brought back from the Salamo nursery to survive the ‘eating customs [roasted foods and little in the way of liquids] and village life’ of Goodenough, noting there was a death rate of 30 percent amongst such babies.35 The response to this was to build the new hospital and nursery at Wailagi. Hospital and nursery were breeding grounds for other problems as well. Daphne Birt examined the faeces of the babies in the Salamo nursery for internal parasites and found none in immobile babies yet all those crawling were infected with round worm, ranging from moderate to very heavy infections. The fault lay in the nursery itself where, with very little supervision, the children crawled into the general wards where defecation onto the floor was a common occurrence.36

The 1950s changes in education had a complementary effect on medical services at a time when a better educated person was offering for training. Nurse training at Salamo had, up to the early fifties, been in Dobuan, a language that had difficulty in translating medical concepts and treatments adequately. Among the outstanding trainees at Salamo was Nedulo Beko, a native of Misima. Her father had been one of those executed for involvement in the Buliga cult during the war. She, and children of other

34 See page 105.
36 D. Birt, Report to 1956 Synod, MOM 364.
families from that incident, were brought by Isikeli and Mary Hau’ofa to the Loaga Mission Station and fostered in their home. After finishing her schooling Nedulo completed nurse training at Salamo before going on to a government hospital near Port Moresby to get her government certificate. Granted a World Health Organisation fellowship in 1967 she gained experience throughout Asia, returned to PNG and occupied senior nursing positions before returning to Salamo in 1974.37

Like the Methodists, the Sacred Heart people had no plan for medical work when it commenced its mission. This may have been due to their proximity to the government hospital at Samarai but it was clear as soon as they began to extend their influence that they would need to do something to meet expectations that missions healed the sick. However it was not until 1940 that a hospital was built at Daio, quite some distance from Samarai and Sideia. The idea was, at first, not generally welcomed. De Boismenu had wanted such a facility both for its work and as a means of gaining favourable reputation with government as well as help to challenge the spheres of influence agreement. The task of raising money for the venture was given to Father Arch Bryson. His activities were questioned by the provincial authorities in Sydney who, with an eye to the finances, did not approve of the venture. De Boismenu’s motives were enunciated by Bryson thus:

Coming to the matter of nurses for our mission. I can but reiterate facts - Some two and a half years ago Fr Sorin instructed me to build a hospital in Milne Bay, as all the non-Catholic missions were in possession of same, and through their medical work wielded a big influence over the natives ... His Lordship [de Boismenu] bade me specifically in the presence of Fr Doody to bring back (from Australia) nurses for the hospital in Milne Bay, as it was his considered opinion that, apart from the good we could do for the natives, it would give our mission civil recognition from the government when our hospital was staffed with certificated nurses and registered, and thus finally break down the Spheres of influence policy operating against us in the east.38

The provincial authorities’ in Kensington disapproval of the idea of sending nurses put

37 Ellen Kettle, That They Might Live, 119.

38 Bryson to Father Provincial, 15 February 1940, SHM.
them in conflict with the bishop for which they blamed Bryson's 'misinformation.' Part of the provincial concern was because Bryson planned to bring one or two nurses to start the hospital who would be lay nurses. This would not be good for cordial relations with the sisters [nuns]; lay workers would probably be there for only a year or two unless they had a 'special vocation' for the work and their presence would be disruptive in the religious community. Sorin found another concern: there should not be a lone lay sister, a companion was necessary as a 'good guard against 'other dangers' a euphemism for romantic entanglements in a celibate community.

The situation was becoming complicated. The bishop, vicar apostolic Sorin, Bryson and newly arrived superior George Taylor all approved the idea in various ways but the Kensington authorities were opposed. Their concern was the cost, not surprising as they were primarily responsible for this. Bryson's fund-raising was effective but the £1,000 he had raised would only last two years at most and to then close the work down would be too damaging for future prospects and credibility. Taylor's complication was location. He felt the Trobriands was the logical place. Daio was not suitable as it would require its own boat to serve the scattered population whereas the Trobriands, with large villages and roads, was ideal except the location lacked what Daio possessed - good buildings. It was then announced that a Dr Tighe from Melbourne was prepared to sell his practice and go to Papua, an offer that appealed to Taylor except there could be no certainty how long Tighe would be prepared to stay or how he might adapt. In the end the Daio hospital went ahead but at no time in the mission's history has its medical work been seen as a significant priority. By 1970 they had six hospitals - Sideia, Daio, Kiriwina, Nimoa, Rossel and Budoya - with a total of 74 beds.

Both missions were invited by government to involve themselves in leprosy work. The Methodists accepted the opportunity but the Catholics, at first attracted to the idea, eventually declined. The initial Catholic reason for considering the opportunity

39 Father Provincial to de Boismenu, 8 February 1940, SHM.
40 Father Provincial to Sorin, 3 April 1940, SHM.
41 Sorin to Father Provincial, 20 April 1940, SHM.
42 Taylor to Father Provincial, 12 September 1940, SHM.
was tied up with their own propaganda. Always looking out for opportunities to work with government, and with the location for a leprosarium being Gesila, just minutes away from the district’s government and commercial offices at Samarai, it was an attractive proposition. Dwyer summed the opportunity up thus:

Actually, there is not a great deal of mission work in the conducting of a leprosarium, even with TB, as the patients would never exceed say 150 and some of these would be staunch Protestants but weighing all things it is surely a work that would bring great blessing on the surrounding mission. That, and the welfare of the few under command, can be the chief justification for the work. ④³

However, the idea proceeded no further, in all probability because it required a minimum of four sisters including two trained nurses, which Kensington could not provide and the opportunity was passed over to the Seventh Day Adventists.

The Methodists established their hospital, a Hansenide Colony, at their old headquarters on the small island of Ubuya. The government financed the whole venture, from materials, construction, medicines and salaries; the mission provided the staff including builders. Construction began in 1951 and the following year, still incomplete with just 36 beds, 43 patients were admitted. The demand seemed overwhelming, as Bert Cuff, the founding superintendent, wrote:

The patients, when they heard that we could take some, came in a flood. They came by canoe, on foot along the beach tracks and over the hills, and by launch ... They range from two men who are nearly helpless and have to be helped to feed themselves, down to two young children about eight who have the first signs of leprosy. ④⁴

Numbers continued to grow and by 1963 there were 137 patients with twice as many (37) being admitted as discharged (20) and the following year another 50 were admitted. ④⁵ Authorities discussed opening a second colony for those who had been discharged. The mission, through the chairman, strongly urged against the idea on the grounds that it would lead to permanent alienation of the people from their land and customs and a second colony would make it even more difficult to locate new cases in

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④³ Dwyer to Father Provincial, 21 June 1948, SHM.

④⁴ AC Cuff, M/R, February 1952, 9

④⁵ Greta Secomb, Annual Reports to 1963 and 1964 Synods, MOM 370 and 371.
the villages. The solution was simple: increase the supervision of those who returned to the village.\textsuperscript{46} At first babies of infected mothers were allowed to remain at Ubuya but new policy directions from Port Moresby required their removal and the Salamo nursery went into crisis management with up to 60 babies in residence. By the mid-sixties the government changed its policy and the removal of babies from their mothers was phased out.

The creation of the Ubuya hospital led to more periodic foot patrols around the province which uncovered some tragic stories. Many people, fearing they were infected, went to great lengths to avoid detection and Ubuya became a dreaded name. By the early seventies advances in micro-surgery and good cooperation between the Methodists and the Department of Public Health, together with considerable nursing support from the Sacred Heart at Budoya, saw dramatic improvement in the control and eradication of leprosy. The new surgical techniques used by Dr Ken Clezy were remarkably effective so that patients, who had expected to spend a lifetime at Ubuya, were instead being discharged, a change so dramatic that by 1975 Ubuya had closed as a leprosarium and re-opened later as a vocational training centre.\textsuperscript{47}

Education and medical services were permanent symbols of missionary endeavours but as increasingly government took over the policies that governed them and then forced missions into acting as providers on behalf of government, the reasons for involvement no longer had as much currency. Leigh Swaby was one of the few to see the significance of this and question whether missions would lose their singular impact. Eighteen months into his chairmanship he raised the issue at synod:

[In] government-Missions joint ventures (such as Ubuya) we are interested in economy, self help, and a high standard of moral responsibility. The government is interested in efficiency, which costs a lot, coupled with decent behaviour. The two policies are hard to harmonise.

... In education and medical work we have continued largely as agents of the government. Where we have asserted particular emphases they

\textsuperscript{46} Swaby to Dr Russell, Public Health Department, Konedobu 8 July 1963, NGC ALX 3/185.

\textsuperscript{47} A personal note: I was appointed as acting-superintendent of Ubuya during my first six months in Papua. While this was purely an administrative task I was made aware the patients were there for life. Within eight years all had returned home.
could be described thus: The government provides the kind of education the people want while we have been trying to supply the kind of education the people need. In this we have not been very popular because people do not want to be taught to be content with their lot. In medical work we have tried to insist on help from the relatives of patients both in the supply of food and in labour. This has saved a little expense but made the work harder. The government servants as a rule content themselves with the treatment of illness without concerning themselves with the moral questions involved in self help. This is the line of least resistance and the line which many people favour. 48

The Papua synod had little, if any, power on the issue of government control over education and medical work. The Mission Board was the agency who related to government and who held discussions with them; the Papua synod implemented the outcomes. There is no doubt the missionaries welcomed government new controls because it lessened a growing financial drain on mission resources and it was able to insist on educational standards for teachers and nurses as well as schools themselves. Missionaries were finding this difficult to do because church workers saw these avenues of work as a right for their children irrespective of ability.

While missionary contributions to the people of Milne Bay province is most obvious through schools, hospitals and aid posts, it was in transport, particularly boats, that a more emotional attachment was seen. Their appearance in anchorages at islands large and small, the acts of mercy they performed, the value to the social and monetary economy, and the ability they gave the people to move around has been inestimable in the value they gave to the respective Mission’s fortunes.

The arrival of a new vessel, the shipwreck of another or the sale of one gave rise to a high level of emotion among the people, not surprising given the geography of the province. Such events made an incredible mark on the people. The sinking of the Bromilow in 1930 was a severe blow to the Methodists, not helped by the fact it was many years before there was any adequate replacement. Before that happened the war came and ANGAU took over all vessels. They were purchased back after hostilities ceased, but only for nominal amounts and with the vessels in very poor condition. In 1952 eight of the nine boats in use had their beginnings as far back as 1911. The Ulele

48 Chairman’s Report to 1963 Synod, MOM 370.
Bolovoi and Vive Warwick (1913), Gudara (1920), Mwananal (1927), Nonoleta (1929), Eliam (1940) and Tolema II (1946) were still in service. Some of them had been built by Matthew Gilmour and, while still serviceable, were clearly not suited to long service in open ocean and usually rough seas. Charles Sparrow, missionary boat builder at Salamo, declared the Ulele, Nonoleta, Bolovoi and Vive Warwick were, in 1933, in a 'deplorable condition.'

