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# MELANESIAN JOURNAL OF THEOLOGY

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**Indigenising a Theological Language**  
Fr Theo Aerts

**Illustrating Evil**  
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**The Relationship of Islam to Judaism**  
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**The Pastor and His Resources**  
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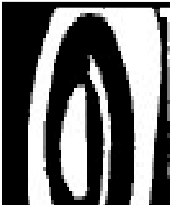
**The Significance of Water in Numbers**  
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Journal of the Melanesian Association of Theological Schools

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# **MELANESIAN JOURNAL OF THEOLOGY**

*Journal of the Melanesian Association of Theological Schools*

The *Melanesian Journal of Theology* aims to stimulate the writing of theology by Melanesians for Melanesians. It is an organ for the regular discussion of theological topics at a scholarly level by staff and students of the member schools of the Melanesian Association of Theological Schools (MATS), though contributions from non-members and non-Melanesians will be considered.

The *Melanesian Journal of Theology* is ecumenical, and it is committed to the dialogue of Christian faith with Melanesian cultures. The Editors will consider for publication all manuscripts of scholarly standard on matters of concern to Melanesian Christians, and of general theological interest. Manuscripts should be typed, double-spaced, and in duplicate.

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[The way the article “Indigenising a Theological Language” was laid out in the original printed version, it took about ten pages more than the present layout, which has made it very difficult to match much of the page numbering in this online version to that of the original printed version. As a result, the page numbering in this online version is different from the original printed version for the articles following “Indigenising a Theological Language”. –Revising ed.]

## EDITORIAL

### Towards a Theologically Balanced Diet

What are the ingredients of a good meal? A proper balance of the main essential food groups necessary for healthy growth, presented in a tasty and appetising way. What about a good theological diet? Surely we need a balance of solid biblical exposition, theological reflection, practical integration, and contextual dialogue.

The church in Melanesia is in need of such a balanced diet. Indeed, all churches need such a diet. As Christians, we all, regardless of our ecclesiastical traditions, hold our biblical heritage close to our spiritual hearts. David Hesselgrave, Professor of Missiology at Trinity Evangelical Divinity School, recently made this insightful comment.<sup>1</sup>

“An underlying cause of the current weakness is discoverable at precisely the place of the (Evangelical) movement’s strength. If the source of our strength has been a high regard for the full authority of the Bible, then the source of our weakness is a relative disregard for its proper use.”

While this may be a worldwide phenomenon, the church in Melanesia must, as part of the world Christian community, be aware of the current trends. The *Melanesian Journal of Theology* cannot pretend to lead in the direction of returning to the biblical/theological “square meal”, but, certainly in this issue, we have endeavoured to present articles, which cover the essential areas of theological study – biblical exposition, theological reflection, pastoral and cultural studies, and inter-faith dialogue.

Theo Aerts’ article on the need to indigenise our theological language is a detailed study of the translation of biblical and theological concepts

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<sup>1</sup> David J. Hesselgrave, “The Role of the Academy in the Current Evangelical Malaise”, in *Trinity World Forum* 20-2 (Winter 1995), p. 1.

between languages – ancient, ecclesiastical, European, and Melanesian. He outlines the uses and abuses of terms used in our ecclesiastical vocabulary.

My study of Gen 4 to 11 is an attempt to demonstrate some of the theological developments regarding the spread of sin in the primordial narratives.

The questions regarding the interface between Islam and Judeo-Christian religion, as addressed by Wanis Semaan, are timely for the Melanesian church. The points of contact and contrast between Islam and Christianity highlight the challenge, which Islam brings to PNG, at a time when its influence in this country is steadily increasing.

Gaius Helix brings before us a discussion on pastoral ministry in the PNG urban context. He outlines the needs of the modern pastor, and the resources he has to meet the challenge.

Kewai Kero's interesting study on the theological uses of the concept of water in the Book of Numbers highlights some currents in present theological exposition among Melanesian biblical scholars. He has delineated ritual, as well as physical, uses of water in the book, which demonstrate God as both Sanctifier and Provider – two important motifs for Melanesian Christianity.

The final article, by Gabriel Keni, is an attempt by a young Melanesian to tackle the age-old theological question of the fairness of God's election to salvation. He has brought some fresh insights to the question, particularly through the eyes of the PNG church.

The challenge before the Melanesian church is to take its place in the world Christian community. Our theological and biblical reflection on the issues, which face our church, are essential, as the Melanesian church faces the third millennium. Our congregations need leaders who are biblical and theological thinkers, who can apply the timeless truths to the present-day PNG situation.

It goes without saying that the opinions expressed within these articles are the opinions of the authors, and not necessarily those of the editors. We trust, however, that these papers will indeed stimulate healthy dialogue and reflective criticism, and perhaps inspire us to examine and “*guard the good deposit that was entrusted to us*” (2 Tim 1:14).

**Revd Victor James Johnson**  
**Christian Leaders’ Training College.**

# INDIGENISING A THEOLOGICAL LANGUAGE?

Theo Aerts

One theologian visited a Papuan village, and was asked to deliver the Sunday sermon to a Catholic congregation, of course, in English, to be followed by the catechist's translation in the *tok ples*. The visitor did his best to break down some hard theological concepts, and hoped that his interpreter would do the rest, until he heard him repeatedly using words like *Deo*, *redemsio*, *grasia*, and the like. He then gave up, saying, "What have these old missionaries taught the people? Has anybody here a clue of what is going on?" And he quickly stopped talking.

This little incident leads us to the question as to whether the biblical message ever became part of the local context. Did the earlier missionaries make any serious attempts to inculturate the Christian message, and avoid transliterations, and plain loan words, and speak an understandable language? Can the rate of their success somehow be established today? These and similar queries will occupy us in this essay.

In the essay below, we will first detail some preliminary distinctions – mainly about scripture and tradition (Part I). After that, we will follow a chronological pattern, by having a glance at what we can learn from the acceptance of the scriptures by our (biblical) ancestors in faith. Under this heading, we will first look at the example from the Bible. We will start with the Old Testament (OT) translation of the Bible in Greek, and subsequently devote some attention to the New Testament (NT), because both documents were the scriptures of the early Christians (Part II).

Next, we will move to the more-recent generations, who accepted the faith, both in Europe (from where the old missionaries came), and then here, among the indigenous people of Papua New Guinea (PNG) (Part III). Supplementary, but of a different nature of exposition, will be our two



appendices regarding the *Tok Pisin* (TP) vocabulary, which Roman Catholics have used in PNG.

## **Part 1 – Scripture and Tradition**

### **1. The Word of God**

Those, who pride themselves on being Christians, possess, no doubt, a common heritage of *biblical words and themes*. Obviously, in order to establish such a list, there are handy reference works at hand, such as the many biblical dictionaries, or the more-specific theological wordbooks of the Bible.

We are not concerned too much with “ordinary” words, although it has taken a long time before people agreed that there existed no specific “language of the Holy Spirit”, but that the Greek writers of the scriptures just used the “common” (Gr: *koinè*) tongue of their own days, and not some kind of “speech of the angels” (cf. 1 Cor 13:1).

Neither are we much interested in names of personalities and localities – which would not change much in any given translation, apart from the unavoidable adaptation to a foreign sound pattern. Still, one should remember that even proper names might often be “meaningful” (like E: Armageddon = “Mount Megiddo”, Gehenna = “the valley of Hinnom”, Jesus = “Jahweh saves”).

Instead, we will, rather, zero in on the more-limited, semantic area of “theological” terms. Our main question is to determine which ideas have appealed to Melanesian Christians, and what have been the actual results in PNG, after over 100 years of mission work. We will limit ourselves to TP, today’s most-spoken language in PNG. For this, we will have a particularly close look at two Catholic “small catechisms”, one from the New Guinea side (1979), and another from the Rabaul side (1966), and, occasionally, also refer to some of the current Catholic hymn books.

