# THE BOUGAINVILLE CATHOLIC CHURCH AND 'INDIGENISATION'

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This chapter examines localisation practice in the Catholic Church in Bougainville. In doing so, it touches on some related questions: how has the Church fulfilled its apostolic mission to plant the Word of God in the various communities who have welcomed Christ? Did the Marist missionaries, the first proselytisers to come to Bougainville as early as 1901, interpret and apply the gospel values according to the contemporary needs of the people when preaching the Word of God? How influential have these missionaries been when one considers what, in recent times, Bougainvilleans have lived through, how they have struggled, killed, wept and mourned, and yet have been able to rise above these situations, have been able to forgive and to get on with life? I do not think that anyone can easily forgive and forget after such events. It has therefore been remarkable to witness numerous, and ongoing, instances of both personal and communal acts of forgiveness and reconciliation ceremonies. There must be reasons why Bougainvilleans can do this with such goodness of heart, skill and dignity!

We need to acknowledge that each of the three main churches in Bougainville (Catholic, United and Seventh-Day Adventist) has played a vital role in contributing to the kind of people Bougainvilleans are today, and what they, too, were before the Bougainville Copper company started production in 1972. It is the Catholic Church which has had the longest presence in Bougainville, whose people are still about 75–80 per cent Catholic. It took a particularly holistic approach in its missionary work, thus influencing both religious and secular aspects of people's lives.

The early Marist missionaries were mostly from France and Germany. They arrived initially from the Shortland Islands, then part of the British Solomon Islands Protectorate. Later, in 1940, Bishop Thomas Wade requested the Sisters of

St Joseph from Orange in California to come to Bougainville and, two years later the Marist Brothers. In conjunction with their pastoral and socio-economic activities that the sisters and brothers offered both high standards of education and good quality health services. The Marist approach to education laid a good foundation and may well have influenced highly educated Bougainvilleans to look critically at life and at the issues facing them.

In the strict meaning of 'indigenisation', the Catholic Church still has a long way to go before it becomes fully 'Bougainvilleanised'. This is not something to be gauged only by numbers of indigenous clergy and members of religious orders and of Bougainvillean lay persons participating in the Church ministries. It pertains as much to the whole life of the Church, the degree of inculturation of its liturgies, the acceptance by the people of its sacraments and of how well the local clergy have been empowered in relation to Church administration and decision making. Indigenisation means that expatriates are only supporters and consultants whenever they are invited.

Despite the overall slow pace with which the Catholic Church initially localised itself, its saturating influence in Bougainville cannot be doubted. Despite all the killings and material losses during the conflict (1988 to 1997) and their material and environmental losses in the years preceding it, Bougainvilleans have proved the strength of their internal stamina to pursue their true identity. For the majority Catholics, it was the instilling of so deep a faith and spirituality by the Marist missionaries as well as the people's acceptance of the holisitic approach of the Marist evangelists, that nourished their spirit of endurance. It is also amazing to observe how many who have attended church schools are gifted with philosophical and analytical minds. In my view, that factor too has been a significant influence on the way in which Bougainvilleans have handled the impact of the conflict.

Although the situation in many ways continues to be difficult, Bougainvilleans have, in my view, exhibited a deep desire for an authentic Bougainville type of leadership and a government of, for and by the people. The people have demonstrated a persistent ambition to foster an identity of their own. That has been manifested in both a dialogue and a constant struggle, already evident in the 1960s. One cannot help but see how the influence of Christianity, which has informed the religious convictions of the Bougainville people, has been a profound influence throughout, helping to shape people's views on their own identity. When they have been knee-deep in divisions and conflicts, Christian beliefs have still encouraged people to seek forgiveness from each other for their transgressions and to establish genuine reconciliation. I have no doubt that these beliefs prevented further massacres from taking place, during and after the

conflict, even after loved ones had died. It is remarkable that, under such duress, both the individual and whole communities can forgive those responsible for their pain. You may argue that the capacity to forgive is natural to people. Such a view understates the difficulty of doing so. An appropriate and deep spiritual formation certainly provides support for the heroism required to not only forgive someone 'from the heart' but also to then aspire to work together in unity with known perpetrators of misery and crime. Of course there is still a long way to go before reconciliation in relation to many outstanding cases arising from the conflict can be attended to.