The cost of boats was a major issue between the Papua district and the Board in Sydney and often a source of irritation. The Mission Board usually claimed it did not have the finances for new purchases until, after considerable complaints from the district and a number of breakdowns at sea, agreement was reached in 1952 to purchase a well known fifty-eight foot timber-keeled trading vessel, Koonwarra. Purchased from Dr W. J. Chapman of Townsville for £10,000 it was seen as 'the Methodist Mission on water.' Its purchase came about, in part, because the Sacred Heart, with newer and more adequate vessels, had taken possession in 1947 of its new flagship, the specially designed and constructed Morning Star, made in Taree NSW. Its first task was to help commence the mission at Nimoa, generally considered its most successful outstation. Methodists felt they were losing the propaganda war, the Catholics seeming to have a boat for every new venture, a number of which, such as the St Victor, St Francis and St Joseph were locally constructed.

Methodist fortunes declined further when its new Gilmour II, substitute for the shipwrecked Muroro, itself was wrecked on a reef in the Louisiades in 1966. The Gilmour had been purchased from insurance and the decommissioning and sale of most of its older vessels, and its loss made the Mission feel quite vulnerable. Other vessels were built or purchased - Maedana, Tuilala, and Bundamba - but all were small, no more than twenty-six feet in length. The advent of small airfields in the seventies and the escalating cost of boat running led to the sale of most boats to village cooperative businesses. In 1968 there were commercial airstrips at Vivigani (Goodenough), Kiriwina, Misima and Gurney (Milne Bay) and by 1975 strips for small aircraft were in service at Salamo, Sehulea and Esá’ala (Normanby), Kalokalo (Fergusson), Sudest.

49 C.E. Sparrow, Annual Report to 1933 Synod, MOM 201.
Rossel and Woodlark, most built by missions. The sale of the *Koonwarra* in 1996 to a cooperative from the mainland, was an unpopular and sad day for the United Church people at Salamo and its send-off described in the local press as like ‘a funeral’.\(^{50}\)

Cost of boat running was, next to salaries, the major item of expenditure for the mission. A comparison can be gauged as follows:

Table 4: *Methodist Expenditure*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Missionary Salaries</th>
<th>Boat Costs</th>
<th>Total Mission Expenditure</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1930</td>
<td>£7,963</td>
<td>£1,437</td>
<td>£13,878</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1940</td>
<td>4,838</td>
<td>488</td>
<td>11,560</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1950</td>
<td>7,643</td>
<td>3,022</td>
<td>25,876</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1960</td>
<td>20,267</td>
<td>3,528</td>
<td>48,352</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1966(^{51})</td>
<td>$52,331</td>
<td>$6,476</td>
<td>$92,643</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

While no cost comparison can be made between the two Missions on boat expenditures it can be presumed they were similar. That similarity can be extended to shipwrecks. The Sacred Heart had only one such experience but the event of its eventual salvage and safety is considered as one of the mission’s most symbolic spiritual high points. On 8 December 1980, while returning high school students and nuns home to Sudest and Rossel, the *Morning Star* ran on a reef near Nivani. All passengers were disembarked onto a nearby sandy atoll. By 1980 radio communications were much improved and soon a number of vessels came to the aid of the *Morning Star*. In a five day ordeal it was salvaged and floated, but not before some heroics and a deal of privation. The result was claimed as a result of ‘the power of prayer’ and ‘a truly moving experience ... an evening mass concelebrated by five priests [who had gathered] on the island ... raising hearts ... for the many graces and blessings’ received by those who had travelled

\(^{50}\) *The Eastern Star*, 26 June 1996.

\(^{51}\) 1966 was the last recorded year in which costs were broken up. The boat costs in 1960 and 1966 do not include the annual cost of compulsory government slipway survey, estimated at $4,000 in 1966.
on the *Morning Star* over the years.\textsuperscript{52} Its midnight arrival back at Sideia was greeted by a ‘tremendous welcome’ by station residents and ‘many outsiders’,\textsuperscript{53} a symbolism of the affection a sea-going people have for the visible sign of the church to which they belong.

While there will always be debate as to why people become converts to Christianity, with the implication that provision of services is for that purpose, these two Missions could rightly claim the educational, medical and technical services they provided were a result of their desire to share a practical faith that would improve the quality of life of the people they ministered to. It was no guarantee the Church would survive. That was decided in a different way.

\textsuperscript{52} K. McGhee, *The First Fifty Years* ..., 108-109.

\textsuperscript{53} K. McGhee, *The First Fifty Years* ..., 109.
CHAPTER TWELVE
The Church Invisible

While schools, hospitals and commercial infrastructure were the most visible signs of mission activity, as well as the most desired, by some of the people at least, it was what went on in the hearts and minds of the people and their connectedness to the church that missionaries most desired to win. There were a number of obvious indicators for this, such as church attendance and membership, as well as some deeper signs found in the stories of individual Papuan believers. There is one undeniable sign that what the missionaries set out to do in evangelising the Milne Bay province had succeeded: the mission or church is established and ‘owned’ by the people. For this to happen there needed to be three significant outcomes in the local church: self-propagation, self-funding, and self-governance.

Self-propagation involved leadership development, indigenous strategies for extending the church, and prophetic leaders who could be the equivalent ‘big men’. From its early days the Methodist missionaries in Papua had been urged by their Mission Board to develop an indigenous ministry but it failed to do so for a long time, a major source of frustration as far as the Board was concerned. When the district asked for more missionary personnel to expand the work, the Board’s response was often to refuse as a way to force the district to do what the Board wanted of them: to prepare a ‘stronger, better trained native staff’. This advice was not heeded with any vigour until the sixties: the reasons it was not heeded go back to the early decades and the Methodist culture of ‘status’.

Bromilow had brought Pacific Islander missionaries with him; these he called ‘native’ teachers and ‘native’ ministers, the same designation as given to Papuans. Such nomenclature made it obvious there was a stratification in the missionary ranks between Europeans and others. Stratification concerned work - teacher-pastor to catechist and then to minister - as well as race - Papuan, Pacific Islander and Australian. It was not permissible for one ‘to deal with the status [work] and character of those of higher status

1 [General Secretary] Benjamin Danks to Gilmour, 15 September 1911, MOM 57.
than themselves\textsuperscript{2} the synod resolved. This attitude persisted for a long time and was one the reasons the Pacific Islanders were not considered for evacuation; they were not equal with Australians. In effect, Pacific Islanders were seen as a bridge between Australians and Papuans, inferior in status to one, superior to the other. There was the expectation of a regular supply of Pacific Islanders which took away the imperative for an indigenous leadership. However such a supply eventually dried up because costs of sending Islanders to Papua was high, and the unpopularity of some, especially Samoans, whose discipline of Papuans was often harsh, was another.\textsuperscript{3}

Gilmour’s preference for technical training impacted adversely on the development of Papuan clergy, of whom there were none in the first fifty years of the Mission. As new missionaries arrived they entered a culture where it was impossible for them to change decades-long practices because the chairman held such strong powers of direction. Each chairman, by the time of occupying that office, had been in Papua for decades and already conformed to the legacy of Bromilow and Gilmour, neither of whom had expressed any confidence in Papuan leadership or abilities. This thinking was only changed when Leigh Swaby was appointed chairman, the first to be appointed from outside the district, and deliberately so, so that real change could happen.

Since the beginning, however, Papuan converts had a strong desire to take the gospel to their own people and their stories present a counter to those who consider Christianity to be only superficially accepted by the people, that it is like a ‘thin veneer,’\textsuperscript{4} or it is like ‘an umbrella over the people’ covering but failing to go deep into them.\textsuperscript{5} An early example was the first Kiriwinan teacher, Samisoni Mwadaguripa. Following the untimely death in 1901 of a Fijian teacher, Samisoni was appointed to work

\begin{itemize}
\item[\textsuperscript{2}] 1936 Synod minutes, MOM 269.
\item[\textsuperscript{3}] The 1972 United Church Assembly meeting, at Hanua, passed a resolution that Samoans be no longer employed in the United Church. A growing educated local clergy also made the need for Pacific Islanders unnecessary though the Papuan Islands Region, along with the Highlands Region did not enjoy this luxury and continued to receive Tongans.
\item[\textsuperscript{4}] Charles Forman, ‘Some Next Steps in the Study of Pacific Island Christianity’, in John Barker (ed.) \textit{Christianity in Oceania}, 27.
\item[\textsuperscript{5}] Comment from Demas Duwega, East Cape, 1971.
\end{itemize}
amongst the hardest, most callous and untouchable people of the district ... Though it seemed an impossible task to trust to the first Kiriwinan teacher to go out, Samisoni was appointed. and went out with the faith and confidence of the Fijian teachers. After some very hard, and almost heartbreaking months, oft in danger, sometimes amid mocking and jeering, there occurred the most wonderful revival we have had in Papua.6

The first locallyraised ministry candidate was Metuesela Fifita, the son of Fijian parents, who had come to Papua when six years old. However, he was not ‘Papuan’; rather, he was considered to be ‘of Fijian origin. ... there is little probability of any Papuans becoming ministers in the next few years’.7 His candidature forced the synod to quickly devise a course of study which was indicative of the scant regard missionaries felt for local abilities. The prescribed course was cursory and done under the supervision of the superintendent minister with whom the candidate worked. Over a six-year period candidates were expected to study selected books from the Bible as well as such material as Sunday School lesson books, Pilgrims Progress, Methodist church history in the Pacific, Methodist polity, and a, as yet unwritten, Fijian theology book titled Heroes of the Faith.8 Neither the study nor the results encouraged others to follow in Fifita’s footsteps and no-one did. The mission continued to hold out little expectation for the intellectual ability of an indigenous clergy. When a vernacular theological college was proposed in 1951 the synod told the Board it did not require its Principal ‘to be a man of ‘advanced academic attainment’ to which the Board responded that it ‘noted the urgent need’ so suggested they make a staff adjustment within the district to fill the position.9 As candidates for the ministry began to come forward in small numbers it was clear the training available was quite inadequate and the Board was told there was a need to find some way of giving these men adequate theological training before ordination.10

6 1932 Synod minutes, MOM 200.
7 1934 Synod minutes, MOM 202.
8 1934 Synod minutes, MOM 202.
9 Board minutes, 14 January 1951, MOM 342.
The first candidates for the ministry to be trained were accepted in 1936 and both commenced their probation the following year. They were Inosi Ugwalubu (Kiriwina) and Kelebi Toginitu (Bunama). Both had served the mission for thirty years as teachers and then as catechists, and their elevation was more a reward for faithfulness than anything else. Both successfully passed their annual probation requirements and would have been eligible for ordination in 1943. Because of the evacuation this was delayed but Inosi ceased his ministry in 1942 because of a two month prison sentence for having a ‘large quantity of stolen European goods’ in his possession. As this was around the same time the Catholic Mission at Gusaweta was looted it is probable Inosi was engaging in some sectarian misbehaviour as well.