To establish our basic list of terms of interest, well-known productions come to mind. One such book was edited, long ago, by Alan Richardson (1950), and another one by Xavier Leon-Dufour (1967; 1973). These

authors concentrate on the theological analysis of words on God, and His nature, on angels and devils, and on a multitude of scriptural concepts (such as forgiveness, grace, justification, etc.). Their works also contain a lot of historical references (to biblical persons or places), and many plain, “ordinary” words, which happen to have a biblical, or a religious, connotation as well (such as “abide”, “animal”, “ashes”).

The first problem with these research tools is that of the translation of biblical concepts. Obviously, they are not given here in Hebrew (H), or Greek (Gr), or even in Latin (L), but in a modern tongue, such as English (E), or German (Ge). This handicap will usually be corrected by internal cross-references in these books (e.g., for: “accomplish”, see: “fulfil”, etc.). But, sometimes, it is not unmistakably clear which Hebrew and/or Greek term is referred to, especially when there is not a once-for-all conventional rendering, but when more “dynamic equivalents” are chosen.

The other problem concerns the choice of the terms decided upon. Should “Aaron” have his own entry, or be treated under, say, “sacrifice”, etc. Still, A. Richardson’s book presents as many as 150 different, signed articles, while X. Leon-Dufour’s work, in its second edition, has 320 entries. One might rightfully ask: which short list is theologically relevant, and where does one draw the line?

However, there are more problems yet, because we cannot cut out from actual church life the various contributions from 2,000 years of Christianity, which have produced several theological syntheses, all of which were marked by changing places and times. Even the study tools, referred to above, reflect this situation, because they were all written in modern tongues, and with post-biblical values in mind. Without further ado, we will now address the theological content (or particular ideological tendency) found in some PNG Christian sources from the last decennia.

## **2. And Words of Men**

We should note from the start, that “going back to the Bible” is not enough to explain the real situation on the church scene. As a matter of fact, the use of human language in religion always carries a heavy burden of

*traditional, or historical, terminology.* In our case, the Catholic church's vocabulary was introduced, and developed, by foreign missionaries, and its value has, for this very reason, sometimes been questioned.

There will be no qualms in admitting in general that, in so-called *sacramental* churches, there exists a theological "packing" of Bible data, sometimes looked upon as mere human accretions to the pure and undiluted Word of God. Some would like to think that people have done away with it, since the time of the Reformation. But is this the real situation?

Everybody realises that there are, in PNG, a host of churches, some of which acknowledge two, and others seven, "holy signs" (or sacraments, including the various ministries in their church), and would have many "sacramentals" (like blessings with water and oil, and other rituals). These churches have their liturgical days and actions, and, of course, they cherish some long-established doctrines as well. Not surprisingly, their ecclesiastical jargon is huge indeed, even if one leaves out the many "ordinary" terms, which often show theological overtones.

Now, certain churches might not like this approach. They will not pay much attention to, say, the Trinity and grace, the virtues and vices, etc. Examples are the Jehovah's Witnesses (in their stand against the Trinity), or the Salvation Army (for downplaying the sacraments). But would these, let us call them *non-sacramental*, churches be free from human traditions? Or should we blame our own ignorance of them for not better knowing other people's religious faith and convictions?

If I may refer to the *New Schofield Reference Bible* (1957, p. vii), it appears that this book is happy with explaining – I quote:

“adoption, advocacy, assurance, atonement, conversion, death, election, eternal life, eternal punishment, faith, flesh, forgiveness, grace, hell, imputation, justification, kingdom, propitiation, reconciliation, redemption, repentance, righteousness, salvation, sanctification, sin, etc.”

These 25 terms may all be of “biblical” origin, but, surely the inclusion gives us a very-particular interpretation of Christianity. This interpretation will go along easily with a stress on the millennium and the seven dispensations, the rapture and the second advent of Christ, personal salvation and human decisions for the Lord, etc. Even this list of terms is not exhaustive, and one could easily add over a dozen specific theological terms and “holy signs”.

Let me list only such words and actions as awakening, outreach, evangelism, revivals, rallies, crusades, healing ministry, altar calls, nominal and born-again Christians, baptism of the Spirit, speaking in tongues, prophecies and mysteries, the end of the world, the mark of the beast, etc. As to the “holy signs”, there might be, among the non-sacramental churches, nothing like a baptism, but then some might have, instead, a list of “Articles of War” to guide the Christian adherents in their spiritual struggle.

In other words, although the list of the technical jargon used by a so-called historical or mainline church might be rather extensive (as A. Richardson, X. Leon-Dufour, and others, have suggested), a doctrinal tradition cannot be ignored for people of all Christian persuasions.

Now, because of my own familiarity with Roman Catholicism, and with its particular shape in PNG, I will use as my base over 260 TP terms, heard in the Catholic community. Without noting mere spelling differences, and, if I am not mistaken, the TP vocabulary to be studied is made up of 50 main entries, and 83 equivalent terms. Some attention will also go to the primary or secondary derivations of either of these categories (respectively marked as 1-2, and as 3-4, in Table 1); they amount to another 136 idioms. In addition, the text below will also make a brief mention of up to a further 50 terms, which are plain borrowings from the Latin, but which, I believe, were never extensively used. Finally, there are over 20 TP paraphrases listed. All these idioms enter into the total Christian reality in Melanesia.

Table 1: TP terms studied, and related idioms

Main entries	Tok Pisin equivalent	Subtotal	Derivations				Subtotal
			1	2	3	4	
5	0	0	20	9	0	0	29
20	1	20	15	0	8	0	23
15	2	30	10	0	10	0	20
7	3	21	28	7	18	2	55
3	4	12	4	0	5	0	9
50	10	83	77	16	41	2	136

The topic under review is very important, and needs an in-depth research in a large area of theology. Unfortunately, many study tools are not readily at hand, and so the essay below will bear every sign of a limited, incomplete attempt only. There is hardly anything about “heaven”, or “eternal life”, or on such moral qualities as “patience”, or “pity”. Still, within the earlier described frame of reference, the present overview might still be of some use in stating how much one particular form of Christianity has found its roots in this country.

## Part 2 – The Example from the Scriptures

### 1. Hebrew Used in Greek

#### A. The Old Testament

One can distinguish at least four ways in which various Old Testament or Hebrew terms have been rendered in Greek. Starting from the mere material rendering, there are cases in which the outward form of a word is preserved, or its audible sound, or, also, its basic meaning, or, finally, the cases in which it is replaced by a synonym, or a euphemism, or the like.

a. First of all, there are, in the Greek Bible, some instances of rendering a foreign word, not by retaining its sound or meaning, but just by retaining its *visual image*, or the picture, which one perceives. I would like to call this a “magical equivalence” of the external form, although various non-magical reasons might have intervened as well. Thus, there are Septuagint manuscripts, which at times – at least for the name of God – have imitated the square Hebrew scripts, as though they were Greek capital

letters). The odd result is that the readers get the picture that God's name in Greek (reading from left to right) would be *PIPI!*

This approach is not something new in the Greek Bible, either.<sup>1</sup> Actually – at least for the sacred name of God – there are still some survivals of this approach with us today (as in the use of a capitalised LORD, as found in some English Bibles!). One should be aware of the fact that this way of doing is not so unusual as might first appear. One need only to remember that, even in the printed word today, foreign spellings are often preserved. Thus, in writing “Australia” in an otherwise TP text, the option of “copying” the foreign word is often followed, whereas other editors might like to adopt here just a phonetic equivalence, and spell this name as “Ostrelya”!

b. The visible shape of letters, and the sounds they stand for, both move on the level of the outward signs of a concept. Hence, to change from one language to another, while keeping the *sound pattern* is, to a certain extent, a very similar exercise. The same is true of changing from one alphabet to the other (or using a so-called transliteration), in which it is also presumed that a term's meaning is not affected at all.

