



## Poignant Film about HIV/AIDS in PNG

Alarming figures from the World Health Organization suggest that one in five Papua New Guinean men, women and children will be infected with HIV within the next decade. Similar figures are coming from other parts of the Pacific.

We have become accustomed to reading about Africa, Asia and other regions of the world but now the reality that HIV/AIDS is a pandemic in the Pacific is a challenge to the Church and to SIGNIS Pacific members in particular.

Members that attended the Pacific Regional Meeting in February, 2007, watched "Mist in the Mountains" a film by Sr Zelia Cordeiro (pictured) and Fr Philip Gibbs, both working in Papua New Guinea.



**President:** Mr Bill Falakaono, Tonga.  
**Vice President:** Mdm. Nicole Constans, New Caledonia.  
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*SIGNIS Pacific is part of SIGNIS, the World Catholic Association for Communication.*



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## Poignant Film about HIV/AIDS in PNG CONTINUED

The film presents raw, stark images that can be both shocking yet fascinating. There are scenes from a funeral, of boasting irresponsibility, heart-wrenching scenes of a grandmother caring for her orphaned grandchild, and community workers visiting a person living with Aids who surely did not have long to live.

The film makers prepared for a year, with visits to Porgera, the site of the film, a large goldmine in the centre of the PNG highlands that provides employment for 2,000 workers.



Thousands come to Porgera to seek their fortunes. The paradox of a large amount of wealth circulating, yet widespread poverty and unemployment leads many people, especially young people to engage in risky behaviour involving alcohol, drugs and sex.

Although "Mist in the Mountains" is a powerful documentary feature it has a strong educational dimension, including a striking graphic illustrating how the HIV virus damages and destroys the immune system.

"Mist in the Mountains" follows the destiny of several people in Porgera: Rex a young man who died of AIDS, Amie, a young woman who has been rejected by her family and who supports herself and her son by panning gold in an isolated spot in the hills, and Katherina who has taken an abandoned HIV positive child and is caring for the child along with her own children.

The scenario for "Mist in the Mountains" could provide a plot for a very negative outcome, however the film rises beyond desperation to offer avenues for hope. People are encouraged to go for a blood test. It is possible to live positively even with the HIV virus.

Communities are challenged to take greater responsibility for the situation. The focus is on two local women who are part of a small group of qualified HIV and AIDS counsellors, who go and visit people in their homes, and who, along with other interested parties such as the mining company, have started a day-care centre.

Congratulations to Sister Zelia and Father Philip for excellent production values; a first-class educational resource and for preaching the Gospel in a practical, down-to-earth manner. These are values cherished by all members of SIGNIS Pacific.



*To purchase a copy of "Mist in the Mountains", contact Sr Zelia Cordeiro [cfla@online.net.pg](mailto:cfla@online.net.pg).*



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## *World President's Letter to SIGNIS Pacific members*

Dear Colleagues of Signis Pacific,

Greetings! Trust all of you are in the best of Health and Spirits. I really appreciate the wonderful work you are doing in the Pacific islands despite enormous difficulties. I had the opportunity last week to attend the 4th. Asia Media Summit here in Kuala Lumpur. Organised by Asia-Pacific Institute for Broadcasting Development (AIBD) the Summit brought together more than 500 media practitioners from 60 countries not only from the Asia-Pacific Region but also from around the world. There were government officials, policymakers, media owners, non-governmental organisations and academics. My presence was as an official representative of SIGNIS. I think I was the only representative from a Church organisation.



The Summit provided a platform to discuss the role of Media in Development, particularly in addressing issues such as poverty alleviation, information imbalances, the role of public service broadcasting, community radio, environmental pollution, gender issues and HIV/AIDS. The Summit provided different views and approaches on how media can further the search for open dialogue and a culture of Peace. This was most significant as many of the issues discussed and the concern for a culture of Peace are indeed the very same issues SIGNIS is involved in. If I had not been there, we would have lost a great opportunity to dialogue with the secular media which has such a great impact on our peoples.

I had the opportunity also to make many friends including, a very nice gentleman, Mr. Mesake Nawari, the CEO of Fiji Television. I had a nice talk with him and will meet him again in Fiji in August. He is very interested in helping Signis Fiji.