Kelebi Toginitu became the first Papuan to be ordained, which took place at the first full synod following the missionaries’ return, on 3 November 1946. Also ordained at that synod was the Tongan, Isikeli Hau’ofa. Toginitu was first appointed a teacher in 1907 and a catechist in 1930. His first contact with the mission had been as a youth when he became a house boy to the pioneer missionary to Tubetube, J.T. Field. He retired in 1951 and his valedictory resolution described his service as ‘marked by a zeal for Christ, a kindly and wise leadership of his Papuan brethren, and a great readiness to serve’. He was also a wily, strong, resilient character whose toughness is well remembered, such as during the war he was stationed as de facto leader at East Cape where his work was eulogised thus:

Kelebi has done really good work in this Section. It has not been an easy task. There have been difficulties far greater than any teachers had to face at Misima. It is to the credit of the teachers that the work did not collapse. At times they were afraid ... and some have suffered loss of houses and goods, but have carried on with their preaching services, and wherever possible they have conducted their schools.

He is buried, at his own request, on top of the hill overlooking the misinari village at

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12 1950 Synod minutes, MOM 358.

13 Harry Bartlett to General Secretary [J.W. Burton], Board minutes, 17 March 1944, MOM 340.
Tubetube on the site where Field's kitchen had been. The site is marked by a ship's bell.

Ordination as a reward for long service as teacher then catechist persisted for a long time. The next to go this way was Eliesa Duigu who had been Bromilow's main informant in his Bible translation. Born in 1885, he witnessed the arrival of the pioneer missionaries in 1891, became a teacher in 1907, a ministry candidate in 1940, and was ordained in 1947 before retiring in 1951. He earned the reputation of being amongst 'the most eloquent and thoughtful of preachers'. He died at his native Dobu in 1958.

Perhaps the most outstanding of the earlier generations of Papuan ministers was Yoafu Guniniei. Guniniei was the son of a Dobuan teacher who had gone to pioneer the mission on Goodenough in Bromilow's time. Born there in 1909 he entered the teacher ranks in 1930, became a catechist in 1941 and was ordained in 1956. His acceptance as a candidate for the ministry was based on his reputation as one who possessed 'outstanding spiritual qualities and marked ability in leadership and organisation'. He spent almost all his working years on Goodenough and epitomised the dilemma between being a Papuan and a product of a mostly European-inspired church. This trial of identity and choice became most apparent at the time of the cargo cult outbreak at Wagifá and Wailagi in 1959. Garlick was particularly close to Guniniei and had brought about the result in 1965 in which Guniniei became the first superintendent minister of a circuit. A life-long sufferer of severe asthma, Guniniei died from that in September 1965 and was buried at his adopted Goodenough.

Self-propagation of the mission was not dependent on local clergy alone. It needed village-level workers to be most effective and teachers were needed to go to locations to pioneer the work. Part of the difficulty for Papuans entering church work was the attitude of their home village. In some cases villagers took pride in one of their own, especially if such individuals made a name for themselves, but others faced ridicule and discrimination. ‘The pull of native custom and tribal solidarity is still chiefly against those who leave home, particularly for a life work as that of a mission teacher’ students

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14 1950 Synod minutes, MOM 358.
15 1948 Synod minutes, MOM 356.
at the DTI reported to their teachers. However such experiences only served to flame the ardour of others and when the idea of creating their own missionary vocation - misinari - was raised it was quickly taken up.

The first to do this were two men from Normanby, Gideon and Daniela, both married with six and eight children respectively. They offered to evangelise among the people of Sudest, a large island with a small, scattered population. Harry Bartlett dropped the men and their families on Sudest in December 1941 where they worked for two years without supervision or pastoral contact because of the evacuation. In 1943 a severe dysentery epidemic broke out and both wives died as well as four of Daniela’s children and one of Gideon’s. The men were blamed for the epidemic and accused of sorcery for which a patrol officer arrested them and put them in the Misima gaol. Daniela contracted TB and died in the Misima hospital. Gideon survived all the trauma to eventually return home to Normanby in 1948 with some of his children. Their experience became a motivation for others and the office of misinari - a teacher who worked in a place not of his own language - was born.

Such hardships were not unique, nor were they typical. On occasions, such families suffered neglect by the Mission and its leaders. Philemon Topemu heard his call when Hedley Shotton, missionary at Kiriwina, asked for misinaris to go to the isolated, small island of Gawa, one of the Marshall Bennett group. Surrounded by high coral and limestone cliffs, Gawa had no streams or running water. With a population of a few hundred the island received few visitors because it had no safe anchorage and its isolation was forbidding. Topemu offered to go and with his wife and younger children they arrived at Gawa to start up the mission, in 1930. Poorly equipped for the task he laboured on even when one of his children died in the first year. Two years later he refused to leave the island when Shotton informed him the Depression would mean there would be no boats to call on him and no money for salary. When conditions returned

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16 DTI report to 1934 Synod, MOM 202.

17 1941 Synod minutes, MOM 274; MR, July 1945, 6; May 1948, 8.

18 Details of this story were gained from my time in Papua and popularised in a booklet by Kingsley Bond, Stories from Papua, MOM 1960.
to normality inexplicably Topemu on Gawa was forgotten for, as Bond put it, 'by most it [Gawa] had been a forgotten speck in a limitless blue'. Following the evacuation, it was 1947 before any missionary called at Gawa, an incredible gap of fifteen years. Not knowing what to expect they found Topemu still conducting church services and holding school even though he had received no salary in that time. He died in 1952 and at least one of his sons continued on as a village teacher.

Others propagated the faith without official sanction or direction. Yanaba, a small island in the Egum atoll, is rarely visited. It lies on a direct sea lane from Normanby to Woodlark but motorised vessels usually take a longer route via the Trobriands, because of atmospheric problems that are believed to cause problems for compasses. The islands of the Egum are low-lying and have a small population. On a rare occasion that a missionary visited Yanaba, Ralph Lawton found a small church had been built. Its leader was an old man with no formal education and no training as a local preacher. He did not hold church membership and was classified as a catechumen (seeker). Yet this man had encouraged the people to build the church and each Sunday he preached.

It was not only Papuan individuals who propagated the faith. New group strategies to generate popular support were developed along with the class meetings. There were two such developments - village conventions or tapwaroro sidasida and Maedana meetings for women. Conventions were first begun in 1933 and were a means for 'deepening of the spiritual life of the people', to revive the faithful and evangelise the unconverted but the emphasis was on the former. At various times they were held on a district, circuit and village level and consisted of personal testimonies, singing and public prayer. The influence of Kwato and the Oxford Movement was apparent in the early period when Hedley Shotton, arguably the most evangelical of the missionaries, wrote in approving terms of events at Kiriwina:

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21 1933 Synod minutes, MOM 201.
We were much blessed in these meetings [three local conventions] and our experiences there helped us to accept the challenge of the Oxford Group and use its techniques in conjunction with our work. The sharing by the white staff with the brown staff and teacher with people, of fighting and failures and victories in a closer way than usual, led to the release of many from intolerable burdens of sin and sinful habits, and to a deeper feeling of responsibility for one another. In our midst was begun a spiritual awakening which had begun to spread from station to village before our departure and one we trust which will yet make its influence felt throughout our circuit and beyond.  

Conventions were important because they confirmed the central role of the laity. Local (lay) preaching had always been an integral part of Methodism and almost every village had at least one in its midst and conventions, being unstructured, gave opportunity for others who were not preachers to share. Conventions were held to buttress the people in difficult times, such as during the war years, when they were held on Goodenough within earshot of gunfire, and on other occasions to provide dramatic appeal to the claims of Christ. One such time was witnessed by Bruce Walkeden Brown:

We planned a Tapwaroro Sidasida to be held at Bwa’era [near Salamo and Dobu] a few months later (held at time of harvest) ... The highlight of the convention was the giving of testimonies to the influence and power of Jesus. One teacher who had just reached retirement age gave a dramatic testimony, telling how he had killed 30 people (11 women and 19 men) but had heard the call of the Master and followed Him. The deaths were by sorcery, but their reality to him and to the audience were as vivid as physical murder.

The impact of such events cannot be overestimated and children in one village, Garea (Fergusson Island), seeing the effect on adults, organised and led their own convention with public praying and preaching attended by 150 children.

The success of conventions led to the formation of a women’s version, Maedana, or Women’s Meeting for Light. Begun in 1949 under the influence of Hedley

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22 Hedley Shotton, Annual Report to 1938 Synod, MOM 272.

23 In 1980 there were more than 1318 local preachers (Dobu and East Cape circuits failed to report their numbers) with another 910 untrained preachers. Appendix 1: Methodist Statistics.

24 Bruce Brown, Annual Report to 1948 Synod, MOM 356.

25 Rita Berry, Annual Report to 1950 Synod, MOM 358.
Shotton, these became structured and regular gatherings. Unlike similar movements in other countries, such as South Africa Methodism’s Manyana, Maedana women were not uniformed and had no distinctive membership paraphernalia. However they became a powerful influence in village life. Their meetings consisted of devotions, health talks, handicrafts and a means for women to discuss and network. The medical people clearly saw the strategic importance of these meetings so when it was decided medical clinics on the Bwayowa peninsula would be conducted by Catholic nurses, Methodist nurses, disappointed by this, resolved to attend all Maedana meetings knowing influence was maintained through this.

By comparison, Catholic self-propagation was much more limited. This is not surprising given two factors. One is the clergy-dominated nature of Catholicism in which lay leadership is dependent on clerical permission. There is no comparative local preacher function though the mission grew through the activities of school students returning from Sideia to their home villages. Apart from the school, apostolic appeal was made through the medical work - the very sick were given the last rites and then declared Catholic - and the regular, persistent village visitation by priests. Mass was either in Latin or, post-Vatican II in English, which disenfranchised many older villagers. At Rossel, Henderson saw the surprise on Catholic faces when they heard their United Church people reading the Scriptures and preaching in their own language.26

The second factor is the relative short period of time of Catholic work. Up until the mid-fifties their energies went into expansion into new areas and this meant the schools. There was no second generation work to be developed. The advent of the national education system took away their chance to make further incursions into new places and the only hope was a rapidly growing indigenous priesthood. This was not to be, for up to 1980 there were only two local priests.