This method of keeping an existing sound pattern is followed for nearly all names of persons and places, and – on a more theological level – also for such words as H: אֲמֵן (*'āmēn*) and הַלְלֵי־הַ (hal<sup>e</sup>lūjāh), which are still with us today, notwithstanding the many intervening translation steps.<sup>2</sup>

Intriguing are the dozen or so times of encountering the spelling Gr: γέενναν (*geennan*) (Matt 5:22), which merely reproduces the Hebrew sounds of גֵּיְהִנְנוֹם (*gē-hinnōm*). As is well known, “the Valley of Hinnom” – also called “the Valley of Tophet” – was a ravine near Jerusalem, which was associated with smoke and fire and ancient evil practices (cf. 2 Kings 23:10). Yet, since the 1st-century BC, the word Gr: *geenna* adopted a metaphorical sense as well, as designating the place of torment for the wicked. In other words, a specific name of a particular locality became, in time, a common, or generic, name, or almost a new concept.

c. Whatever one can add to the previous observations, it should be clear that the ordinary Greek translations from the Hebrew use Greek terms, which have the same *basic meaning* as those in the other tongue. One could think here of many examples.

In the OT, the head of the world of darkness was called H: שָׂטָן (*sātān*), which means basically “the one who obstructs, or opposes”, and it has found a transliteration in Gr as: Σατανᾶς (*satanas*). However, the same language has also kept the word’s meaning, via the already-existing term Gr: διάβολος (*diabolos*), literally: “adversary (in court), slanderer, calumniator”. Hence, in this case, loan word and reconceptualisation appear next to one another.

One could also add the H: מַלְאָךְ (*mal’ak*) = Gr: ἄγγελος (*angelos*), which must have been – at the time – a plain and ordinary reference to an announcer, or a news bringer, without anything “angelical” about it. Similar is H: שְׁלֵחַ (*shālach*) = Gr: ἀπόστολος (*apostolos*), who is – in today’s language – a messenger, an envoy, or an ambassador. The same is surely true of H: מָשִׁיחַ (*mashiach*) = Gr: χριστός (*christos*), or “the one who is anointed”, although many Christians would still be convinced that only Jesus Christ was the person referred to.

An interesting reconceptualisation has affected the group of H: בָּרַךְ (*bārak*) = “to praise”, and בְּרָכָה (*b<sup>e</sup>rākāh*) = “blessing”. Both terms are related to the noun בֶּרֶךְ (*berek*) = “knee”, hence they mean basically: “to genuflect, kneel down” (as commonly understood in TP: *brukim skru*). Now, the Septuagint translation has normally substituted the terms Gr: εὐλογεῖν (*eulogein*) and εὐλογία (*eulogia*), which mean: “to say good words”. This is one clear example of translations choosing one of the manifold possible meanings of a given term.

d. It is possible to adopt still another translation technique, and that is to follow the road of using a reverential *replacement* for a term (as indicated already in the previous section by our reference to “the (ineffable divine) Name”). Very near to this, are the attempts to reconceptualise a

given idea, and find another word for it. This has been, e.g., the case with the name of God. Apparently, whenever the Jews saw the Tetragrammaton (literally: the four Hebrew “consonants”, viz., *Y, H, W, and H*), they read the common H: יהוה (*'adonai*). The latter term means something like “His Lordship” (literally: “my lords”). This, the users of the Septuagint have also done, by rendering *J-H-W-H* by Gr: ὁ κύριος (*ho kurios*) = “the Lord”, again a common term, and not a personal name.<sup>3</sup>

If one is allowed to go a few centuries beyond the frame of reference set out here, one might add that – concerning the Tetragrammaton – there also exists another problem of sound equivalence. As a matter of fact, there has been a strange medieval combination of the traditional Hebrew consonants of יהוה (YHWH), with the much-younger Masoretic vowel signs: אֹ אֵ אִ (a o ai), derived from H: יהוה (*'adōnai*) = “the Lord”. In short: the two elements of writing involved are of different origins, and have led to the mispronunciation: *YaHoWaH* (hence: *Jehovah*, as also found in some PNG Bibles).

In fact, since the Christian Middle Ages, a new cultural configuration prevailed in Europe, and this (including probably some ignorance about what happened before) justified the newer custom of calling God *Jehovah*. Still, a Jewish believer would never have made the “mistake” indicated, because – for him – the unusual conflation of vowels and consonants, described above, were merely a hint not to use the divine name in vain. Thus, both ancient Jews, and much-younger Christians, tried to emphasise God’s worthiness. Yet, in manifesting their great appreciation of God’s transcendence, whose name was not of the kind of John, or Dick, or Harry, they were directed by different theological models, and came to different results.

## **B. The New Testament**

The preceding section has explained how – in general terms – a translator has to make up his mind as to which of at least four methods is going to be followed in a translation.



a. We are not aware of any “magical use” of Greek terms, although a case could be made for the presence of abbreviations, for so-called *nomina sacra* (= “sacred terms”), such as *KC* for Gr: κύριος (*Kurios*) = “Lord”, or *IC* for Ἰησοῦς (*Iēsous*) = “God”. But this practice was just a saving device – I believe – for hurried copyists, and has nothing to do with a specially-developed respect for the divine.

b. For the New Testament, one often finds *transliterations* (i.e., retaining the same sounds, yet according to another language’s speech pattern). This is normal for all personal names,<sup>4</sup> and applies also to the quotation of short sentences.<sup>5</sup>

One should probably also include here the gospels’ frequent use of “Amen (Amen), I tell you”, placed in the mouth of the Lord. The same custom is also followed by the apostle Paul, when writing in Greek, he referred to Jesus’ prayer, “ἄββᾶ (*Abba*), Father” (Rom 8:15; Gal 4:6; cf. already Mark 14:36). The adoption of a foreign word is, furthermore, found in several NT acclamations (e.g., 1 Cor 14:16: ἀμήν (*amēn*); or Rev 19:1: Ἀλληλουία (*hallēlouia*); or Matt 21:9: ὡσαννὰ (*hōsanna*), and elsewhere.

c. Yet, one has immediately to note that – not infrequently – there are *double translations*, in which the meaning of the non-Greek word is added. This occurs in the explanations of the name and some of the Jesus’ titles, viz., Gr: Ἰησοῦς (*Iēsous*)= “God saves” (Matt 1:21), Gr: Ἐμμανουήλ (*Emmanouēl*) = “God with us” (Matt 1:23), Gr: Μεσσίαν (*Messian*) = χριστός (*Christos*) = the anointed one” (John 1:41), and also the address Gr: ῥαββί/ῥαββουνί (*rabbi/rabbouni*) – “my/our teacher” (Matt 23:7; John 1:38; 20:16). For the discussed meaning of the foreign μαράνα θά (*maranatha*) (1 Cor 16:22), one can, among others, refer to the invocation: “Come, Lord Jesus” of Rev 22:20.

