

Anglican partners meet in Papua New Guinea

By Fr Paul Devenport, ABM SA Board representative

The importance of continued support for the Anglican Church in Papua New Guinea has been emphasized by a series of meetings with overseas partners including the Anglican Board of Mission (ABM).

The meetings were represented by the ABM President and Primate of Australia, and Archbishop of Adelaide, the Most Reverend Geoff Smith, the Board Chair, the Revâ??d Andrew Sempell and the ABMâ??s Chair of the SA Provincial Committee and SA ABM Board Representative, the Revâ??d Paul Devenport.

The meetings over several days between August the 29th and September the 1st were held at Newton Theological College near Popondetta in the Oro Province.

They also coincided with the 75th anniversary of a school named in honour of the Papua New Guinea martyrs on Sunday the 3rd of September.



L-R: the Rt Rev Andrew Hedge, Bishop of Waiapu (Celebrant), the Most Rev Geoff Smith, Primate of the Anglican Church of Australia and Archbishop of Adelaide (Preacher), the Rt Rev Lindsley Ihove, Bishop of Popondota, the Rt Rev Peter Ramsden, former Bishop of Port Moresby, and the Rt Rev Jonathan Meyrick, former Bishop of Lynn within the Diocese of Norwich and Chair of PNG Church Partnership UK.

Hundreds of school students along with other Bishops, partner groups from the UK and New Zealand attended the service at Martyrs Memorial Secondary School near Popondetta.

The service was held in honour of the 75th anniversary of the school and in remembrance of the 12 Anglican missionaries who were killed in the Second World War during the Japanese invasion of the country.

The Bishop for Waiapu in New Zealand, Andrew Hedge celebrated the Mass while Archbishop Geoff Smith preached.

The other Bishops present at the service included the Bishop of Popondota, Lindlsey Ihove, the Bishop of New Guinea Islands, Reginald Makele, the former Bishop of Port Moresby, Peter Rumsden and Bishop Jonathan Meyrick, both from the UK.

The series of meetings at Newton Theological College near Popondetta was the first since the COVID-19 pandemic and was centred on providing updates on the Anglican Church in PNG and how the

partner agencies can help in the future.

Also in attendance was the Bishop of New Guinea Islands, Reginald Makele, the ABM Board Chair, the Revâ??d Andrew Sempell, ABM staff, Robert McLean and Lina Magallaness along with representatives from the Norwich Diocese PNG Link Group in England and a link group from New Zealand in the Diocese of Waiapu, centred at Napier.

The get together of partners was also an opportunity to meet the students at Newton Theological College and to join them and their families in daily services and in meals.



L to R ABM SA Board representative Paul Devenport, Sr Ann, Sr Beverley, ABM Board Chair, Andrew Sempell, and ABM staff member, Robert McLean.

We also heard firsthand of the work that has been done over the past six years by the Acting Principal, Bishop Geoffrey Driver.

Bishop Driver stated the college was in near collapse in 2017 but was now in principle registered as a tertiary institution by the PNG Government and has now the best theological library in PNG with seven thousand books.

Power has also been connected over the past 12 months, all 25 buildings on the site have been rebuilt and an IT upgrade is underway.

80 per cent of the funding for the college comes from the ABM and the Anglican Missions in England and New Zealand.

The meetings emphasized the importance of support for the PNG Church, and in supporting the Martyrs Day Appeal, in providing leadership skills for Anglican Parishes across Papua New Guinea.

The Anglican Province of PNG is represented by five dioceses and has an Acting Archbishop, Bishop Nathan Ingen in the Diocese of Aigo Rongo in the Highlands, the Bishop of Popondota, Lindsley Ihove and the Bishop of New Guinea Islands, Reginald Makele. The Dioceses of Port Moresby and Dogura are currently vacant.

An election of a new Bishop for Dogara is hopeful by the end of the year, while a date for the election for a new Bishop for Port Moresby remains uncertain.

The Acting Archbishop Nathan Ingen was unable to be at the meetings, due to his wife still being in hospital from a serious road accident in the highlands in July, which killed Mother Juliet Kolai and seriously injured others.

The partners were also able to visit Anglican run health centres largely funded by the PNG Government in the Diocese of Popondota, the Melanesian Brothers and the Anglican Franciscans, the Sisters of the Visitation of our Lady Convent and at a remembrance site where the Australians defeated the Japanese at Gona in 1942.

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