Examining the influence of the Church from the 1950s to the 1980s, its impact and the results are only too obvious. One only has to think of Bougainvillean leaders, present and past, like Aloysius Tamuka (Noga), Leo Hannett, Melchior Togolo, Alexis Sarei, John Momis, Theodore Miriung, Gregory Singkai and Peter Kurongku, as well as women leaders, and many more who are the products of schools run by the missionaries of Bougainville.

## ASPECTS OF THE CHURCH'S ROLE IN DEVELOPMENT IN BOUGAINVILLE

After the Marists, the Methodist missionaries came a few years later, from Australia, Fiji, Samoa and the Solomon Islands. Venturing into remote areas by foot and by boat, they set up schools, health centres and clubs to teach local women and men basic literacy. Women missionaries used women's organisations such as 'women's clubs' to teach local women about basic health and hygiene and train them for modern home management in sewing, cooking and other domestic skills.

The missionaries had the vision to promote the human dignity of the Bougainvillean people, not just by preaching the Word of God, but also in various practical ways and especially through secular education. In doing so they played an important part in raising awareness about social issues.

### Social Services: Practical Training, Education and Health

As part of its commitment to education and training, the Marist mission set up a number of formation and training centres from as early as 1925. A Catechist Training School at Burunotui on the west coat of Buka — and later at Tarlena and Asitavi — was introduced as the work of catechists became more vital. There young men in particular learnt not only matters pertaining to faith, but also how to read and write and to deal with numbers. In 1946 agricultural schools were built at Patupatuai and Tarlena and a boys' vocational school at Torokina. When

World War II left devastation everywhere, Tearouki Plantation was re-opened in 1948 to help with the Vicariate's finances.

In 1948 the Marist Teaching Brothers established a school at Chabai in north-west Bougainville. The following year they started the first high school for boys at Rigu near Kieta town on the central east coast of Bougainville, naming it after St Joseph. Many present Bougainvillean leaders are products of this school. A teacher training program was later run there too, modeled on the one introduced earlier at Asitavi Girl's High School (below). In 1953, Brother Angas built an engineering workshop at Tsiroge to train young men to repair the engines of ships, generators and all manner of motor vehicles. Brother Pius came from Germany in 1955 and took over the running of this workshop. Later on many of those who were trained at Tsiroge were to find employment with Bougainville Copper. Carpentry and building skills were also taught by the Brothers of St Joseph who built many of the mission houses and churches throughout the Diocese of Bougainville. Many of them still stand today [Diocese of Bougainville 2001: 19–22].

Brother Patrick, another Marist, established the Christian Farmers' School at Mabiri, 30 kilometres from Rigu. This agricultural training institution not only catered for its young students but was open to anyone, no matter how old, who wanted to improve his knowledge and skill in farming. Such an endeavour led the Marists to help launch the Bougainville Christian Farmers' Association. Another farm school modeled on Mabiri was also set up by the Marists at Burunotui, north-west Buka, where members of the order had first landed on Buka.

In 1956, a time when in most parts of Bougainville public roles for women were frowned upon, Sister Catherine Matzunitsi, now known as Sister Emma, opened St Mary's High School at Asitavi, then a remote place on the east central coastal mainland, only accessible by boat or foot. It was run by both Marist Sisters and lay missionaries. As at that time it was the only single sex girls' high school on Bougainville, it was not only Catholics who were educated there. It provided both high school programs and courses in teacher training (the latter being phased out in 1968 when the staff were transferred to Kabaleo Teachers' College in East New Britain). About the same time the teacher training staff at Rigu was also sent to the corresponding male institution at Vunakanau in East New Britain. Since the Bougainville 'conflict' St Mary's has become a co-educational institution but there are plans to phase this out by 2007. The Church still runs many schools in Bougainville and elsewhere in Papua New Guinea you will find Bougainvillean women serving as school principals, especially of its many community schools. Old students from St Mary's High School at Asitavi figure prominently among them.

Even now, after the conflict, the Catholic Church continues to play a major role in education in Bougainville. Of the approximately 140–150 community schools in Bougainville, 123 are conducted as Catholic agency schools. Of the eight high schools, three are Catholic, three run by the government and one by the Uniting Church, while the eighth — Bana High School — was recently established by the Banoni and Nagovisi people themselves. There are four Catholic vocational schools, and the Mabiri Kristen Farmer's School continues to operate.

When church schools were asked to come under the unified national system of education in the early 1970s, the Uniting and Catholic Church school authorities agreed, while Seventh–Day Adventist schools remained outside the system. This meant that the teachers in Catholic 'agency' schools would be paid by the National Education Department and that their core curriculum and administrative matters would be governed through the national education system. However, the church schools, especially the Catholic ones, have maintained their identity and holistic approach at all levels and in both formal and non-formal situations.