As to personal names, one might remember the famous change of name applied to the apostle Peter (Matt 16:18; John 1:42). One can make best sense of this passage by admitting that the Aramaic כֵּפָא ( *Kēfa* ) (or Gr: Κηφᾶς (*Kēphas*)) is replaced by Gr: Πέτρος (*Petros*), a man’s name derived

from the feminine noun πέτρα (*petra*) = “rock”. The latter means a solid rock, on which Jesus would build His church. One, therefore, realises that, even in modern languages, where the two terms are homonyms,<sup>6</sup> a great deal of the word play is lost, because, now, the new personal name, and the term for a pebble are homonyms, which really destroys the “play on words” intended.

d. Let us, finally, look at some cultural equivalents. As said before, H: 𐤀𐤓𐤍𐤏𐤍 ( *gē-hinnōm*) does not appear as a transliteration in Greek, but, ten times, the NT has found an equivalent rendering via Gr: ἄιδης (*haidēs*) (Matt 11:23). The latter term refers to the region of the departed spirits, according to Greek mythology, and corresponds closely to the abode of the dead, commonly called שְׁאוֹל (*she'ol*), according to the Hebrew concept of the universe. Conceptually related also is the verb Gr: ταρταρώσας (*tartarōsas*) = “to consign to Tartaros” (2 Pet 2:4), using a mythological concept linked with the place of punishment for the Greek half-gods, the Titans (and also to Gen 6:3, with the biblical fall of the angels). Both cases are, therefore, noteworthy attempts at contextualising the NT message for a pagan audience, or – in other words – at introducing foreign mythologies, while translating the biblical message.

One may sum up by saying that – apart from the names of persons and places – the NT is quite clear about not using unintelligible words, but rather to use words according to their meaning. Said the apostle Paul, in a different context though, “I would rather say five words that can be understood . . . than 10,000 words in a language nobody understands” (1 Cor 14:19).

## 2. Greek Transliterations in Latin

In the early centuries, Greek went out of use, and various translations were made, in the East, in Semitic tongues (e.g., Syriac), and, in the West, in common Latin. This is the origin of the many Latin versions, which became known as the “Vulgata” (lit. the common translation, intended for the L: *vulgus* = “people”, and it was not till the time of the Reformation that Greek became of any practical importance.

a. Naturally, many *old Latin words* were taken over in translation, but, then, in a new sense) such as: *confiteri, deus, fides, martyr, mediator, sacramentum*, etc.). Possibly, there were others as well, such as L: *gratia* for Gr: *χάρισμα* (*charisma*); L: *praedicatio* for Gr: *κήρυγμα* (*kērugma*); L: *salvator* for Gr: *σωτήρ* (*sōtēr*); etc.), some of which are still with us today.

b. Since Greek and Latin are linguistic cousins, many *loan words* were taken from the other language, or derived from one and the same source. Although we do not like to dwell too much on personal names (e.g., Gr: *Ἰησοῦς* (*Iēsous*)/L: *Jesus*; Gr: *Πέτρος* (*Petros*)/L: *Petrus*, etc.), still, it is surprising how much other Christian terminology remains affected.

A specialist in church Latin, Dr Christine Mohrmann, once observed that, on the whole, Greek terms were kept for the concrete aspects of Christianity (such as the institutions of baptism, eucharist, etc., and the threefold sacred ministry). Well aware that our list below is far from exhaustive, we might include at least some 20 Greek/Latin items, later carried over in TP. They include:

<i>angelos/angelus</i>	<i>apostolos/-us</i>	<i>archangelos/-angelus</i>
<i>baptismos/-mus</i>	<i>biblion/biblia</i>	<i>blasphēmia</i>
<i>christos/christus</i>	<i>diabolos/-lus</i>	<i>diakonos/diaconus</i>
<i>ekkēsia/ecclesia</i>	<i>episkōpos/-us</i>	<i>ethnoi/ethnici</i>
<i>euangelion/evangelium</i>	<i>eucharistia</i>	<i>epistolē/-la</i>
<i>katholikos/catholicus</i>	<i>martus/martir</i>	<i>mustērion/mysterium</i>
<i>pistis/fides</i>	<i>presbuteros/-us</i>	<i>profetēs/propheta</i>
<i>skandalon/scandalum</i>	<i>sumboulion/symbolum</i>	

c. A further step was sometimes taken, when words were broken down in their linguistic components, and *rendered part-by-part*. This would apply to, say:

*apo-kaluptein/apo-kalupsis* = *re-valare/re-velatio*,  
*eu-longein/eu-logia* = *bene-dicere/bene-dictio*, or  
*pro-phēteuein* = *prae-dicare*, etc.

In a way, these terms were all *Latin neologisms*, which, according to Dr Mohrmann, used to be created to express abstract or spiritual ideas (and is even more obvious in such linguistic creations as L: *carnalis*, *spiritualis*, *sanctificare*, *vivificare*, *glorificare*, etc.).

d. The road of *double translations* was also followed, so that, besides the loan L: *diaconus*/E: servant, also L: *minister* was used, or that, for Gr: ἔθνοι (*ethnoi*)/E: pagans, next to the related L: *ethnici* – also words of the group L: *gentes/gentiles* were adopted. It might be clear, too, that L: *baptizare/baptisms/baptisma* ultimately derives from Gr: βάθος (*bathos*) = “deep” (cf. our loan “bath”, next to such verbs as E: “to dip, dive”, etc.). It is noteworthy that, in this particular case, an early Christian author, Tertullian (died c220), tried to introduce the regular Latin term for “to wet, moist, bath” (viz., L: *tingere*) or “to wash” (cf. also his circumlocution L: *lavacrum regenerationis*), but that his “innovations” were resisted. Thus, while Tertullian was successful in introducing such terms as L: *natura*, *substantia*, and *Trinitas*, he lost on other accounts, and the use of Greek loans still went ahead.

Maybe this is the place to comment on half-a-dozen theological terms in Greek, and try to follow the avenues chosen in the past, mainly as supplying hints to evaluate the TP theological lexicon.

1. One important achievement, now, was the choice of L: *testamentum*, or “last will”, to render Gr: διαθήκη (*diathēkē*), and distinguishing it from συνθήκη (*sunthēkē*), which was also a possible candidate-term. As the prepositions show, Gr: διά- (*dia-*) stresses the benevolence and unilateral initiative “from” the giver – in this case, God – while συν- (*sun-*) (like its equivalents in L: *cum*, *con*, *co-*) points towards an otherwise equal and balanced contract (or covenant, as, say, between husband and wife). As a rule, translations are not always neutral replicas, but are “loaded”.

2. The term Gr: ἔθνος (*ethnos*), originally rendered by L: *gens*, etc., down to our E: “gentiles”, later got a further extension. Thus, it is

commonly believed that, when Christianity spread from towns to villages, a new formation appeared also in the word *paganus*, literally, the people of a distant “village” (L: *pagus*). Interesting is that, still later, preachers of the gospel used Ge: *Heiden*/E: heathen (that is, the people from the distant places, on the *Heide*, or in the heath, or heather-country!).

3. The ancient designations: Gr: *gehena/haidēs*, have found two Latin translations. One of these terms was the singular L: *infernium* = “hell”, something like an under-earthly “concealed place”, or “hole”. The other term was the plural L: *infernī*, understood as the “lower [places]”, used for Jesus’ “descent into hell”, where He encountered the blessed dead of the OT period (cf. 1 Pet 3:19f).

4. Gr: *μυστήριον* (*mustērion*) has also found two possible translations. There is the very close L: *mysterium* (Col 1:26), that is, in the first place, what was known to a Gr: *μύστης* (*mustēs*) = “initiated person”, or a person obliged “to shut up” (Gr: *μυεῖν* (*muein*)) about the secrets taught him. But there is also L: *sacramentum* – “something consecrated, a sacred sign, an oath, etc.”, used, for instance, in Eph 3:3; 5:22, etc., and very extensively taken up in later ecclesiastical contexts.

5. The different types of sins were, in the OT, expressed by up to 20 different terms, which were later reduced, and, among which, the Gr: *ἁρμαρτία* (*harmartia*) = “to miss the target” became probably the most widely used. Here, the Latin has usually preferred still another translation, via the term *peccatum* = “taint, blot”. Some of the many other possibilities in this field (e.g., to render “sin” by “debt”, as in Matt 6:12) have had very limited success only.