The first was John Sinou, a native of Tewara, a small island off the eastern coast of Fergusson, made famous as the place of Reo Fortune’s anthropological study Sorcerers of Dobu. Sinou’s early life was one of poverty. Born in September 1939, his father died in 1941 and, with his family close to starvation, Sinou was adopted by his

paternal uncle and moved to Fergusson. During the war this family experienced even more privations and their village community at Waluma was bombed by Australian forces. In 1948 he started his education, attending a Methodist school and went to live with the family of his cousin, Noel Bernard, one of the original MSC Sarto Brothers. When Noel Bernard went to Sideia to continue his education, Sinou longed to go to school in some other place as well and stowed aboard the Morning Star when it arrived to pick up school students to start the new year. This was in 1951 and, following his baptism and first communion two years later, Sinou was chosen to enter the junior seminary at Sideia before going on to the MSC Chevalier College, Bowral, NSW for three years secondary schooling. With Doyle’s support Sinou went to the MSC minor seminary Ulapia near Rabaul in 1957 where he finished his secondary education and began studies for the priesthood. Transferring to de Boismenu College, Bomana, he completed his studies and was ordained by Doyle at Sideia Cathedral on 7 March 1969 and offered his first mass the following morning.27

Whereas it had taken the Methodists forty-five years to accept their first candidate for ordination the Catholics had done so in only twenty-one years and just three years after entering Sinou’s home district of Budoya. The second Papuan priest was a native of the Louisiades, Sam Miyon. Born on Sabarl Island near Nimoa, Miyon was a student in the local Catholic school before transferring to Sideia for high school. He received Doyle’s blessing to enter the priesthood and followed a similar path to Sinou, studying at Ulapia and then Bomana. His ordination took place at Nimoa on 17 June 1977 in a specially constructed ‘traditional native hut’ following two days of feasting.28 By 1981 a further three men were in training in the major seminary.

There were two latter-day attempts to develop a new outreach amongst the young, always a priority for the Catholics. One was the Young Christian movement, commenced in 1972, providing a popular four-pronged program catering for spiritual, social, recreational and cultural needs of youth. By 1982 there were thirty such groups

27 Sinou’s own account is contained in K. McGhee, MSC Missions ... , 35-38.

28 K. McGhee, MSC Missions ... , 70-71.
in existence,\textsuperscript{29} providing leadership training, communicating through newsletter and overseen by a priest acting as regional director. The Young Christian movement became registered as part of the government's National Youth Movement Programme.

A further development was the Sideia Catechetical School begun in the post-war years and which was moved to be part of a new Catechists School at Bomana in Port Moresby. Offering a two year course and then a local six week refresher program after five years, the school has provided good preliminary training for some who are contemplating holy orders. By 1980 the school had trained 25 catechists who were still active. In a church where there are serious questions to be asked about future priestly needs catechists will be increasingly needed.

To estimate the relative strength of both Missions it is important to understand the longevity of Methodism as compared to Catholicism. The statistics, however, do show how strong the Methodists are. In 1940 the Catholics counted 171 people as theirs; in 1960 they had 4,148, and in 1980 they claimed 14,600. Methodists in those years numbered 41,637, 36,048 and 73,476 respectively. In 1940 neither mission had Papuan clergy, in 1960 the Methodists had nine and the Catholics none, and in 1980 the Catholics had two local priests and the Methodists thirty ordained ministers. In 1940 the Methodists had eighteen missionaries (nine ministers and nine lay workers), the Catholics seven priests, five Brothers and ten nuns; in 1960 there were five Methodist ministers and eighteen lay missionaries, while the Catholics had fifteen priests, ten Brothers and seventeen nuns. The contrast was even more marked in 1980: there was one missionary - a lay woman - in the United Church whereas the Catholics were employing nineteen priests, eight brothers and seventeen nuns.

At no time did the Catholic population reach more than one quarter of the Methodist/United Church numbers. Clearly the growth in the Methodist work was due to the role of village pastors and local preachers, indicating how much of a lay movement the Mission had been.

A better comparison for the Methodist/United Church figures would be with

\textsuperscript{29} K. McGhee, \textit{MSC Missions ...}, 102.
their sister district, the New Guinea Islands. Under the criteria used in both, support for the missions is indicated in three categories: Full membership, seekers or trial members, and church attendance:

Table 5: *Methodist Membership Statistics*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Papua District</th>
<th>New Guinea District</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Full</td>
<td>Trial</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1940</td>
<td>4,726</td>
<td>2,236</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1950</td>
<td>5,860</td>
<td>2,549</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1960</td>
<td>7,425</td>
<td>3,010</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1975</td>
<td>12,412</td>
<td>8,891</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

These figures show two things. One is the impact of the war on the New Guinea church, of which one effect was the loss of almost all the male missionary personnel through capture by the Japanese and then the sinking of the *Montevideo Maru* off the Philippines. Of the two men who survived, Rodger Brown returned to serve some more years and his senior colleague, G. J. Platten, was appointed chairman after the war before eventually leaving the Mission and the ministry. The decimation of the leadership, the serious disruption the war caused and deaths due to war saw an inevitable decline in church numbers. The steady growth from the late forties onwards is indicative of the positive impact of trials and tribulations on religious life and the opportunity provided by a new generation of missionaries to modify or abandon policies and practices of an earlier era.

The second indicator from these figures is the impact in Papua of Catholic competition and the ending of the village schools. By 1960 the Catholic expansion into the Dobu area was complete and, with 10,000 ‘Catholic people’ overall, the Methodist

\(^{30}\) This figure is unreliable as a number of circuits - including East Cape, Misima, Rossel and Simla (Trobriands) failed to report their details. This would account for at least 10,000 attenders.
Mission felt that impact. This, with the closure of village schools, saw many people leave the Methodist fold. Yet there was a converse picture: an increase in church membership and those who were seekers or trial members. This is accounted for by the fact that those who continued on in the church did so because of conviction rather than the provision of services. This is an impact all in the church would have desired.

There is no comparison between the missions where self-funding is concerned. The Catholics made no request to their people for money. Income was from commercial activities such as sawmill, plantations and shipping. Regular income was anticipated from the Australian MSC and from Rome. As time went on increasing subsidies for education and medical work came from government and school and medical fees as prescribed by government. By being part of the world-wide Catholic communion it was not necessary for the mission to be self funding; it was the duty of the Catholic Church to see the work went on.

By contrast the Methodists were subsidised by a Mission Board whose own income was never guaranteed and dependent on the generosity of Australian church congregations. Papua, because of its isolation and dependence on boats, was a high cost/low income district. Apart from copra there was little commercial development among villagers but the Board was always requesting its districts to be less dependent on its resources. To encourage a sense of generosity all districts were asked to make appeals for money for ‘overseas missions’, and Papuans responded to the call. Returns, though small, were significant. In 1930 £2,356.18.4 was given but this steadily declined to an average of less than £1,000 until the post-war years when it was usually around £2,000. What this practice did was inculcate an idea that one day the mission would need to be self-supporting. Two influences changed attitudes to giving. One was the impact of Pacific Island missionaries who brought the custom of their home churches - the annual giving Sunday. This was adopted in Papua and the giving day - Ebwaeadaita - became a major Sunday in each village. Giving was a clan/family activity and each group would collect its money or goods beforehand and on the day present it with much fanfare - and a not-too-subtle competitiveness - often acting out Biblical parables in the process of doing so.
The second influence was a product of the Depression. The Board was in financial difficulty and retrenchments had taken place and the already small missionary stipends were being cut. Through the *Missionary Review* Burton exhorted Methodists to give more, calling for a 'final endeavour ... kept up to the last day'. The income for that year showed that, with one month to go in the fiscal year, the giving from the bigger states was down more than 50 percent in NSW and two-thirds in Victoria and the Board was already carrying a debt of £47,583.

The synod understood its own precariousness, responding by linking the 'constant urge to us to seek every avenue of help towards self support' with plans for 'strengthening the native church' and 'building up the Kingdom of God'. This inclusive stewardship was to be accomplished by the Papuan churches raising the money to pay the village pastor/teachers and, where possible, the stipends of the Pacific Islanders.

The plan was the initiative of Jack Rundle at Bwaidoga and readily adopted by the synod. In outline the plan was to set up a fund within the district in which all village offerings would be placed

1. That the object of the Fund be to provide for the Salaries of the South Sea Island Workers and Native Agents labouring in the Circuit.
2. That all amounts, usually known as Missionary Meeting Contributions, raised in the Circuit, be credited to this Fund.
3. That the amount standing to the Credit of this Fund on 31st December each year be not exceeded in disbursements to our Agents during the following year.
4. That it be distinctly understood that the Fund must on no account be allowed to go into debt.
5. That the Scale of Salaries in the District be the accepted rate in the Bwaidoga Circuit, but should the amount in the Fund be insufficient a percentage deduction from each agent's salary be made as may be necessary.
6. That if more than 10% reduction is necessary the Circuit be allowed to make a special appeal to the Chairman and the Mission Board.

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31 *MR*, 'Editorial,' November 1933, 1-4. See also page 105.
33 1935 Synod minutes, MOM 268.
34 'Self Support Plan for Bwaidoga Circuit', 1935 Synod minutes, MOM 268.
Through this decision salaries of local workers would forever be tied to ability to pay; no longer would the essential pastoral work of the mission be an Australian responsibility. It gave the Papuan church the right to decide its own priorities which, in the recent past, had seen teachers' salaries reduced by three successive 10 percent cuts. Within two years all five circuits had joined the Fund and each raised more money than was needed. It was not until 1954 the policy was tested when, because of record income to the Fund due to high copra prices and increased giving, a bonus of £2 was given to each teacher. However Kiriwina, despite having more cash in its economy than anywhere except Misima, had failed for a few years to meet its requirements and was excluded from the bonus. From its inception this was the only occasion when circuits had not met the salaries of their own people. Whilst this might seem a laudable result it hid the fact that the salaries were very low: by 1960 only £24 per annum which, for a teacher - as most were - was what their government counterparts were paid for a month.

When church attendance and financial giving are compared it is clear that the mid-sixties was a special turning point. As already noted this was the time when attendances declined but membership increased, with the conclusion this was a sign of members' stronger commitment to the church. This is borne out when giving is compared to total annual expenditure, as indicated here:

Table 6: Methodist Giving and Expenditure

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Giving</th>
<th>Annual Expenditure</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1940</td>
<td>£982.12.10</td>
<td>£11,560.11.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1950</td>
<td>3,030.5.7</td>
<td>25,875.15.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1960</td>
<td>3,835.12.3</td>
<td>48,351.11.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1965</td>
<td>8,378.14.9</td>
<td>47,913.5.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1970</td>
<td>$221,104.09</td>
<td>$114,288.71</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Local giving remained at about 8.5 percent of total budget from 1940 to 1960 then 17

35 Harry Bartlett, Report on visit to Papua, Board minutes, 21 November 1960, MOM 348.
percent in 1965 and 20 percent in 1970.\textsuperscript{36}

By 1980 the region was fully self-supporting as grants from the Australian church to the national United Church office in Port Moresby were no longer disbursed to regions but fully used in running the church’s institutions.

