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Sir Peter firm on freedom

THREE months ago, Archbishop Sir Peter Kurongku delivered an address to the media freedom seminar on the subject of accountability. In his address, he emphasised that the media had a responsibility to find and publish the truth. This, he said, was a responsibility placed upon media owners, managers and staff to carry out their duties 'in the service of the community'.

Speaking to the media, he said: 'The truth is the truth, simple and straight. No twist, no manipulation, no concealment, no unanswered innuendo. Yet, there is something even more important which at times may be difficult for the 'street wise' media person to accommodate. The Church maintains that the truth must be spoken, written, presented in love. This is the Christian dimension.'

Sir Peter was concerned that the people should know the truth about what is happening in Papua New Guinea at this time.

'We see money being spent all around the place, on all kinds of things. But the people living in the settlements, the unemployed, those socially deprived, see nothing of this money. The principle 'user pays' now applies to health, education and other principles. I believe this principle really discriminates against the poor, for those unable to pay are also unable to find the means of even getting the necessary payment. The cost of living has risen dramatically, here again, those who can least afford it are in fact the hardest hit. Yet they are offered no logical explanation.'

Sir Peter, who died early on 11 June 1996, has left behind a legacy for all Papua New Guineans who believe that their people deserve better.

□ *Editorial in the Post-Courier, 13 June 1996*