6. The very special Christian term Gr: *ἀγάπη* (*agapē*) is also worth mentioning. It distinguishes itself from the terms Gr: *ἔρως* (*erōs*), *στεργή* (*stergē*), and *φιλία* (*philia*), which all had specific Hellenistic connotations. As a rule, the Latin has opted for the lasting, out-going, self-sacrificing L: *caritas* (related to the adjective L: *carus*), which means basically “to be inclined towards somebody”, thus leaving other terms (such as L: *amor*, *dilectio*) practically unused.

### Part 3 – Modern and Mission Translations

#### 1. Biblical Heritage in European Languages

Apart from the early missionaries in the Middle East (where Semitic languages influenced the Christian vocabulary of Arabic, Ethiopic, or Syriac), we are particularly interested in the evangelisation of those peoples in Europe, from which came most of the missionaries sent to PNG. Although here there are, already, some scriptural terms, which have survived all historical hazards (e.g., E: *abba, amen, halleluia, hosanna, messiah, satan*, etc.), the ancient homelands of the later sending agencies, and, therefore, of their missionaries, knew also several cases of adaptation, or real creations of a Christian vocabulary.

Our attention will not be taken by the many renderings of Christian terms in the Romance languages (such as French, Italian, etc.), because, as a rule, these languages used cognate words, also found in the Latin. Hence, translation problems are, rather, to be found in the Germanic languages, that is, for PNG, particularly English. It is interesting that there are hardly any theological TP terms (except, maybe: *bless, Lord, pray, sin*), which cannot otherwise be explained, except by a derivation from the English.

a. For the reason just mentioned, it is not pedantic to stress how many German missionaries have been in PNG, and that they, too, were probably instrumental in passing on, via the Latin, many *Greek loan words*. The latter would include:

Gr <i>apokalupsis</i>	Ge <i>Apokalypse</i>	E <i>apocalypse</i>
Gr <i>apostolos</i>	Ge <i>Apostel</i>	E <i>apostle</i>
Gr <i>(arch)angelos</i>	Ge <i>(Erz)engel</i>	E <i>(arch)angel</i>
Gr <i>baptizein, baptismos</i>		E <i>baptise, baptism</i>
Gr <i>biblion</i>	Ge <i>Bibel</i>	E <i>bible</i>
Gr <i>blasphēmia</i>	Ge <i>Blasphemie</i>	E <i>blasphemy</i>
Gr <i>Christos</i>	Ge <i>Christus</i>	E <i>Christ</i>
Gr <i>diabolos</i>	Ge <i>Teufel</i>	E <i>devil</i>
Gr <i>diakonos</i>	Ge <i>Diakon</i>	E <i>deacon</i>
Gr <i>ekklesiā</i>	Ge <i>ekklesiastisch</i>	E <i>ecclesiastical</i>
Gr <i>epistolē</i>	Ge <i>Epistel</i>	E <i>epistle</i>

Gr <i>episkopos</i>	Ge <i>Bischof</i>	E <i>bishop</i>
Gr <i>euangelium</i>	Ge <i>Evangelium</i>	E <i>evangelical</i>
Gr <i>eucharistia</i>	Ge <i>Euchristia</i>	E <i>eucharist</i>
Gr <i>katholikos</i>	Ge <i>katholisch</i>	E <i>catholic</i>
Gr <i>kuri(ak)os</i>	Ge <i>Kirche</i>	E <i>church</i>
Gr <i>martus</i> (Gen: <i>marturos</i> )	Ge <i>Märtyrer</i>	E <i>martyr</i>
Gr <i>mystērion</i>	Ge <i>Mysterium</i>	E <i>mystery</i>
Gr <i>pascha</i>		E <i>pasch</i>
Gr <i>pistis</i>		E <i>faith</i>
Gr <i>presbuteros</i>	Ge <i>Priester</i>	E <i>priest</i>
Gr <i>prophētēs</i>	Ge <i>Prophet</i>	E <i>prophet</i>
Gr <i>skandalon</i>	Ge <i>Skandal</i>	E <i>scandal</i>
Gr <i>sumboulion</i>	Ge <i>Symbolon</i>	E <i>symbol(um)</i>

Of special interest, is the word Gr: κύριος (*kurios*) = “lord” (derived from κῦρος (*kuros*) = “head, supreme power”). It was only via its derivative κυριακός (*kuriakos*) = “of the Lord” (supplying, e.g., “house [of the Lord]” = church), that this important term has entered the Christian vocabulary, and has given us Ge: *Kirche*, E: *church/kirk*, till the TP *kirke/sio(t)s*. Only scholars would know that Gr: κύριος (*kurios*) is etymologically related to Ge: *Herr* (K//H, as in *kardia/cor[cordis]/Herz/heart*), and to E: *harlot* (originally used for a male rogue). Yet, this ancient link has never been exploited.

b. Similarly, many specific *Latin loan words* also came into use. Examples of this method include:

L <i>confirmatio</i>	Ge <i>Firmung</i>	E <i>confirmation</i>
L <i>crux</i>	Ge <i>Kreuz</i>	E <i>cross</i>
L <i>discipulus</i>		E <i>disciple</i>
L <i>fides</i>		E <i>faith</i>
L <i>martyr</i>	Ge <i>Märtyrer</i>	E <i>martyr</i>
L <i>praedicatio</i>	Ge <i>Predigt</i>	E <i>preaching</i>
L <i>redemptio</i> (Acc: <i>Redemptionem</i> )		E <i>ransom, redemption</i>
L <i>revelatio</i>		E <i>revelation</i>
L <i>sacramentum</i>	Ge <i>Sakrament</i>	E <i>sacrament</i>
L <i>salvator</i>		E <i>saviour</i>

L *Trinitas*

E *Trinity*

c. Yet, some of the mission vocabulary has shown its own identity, by manifesting, rather, signs of *reconceptualisation* of either Greek or Latin ideas. They include:

Gr <i>apokalupsis</i>	Ge <i>Offenbarung</i>	E ( <i>revelation</i> )
Gr <i>baptismos</i>	Ge <i>Taufe</i>	E ( <i>baptism</i> )
Gr <i>diathēkē</i>	Ge <i>Testament</i>	E <i>testament</i>
Gr <i>mathēthēs</i>	Ge <i>Jünger</i>	E ( <i>disciple</i> )
Gr <i>theos</i>	Ge <i>Gott</i>	E <i>God</i>
Gr <i>pascha</i>	Ge <i>Ostern</i>	E <i>Easter</i> <sup>7</sup>
Gr <i>stauros</i>	Ge <i>Kreuz</i>	E <i>rood</i> (also <i>cross</i> )
L <i>fides</i>	Ge <i>Glaube</i>	E ( <i>faith</i> )
L <i>infernum, inferi</i>	Ge <i>Hölle</i>	E <i>hell</i>
L <i>martyr</i>	Ge <i>Blutzeuge</i>	E ( <i>martyr</i> )
L <i>orare</i>	Ge <i>beten</i>	E <i>pray</i> (also <i>bid</i> )
L <i>paganus</i>	Ge <i>Heiden</i>	E <i>heathen</i>
L <i>peccatum</i>	Ge <i>Suende</i>	E <i>sin</i>
L <i>redemptio</i>	Ge <i>Erloesung</i>	
L <i>proximus</i>	Ge <i>Nachbar</i>	E <i>neighbour</i>
L <i>salvator</i>	Ge <i>Heiland</i>	E ( <i>saviour</i> )
L <i>Trinitas</i>	Ge <i>Dreifaltigkeit</i>	E ( <i>Trinity</i> )

In olden times, there was still a feeling that “gos-spel” was a “spell [or word] of God”, and that “at-one-ment” really meant to bring people “at one”, or at good terms again (from which it came to mean a state of reconciliation, and the means leading to it). Unfortunately, the subsequent changes in pronunciation obscured the original senses, while, at the same time, the specific Christian content of these terms was heightened. In other words, old terms became “filled” with new meanings, to be regularly explained in sermons and teachings.