AIDS was an important issue at the Summit. I know HIV/AIDS in the Pacific is a serious and growing problem. It is good that SIGNIS Pacific is part of the struggle to help HIV/AIDS victims. As Christians we have a great obligation to respond to the human suffering caused by AIDS. As a prophetic church we have a special calling to move our governments, our health care system and our social service system to greater action.

There is much ignorance. Our first duty is to let people know the truth about this terrible disease. The media has a key role to play here. That is why I am very proud of the movie made by one of our sisters in the Pacific on HIV/AIDS. No one really knows the number of victims in the Pacific. Imagine if you ask for statistics in Papua New Guinea they will tell you we have between 10,000 and 20,000 and there is big 'in between'. This documentary on AIDS has become an eye-opener. It is now known by the people attending the Summit. And for us in Signis Pacific we can see how even a single film can make a big difference.

What did I learn by attending this Summit? "We have to be there when things happen". We can't just confine ourselves to church circles especially when we tackle so many global issues including HIV/AIDS which is a global problem. We have to, as many of you are already doing, to get involved with as many people and groups both in the public and private sector of the media in the Pacific. Our presence is so necessary.

Wishing you much success in your wonderful work.

Yours sincerely,

Augustine Loorthusamy (World President)



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## NEWS BRIEFS

There were fatalities, injuries, missing persons and considerable property and crops damage after parts of the Solomon Islands were hit by an 8.1 magnitude earthquake in April this year. SIGNIS Pacific and SIGNIS World conveyed member's sympathy and promise of prayers to the bishops in the Solomons. Archbishop Adrian Smith SM, the Archbishop of Honiara, thanked us for this gesture. We maintain our support and prayers as the Solomons continues to recover.



Jim McDonnell administers the Advocacy Desk for SIGNIS worldwide. You can access the advocacy news blog at <http://advocacynews.blogspot.com>

SIGNIS Pacific members are invited to send Jim information about media and communication issues in your country.

The Church of Melanesia (COM) is planning to establish a University in the Solomon Islands. A taskforce committee with a mandate to oversee plans for its development has been selected from government, private and church institutions. The University hopes to have faculties of education and health. (East West Centre 5/6/07)



Agatha Ferei, SIGNIS Fiji and Fiji Media Watch, Suva, represented SIGNIS Pacific at the 5th World Summit on Media and Children Television Conference, Johannesburg, March 2007. A meeting of SIGNIS media educators, held in conjunction with the Summit, released the Johannesburg SIGNIS Charter on Media Education. There are a number of recommendations to go to the SIGNIS Board in November.

"The media are used successfully to sell soap and automobiles and clothing and vacation experiences," said Archbishop John Foley, President of the Pontifical Council for Social Communications (March '07), "but Christians who have the responsibility to proclaim the most important message in the history of the human race, have often lacked the imagination and the dedication to use the media well in making known the good news of Jesus Christ." (Catholic Online, 7/3/07)



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## Not agents of change, but engines of growth

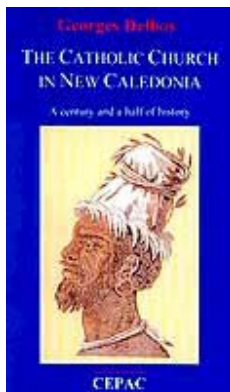
Fr Ambrose Pereira sdb,  
Catholic Communications Solomon's & SIGNIS Solomons



'Not agents of change, but engines of growth', struck me hard! Living here for the past eight years, I have been unconsciously reminding myself, that I am here to make a change. Browsing through the *Pacific Newspaper Management Manual* by Eugene D. Johnson and Jim Richstad, 1986 and later revised by Russell Hunter, 2003, gave me an insight that I will long treasure. The Pacific Way is indeed different, but by no means inferior to other systems, patterns of thought, behaviour and growth. 'Why do people respond slowly?' Well that's just the way it is here in the Solomon's. 'Why do they do things this way and not that way?' - Well it's their way and it's different.

Having realized over the years that the above is true, it gives me joy and satisfaction to see things happen..

How true! Changing patterns, changing behaviour, changing lifestyles ....will happen only if I impart understanding and people make it their own; gradually, slowly and in their time. True, over the years, it gives me great joy to know that 'Voice Katolika' has indeed been an 'engine of growth'.