Church-run schools are virtually self-reliant. Apart from its obvious benefits, self-reliance had been a necessary goal because church schools receive government grants only to subsidise costs whereas government schools receive full grants. The Catholic Church still has authority over its Catholic agency schools and health centres through its own education and health boards. Before the Bougainville conflict, the boards worked well with the relevant government authorities and similar relationships are being established in the early 2000s. Through the National Catholic Education Secretariat of the National Catholic Bishops' Conference, the Catholic Church has continued the responsibility of forming and moulding the future educated population, providing both national and provincial seminars for teaching staff geared towards the needs of the times. Teachers are still being provided with the opportunities to improve their ability to impart and witness their apostolic mission.

While in other provinces, community schools still had expatriate principals in the 1970s, by that time practically all Catholic schools' head teacher positions in Bougainville had been localised. By the 1980s localisation in all schools in Bougainville had extended to the teachers in all community schools. In the vocational and high schools localisation occurred later in the 1980s. From 1983 until 1989 I was principal of St Mary's Provincial High School, Asitavi. Of the 13 teaching staff, only two were expatriates, the rest being Bougainvilleans. Likewise, in 1988, a Bougainvillean Marist Teaching Brother, Brother Julian Hakumin, was appointed principal at St Joseph's High School, Rigu. At both of these Catholic high schools the support from a couple of expatriate staff who remained to teach or work at ancillary level was of great value. Contributing to the acceptance of

localisation by the expatriate clergy was the essential Marist missionary approach which inspired members of the order to move to a mission country, establish a Catholic community and local church and eventually leave for the next new challenge. Many of our Catholic schools remained open throughout the crisis due to their intrepid teaching staff who were imbued with this same spirit. During those turbulent times the community supported them with food and accommodation as their regular salaries ceased to be paid.

From the very beginning many of the missionaries ventured into remote areas to establish health centres in every mission station alongside schools. Two health centres, namely Tearouki and Morotana, were staffed with highly qualified doctors and nurses. Tearouki Health Centre trained many of the Catholic nurses who were to be of such value to their communities during the Bougainville crisis, serving our people with dedication and commitment, often despite acute shortages of medicine.

**Seminary and Training of Religious Men and Women from Bougainville**

Of course, the Church was initially dependant on expatriate personnel. Even as late as the 1940s, expatriate staff dominated. In 1945 the American, Bishop Wade, together with 16 expatriate Marist Fathers as well as 13 Sisters and two Brothers returned to Bougainville from abroad and began the great task of post-war reconstruction of missionary activity. In 1947 more Sisters and Brothers followed as well as 10 Marist Fathers to assist the Vicariate.

Despite this dependence, from an early stage the Church worked to replace the expatriate personnel. At that time localisation of clergy and religious could only be effected, so it seemed, in a strong context of existing clerical structures. As a result, the focus was on the seminary training and formation of Bougainvilleans as priests, thereby empowering young men to lead our people in their spiritual lives. A minor seminary was established at Chabai in 1932 for the initial preparation of young men for training for the local diocesan priesthood. [Diocese of Bougainville 2001: 13–14]. The next level of seminary training for the Catholic priesthood was available in Rabaul, where Paul Lapun, Peter Tatamas, John Teosin and Aloysius Tamuka (Noga) studied before the outbreak of World War II. After the War, in 1945, the Marists established the first major seminary for Papua New Guinea at Torokina on the west coast of Bougainville, no doubt because the United States army had left such a huge infrastructure there. Its first candidates were one Papuan, two from East New Britain and two Bougainvilleans. However, perhaps because of its geographic remoteness, Torokina failed to attract nationwide candidates and the seminary there was soon closed. Subsequently candidates from Bougainville were obliged to study at the more conveniently sited seminaries

at Rabaul and Madang. The first two diocesan local priests were ordained in 1953: Aloysius Tamuka (Noga) from Tabago parish in Buin and Peter Tatamas of Lemanmanu in Buka. Despite the remote location of seminaries from their own homeland after the closure of the Torokina facility, Bougainvilleans continued to respond to the call of the priesthood.