For L: *benedicere* (which has several meanings), at times a choice was made for the verb Ge: *segnen* (related to L: *signare* = “make a sign on/over something”, which led then to the mainland TP (*segen/segnim*). But others



rendered the same verb with E: “to bless”, which means “to sign with blood” (from the Anglo-Saxon *bletsian*, still familiar in our term “blood”), and have thus “baptised” a plain pagan term.<sup>8</sup>

To do justice to the actual Christian experience, one should not omit post-biblical adaptations and/or innovations. They naturally manifest, to a certain degree, particular theological understandings, and an admirable degree of “contextualisation” from various Greek or Latin “substrata”. At the time, their meaning might have been obvious, but now they often figure as mere “survivals” of the past.<sup>9</sup> Apparently, some examples have favoured certain later TP renderings.

## **2. The Theological Scene in PNG**

### **A. A Lesson from History**

Catholic missionaries to PNG came mainly from France, Italy, Germany, and from English-speaking countries. Their Western “packing” of Christianity was neither avoidable at the time, nor has it been lost today.

a. It should be clear that there is a *Latin origin* for many Catholic terms of theology. This would have been almost automatic for, say, French-speaking people (as were the MSC missionaries on Yule Island, or many Marists on Bougainville). However, outside Papua, German missionaries, both MSC and SVD, but not their German Lutheran counterparts, relied on the same Tridentine formation in classical humanities. They, too, via their Vulgate Bible (at Mass, and in their Breviaries), shared a daily familiarity with Latin. No doubt, many of them were familiar with the meanings and derivations of the Latin/Greek terms they used.<sup>10</sup>

Yet, when it came to making translations into the vernaculars, they soon realised that taking a loan word and “filling” it, through their instructions, was like starting their catechesis with infelicitous “zero translations”. Thus, on the mission field, also among other denominations, serious discussions took place, cross-checking with local preachers was done, and quite a few “discoveries” were made; we will call them reconceptualisations.

One might easily realise that, when the same mission agency was working among many different linguistic groups (say, among more than ten different languages for Catholics in Papua only), and when individual missionaries were trying to impose the local name from their area for, say, “God”, the situation looked rather hopeless. Just think that, in the case of the divine name, some people might confound a personal name (as Jahweh and Jesus in the Bible, or Aisi and Anutu in PNG), with a common name, also used for other gods or “false gods”.<sup>11</sup>

Not unexpectedly, then, that, in the end, some Catholics (for whom all liturgy at the time was in Latin) utilised the “church vocabulary” they knew, and that, at times, an authoritarian decision supported this (as was taken, about 1935, among the Catholic SVDs on mainland New Guinea). At other places, a preference was expressed for English derivations (as suggested, around 1940, by Archbishop de Boismenu for the Papuan region). There always remained room to move, because – as a rule – each one of the early missionaries worked in a particular *tok ples*, and not all of these pioneers were inclined to slavishly obey some general directives.<sup>12</sup>

b. Although one can affirm that there was never an accepted Catholic *lingua franca* (and only a feeble attempt by the SVD Fathers to introduce Boikin or Malay on mainland New Guinea), still the mission publications from the MSC Mission around Rabaul managed to use a fair deal of Tolai or *Kuanua* vocabulary. For the Methodist church in New Britain and New Ireland, the Raluana dialect of *Kuanua* became a church language, though, while the general absorption of many of its words fell at the time, they also fell in line with the development of the TP lexicon itself.<sup>13</sup> To be sure, this *Kuanua* influence on TP is not completely obliterated, even in our days, especially on and around New Britain.

To explain this option, some would like to reckon with an almost innate tendency of Germans to show their identity through reconceptualisations, and new creations of their own home-grown words.<sup>14</sup> Yet one should not forget that this German tendency goes back to language policies, taken by the home government only at the beginning of this

century, although it has not had the same impact wherever there were German missionaries at work.

c. Going ahead in our analysis, one should not forget, either, that there were, at the time, wide-ranging discussions “in the Territory” about the nature of *Tok Pisin* itself. In these discussions, there was official policy to rely upon. Hence government and missions were not at one; Catholics opposed non-Catholics; MSCs from Rabaul disagreed with SVDs from mainland New Guinea; and even SVD among themselves were divided. For example, which was better Pidgin to pray in the “Our Father”: *Papa bilong mipela*, or *Fader bilong mifelo*? Again, not all proposals from the earlier times were lasting, such as the various renderings of “kingdom” in the same prayer, either by *lotu* or *ples* (Vunapope, 1931 and 1935), or by *pasin* (Lutherans, c1934), and even by the Gr: *basileia*, as in some other vernaculars of PNG.

In sum, it would appear that, in the pre-war time, the Rabaul Catholic mission took one practical decision, which was contemplated, and sometimes also followed, in other places as well. However, the day was won for TP, which grew up with an overwhelmingly English-based vocabulary, as the future would also show.

d. Regarding this future development, the most important new element to take into account came after World War II, when, on the advice of the United Nations, and through an Australian government decision – the existence of the TP and *tok ples* (or vernacular) schools was wiped out. At the same time, through the coming of a new generation of missionaries, and also other factors (such as the prestige element from using TP), the use of this *lingua franca* generally increased. This development is reflected in the production of the TP *Nupela Testamen* (1959), and eventually in the publication of the whole *Buk Baibel* (1989). The move signalled the victory of opting for an *English-derived vocabulary*, and for a Madang-centred “lingua franca”.

Indirectly, one could also speak of the victory of the Lutheran missionary linguists, who were, at the time, more of an Australian and

American background, and no longer of European and German descent. The Lutherans finally decided, in the late 1950s, to abandon the use of their church languages, Yabin and Kote, in educational institutions. This led to a more-general use of English in schools, while, about the same time, more and more church meetings and conferences were conducted in TP. The Catholics followed suit. In the course of action, English-sounding words came also to supplant terms of a Latin (and German) derivation in TP as well. Examples are the personal names for biblical personalities in the *Nupela Testamen*,<sup>15</sup> but also some more content-filled words (such as TP: *Lord, sin, sio(t)s*, etc.).<sup>16</sup>

As a matter of fact, the theology of the time – for Catholics, that from after the Second Vatican Council – also had its bearings. And although, in several places, homilies were often given in TP, or in English, the vernaculars were still kept alive – both through the existing liturgy, read from prepared texts, and through the words of the catechist, who translated, off the cuff, the otherwise not-understood sermons.

## B. The Results

As said earlier, I would like to zero in on the theological TP vocabulary, and particularly other terms, which are more specific to Catholic usage. Again, we will not spend so much time on “ordinary words” (like TP: *hambak, malolo, orait, tudak, wok*, etc.), although it is sometimes hard to draw a line (so that attention will be given to TP *gutwok, pasin, sem, trabel*, etc.). Others might find such a division too subjective.

a. There are, even today, still over 30 ecclesiastical terms in TP, which – although rarely heard – Catholics borrowed directly from the Latin. They include:

<i>absolutio</i>	<i>adorim</i>	<i>(ark)angelo</i>
<i>benediksen/-sio</i>	<i>diabolo</i>	<i>grasia</i>
<i>indulsensia</i>	<i>inkarnasio</i>	<i>karakta</i>
<i>konfirmasio</i>	<i>limbo</i>	<i>litani</i>
<i>mirakel/-kulo</i>	<i>natura</i>	<i>novena</i>
<i>ordo</i>	<i>paraklet</i>	<i>patriarka</i>