## *The Catholic Church in New Caledonia*

As someone who knows New Caledonia well, author Father Georges Delbos MSC, has painstakingly collected as much information as possible for his excellent book 'The Catholic Church in New Caledonia - A Century and a Half of History.' He has probed deeply into the documents left behind by direct witnesses of recorded events; some 4,000 letters, especially those in the archives of the General House of the Marist Fathers, New Caledonia's first evangelisers.

For those interested in mission history, missiology and for the development of the church in Island nations, this is a 'must' read. Published by CEPAC, it is available from their Secretariat, P.O. Box 289, Suva, Fiji. Email: [cepac@is.com.fj](mailto:cepac@is.com.fj)



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## ***Bishop translates Scriptures into Chamorro Language***

Bishop Tomas Camacho, a good friend of SIGNIS Pacific, has accomplished the significant task of translating the Christian Greek Scriptures into the Chamorro language.

It's taken him 21 years to complete his works which includes the translations of prayer books.

His translations include the Gospels of Matthew, Mark, Luke and John; Romans, 1 Corinthians, 2 Corinthians, Galatians, Ephesians, Philippians, Colossians, 1 Thessalonians, 2 Thessalonians, 1 Timothy, 2 Timothy, Titus, Philemon, Hebrews, James, 1 Peter, 2 Peter, 1 John, 2 John, 3 John. Congratulations, Bp. Comacho!



### ***RECOMMENDED WEBSITES*** - <http://pidp.eastwestcenter.org>



The Pacific Island Report, a daily news service published by the Pacific Islands Development Program, East-West Center, with support from Center for Pacific Island Studies, University of Hawaii is a first-class news service with daily stories, news links, editorials, commentaries, analysis, reports and features. Currently on-line on this site is an analysis by Jesuit priest, Francis X. Hezel SJ titled, 'Where are the Boundaries of Politics'. Hezel is Director of the 'Micronesian Seminar', a think tank based in Pohnpei. He has worked in Micronesia since 1963 and is considered a leading authority on social issues in the Federated States of Micronesia.

Also take a look at [www.pacificislandsradio.com](http://www.pacificislandsradio.com)

An Internet Radio Station that offers three choices; Tropical Sounds Radio, Radio Melanesia and Micronesia Music Radio. The introduction to this site says - Welcome everybody to our Pacific Islands Radio Stations for your free listening to our beautiful Pacific Island music, 24 hours a day, 7 days a week! The music is a mixture of traditional chants, gospel, songs about the beauty of the sunrise, the sunset, the islands and the people, not to mention the uniquely beautiful Pacific love songs with their haunting lyrics and melodies.



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## ***DID YOU KNOW?***



Kiribati's latest project is to establish an FM radio station from St. Paul's Communication Centre.



In New Caledonia programs from 'Le Jour du Seigneur', made for overseas French territories, are shown on TNC, Tele Nouvelle Caledonie.



The Diocese of Chalan Kanoa in Saipan produces the weekly TV program, 'Oran Katoliko' and airs live Sunday masses on Marianas Cable Vision.



Kaselehlie TV Productions in Pohnpei produces TV programs including a feature with singing and dancing as a tribute to Kilara, a woman who has brought the good news of Christmas to the people of Pohnpei.



Australian Catholic Film Office published reviews for over 182 films for a dozen publications and websites and conducted workshops and presentations on film and culture.



In Fiji every Monday evening a 30-minute Fijian language program, 'Talanoa', featuring Catholic teaching and news is broadcast on Radio Fiji.



Radio Maria has taken over the Catholic Radio Network in Papua New Guinea. Three other Catholic radio stations operating in their own right are in Lae, Mt Hagen and Vanimo.



'The Soap Box' is a youth talk show that airs weekly on radio and television in the Marshall Islands. Based on scripture study, i.e. S=scripture; O=observation; A=application; P=prayer. Lectio Divina repackaged for youth!



Radio Maria operates in French Polynesia in the Archdiocese of Papeete and in the Diocese of Marquesas.



In Tonga the church produces weekly radio and television programs that are broadcast by the Tongan Broadcasting Commission, the national government radio and television service.



KOLG 90.9 FM, Catholic Educational Radio in Guam seeks to inform people on matters of importance regarding the Catholic faith and the livelihood of the human community.

*The above is just a tiny glimpse of some of the media work from some of the countries that belong to SIGNIS Pacific.*

**SIGNIS Pacific - As an affiliate of SIGNIS World we bring together media professionals, from the Pacific region, to advance the communications mission of the Church.**