Self-governance in the respective Missions mirrored the funding issue. In the Catholic Mission the bishop dealt with external relations with government and commerce as well as directions and policy within the mission, including placement of his staff, while the Australian provincial authorities provided financial support and recruitment. As the mission was typically priest-dominated there was little opportunity for indigenous opinion to influence decisions unless the priest accepted the ideas. It is hard to see this changing as only two priests were locals. However a major attempt to contextualise the mission more towards local aspirations was made by the formation in 1975 of the MSC Pacific Islands Province. With its legal and administrative ties with Australia now ended the Australian province still accepted the task of recruitment of staff and financial support.

The MSC was a decade behind its sister congregation, FDNSC, in doing this. As early as 1964 the Papua New Guinea Province of Our Lady of the Sacred Heart had been formed with the integration of the work in Milne Bay with Yule Island, New Britain, Manus and Port Moresby.

Methodist practice for many years gave a veneer to self government in the church but little substance. Synod meetings comprised two sessions, Ministerial and Representative or ‘Native’, with all ministers attending both sessions. Since the late twenties there had been ‘native representation’ at synod but these representatives had no voting power. With Board approval the vote was given in 1936 subject to certain conditions, including that the right was reserved for ‘native’ sessions, and these representatives could not vote on matters affecting those of ‘higher status’.\textsuperscript{37} Lay representatives were elected by their circuit quarterly meeting and all ministers, probationary and ordained, were members of the ministerial session. As the number of

\textsuperscript{36} After 1970 \textit{ebwaeadaita} figures were not included in synod records.
circuits grew so there was a greater representation of Papuans. No European lay person was ever elected as a circuit representative and only those in charge of an institution were members of synod. Internal changes with the creation of smaller circuits, ordination of more ministers and the effect of Methodist law which required all ministers to attend synod, all contributed to the growing control Papuans had over the synod meetings. At no time in this process was there any suggestion of a diminution of synod powers (including finance). In effect, the Papua synod could, by its own inaction, delay what its Mission Board urged it to do but it was the Board who made the decisions on the issues that made change happen: government’s involvement in education and health care.

Little change towards greater Papuan control was made in the synod meetings for many decades and when it was it was due to two external factors. One was the advent of local government councils where people now had local political control over their own affairs. This, and the more distant developments in Port Moresby in the Legislative Council formation, gave impetus to missionaries to understand that Papuan leadership of synod was inevitable and so they should devolve church power to the people. Then there came the catalyst that was to change everything: a movement by the Board towards setting up a Melanesian Conference of the Methodist Church quickly gave way to the discussions for church union.

Synod was a most important time, usually held in October and lasting for at least three weeks. It was the only time people would see each other in the year and missionaries brought their whole families with them. Synod sessions were leisurely paced and everything for the year, including financial books for each circuit and estimates, were dealt with. Until the sixties it was held at Salama and then moved to outstations in rotation until, in 1971, it was held in a village - Lelehudi in the East Cape circuit - for the first time.

At first the Papua Synod was cautious of a United Synod as proposed by the Melanesian Conference idea, fearing its bureaucratic nature and only limited independence from the home churches in Australia and New Zealand, who would still

37 The 1936 decision was one that applied to all the MOM districts and grew out of pressure from Fiji.
provide most of the money and missionary personnel. The Papuan Synod preferred to deal directly with the Board on all matters of money and manpower and the United Synod on issues of policy, doctrine, social questions and inter-district institutions.\(^{38}\) Their reservations came to nothing when, almost concurrently, informal discussions saw the United Synod idea fall away in favour of organic union.

By 1967 the majority of ministers in the Papuan Islands Region were Papuan - of twenty-three in circuit placements fifteen were Pauans and by 1977 all were. It was the last white chairman, Colin Garlick, who proposed that, as a symbolic act, a Papuan should sign the deed of incorporation of the Methodist Mission into the United Church of Papua New Guinea and the Solomon Islands. That symbolism indicated the total transfer of power and government to the local church. He proposed his good friend, Robert Budiara, one of Ralph Grant’s printing press workers of twenty years before and now a minister, be that one and nominated him to be the inaugural bishop.

The United Church formation was the final act that ended the mission started seventy-seven years before by Bromilow and his colleagues and made it to be an indigenous, independent church.

\(^{38}\) 1963 Synod minutes, MOM 370.
CONCLUSION

Missionary activity has two possible paradigms. One is to preach the message of the gospel as an end in itself, without cultural ties or political overtones. This way has rarely been suggested and even less practised. One who did so was the Catholic priest, Vincent Donovan. A missionary to the Masai of Eastern Africa from 1965 to 1975, he determined to do nothing else except teach the Bible and simple theology. Eschewing education and health services as a way to do this, his rationale was that the Church got in the way of understanding God, at least as far as new converts were concerned. Some of what he argued was a logical follow-on from the turn-of-the-century missionary to China, Roland Allen. Arguing that evangelisation 'is a process of bringing the gospel to people where they are, not where you would like them to be';¹ he refused the long-established practice of mission stations as the axis for missionary activity, instead going to the camps of the herdsmen at night to engage them.

The second paradigm is that which Donovan rejected, one in which school and medical work were synonymous with preaching and teaching the gospel. This was the practice of both MSC and Methodists. While the pioneers, especially the Pacific Islanders, did reside in villages the tendency over the decades was to withdraw missionaries onto mission stations and leave the village pastor-teacher as the resident church leader. In the Solomon Islands Whiteman's observation is just as true of Milne Bay missions as are the results he alludes to:

Mission evangelisation moved further and further away from the village context towards an institutional setting - hospitals, schools, technical training centres and so on. More often than not, when islanders left these mission institutions and returned to village life, they left behind many of the practices they had been taught there.²

By 1980 both missions were a part of strong, national churches. The MSC and its sister congregation, the FNDSC, had brought the permanent presence of the Catholic Church into the world of the Massim people, thereby bringing the people into the worldwide Catholic communion. The Methodists' stated aim to bring 'transformation from

¹ Vincent J. Donovan, Christianity Rediscovered ..., vi.
² Darrell Whiteman, Melanesians and Missionaries ..., 330.
within' the Melanesian world and to create a Melanesian church would seem to have been realised. To claim, therefore, that the missionaries had successfully completed their task would need to be clarified.

The introduction of Christianity into the world of Melanesian religion among the Massim has been described by Barker as a 'contest', for which he delineates three possible outcomes. The first outcome is that represented by Malinowski and others who were pessimistic of the ability of Melanesians to stand firm against the 'wanton destruction' of native culture as practised by missionaries. Later, after the war, a second outcome was proposed by others that not all indigenous religion was destroyed after all; rather, both the new and the old co-existed, with Christian forms practised along with former beliefs and ritual practices, but with the expectation that Christianity would eventually win out. When this explanation did not hold up to scrutiny, a third outcome was suggested: that traditional institutions had actually thrived despite a century of colonialism, for which the explanation was that Christianity only affected the 'superstructure of native life', the inner form remained as it had before western intervention.

Protestant and Catholic missionaries in Milne Bay would claim the faith they introduced to the people had been indigenised. While to some this may have been brought about by compromise with traditional beliefs, others of them would express satisfaction that such an outcome had eventuated. As a group they would claim justification for their endeavours when they observed that children survived their infancy in much greater numbers than before they came, these children were well educated, trained in skills otherwise foreign to them, and were, to some degree, able to withstand the fear of evil spirits and to enjoy a better quality of life and a measure of freedom from fear compared to what their ancestors had lived with.

However, in any analysis, the success of missionary endeavour was ultimately beyond the control of the missionaries or those who sent them. By their actions they could ensure failure, but not success. All missionaries would claim reliance on God for their calling and vocation but this could not guarantee success either. Success lay in the

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response of the people and this thesis maintains that, as the Milne Bay people overwhelmingly call themselves Christians, the churches are well patronised, and the majority of people have regular and frequent contact with it, shows that it is a central part of Massim village life. In 1980 the national census counted the Milne Bay provincial population at 127,841: United Church attendance on a Sunday was 60,000 and the Catholics claimed 15,000. In addition, an unknown number (probably in the vicinity of 10,000) belonged to Kwato, whose influence extended all over Milne Bay itself except for East Cape. The figures, therefore, show an overwhelming allegiance to the Christian faith.

What is in question, then, is to know if Christianity is an imposition on the people, or accepted and owned by them. Barker points out that anthropologists who have made negative claims about missions include those who refused to study Christianity in the villages in which they lived, a refusal to join in based on their own personal agnosticism. Not joining the people in Sunday worship is to miss observing how important religious worship is for them and its integration into the Melanesian world-view. This gulf between missionaries and anthropologists has not always been the situation; in earlier days of missionisation both parties often helped each other. Seligman checked his ideas and observations with Bromilow and even Malinowski acknowledged Matthew Gilmour’s contribution to his own study. On the other hand there was Reo Fortune, a disciple of Malinowski who, while he researched his Sorcerers of Dobu, refused to live on Dobu because of the Methodist influence there, residing instead on Tewara, a small island off the north-east coast of Fergusson some forty kilometres away.

One who has ventured into the new Christian world-view of the Massim is Carl Thune whose study shows that when Christian worship is explored in the village church, what is seen is an integration of person, community and God in a Melanesian context.6

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4 1980 United Church Annual Synod minutes; Kevin McGhee, Australian MSC Missions, 132. It should also be noted the Methodist/United work does not cover the well populated Milne Bay itself or its hinterland except for part of the northern tip of the Bay at East Cape.

5 Barker, ‘Christianity in Western Melanesian Ethnography’, 145-148.

Thune supports the claim that the church’s importance to the people was relative to its provisions. Loboda is a large village near Bwaruada where the Methodists offered medical and educational opportunities:

Older villagers recall this period [1950s and 1960s] as the time of the mission’s greatest importance to villagers both in terms of its role in village life and in terms of the interest villagers brought to it.7

As governments took more control over the areas of mission influence except for the worship services, Thune claims the church’s importance has declined, and even more so since the localisation of its workers. The departure of expatriates has removed that contact with the wider world and knowledge of many of the new insights such people had brought with them, so that now the people feel they live in a smaller world, a situation not necessarily of their choosing. This is the negative side of the Methodist policy of removing all missionaries. His conclusion on the effect of this on the village church is valid:

The church in many ways has ceased to be an alien presence with all the attractions of exoticism and social expansion that that implies. Perhaps another contribution erasing the church’s earlier exoticism is its mundane everyday familiarity to those who have known it all their lives.8

A different interpretation to the enduring influence of missions is that of Berde, whose study of canoe making in the Louisiades led him to say:

[Panetani Islanders] contend they have achieved a materially richer lifestyle since the Methodist Mission’s pacification ... They feel the mission’s influence allowed them to achieve greater returns from their physical and human resources ... The returns were measured by standards of utility rather than imposed mission standards ... [and that] the people’s priorities and mission priorities still work well without major conflict.9

These two claims are not mutually exclusive but it is important to understand if Thune is correct in suggesting the church’s influence is waning. Clearly, for the reasons he gives, government has taken over the role of the mission in providing the medical and educational services. Doyle’s fear of government control over education has proved

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7 Carl E. Thune, ‘Village Church Services ...’, 104.
8 Carl E. Thune, ‘Village Church Services ...’, 104.
justified as it has made Catholic influence much more difficult to achieve. For the Methodists, the departure of expatriates has had the effect of, to some extent at least, reversing the trend observed by Whiteman. Clergy are more and more living in villages and not on mission stations, especially since the creation of more circuits without such stations.