<i>persona</i>	<i>pestode</i>	<i>profeta</i>
<i>purgatorio</i>	<i>resureksio</i>	<i>roseri</i>
<i>saserdote</i>	<i>Satan</i>	<i>seremoni</i>
<i>Trinita</i>	<i>unsio</i>	<i>voto, etc.</i>

Still less in use, are another dozen or more ethical terms (such as TP: *adulterio, sakrilegio, skandalo*, etc.), or also terms related to the sacraments. As to them, the first place goes, of course, to the eucharist, in its various parts (TP: *misa, offertorio, prefasio, konsekrasio, transsubstansiasio, hostia*, etc.), its place (*alta, tabernakel*, etc.), the instruments, or vestments, used (*kalis* [also from E: *kap*, and from Ge: *kelek*], *siborio* [or: *kalis bilong hostia*], *turibulo, alba, singulum*, etc.), etc. As a rule (as Dr Mohrmann observed for the Latin names given to Christian institutions), the “new thing” brought along also a “new name”, regularly taken from Latin.

b. Of the 150 *German borrowings*, which one author has recorded for the whole TP lexicon, only a few religious terms have survived, one of them being TP: (*bikpela*) *beten* – which has also been “domesticated” in some vernaculars of the PNG Highlands as well. This term is not found, however, on New Britain (where *Kuanua raring* is used). But, even on mainland New Guinea, one only rarely still hears these days TP: *buse*, while terms, such as *baikten/baisten, kelek, kirke, ministran, segen/segnim*, etc., have completely gone.

c. What about the *Kuanua terms*, which had some lease on life, and which were not without merit either? About 20 terms are here worth considering, e.g.:

<i>diwai</i>	< <i>dibai</i> cf. <i>mak bilong diwai kros</i> = sign of the cross
<i>kibung/kivung</i>	= to hold a meeting = religious congregation
<i>kundar</i>	= to help/assist = altar boy
<i>kurkurua</i>	= beads, necklace = rosary
<i>luluai</i>	< <i>lua</i> = to be first, village leader = lord
<i>matmat</i>	< <i>mat</i> = to die = cemetery
<i>nukpuku</i>	< <i>nuk</i> + <i>pukua</i> = think + change = to be sorry
<i>raring</i>	< <i>aring</i> (tr.), <i>araring</i> (intr.) = to ask
<i>ruru</i>	< <i>ru, ruru</i> = to respect/fear

<i>takondo</i>	= straight, correct = holy
<i>tambalar</i>	= image = picture
<i>tematan</i>	= <i>te</i> + <i>matana</i> = or/from [different] + eyes = pagan
<i>tultul</i>	< <i>tul</i> = to send, message =, spokesman
<i>wokurai</i>	= <i>kure</i> = to judge/decide = to hold court
<i>vartovo</i>	< <i>tovo</i> = to teach = sermon
<i>varvai</i>	= to tell = to preach
<i>varvaliu</i>	= to show around = procession
<i>varvandoan</i>	= to make happy, bless = to bless
<i>vinamut</i>	= silence, peace = retreat
<i>vinivel</i>	= to fast = time of Lent

As a rule, these terms are generally no longer known, except as “survivals” of the past. For their continued appearance, one should not forget the ongoing influence through well-known hymns.<sup>17</sup> Even though there existed (somewhere) an updated version of the same songs, the familiar tunes, at times, still supported the earlier choices made.<sup>18</sup>

d. The substitution of Kuanua by *Tok Pisin* words goes mainly back to the early 1960s already, when some Rabaul publications (say, the *Smolpela Katekismo* of 1966, as compared with the bigger *Katekismo Katolik* of 1959) began to introduce alternative renderings. These synonyms (which do not always appear in the same order) leave it to the user which word he or she will choose. There is, thus, no clear indication of which of the two terms had, at the time, the upper hand. They include:

<i>amamas/hepi</i>	<i>baptais/wasim</i>	<i>bilas/glori</i>
<i>nukpuku/sori</i>	<i>Pikinini/Son</i>	<i>prister/pris</i>
<i>raring/pre</i>	<i>takondo/santu</i>	<i>Triniti/God Triwan</i>
<i>unsio/welim sikman</i>	<i>varvai/konpesio</i>	<i>Vinivel/Len(t)</i>

After that date (1966), further steps were taken towards a unified TP, especially in the mid-1980s, as can be seen by comparing two Rabaul hymnbooks:

1979: **Long ai bilong God** (Rabaul):

*Ona tru long Papa, Son na Santu Spiritu,  
Ona tru long God Santu Triwan* (p. 48).

*Yumi bringim bret na wain,  
em i go long Got na Masta . . .  
santu, santu, santu* (p. 59).

And further on the same page:

*(Yesus Kristus) i givim yumi long grasia,  
baimbai yumi ken orait tasol.*

1985: **Yumi lotu** (LCI):

*Ona tru long Papa, Son na Holi Spiri-i-rit,  
Ona tru long Holi Trinititi* (n. 167).

*Yumi bringim bret na wain,  
i go long God, Bikpela . . .  
tenkyu, tenkyu, tenkyu* (n. 157). And further on:

*(Krais) i givim laip bilong em bipo,  
baimbai yumi ken orait oltaim.*

To be sure, many substitutes were just harmonised spellings (such as TP: *giraun/graun, garasia/grasia, inferno/imperno, marmari/marimari*, or also, *God-man*, for *Godman*, etc.), such as they occur in other vernacular spellings as well (e.g., *Kristus/Kerito/Kraist/Krais*, or, *santo/tanto*, etc.). Yet, a very strong life was shown by some “dialectical” differences from around Rabaul, such as, e.g., TP: *ples-daun* = “world below, or earth” (as opposed to *ples-antap* = “heaven”, and not just “valley”), and *Kuanua virua*/(TP also spelled *birua*), which, in its home area, refers to a “victim, violent death, etc.” (and, elsewhere in PNG, to any “accident”, even without loss of life).

e. Of course, Kuanua is not the only vernacular language, which has provided, and still adds to, a local theological discourse. Yet, the *non-Kuanua borrowings* are rather limited, although they still include:

<i>amamas/hamamas</i>	<i>aismalang</i>	<i>ketub</i> (heart)
<i>lotu</i>	<i>papait</i>	<i>sanguma</i>
<i>masalai</i>	<i>mangal(im)</i>	<i>pamuk</i>
<i>puripuri</i> , etc.		

In short, the present-day result of a long evolution is that the TP vocabulary, in general, uses mostly words of English origin. Things would not be much different for the use of TP in the Catholic church.

### C. Paraphrases and Reconceptualisations

It must be admitted that TP, in particular, is a living entity, which keeps evolving. Sometimes, an updating of Latin-derived terms is quite easy, as for TP: *Asensio*, *Asumsio*, *Inicarnasio*, etc., becoming “anglicised” to TP: *Asensen*, *Asumsen*, *Inkarnesen*, etc. But, it seems that another way is preferred, because the innate limitations of the TP vocabulary has led to concepts expressed in a way, for which, in earlier times, only transliterations were available. This enrichment of expression is particularly seen in church jargon, or ecclesiastical terms, like the name of feast days, the terms used for the sacraments, etc. In this regard, we would like to refer to:

*Asensen/-sio: De bilong goap bilong Jisas*  
*Jisas i go (bek) long heven*  
*Asumsen/-sio: De bilong litimapim Maria*  
*(Ol i kisim) Maria i go long heven*  
*Immaculate Conception: De bilong Maria i nogat sin*  
*Incarnasio: God i kisim bodi (bilong man)*  
*Ista: De bilong Jisas i kirap bek*  
*Konpesio: sakramen bilong sekan*  
*Konpirmasio: sakramen bilong givim holi Spirit*  
*Litani: kolim nem bilong ol santu*  
*Ordo: sakramen bilong makim pris*  
*mekim man i kamap pris*



*Paraclete: Man bilong pinisim sori*  
*Pentekos: De Jisas i salim holi Spirit*  
*Redemsio: Jisas i kisim bek yumi*  
*Resureksio: Jisas i kirap bek*  
*Transfigurasio: Jisas i kamap narakain*  
*Unsio: sakramen bilong welim ol sikmanmeri, etc.*

No doubt, regarding the latter development, European theology has been of importance as well, as is shown in the replacement terms for TP: *konpesio* (cf. now “sacrament of reconciliation”), and for: (*estrema*) *unsio* (cf. now “sacrament of the sick”).

