

## PNG PRIME MINISTER'S SPEECH AT THAT COUNTRY'S NATIONAL DAY OF PRAYER

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**Editor's note:** *The acknowledgment of the existence of God let alone a public commitment to follow Him by national leaders is rare in today's world. When a national leader makes such a public pronouncement it is worthy of recognition which is why we are publishing the speech of the Papua New Guinea Prime Minister at that nations recent National Day of Prayer and Repentance. We can only hope that one day the same may occur in our own nation.*

“Let me first thank the Body of Christ, (which I believe, consists of all Christian Churches), and the Department of Community Development and Religion for organizing and facilitating this platform on which I stand today to make this statement, in my capacity as the 8th Prime Minister of our Nation. People of Papua New Guinea, today, I stand here before God and his people with an overarching thought which permeates my spirit “That a nation who fears the Lord God of the Universe, shall be blessed”. In my heart, I know that the event of this day marks, not just a National Occasion in our National Calendar but a grand occasion. I emphasize – a grand occasion, because today marks a day on which our Nation invokes the Creator of all things, to intervene in our National affairs.

Our National Day of Prayer and Dependence speaks of us acknowledging the God of Israel as our strength against enemies, source of sustenance and origin of our very existence. Therefore, the value of this occasion is far greater than every other occasion on our National Calendar. My brothers and sisters, this day is different in that it is not a National Public Holiday, rather it is a solemn day of our people coming together in unison, to bow before God in humility and prayer, seeking His forgiveness, love, and direction in a turbulent time of confusion, fear, and panic. As leaders in the public domain, occasions and event are our norms, but I do not take such an event of this value and greatness today, lightly.

Today, the Nation of Papua New Guinea rises in one voice, reaffirming our deepest convictions regarding fundamental issues which matter most to us as a Nation. As you all know, we have declared our intension to “Take Back our Nation and make it the richest Christian Nation on Earth”. The occasion today is grand because I stand here with this vision, seeking God’s wisdom, His strength and direction that He may establish His eternal will and purpose for us as a Nation just as He prayed, “they Kingdom come, thy will be done, on earth, or in Papua New Guinea, as it is in heaven.” Brothers and Sisters, this day must not be confused with our traditional days of worship. This is the National Day of Prayer and Repentance, declared and gazetted by the Government of Papua New Guinea.

Therefore, I, as the Prime Minister of our Nation, stand here today, not as an invited Guest to a Church meeting. Rather, I stand here today as the Chief Executing Officer of the Government of Papua New Guinea, paying homage and tribute to the King of the Universe, the Lord Jesus Christ, invoking His unmerited favour and grace upon my Government for the sake of His Name and for the sake of His own people of this blessed nation. So, I stand to Offer to our King, the Highest Order of Protocol by leading and officiating on this Prayer Occasion with a higher purpose to cause the People of our Land to come with me to stand before our God in Solemn Prayer and declaration of our collective faith without fear, intimidation, and shame.

I stand today before our God, to call on our mothers, our fathers, our sisters and our brothers, our girls and our boys including our substances and our possessions, our visitors and friends from other Nations, to pause for a moment with me, to acknowledge the most high God of the Universe, the God of Israel, who is now our God through our Lord Jesus Christ. Distinguished worshippers, brothers and sisters, I take this occasion as a Servant of the Most High God, appointed and mandated by grace, in His season and timing, to be His mouth piece and His instrument, to unleash a message that is unquenchably burning and fiercely yearning in the heart of every genuine Citizen of our Land.

I must state from the outset, that I have one business that I must complete, for which I had made it vehemently clear on the day I took Office as the Prime Minister.

For this reason, I was born and raised, and for which I am prepared to sacrifice and forego everything that the World could offer, and it is the message of our unshakable, inerasable heritage, crafted by the hand of God, meticulously and miraculously, giving us our national sovereignty, our very identity and our priceless gift of national unity. The National Day of Prayer is the most important event of our National Calendar, which symbolizes this special blend of National Sovereignty, under which 864 known language groups of our land are gloriously woven into one united people, one Nation. We truly are the United Nation on earth, the United Tribes of Paradisia. Ladies and Gentlemen, listen to my words attentively and carefully. I came today to discuss without any apology, the very spirit of our Sovereign State, the very being of our Nationhood.