The Methodist/United Church is the preferred church of the people of Milne Bay province, a position that has not changed with the absence of white personnel. Some things are done differently and other things, such as administrative detail, are done poorly. All this indicates is that those things are not as important for Melanesians as they were for European leaders. However this does not mean any lessening in their enthusiasm for the church. In 1989 I had the experience of returning to my first placement, East Cape, which I had left in 1971. In my days there the church was in a time of nominalism and attendance was not strong though most people readily acknowledged they belonged in the United Church. In 1989, nearly twenty years after I, as the last expatriate had left, the church was overflowing with attendees. Large youth groups existed, the local villagers were integrated into the mission station life in a way not imagined before, and there was a vitality about tapwaroro that was different to before.

Localisation might produce lesser trained clergy but it gives the ownership the early mission bureaucrats had longed argued for. That is why the United Church will remain the dominant Christian institution: it came first, provided people with opportunities to heal and learn and live a better, more satisfying lifestyle, and has given the church over to them. The handing over was generated more from outside the district: the Mission Board’s appointment of Leigh Swaby as chairman and the introduction of newer missionaries who were products of the decolonisation mentality as well as the international movements the propelled decolonisation forward all played their part. While the process to self-government and autonomy was long delayed, it was done. The request that led to my research grew out of a sense that fears of the Catholic Church, that were argued by the missionaries of the time, had not proved correct. There

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10 This refers to the collection of statistical data on church attendance. Up to half the circuits fail to report their information in any one year making the annual returns incomplete.
was a certain sense that, if localisation (well underway) was achieved they, Methodist/United Church people, might still lose out. The reality was to show this was not the case.

For the Catholics the future situation is more problematic. Just as their Protestant counterparts did, they provided opportunities for the people to become Christians and to realise ambitions. But with the inability to win local men for the priesthood, and the Australian congregation increasingly unable to provide any more, the future of the Catholic work - clergy-dominated as it is - is hard to visualise. While the powerful Latin American Catholic churches face the same dilemma, they have met the challenge by developing catechists as lay workers, many doing priestly functions. The Catholic Church in Papua is more attuned to the European church in its conservatism on celibacy and the priesthood. In Papua, with the priests all so old, it is hard to see what the future will hold in the next decade. As with the start of this work in Papua, the answer lies with Rome and whether it will relax some of its rules on the priesthood and priestly functions. Whatever happens, there is in the Milne Bay province a significant minority of Catholic people who will continue to uphold the faith.
## APPENDIX I
### Methodist Statistics

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Churches</th>
<th>Ministers</th>
<th>Laymen</th>
<th>Laywomen</th>
<th>'Native' Ministers</th>
<th>Trial Members</th>
<th>Full Members</th>
<th>Attendance</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1930</td>
<td>390</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>1447</td>
<td>3070</td>
<td>35085</td>
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<tr>
<td>1931</td>
<td>402</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1434</td>
<td>3189</td>
<td>33155</td>
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<tr>
<td>1932</td>
<td>430</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1612</td>
<td>3231</td>
<td>34848</td>
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<tr>
<td>1933</td>
<td>434</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1639</td>
<td>3309</td>
<td>37635</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1934</td>
<td>475</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1765</td>
<td>3571</td>
<td>38175</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1935</td>
<td>452</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1785</td>
<td>3810</td>
<td>40825</td>
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<tr>
<td>1936</td>
<td>458</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>1793</td>
<td>4010</td>
<td>40180</td>
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<tr>
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<td>10</td>
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<td>8</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>1793</td>
<td>4010</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>1938</td>
<td>452</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>2072</td>
<td>4586</td>
<td>24362</td>
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<tr>
<td>1939</td>
<td>461</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>2217</td>
<td>4578</td>
<td>24213</td>
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<tr>
<td>1940</td>
<td>475</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>2236</td>
<td>4726</td>
<td>41637</td>
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<tr>
<td>1941</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>7</td>
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<td>7</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>N/A</td>
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<td>41546</td>
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<tr>
<td>1942-45</td>
<td>352</td>
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<td>0</td>
<td>6</td>
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<td>2117</td>
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<tr>
<td>1946</td>
<td>418</td>
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<td>5</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>1943</td>
<td>4590</td>
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<tr>
<td>1947</td>
<td>342</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>1929</td>
<td>4507</td>
<td>38717</td>
</tr>
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### APPENDIX IV

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**Daughters of Our Lady of the Sacred Heart (FDNSC)**

- Antonia 1957 1963
- Antoninus (Shelley) 1949 1979
- Benedicta 1963 --
- Benilde 1939 1941
- Berchmans (Keegan) 1934 1942
- Bernardine 1959 --
- Brenda 1961 --
- Camillus 1948 1950
- Catherine (Baird) 1936 1942
- Cecilia (Buchanan) 1934 1934
- Christine (North) 1962 1967
- Christopher Mary 1952 1960
- Cornelia 1973 1980
- Cupertino 1973 1976
- Damascene (Callahan) 1948 1955
- de Pazzi (Brady) 1934 1942
- Delia 1973 --
- Ellen 1979 1981
- Evelyn 1970 1979
- Finbar (Fox) 1934 1964
- Flavian (Boland) 1949 1973
- Genevieve (Downey) 1934 1934
- Gerald 1955 1972
- Helen (Warman) 1959 --
- Helen (Canty) 1967 1971
- Jacinta 1962 --
- Jane Francis (Dempsey) 1951 1963
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<td>Veronica</td>
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<td>Xavier (Dwyer)</td>
<td>1949</td>
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( family name) where known.

APPENDIX VI

Report on the Wreck of the Bromilow

The Bromilow left Gawa Island for Cape Pearson at 4 p.m. on [Thursday] July 10th 1930. There was a native crew of six viz, WATUWATU (capt.), LIBUTAU, BOKERA, WESELI BWAWILAI (engine boy), ILAITIA KIPAMU (student), and another whose name I have not ascertained. Besides these there were PAULA NAGODILI (teacher) and MORINA, HERONIDA and DINANA students from East Cape who accompanied me as my batmen, and also myself.

There was a fairly strong South East wind blowing and as the boy at the wheel (ILAITIA) advised me that there was a strong tide running with the wind we altered the course from S.W. to S.S.W. and shortly afterwards to S.S.W. by S. The three sails were also spread and we were making a very quick run and anticipated that we would reach our destination about 8 a.m. next day. At 10 p.m. the captain took the wheel and ILAITIA went below, and I decided to lie down for a while on the hatch. About 11 p.m. the wind had freshened considerably and the sea was breaking over the boat so that I was forced into the cabin. At midnight I went on deck again and found that the captain had given the wheel to Libutau who had the reputation of knowing that course very well and who was a clever boy at the wheel. Owing to a chain plate tearing away the mainsail had been lowered and we were still making very good progress. I looked at the compass which was situated right in front of the wheel and found that we were dead on the course that I had set. I stayed on deck as the fumes from the engine made the cabin almost unbearable. About 2 a.m. land loomed into sight. Both the captain and LIBUTAU assured me that this land was DUAU, but it seemed to me that we had sighted it too soon for that to be correct and I told the steersman to alter the course a little more to the South, which he did at once. At 3 a.m. we were back on the S.S.W. by S. course again and the land seemed to have receded a good deal in spite of the full moon. When we altered the course on sighting land the boy at the wheel remarked that the tide was still running strongly. About 3.30 a.m. I went below again and dozed off to sleep.

At 4 a.m. I was wakened by three solid bumps and realized that we were aground. Immediately ILAITIA reversed the engine and called loudly that the sails be furled. By the time that I got on deck this had been done and the dinghy was lowered and a kedge anchor put out over the starboard bow, which boys said was the better direction. The boat had swung right around and was facing the direction from which he had come. Whether this was due to the wind after we struck or whether the boy at the wheel realized the presence of the reef and tried to escape it too late I do not know, but I fancy that the latter reason is correct. As we pulled on the kedge anchor the boat moved easily over the reef and we all thought that we should have no difficulty in getting her off, but unfortunately just as we reached the edge of the reef she stuck fast and no amount of effort on our part could move her one way or the other. We afterwards found that had the kedge anchor been put over the port bow there was a good chance
that we would have succeeded in getting the vessel off as there was a small passage thru
which we might have passed. The tide ebbed fast and the boys advised me that the
wisest thing to do was to tie down the boat as firmly as we could and wait until the full
tide, when they said there would be no difficulty at all. We therefore tied her down as
well as we were able putting out three ropes on the starboard side and lashing an oar to
the mainmast on the port side to prop the vessel up a little.

I suggested to the boys that we leave the boat in relays in the dinghy and make
to Dumdum which appeared to be about five miles away. (With the coming of daylight
the boys recognised the land we had previously thought to be DUAU as Ferguson Island
and the small islands close to it as the Amphlett Group). They assured me that this was
quite unnecessary as we were in no danger and that the tide would be up again about 3
p.m. As I'm not nearly as well versed in things nautical as they are I
accepted their
advice. Very shortly afterwards the boat commenced to bump badly, but again they
assured me that there was no need for alarm. However I wrote to Rev. A.H. SCRIVIN
at Salamo telling him of our plight and stating that I felt we could get the vessel off again
and also expressed the wish that we had better gear to tie the boat down as she was
bumping badly. This letter I sent per the dinghy to Dumdum, where the two boys were
to obtain a native canoe and cross to Ferguson Island and hurry overland to Salamo.
They were also instructed to send out two native canoes to stand by the wreck in case
we should need to leave hurriedly, and I suggested that a, third boy go with them to
guide the canoes back. However the crew scouted this suggestion pointing out that the
distance was not great and that a third boy in the dinghy would impede the progress of
the dinghy so the extra boy was not sent. It was suggested that I also go with the dinghy
but this I declined as I thought that I could be of help in refloating the vessel. Another
suggestion that my two smaller boys be sent in the dinghy was also turned down by
them, both begging to be allowed to stay with me on the Bromilow. The dinghy left the
vessel as far as I can remember about 8 a.m. and we reckoned that the boys
Phould arrive
at Salamo next morning about daybreak, as they were instructed to travel c'ay and night.