The focus of indigenisation was not solely on the priesthood. Two local orders of nuns and brothers were established, the Little Sisters of Nazareth and the Brothers of St Joseph. In their efforts to raise the dignity of women, in 1936 the expatriate Marist Missionary Sisters established the Little Sisters of Nazareth, a local Bougainvillean foundation [*Constitution of the Sisters of Nazareth* 2001:1]. Numbering 38 members in 2004, they are involved in education, health and pastoral ministries. As its founders wanted this local order of religious women to flourish, they did not receive Bougainvillean candidates into their own order until the local congregation was fully localised in 1972. That year the first Bougainvillean mother general was elected by the members of the order. The European nuns kept themselves largely separate from the local sisters. The Brothers of St Joseph were also founded locally by the Marist priests to assist them in their work on mission stations, but especially in their work of constructing and maintaining buildings all over Bougainville. There have been eight Brothers of St Joseph to date. The local Marist Bougainvillean priests number four, while there are seven Marist Teaching Brothers.

Progress towards full indigenisation of the clergy still has some distance to go. In 2004, the bishop is an expatriate, as are two priests and three nuns. However, there are 17 Bougainvillean diocesan priests, 13 Marist Fathers, 38 local Bougainvillean Sisters, 10 Brothers of St Joseph and six Marist Teaching Brothers. Some of them are engaged not only in a pastoral capacity but in all sectors of our local communities, as well as in teaching and administration in seminaries in Papua New Guinea and beyond. Some hold administrative positions in various parts of the Province, in their own secular or religious communities and at diocesan centres such as the Mabiri Ministry School.

## Changes under Bougainvillean Leadership

Leo Lemay, the charismatic American Marist bishop of Bougainville from 1959 to 1974, was a great preacher on the justice related issues that caused such controversy in Bougainville in the 1960s and early 1970s. He prepared the Bougainvillean priest, Gregory Singkai, to succeed him. Soon after being consecrated and taking office in 1974, the late Bishop Singkai implemented major changes in the Church structure and government by emphasising the goal of 'self-reliance', especially through the parish councils. This change in direction met with resistance, especially as financial support for the work of the Church had until then been coming freely

from overseas charity and funding agencies, such as Misserio and Propagation of the Faith. Now the Catholic faithful were told to help the Church to become self-reliant by supporting their own parish priests and religious through their contributions to the parish councils. As was to be expected, this worked well in only some of the parishes throughout Bougainville. A lot of clergy and religious had to depend on their own resources. Religious orders and the local congregations of Brothers and Sisters fared somewhat better, especially because some of them were getting regular salaries through the departments of Education and Health as a result of partial integration of church schools and health facilities into the government systems. During the Bougainville conflict (1988 to 1997), Bishop Singkai supported autonomy for Bougainville and suffered for the cause, even being taken hostage at one stage and being confined at Koromira. He was persuaded to leave Bougainville *via* Honiara. However, he eventually returned to the province where he died in 1996.

Another Bougainvillean, Peter Kurongku, was also consecrated bishop of Honiara, Solomon Islands, where he served as auxiliary to the Marist bishop, Adrian Smith, before being appointed archbishop of Port Moresby in 1987. He also introduced many changes, some which shocked many Catholics, both lay and clergy in the archdiocese of Port Moresby. (For example, he invited Filipino priests to come to the archdiocese of Port Moresby from where they spread to other parts of Papua New Guinea.) He, too, was not afraid to speak out on justice issues. When, during the crisis, the national army blindly landed on Bougainville and began to 'shoot and kill' and to commit other atrocities, Archbishop Kurongku spoke up against such actions. He condemned both the Papua New Guinea army and the self-styled Bougainvillean Revolutionary Army (BRA). He also provided homeless Bougainvilleans with accommodation during the critical period of the conflict, something that annoyed some clergy. The archbishop continued to voice his views until he died in 1999.

As the number of expatriate missionaries decreased from the 1970s, and the numbers of indigenous priests, sisters and brothers was much too low to meet the needs of the growing Catholic population, the Church leaders had to look seriously at ways of involving the laity in the pastoral ministry. A major move in this direction occurred in 1974 when, in order to meet pastoral needs of the diocese, a catechetical centre — the Marist Ministry School — was established at Mabiri. Many lay people were trained there as catechists to work in the parishes, as discussed below. The School was initially run by Father (now Bishop) Henk Kronenberg. He was assisted by diocesan priest, Father Benedict His, who had been well prepared by study in the Philippines at the Asia Pacific Socio-Pastoral Institute in Manila. In 2004 it is directed by another Bougainvillean diocesan

priest, Father Bernhard Unabali, who recently studied in Rome. The training of lay people to carry on the work of the Church in Bougainville continues to be regarded as work of vital importance. When the civil war left many parishes without clergy or religious it was young people who had originally been selected by parish councils to train at the Ministry School who as graduates stood out in filling the gaps. Some of them now assist the priests as Communion ministers. During the crisis lay women were also trained to distribute the Eucharist, a special role previously the preserve only of nuns.