We are not just another collection of people aggregated into particular geographical location, demarcated by a political boundary. We are put here by design, not by fluke or by an evolutionary chance. This is what I have come to announce and discuss with you on this solemn occasion. The message is very simple and clear, yet so deeply profound, that it is impossible to be resisted, stopped, or destroyed. The World would desire so much to know “how such a difficult and diverse people, trapped in rugged terrains and scattered atolls, could be brought together as one people. How could any leader possibly carve a Nation out of an extremely fragmented tribal people? What really was the undercurrent power that worked day and night to aggregate a greatly diverse people into one Nation? What power indeed colonized our people and created a modern PNG?

Today, I came to discuss these questions and reaffirm the answer. The answer that I came to deliver today is coded wonderfully in these few words that I have thoughtfully selected: It was our colonial masters that gave us independence, (and we thank God for them) but, listen to me, it was the word of God that made us, it was the Bible that made Papua New Guinea, it was God who gave us our identity and established our national sovereignty and our modern history. Therefore, today we came together to reaffirm our faith and declare in unison, that our nationhood hangs entirely and safely on our faith in God as our Creator, Jesus Christ as God’s only begotten Son and our Saviour and the Bible as the infallible Word of God, which are the fundamentals of our common Christian Faith, that made us who we are.

We came today to trumpet this message throughout our Land and “shout again for the whole World to hear” who we are. We are here with this intent and purpose. I am overly delighted today to know that the preamble to our Constitution acknowledges the “guiding hand of God” who led this Nation of a thousand tribes, 864 known different languages and cultures to be stitched into one independent sovereign State. Lest we forget, this solemn occasion today tells the story of how a greatly fragmented nation on Earth with 1000 tribes, was meticulously woven into one single nation! Our Nation is one of the last “Wonders of the World”, so greatly divided geographically, culturally, and linguistically, yet so miraculously stitched into one people. This is our timeless gift from the Lord through the work of the early missionaries.

Therefore, lest we forget, this occasion today also marks a solemn moment to reflect on the selfless sacrifices that the earlier missionaries and our pioneering converts made, to give us our National Identity and our Unity that is solidly founded on the Word of God. It was the work of the early missionaries and the early converts with the Word of God in their hands, who made the biggest and profound difference in our modern history. The missionaries and our local pioneering church leaders with the message of salvation, love, and forgiveness, were the frontiers and undercurrent power that worked tirelessly day and night making untold sacrifices. It was the work of the early Christian Churches that laid the foundation for our unification well before we were given Independence in 1975.

Today, we came together to remind ourselves, that this is an inerasable part of our national history which transcends our diversity and inspires our shared history as one people. The early political parties such as Pangu Pati undoubtedly rode on the waves that were created by the power of the Gospel, to unite our Nation. It is therefore fitting also that the Pangu Pati, which led the fragmented Nation into independence, riding on that wave, will yet again, after 40 years, under my leadership,

consolidate the true and timeless foundation of our national sovereignty, our identity and our unity. Today, we came together to reflect on the power that made us. Many of us are products of the early Missionaries. If not all, a vast majority of learned Papua New Guineans today were impacted by the Church and the Church-run schools one way or another.

All our founding leaders were trained, coached, and mentored by early Missionaries. Many current leaders are sons of either missionaries or Pastors or church workers. One of them is standing before you today to speak to you. We are here today, also to remind ourselves of the work of our founding fathers who, under the guiding hand of God thoughtfully constructed our Constitution, directed the citizens of this Nation to “guard and pass on to those who come after us our “noble traditions” and the “Christian principles” that are ours”. Drawing from, and giving effect to, the moral foundation laid in the preamble of our Constitution, the founding father of our Nation, Grand Chief Sir Michael Somare, officially dedicated our Nation to God on this day, in 2007, and declared it a “National Day of Prayer.

On this occasion, as the 8th Prime Minister of PNG, I want to pay special tribute to our founding father for laying the Foundation correct, for the succeeding generations to build on. On this note, I must also acknowledge the significant event which took place on 31st of July 2015. On that day, our leaders on the Floor of Parliament, unanimously passed a motion to place the antique 400 year old King James Bible in the chamber of our National Parliament. My predecessor, Hon. Peter O’Neil declared the Bible the “national treasure” of Papua New Guinea. Honourable Peter O’Neill, willingly accepted the antique Bible before a sea of people at Jackson Airport on 27th April 2015 and further directed the Bible to be placed in Parliament by a motion, introduced by the Governor of Southern Highlands, Honourable William Powi, representing the Prime Minister, for which, I pay tribute, on behalf of the people of Papua New Guinea.