All morning the bumping on the reef continued and shortly after midday the boat
started to leak very badly. Every bump seemed to raise the engine about six inches, and
I gave orders that we should take everything from the cabin and engine room and place
them on the deck. This was done and then the two engine boys (WESELI AND
ILAITIA) and myself started to dismantle the engine. Another boy filled a four gallon
tin with drinking water as the sea water was rapidly rising in the boat which by this time
had a list of at least 30 degrees to port. Several others of the crew were busy making
a raft from the spars and floor of the cabin and engine room. We were only able to
partly dismantle the engine when the water rose too high for us to stay in the engine
room. I think we had removed all but the crank case, and this we had to leave. Every
one was in good spirits and we regarded the whole thing as rather a joke except that we
could see the Bromilow would be a total loss. Confidently expecting the arrival of the
canoes at any time we strained our eyes hour after hour towards land, but were
disappointed. I told the boys to be very careful with the water as we had not a large
supply and also told them to eat biscuits, of which we had a good stock, instead of
boiling rice which would so quickly use up our water and these orders were very loyally
carried out. We naturally spent a good deal of our time in prayer, that we might be
The night was very rough the wind increasing and heavy rain falling. We slept huddled around the wheel with our goods and chattels piled around us. The port rail was about two feet below water at high tide and every wave washed right thru the engine whirling and banging anything loose. Several of my possessions were washed away that night. Morning light revealed that two of the three ropes had snapped during the night and the boat was tipped over at probably 40 degrees. After morning prayers two ropes were put out to replace the two that had snapped, but we were unable to set the boat up any better. Thru out the day we watched and waited for the canoes, but they didn’t appear. Twice we thought that smoke we saw was from the Tolema but it must have been from some native garden on Ferguson Island for we afterwards learned that that vessel was then at Salamo. During the afternoon we rebuilt the raft, enlarging and strengthening it. A rough lug sail was made from the awning and after careful consideration we decided that if no boat or canoe arrived during the night we would try to reach Dumdum on the raft next morning. I repeatedly questioned the boys regarding the distance that we were from land and they were certain that the distance was not further than five miles, their comparison being “less than from Bunama to Digaragara Island”. I had never been out there before so knew nothing at all of our position.

The weather was fine during the day and the air very clear, consequently Dumdum appeared to be quite close to us. I spent some time studying the chart, but got little help from that as reefs abound in that locality. Looking at the raft I remarked that it would never carry us all and that I thought we should put the two small boys on it and the rest of us draw lots to decide who should stay until the launch from Salamo arrived or else the native canoes. Speaking for the rest PAULA said that none of them would agree to leave the vessel unless I would consent to take a place on the raft without drawing lots. Whoever stayed on the boat I must go on the raft. After a great deal of talk it was decided that all take a turn at sitting on the raft and swimming beside it. We spent a good deal of time in prayer that evening for we realized that the venture we had planned for the morrow was a risky one, but not one of us had any inkling of the tragedy that was to eventuate from it. All were full of hope and we even joked about what we would do on reaching Dumdum and named our raft Bromilow II. That night was very wild indeed on the reef. Wave after wave swept over the vessel and we were all drenched. The boat lifted tremendously with every wave and I was very much afraid that the ropes would not hold her securely. This proved to be the case for about 8.30 p.m. one rope snapped with report almost like a rifle shot and the vessel tipped over almost on her side. We decided to leave the boat at once, reckoning that the remaining ropes could not possibly stand the strain as the wind was increasing every minute. The boys carefully selected the belongings that they wished to take with them, principally their Bibles and hymn books, and we set out. I had a small pocket compass and had instructed the most reliable boy on the boat to put the tin of water aboard the raft, but in the bustle and hurry and his great care to see that I was safe he forgot all about it.

Unfortunately we did not discover this until we had left the wreck some time and could not go back for it. Heronida, Libatau and myself were seated on the raft and we commended our venture to God and set out. I took a compass bearing and our idea was to make to Dumdum. Just after we left the moon came up and for a time we made
excellent progress. I suggested that the sail be set, but the boys were unanimously of the opinion that it would be unwise to do so seeing that it had been soaked by the waves before we left. As we went we prayed and sang and from time to time one and another of the boys that were swimming and pushing the raft rested on it.

Everyone was quite jolly and all protested that they were not the least bit afraid. Libatau was asked to take his place in the water, but he asked to be excused as he suffered from a type of rheumatism and was afraid of the effect of the water on that account. We had with us two 2lb. sealed tins of biscuits, that being the only food we could take with us without it becoming spoilt in the sea water. Suddenly the moon was obscured and the raft gave a violent lurch. When next I felt for the compass it was gone, and from then on till almost daybreak we wandered about trying to guide ourselves by the tide and the direction of the wind, but from our position at daylight I think that we must have practically worked in a circle. Just before day light Paula became light headed and had to be forcibly put on the raft and held there. Libatau also suffered much from exposure and had to be held on. Morina suggested just about this time that we eat some biscuits and this we did. Then we sighted Dumdum again and made towards with fresh heart, praying and singing as we went and joking as to how many coconuts each would be able to drink when we arrived. The land appeared to be quite close, but our progress was very slow owing to a big swell and the tide which was very strong. Paula became very much worse, and Ilaitia, who had been holding Paula asked me to permit him to swim to Dumdum and bring back help. I was afraid that the distance was too great and refused, saying that we would see how we got on for a while. Probably an hour after when Paula was very much worse and quite violent and Heronida also was beginning to show signs of exhaustion and the rest of us were more or less tiring he asked again pointing out that unless we very soon got Paula to land he would die. I replied that two might go if they wished and Morina immediately set out with Ilaitia swimming with a plank which we took from the raft. I had asked these two boys if they felt able to reach the land and after a careful look at the distant land they said they thought so. Ilaitia said, “Some one must try at any rate and we two are the freshest of all, so we’ll go.” They were to bring back two large native canoes and coconuts and water as quickly as possible and ask the people on Dumdum to prepare food and fires so that the boys might be able to eat as soon as we reached the land.

Alas for our hopes and those two brave boys, for we never saw them again. We paddled on and prayed on for about an hour when Heronida became very violent and lost his reason. I begged all to resist the temptation to drink salt water, pointing out that it would only increase their thirst and eventually send them insane, and I believe they did their best to obey. Our eyes were smarting terribly from the glare, and as the boys found relief from putting their faces in the sea they were constantly doing so and assuring me that they were not drinking any at all. Paula died about an hour and a half after the two boys had gone for help and to keep Heronida from the salt water I nursed him as well as I could for several hours. About 3 p.m. Libutau passed away and he, like Paula was buried at sea. The remaining boys were all weakening and their spirit was beginning to drop. “Why was help so slow in coming?” was their cry. I tried to encourage them to paddle on but they had no heart for it and were in fact all more or less stupid. At 5.30 p.m. or thereabouts Heronida died and we buried him. Then I took the paddle and tried
to make for Dumdum realizing that if we didn’t reach it that night we had no chance of being saved at all. I appealed in vain to the boys who had absolutely given up hope and faith. For about an hour I kept at my task, but could see that I was making very little headway.

Just at dusk a bigger wave than the average upset the raft and a reef seemed to suddenly jump out of nowhere at us, and we found ourselves knee-deep only in the sea. There were two tall coral boulders and to one of these we securely tied the raft thinking to go on in the morning. There were now only four of us left, viz. Watuwatu, Weseli, Dinana and myself. The former made his way to one of the boulders and after tying a second rope to the raft I made my way to the other to find that the other two boys were already there trying to compose themselves for sleep. I questioned Weseli as to our position and he told me that we were on the end of an inhabited atoll. I also must have been a littler light headed at the time for I was under the impression that I could see a barb wire fence and a European house in the near distance.

Some time later we saw a figure moving about in the water and calling out about “the boat”. We thought it must be a boy from a launch that was out looking for us and Dinana went across to him. It proved to be Watuwatu. He had untied the raft, quite without my knowledge even though I was on the rock to which it was tied and it had been washed away from him while trying to tie it to another rock. We felt rather cross about it at the time, but it proved to be but another of God’s kindesses to us for had we tried to go on again next morning we must have all been lost. Dinana spent the night on the one rock with the captain and Weseli and myself tried to settle down on the other. Presently the moon arose and almost immediately Weseli gripped me around the throat and apparently endeavoured to choke me. I drove him off and told him to come back and be sensible. Eventually he came and asked me to forgive him. Scarcely had we settled down again when he made a second attack on me trying to throw me into the sea. Again I beat him off and then he struck me with a stone, bounded into the sea and disappeared.

Next morning we found his body wedged between two big stones. I need not add that when he attacked me his mind was deranged. About 8 a.m. the tide which had risen during the night receded and we were able to leave the boulders and rest on a small sand strip. During the night we had had a very rough time, being frequently hurled into the sea as the waves broke over the rocks on which we were sitting. Our hands were lacerated and our bodies bruised but we managed to lie down and sleep. About 4 p.m. we had to make to the rock again as the tide rose too high for us to stay on the sand bank. The three of us clung to the one boulder that night as it was a little sheltered compared with the one that I had occupied on the Sunday night. Next morning the Captain (Watuwatu) was lighthearted and several times threw stones at us striking Dinana on the head while he was sleeping.

During the day rain fell and we tried to catch a little in the mackintosh that I was wearing, but it wasn’t much of a success as the coat had had a bad time and was getting rather sieve-like. Happily some clam shells were found and we were able to each get a drink of about a pint from those. Watuwatu became normal again after a drink, but next
morning (after another night on the rock) he was as bad as ever and we had to watch him constantly in case he did us some harm with stones. That afternoon he died and was buried. Needless to say we spent nearly all our time on that reef in prayer and watching for a boat. We realized that we were right off the course and that it would be a miracle if we were found, but both Dinana and I thoroughly believed that we would eventually be picked up. Personally that conviction became stronger with me as the days passed and no vessel appeared. Each morning we searched the beach, such as it was, for any edible nut or coconut that might have drifted to us, but only twice did we find anything and then only a very small nut resembling an almond. Thursday night the moon had waned so far that the tide had receded sufficiently to permit us to sleep on the sand bank.

Dinana became very weak and the nights were bitterly cold. Quite distinctly we both thought we could hear fowls crowing during that night. The sun was very hot during the day and as there was no shelter we both suffered a good deal from thirst. Rain fell again Thursday night but it was so light that we only got a little more than an egg cup full each. We prayed for rain and as it came we felt sure that we'd be picked up. Friday was frightfully hot and we could scarcely stagger about owing to weakness. Neither of us would trust ourselves to wash or bathe in the sea in case we gave in to the temptation to drink. Friday night was the coldest we experienced. I was greatly afraid that Dinana would not last till morning so cold was his body, but day break came in time to save him. He managed to crawl over me (I was at the moment too weak to get out of the way) and he laid himself out in the sun with his arms folded to die. I tried to rally him and said that I was sure a boat would come that day, and begged him to lie face down so that he might protect his face from the sun, but I couldn't inspire him at all. Later I managed to drag myself to the sheltered side of a large rock and lie there. There was just sufficient shade to keep my face from the sun, and I spent my time mainly in prayer.