One of Bishop Singkai's greatest achievements was the diocesan synod in 1985, held round the theme 'Yumi Yet I Sios ('We Are The Church'). In this gathering of the faithful in Bougainville, clergy, members of religious orders and lay persons selected from the different parishes as well as heads, managers and administrators of Catholic institutions came together for a whole week. Chairpersons of each of the parish councils were also invited. Everyone worked together very well in both small groups and in large plenary sessions. The structure of the local Catholic Church was evaluated and a new one developed. That new structure was just being implemented when the Bougainville conflict erupted in late 1988. Bougainvillean men and women were very much empowered during these synod sessions, especially young leaders. They saw themselves as being valued by the church asking them to attend.

Even before the synod was called, Bougainville may well have been the only diocese in Papua New Guinea which called an annual diocesan senate at which all Catholics serving on the parish councils came together to discuss issues of common interest. Active participation was encouraged and a good flow of communication took place. Despite the presence of clergy and members of religious orders, lay Bougainvilleans were not inhibited and spoke out frankly.

## Social Justice Issues

The Marist missionaries have been particularly supportive of any of the people's initiatives during times of controversy and crisis. From the late 1960s, missionaries in the main churches made people aware of their rights and of what constituted a healthy physical and spiritual environment. They agreed with the views of many of our people that outsiders, such as multi-national companies, should not be able to just walk in and exploit the resources of the land considered sacred by its Bougainvillean traditional owners. As with every Melanesian clan, land is handed down from generation to generation in sacred trust. Land provides security. It enshrines a heritage. It is the source for food, for construction materials and traditional medicine. It is inalienable, unable to be readily bought and sold as in Australia or European countries.

It may be helpful to provide a few examples to demonstrate how education by the Church has contributed to making people aware of justice related issues in cross-cultural situations and how at times members of the clergy provided practical advice on how to deal with conflicting values in a way that Western agents of change could not ignore.

On 17 May 1990, during the crisis, the rebel leader Francis Ona proclaimed the Bougainville Province as the 'Republic of Me'ekamui' and declared the struggle to deliver land to its rightful owners to be a 'holy war'. It is no surprise that in 1989 Bishop Singkai — the first indigenous bishop to implement the ideology of self-reliance for the Church in Bougainville — made a personal visit to Francis Ona and the militant landowners. Ona spoke to him in the following words:

> Our land is being polluted, our water is being polluted, the air we breathe is being polluted with dangerous chemicals that are slowly killing and destroying our land for future generations. Better that we die fighting than to be slowly poisoned [Diocese of Bougainville 1989: 3].

During the colonial era, as far back as 1967, the owners of the land which Bougainville Copper Ltd (BCL) was trying to acquire for mining purposes strongly disapproved of the purchase and refused to accept the 'occupation fee' being proposed by the colonial Administration. Their anger had been fuelled because the colonial mining legislation did not state that permission from landowners for prospecting was necessary nor that compensation was due for damages to property during prospecting and mining. As long ago as that, Bougainvilleans could not be fooled by an unjust piece of legislation

Ordained as priest in 1970, John Momis in 1974 delivered a paper in Canberra in which he made strong points about the mining Agreement between Cozinc Riotinto Australia (CRA) and the colonial government. He warned that:

> sooner or later there will be a strong popular movement demanding changes in the operation of the mine, and the longer the company waits, the less it will be left with. If no action is taken to re-negotiate the mining Agreement to give a fairer share to landowners in the mining benefits and the royalty payment, there will unquestionably be more bitterness, more mutual distrust, perhaps even violence. [Momis 1989: 19]

In 1966 Bishop Lemay had encouraged Paul Lapun (then an elected Bougainvillean representative in the colonial legislature — the House of Assembly) to demand that

compensation be paid to the owners whose land had been alienated and destroyed by mining. Lemay and members of the clergy discussed this issue with Lapun, publicised the issue and supported him in various ways to put the matter to the House of Assembly. Seeking 40 per cent royalties for landowners from mining profits, Lapun lobbied members of the Assembly. Ultimately, the proposed law provided for a mere five per cent royalty payment. Nevertheless, against the Australian Administration's strenuous opposition, Lapun was successful in having the bill accepted, and five per cent of the Government's share of 1.25 per cent royalty on the value of Bougainville Copper Ltd's production was required to be paid to the Panguna landowners themselves [Oliver 1991: 182].