This action is of historical significance, reaffirming our collective and undeniable resolve as a fully pledged Christian Nation on Earth. It is a symbolic act which recognizes PNG as a Bible believing nation. It is a symbolic act which acknowledges the great work of missionaries in uniting the country into one Nation through the preaching of the Bible. It is a significant symbolic act that will go down in history and long remembered for many generations to come because the Bible stand above all development models and belief systems as the source of our national identity and our National unity. It signifies our resolve that the principles of the Bible must influence policies for long term development of our Nation as reflected in Strategic Pillar 6 of our Vision 2050.

If there is one task yet to be executed on our National Journey: that is to formalize our resolve by an Act of Parliament to declare PNG a Christian nation and protect the Bible as a symbol of our Christian faith and our National Treasure. It is my commitment today to work with the Church and our people to ensure that we achieve this goal. To this end, today, I announce to the Nation that my Cabinet has approved a law to go before Parliament to officially declare “PNG a Christian nation”. God’s people of Papua New Guinea, I request you today to join me in acknowledging God’s grace and his faithfulness upon our Nation, by ensuring that this law is passed on the floor of Parliament. Drawing from the strength of the Christian Church and the declarations of the former Prime Ministers, I stand today, to commit myself to this one cause, to introduce this Law on the Floor of Parliament to capture and protect the historical heritage of our faith, and to declare that we shall always seek God’s guidance for our development and direction.

I represent our collective view that Papua New Guinea is made up of a thousand nations within a nation. We are culturally and linguistically diverse. The natural divisions are obvious. The risk of disintegration is real. Unless we, as a nation, can quickly identify and embrace a common ideology as the basis of our National Unity for our common good, we are threatened by dangerous external forces and competing ideas that are detrimental to our Christian heritage which is the source of our democratic strength. PNG as a member of the global community, is open to competing ideas that have the potential to destroy our unity, our identity, our Christian values, and Constitutional democracy. How can we craft a thousand tribes into a single nation? What will be the basis to unite this nation, the common ideal?

I have a moral duty to protect that which is near and dear to the very fabric of our people's survival as a Nation. You and I are presented with a moral responsibility to build this nation on the sure principles of the Word of God as the historical roots of our National Unity as it provides the only common ideals. Therefore, let us all as a united and peaceful Papua New Guinea, as one people, take heed to God's Word and act accordingly as leaders and citizens to keep proclaiming our well founded motto: "One Nation and One People" founded solidly on the sure Word of God. This is the undeniable truth about us and our proud and lasting legacy to pass on to the next generation.

In Conclusion: Today, I am privileged to also announce that, after this program, we will proceed to the Boulevard in front of the National Parliament to launch a monument called National Identity and Unity Pillar, that symbolically captures the history of our journey to sovereignty and nationhood, which I have just explained. The fundamental truth that I have echoed today, must be inscribed on every monument and tablet, lest we forget. It must be written in every book and institutionalized in every school curriculum. This truth, our heritage, must be preached, taught, and passed on from one generation to another. It must be heralded from the mountain to the sea, it must be trumpeted again and again for the whole to hear, lest we forget the power that made our modern Papua New Guinea.

Therefore, the Unity Pillar, for which I will officiate the launching ceremony shortly after this program, is a physical embodiment of our sacred and precious national history, which must be practically represented and declared, for ourselves and for the whole world to know that we are a Christian Nation. I am compelled by our short but yet profound history, to begin the process of rebuilding and restoring our nation founded on Christ the solid rock. The Foundation Stone of the Unity Pillar has been cut out of a precious gemstone known as Jasper, which is described in the Book of Revelation Chapter 21 and Verse 19, as first Foundation Stone of the walls of the City of New Jerusalem. Ladies and Gentlemen, on this precious gem stone, symbolically representing our National Foundation, shall be written the timeless Words from the first Book of Corinthians Chapter 3 Verse 11 which shall read: "for other foundations can no man lay than that is laid, which is Christ Jesus".

This is the sum total, the consummation of our short historical journey and direction that we must take into the future. Brothers and sisters, as we leave this place, with this message of our National Identity and Unity, which provides the justification for declaring PNG a Christian nation, may the Lord bless and keep us. May His face shine on us and give us His Peace. May the Lord of the Bible, who united us and gave us our National Identity as a Christian Nation, strengthen our faith against all forces of darkness. May our heart continue to glow and radiate the spirit of unity through the love of God, His life, His vision and His direction for PNG, and that the world may know that God has given no other Name under heaven, by who humanity shall be saved except Christ and him alone. To this end, I vow to commit myself. *Amen.*"

GOD BLESS PAPUA NEW GUINEA

HON. JAMES MARAPE, MP,  
Prime Minister Papua New Guinea