



PO Box 1765, Grass Valley, CA 95945
530-272-8170

www.piministries.info office@piministries.com

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Dear Friends,

PNG celebrates its 50th anniversary as an independent nation! At events held in towns around the country colorful PNG flags proudly decorated buildings, fences and the clothing of people. Fifty years ago, the Australian flag was lowered and the new PNG flag was raised on September 16, 1975. Unlike many other nations who had gained their independence through conflict, for PNG the transition to self-governance was implemented over several years. Originally, the southern part of PNG, Papua began as an Australian territory



in 1906. The northern section, New Guinea, was a German colony. Following World War 1 Australia began administering that part of the country separately. Then in 1949 the UN agreed to the Australians unifying both parts of the country and administering them together.

During the colonial days, several thousand Australians were in government administrative positions, education and the health services. Older folks some of whom had Australian teachers in government schools, look back on those days as either being the good old days or they remember negative interactions and discrimination experiences. However, the greatest legacy from the colonial days would be that the country has had freedom of religion. In March 2025 the parliament of Papua New Guinea passed a constitutional amendment which stated that PNG is a Christian country, with specific mention of, "God the Father; Jesus Christ, the Son; and Holy Spirit" and declared that the Bible is a national symbol.

Missionaries from various denominations have brought Christianity to the nation introducing Western education, healthcare, and literacy to remote areas. In 1871 pioneering missionary work began in some the islands of PNG by the London Missionary Society, followed by the Roman Catholics who came in the 1880 s and in the early 1900s when Lutherans, Methodist and groups started their evangelization efforts. Each group focused their work in different sections of the country. All missions were dependent on the colonial government in power to establish law and order. Accessibility, communications, disease, 800 languages, varied cultural groups





with strong traditional beliefs made it difficult during the early days for the outreach work. Today the same issues exist even though technologies have improved the living standards for many in PNG. Over 90% claim Christianity as their religion, yet the old beliefs remain. Belief in the true God and remaining faithful followers of Christ is not hereditary. The fallen nature of mankind and seeking to be independent from God bears the fruit of increased lawless behavior. Thus, each generation is a new mission field.

May the Lord raise up those committed to spreading the good news amongst the lost in PNG and may PIM continue to be used “to equip God’s

people for works of service.” Note the colors on the PNG flag, Red and Yellow, Black and White, and to continue the words of the familiar childrens song, “they are precious in his sight, Jesus loves the little children of the world.

Thank you so much for your support,

Douglas Heidema

Romans 12:33 Oh, the depth of the riches and wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable are his judgments and how inscrutable his ways!

Top picture Decorations at the grounds where the local celebration is held

Middle: a barge is beautiful and functional as it transports people to the celebration

Bottom: the winners of the greased pole challenge built a human ladder to reach the prizes