I had been thus engaged for about an hour I suppose, when I looked up and to my inexpressible delight saw our Tolema coming straight to our tiny sand bank with both sails set. I clambered to the top of the rock and waved until I fell down, then went and called Dinana who would not believe me. I waved again and then saw that the sails were being lowered. I had been seen. Shortly I could make out Rev. A. H. Scrivin waving both arms so that we might see him. The Tolema came round very slowly (to us) and at long last a dinghy was launched and we could see a water bottle being placed in it. On account of the swell the Tolema could not anchor. I staggered to meet Mr. Scrivin. Dinana could not walk. He gave me as much water as he thought was safe, but to me it was merely a trickle, and then went on to Dinana. Another tiny drink and then we were placed in the dinghy and rowed to the Tolema. Mr. Scrivin and the crew were kindness personified. Everything that could be done to make up comfortable was done and then we learned that the two boys who had gone towards Dumdum for help had not reached their destination. That night after a look at a neighbouring atoll to see if Ilaitia and Morina had been washed to it we anchored at Dumdum as the trip back to Salamo was really too dangerous to make in the dark. Next day we arrived safely at Salamo, where we received nothing but kindness at the hands of everyone. Of the goodness of Rev. and Mrs. Scrivin I cannot say too much and the same applies to Matron Purnell and Sister Woodings. They were all marvellously kind to us both, and the whole station
joined with them in helping in any little way that they could. After three days in bed I was able to be about again and on the fifth day after my rescue I was able to rejoin my very anxious wife at Bunama. Dinana was not so fortunate in that respect and required a week longer in hospital than I.

Some things stand out very vividly throughout this tragedy. Firstly the guiding hand of God. Had we not been thrown up on that tiny reef it is most unlikely that anything more would ever have been heard of us as we would have been swept away towards Kiriwina and probably wrecked again on a submerged reef. The sand strip was our salvation. Again the loss of the raft was undoubtedly an act of God. Had we had that, our intention was to set out next morning, and as we could see Dumdum so plainly we thought it to be quite near, whereas it was probably 25 miles away, an impossible distance for us to have crossed in our weak state. The course the *Tolema* took was also another remarkable thing. Mr. Scrivin tells me that on that Saturday morning they had approached the place that they thought the *Bromilow* must have struck and then tried to work out the drift of a raft from the tide and the wind. They set a course and kept on it for several hours and came on an absolutely dead line for the tiny reef that we occupied. Half a mile to either side and I doubt if they would have seen us on account of the swell. From the very first I was confident that we would be picked up and Dinana shared that faith with me. The other boys would not fight, but resigned themselves to what they considered must be inevitable, i.e. death. I feel pretty certain that had Morina and Ilaitia not gone to try to get help they would have lived thru it all to be picked up as both were strong boys with plenty of faith.

Secondly the conduct of the boys under these trying conditions was wonderful. There wasn’t a single murmur even when we found that the water had been forgotten. Until too weak to help, everyone did his share at propelling the raft, and every order was obeyed. The one great care of all the boys was the safety of their *tomugana* and all that could be done to that end was done. To me the finest act of all was the bravery of Morina and Ilaitia in volunteering or rather begging to be permitted to go thru unknown seas when a strong tide was running and they themselves must have been feeling the strain, to bring help. They gave their lives for the rest of the party and than this, “greater love hath no man.”

With the actual crew of the *Bromilow* I was not very conversant, but Paula, Ilaitia, Morina and Heronida I knew and loved for they were true followers of Christ. I grieve greatly that they have gone, but they gave themselves in the Service of Christ and have left us a grand example. Pray God the Papuan church may be inspired and helped by their sacrifice.

(signed) G. Powles Lassam.

July 31st, 1930.

This is the transcript of the report provided to the Harbourmaster’s Enquiry into the sinking of the ‘Bromilow’.
APPENDIX VII

Minutes of the Meeting held between the representatives of the
United Church and the Catholic Church at Budoya

July 3rd, 1972

Present: Bishop R. Budiara, Pastor Lepani, Miss M. Russell, Sr. J. Buchanan,
Mr. Apenai, Mr. N Hicks.
Bishop D. Moore, Fr. E Fallon, Fr. J. Doggett, Fr. J. Sinou, Sr.
Benedicta, Mr. P. Nogei.

Secretary: Fr. R. Anderson

The Chairman, Fr. Fallon, opened the Meeting at 9.30 a.m., pointing out that it
was occasioned by a resolution of the Synod of the United Church in 1971, aimed at
resolving certain differences and misunderstandings which had arisen in the work of the
two Churches in the Milne Bay District.

Bishop D. Moore expressed the hope that, while the meeting was occasioned by
practical considerations, viz, the need to co-operate in the work of the two Churches in
the fields of Medicine and Education, from the Meeting there would come a greater
unity between the two Churches. The present disunity is something that offends all
Christians. Bishop Budiara expressed the view that at the coming of Independence there
was the danger that the divisions within the Church would be blamed on the present
expatriate leaders of the Churches, and that everything should be done at this time to
lessen tensions and reduce areas of difference between the two.

Mr. N Hicks suggested that before treating of the areas of practical co-operation,
the meeting, should discuss pastoral matters. He tabled a submission previously made
to the United Church representatives that they should seek from the Meeting
authoritative answers to four questions, namely:

1. Does the Roman Catholic Church teach and believe that any Catholics who enter
   a United Church place of worship to pray, will die?

2. Does the Sideia Diocese of the Roman Catholic Church recognise Baptism as
   administered in the United Church, or does it require rebaptism of former United
   Church adherents who become Catholics.

3. Does the Roman Catholic Church recognise the united Church as part of the
   Holy Catholic Church, or are they considered as “separated brethren”, i.e. not
   belonging to the Catholic (worldwide) Church, and therefore in error?
4 Do Roman Catholics recognise United Church members as Christians in the same sense that their own people are Christians?

Regarding the first question, the meeting was assured by the Catholic Bishop and other Catholic members that the Catholic Church most certainly does not teach and believe this. On the contrary, the Church encourages Catholics to pray with other Christians on certain occasions, as has already been done in many areas of the Milne Bay District.

On the second question of re-baptism, Father Doggett brought to the notice of the Meeting the present Law of the Church in this matter, as contained in the "Directory on Ecumenism". Section 14 reads as follows: "Indiscriminate conditional baptism of all who desire full communion with the Catholic Church cannot be approved. The Sacrament of Baptism cannot be repeated, and therefore to baptise again conditionally is not allowed, unless there is prudent doubt of the fact or validity of a baptism already administered".

Discussion of this followed, and Mr. Hicks summed up the discussion by saying that the answer to the question is therefore in the affirmative. The Roman Catholic Church does recognise United Church baptism. The Roman Catholic Church does recognise United Church baptism, provided that it is assured that baptism has been given validly with water in the Name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.

In the discussion of the third question, it was pointed out that it was difficult to answer the question as worded, because of the different meanings of the word "catholic" and the various interpretations of the words "separated brethren". The Meeting, however, came up with the following statement:

The Roman Catholic Church recognises the members of the United Church as being members of Christ's Church and brothers to Catholics. Though separated because of differences in belief and worship, we are yet all united through Baptism and Faith in Christ, and sincerely seek a reconciliation of all Christians in the unity of the one and only Church of Christ.

The Meeting decided that the best way to answer the fourth of the questions raised for comment, was to quote from the Decree on Ecumenism of the Second Vatican Council, of which the final sentences of Section 3 read as follows: "All who have been justified by faith in baptism are incorporated into Christ; they therefore have a right to be called Christians, and with good reason are accepted as brothers by the children of the Catholic Church".

The Meeting then passed to a consideration of those areas of practical concern in which the two churches seek to co-operate. The first of these was health work. The hospital at present under construction at Kurada was the first matter to be raised for discussion. Sister Buchanan pointed out that medical work already initiated there by catholic nurses in anticipation of the completion of the new hospital was leading to considerable overlapping of work in the Kurada area, given the fact that nurses from
Bunama already patrolled the area. Sister Buchanan contended that the proposed hospital was not ideally situated if one considered the geography and the needs of the area as a whole, and that it would be better situated in the Sewa Bay area.

The meeting heard a suggestion that while this could well be so, things had probably progressed too far now for the work on the hospital to be stopped. It was therefore proposed that the hospital to be completed, but that as regards MCH patrols there be a clear distinction or division established between areas covered by the Bunama clinic and those covered by Kurada. This was agreed to by the meeting, and the resolution was passed that Bunama would patrol from Barabara eastwards, and that Kurada be responsible for the area extending from Kurada westwards to Bwasiyaiyai, and thence northwards to Sewa Bay thus avoiding any overlapping of work by the two centres.

The matters of charging fees in the new hospital was also raised. The meeting agreed that Kurada hospital, since it was a new foundation. The Bishop assured the meeting that he would communicate to the priest in charge of the Kurada area the resolutions of the meeting in this regard.

A further question raised concerned the policy of the two churches in regard to spiritual care to be given dying patients of other denominations, particularly in regard to Baptism. The Meeting was agreed that where it is possible, attempts be made to contact the priest or pastor of the patient. Where this is not possible, one should act according to the wishes of the patient or those responsible for him.

The Meeting then passed over to matters concerning Education, and the Chairman asked Bishop Budiara in what ways he felt that greater co-operation could be achieved in this field. Bishop Budiara brought to the notice of the Meeting a letter from the people of Barabara, Normanby Is. requesting that a United Church teacher be appointed to the Catholic School there, in order to cater for the spiritual needs of United Church children who are enrolled in that school. Bishop Moore stated the policy that if the people desire a United Church teacher in a Catholic School in which a large number of United Church children are enrolled, then we positively support this move. The United Church teacher must them obtain this position by the normal process of eligibility (where applicable), application and appointment, as set out in the Education Ordinance.

Bishop Budiara was also asked what was the practice in United Church Schools regarding the teaching of Religious Instruction. The question was referred to Miss Russell, who said that each day there was a half-hour of worship and two half-hour periods of Religious Instruction were given each week. Miss Russell undertook to make available a copy of the new format for the half-hour of worship in schools.

Bishop Budiara requested that prior to the opening of any new schools, there be a meeting between the authorities of both Mission Agencies and the village people of the area concerned. Bishop Moore agreed that this should be so.
The Meeting discussed a request from the Duau Council regarding a proposed new school to be opened at Dawada. Those who are familiar with the area expressed the opinion that Dawada was not the best site, especially in view of its proximity to Bwaruada, and Loboda was suggested as being more suitable. Father Fallon offered to recruit a Catholic teacher to help staff the proposed school, in view of a small community of Catholics in the Soisoiya area.

Having completed the discussions on Health and Education, the meeting returned to pastoral matters, and in particular activities which would promote Church Unity. As a result of the discussion, a practical resolution was moved that on or about the occasion of National Day, in those centres where it is possible, there should be an exchange of teachers, and that the subject of the discourse on that day would be the obligation of all Christians to work for Unity. The Bishops of both Churches will communicate this resolution to their priests and ordained ministers, with guidelines for the discourse to be given.

The Meeting concluded with a prayer for Unity.
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