In 1969, it was the women of Rorovana Village who grouped together to stop the destruction of their cash crops and the confiscation of their precious land [Togolo, this volume]. They thrust themselves between the feet of riot squad police and, in a potent symbolic gesture, pulled out the survey peg. Subsequently they stood in front of the mining company's bulldozers to inhibit the knocking down of their coconut tress and the clearing of their forest.

## Socio-economic Innovations

Although some plantations and other practical projects were founded directly to finance the missions, other Marist endeavours were instrumental in getting the people established in socio-economic activities. The main ones were the growing of coconuts and cocoa, the setting up cooperative movements and of saw-mills. They included the initiatives of the following persons during the 1960s and 1970s:

— Father Bill Mentzer's work at Kurai on the west coast of Bougainville, involving a large scheme of resettling mountain people on the thinly populated coast and getting them to grow coconut trees and cocoa shrubs [Laracy 1976: 142].
— Father Brosnan (a young Australian) on the north-west coast at Sipai Mission Station also managed a resettlement scheme involving coconut and cocoa groves for both Catholics and Methodists [Laracy 1976: 142].

Each of the above schemes also involved a saw mill to produce timber for copper driers, as well as cocoa fermenteries, storage sheds, connecting roads and trucks for transport [Diocese of Bougainville 2001: 13–14].

Other projects included those at the following locations:

— Torokina, on the south-west coast, where Father Jim Moore encouraged cash cropping.
— Sovele, south-west inland, where Father Denis Mahony assisted people in getting credit scheme activities going under a cooperative movements structure.

— Tabago beyond Buin town in south Bougainville, where Father Wally Fingleton fired up the local people to insist that the government of the day pay them a just price for the gravel that was being removed from the Malabita Hill quarry. He also encouraged people to plant rice and cocoa.
— Gogohe, on Buka island, where Father Assump Suinday set up a cooperative movement for cocoa and copra producers.
— Also on Buka, at Lemanmanu, where Father Demers stimulated a housing and marketing initiative,
— At Gagan, also on Buka, where Father Luchen assisted in the setting up of a saw mill.
— In the Koromira area of the south-east of the Bougainville mainland, where Father Herman Woeste took a special direction by establishing the 'Rainbow Centre'. Directed at young people involved in crime, the centre ran programs that provided reform and rehabilitation. It assisted some in gaining employment, even in management positions.

These are just a few examples of how the missionaries from the early 1960s on influenced people and helped them to review their attitudes to their simple lifestyle and to meet modern challenges by involving them in new economic activities. These activities were a significant part of the reasons why, by the time the crisis erupted, almost every Bougainville family was at least a small coconut or cocoa plantation owner.

## CONCLUSION

The goal of integral human development guided the churches in their mission endeavours. The work of the churches in assisting and training women and of empowering them generally has been of the utmost importance to the empowerment of women in Papua New Guinea. It was the churches that devoted themselves to ministries such as education and health. In Bougainville, their intensive efforts in this regard were having significant impact on local leadership long before the colonial Administration had the resources to provide wide-scale services. In addition there were other projects intended to meet the more institutional concerns of the churches (such as the training of catechists). Still other programs linked people's ordinary lives with their spiritual orientation. Most schools, health centres, clubs and associations in Bougainville were established by missionary groups, both religious and lay.

The Catholic Church in the 1960s took a firm stand in support of people's concerns about development, especially mining. It was the Church's education system that contributed to the emergence of educated leaders who made the

people aware of their rights and of their freedom to speak out on matters relating to justice, peace, unity, community-building and harmony. The Bougainville conflict and the ensuing peace process, has presented the Catholic Church, as well as our brothers and sisters in the Uniting and Seventh–Day Adventist churches, with the challenge to continue to preach and give witness to the gospel values. That means that they set a new direction during these critical times by continuing to promote the dignity of the people who have been reduced in so many ways. Every Bougainvillean must contribute to the 'building up of the kingdom of God' in Bougainville today by proclaiming and living the gospel values so that our lives will be permeated by justice, by peace and by a better sense of community.