One cannot applaud every rendering made. I just wonder whether a paraphrase of eight words – like: *Ol i kisim Maria i go long heven* – is the end of the road in rendering the older term *Asumsio*, or whether a shorter, although theologically less-precise *Maria i go long heven* will eventually prevail.

#### **D. The Impact of the *Buk Baibel***

After 30 years of preparations, the Bible Society of PNG produced the full TP Bible, in an edition without the deuterocanonical books (green cover), and one including them (red cover). One could say that, as with the King James Version, or the Luther Bible, this event has had an important impact on both the ordinary, and the church, vocabulary in PNG.

In any assessment of the *Buk Baibel*, one should note that here, too, there are transliterations of common and personal names (such as TP: *ensel*, *temple*, etc., or also *Farisi and Sadyusi*). This method avoids various paraphrases, which, not infrequently, are questioned, because they show a preference for meanings, which exegetes and linguists do not find in the Bible.

But there are also several new TP words, about which Catholics are not always too happy. The latter “innovations” brush aside a church tradition, which, at some places, goes back to almost a century, and is still alive in the regular church services of about one million adherents in PNG.

Actually, Catholics have now begun printing liturgical texts, which retain the “old” translations (e.g., *Mesaia*, *Pasova* (or *Paska*), or, also, such names as *Jenesis*, *Eksodas*, etc. They would feel that the innovations were made without proper consultation, a point maybe hard to understand for people from a “Free Church” tradition.

There are also two top paraphrases these days, which might not be too felicitous. They are:

Messiah/Christ: *dispela man God i makim bilong kisim bek ol manmeri bilong en* (John 1:20), where the Semitic anointment rite is hardly mentioned, and the particular Exodus theme of “redemption” is stressed instead.

Passover: *dispela bikpela de bilong tingim de God i larim ol Israel i stap gut* (Luke 22:15), where the biblical “pass over” of the death angel is eclipsed, and the local concept of *stap gut* is introduced.

Maybe translators might argue that they wanted to attempt a reconceptualisation of terms, which they felt were “zero translations”. To be abundantly clear, there is no objection against a reconceptualisation, as such (which is also found in the TP: *wasim*, for “baptism”). At stake is rather: (a) an all-too-free paraphrase of regularly-used names and concepts, (b) a clumsy translation (as has been avoided in, e.g., TP: *kisim bek*, for “redemption”), and (c) a kind of theology, which might not be completely wholesome. Thus, TP: *kamapim tok hait* (abbreviated: *KTH*, to designate “the book of Revelation”) seems not only to be awkward, but might introduce a stress on “mystery”, which, in PNG, distorts the main message of the scriptures as Good News. Other cases of dispute have been the introduction of *Bikpela* as a title for God and Christ, or that of giving – as first choice – the TP: *Olpela Kontrak* and *Nupela Kontrak*, instead of *Olpela* and *Nupela Testamen*. On this we will add some more thoughts below (under numbers 4 and 7).

For our limited purpose, it is sufficient to note this kind of PNG “adaptation” in the current theological jargon. Maybe the vocabulary criticised might be defensible in a homily or a sermon, but not in a Bible intended for all Christians. With this, I would now like to concentrate on some of the more-accepted “reconceptualisations”, and try to comment on a few of them.

1. One ubiquitous TP term is *wantok* = “somebody speaking the same language”. It reveals the common, small-scale, community background in PNG, although this factor is not uniquely Melanesian. Yet, via the Christian command for fraternal love, it has gained its entry into the church’s vocabulary as well. It is noteworthy that it does depart from the English “neighbour = the farmer of next [door]”, or, maybe, “the person born in the next [house]”,<sup>19</sup> and is extremely well suited to stress certain communitarian values. Similar observations could also be made regarding TP: *gutpela sindaun* as well.

2. TP: *bekim* also has a very wide application – e.g., in the continuous compensation demands, the practice of bride wealth, pay-back killings and compensation demands. In some TP idioms, it is used for “penance”, in the sacrament of confession, giving in to the danger of considering man’s relation to God on the level of mere reciprocity. Hence, care should be taken to stress the Christian understanding of one’s relationship of creature to the Creator.

3. Another specific Melanesian choice is TP: *bel*, or, also: *lewa*, which, notwithstanding their derivations (respectively, from E: “belly” and “liver”), have not much relation with them. The dictionaries give us a host of meanings for TP: *bel* (not all listed below), which often renders E: “heart” (which is, literally, TP: *pam*, cf. “pump”, or *kilok*, cf. “clock”). One remarkable extension of the term is found in the idiom TP: *belgut*, or also: *mekim bel i gutpela*. Here, the TP meaning is both different from H: *shalom* (= complete), Gr: *eirènè* (= being pleased, or at peace, as after a war), as also the L: *pax*/E: peace (which is related to L: *pactum* = “treaty”, or “pact”). Specific to TP, seems to be a new stress on the individual’s satisfied disposition.<sup>20</sup>

One should not forget, though, that TP uses also *pis* (cf. E: “peace”). Hence, there remains the possibility to stress the communitarian, or social, aspects of peace, also, and not just one’s individual and personal well-being. This openness is contrary to the two or three previous examples (viz., TP: *wantok* and *bekim*), and is, for us, a welcome reminder not to oppose, too easily, Western, read: personal priorities against Melanesian, read: communitarian values.

4. Specific also is the use of TP: *Bikpela*, for God and Christ. Now, there are various social patterns in PNG societies, with some having a hereditary chief (maybe, rather, at the coast, and on the islands), while other groups have a so-called “big man”, TP: *bikman*. The latter reach their status by personal achievements, such as being impressive orators, fearless fighters, good organisers, etc., but they could lose their status, too.

This accepted content for a local leader points towards a shortcoming when TP: *Bikpela* is applied to God and Christ, who, by their very nature, cannot lose their status. Something similar could also be said against other functional terms used for Jesus, such as TP: *namelman* for “mediator”, or also *peman* (or the loan: *redima*) for “redeemer”. The latter terms refer to particular acts of the Lord, as mediating and compensating (cf. *em i paim ol rong bilong mi*, as in one of the songs). Yet, these functions are not totally unique to Him, and do not fully describe His essentially divine nature (cf. *em i wankain tru long Papa*, as said in the Nicene Creed). Again – still theologically speaking – one needs to be aware that TP: *Bikpela* should also allow for other aspects of Jesus’ mission, which means that He is a “servant” as well – an aspect, which does not very much appeal to Melanesian mentalities.<sup>21</sup>

5. Connected to Christ being our Lord, is also the concept that Christ is God’s Son – for which the old TP around Rabaul used the loan word Ge: *Son* (pronounced with a long vowel “o”, as in E: “old”). The term still appears in some songs, which presumably presume a direct derivation from the English term “son”. However, the main title for our Lord is that he is TP: *Pikinini (bilong God)*. Now this means only “child” –which can be either male or female (thus leading to the common distinction between TP:

*pikinini man* and *pikinini meri*). However, since words are interpreted in their context, one should not be too concerned that, in actual fact, “Son of God” is intended – without any concession, *avant la lettre*, to feminist theology.

6. Instead of TP: *baptism/baptais*, various church traditions used to refer to *wasim*, or even *waswas*. Morphologically, TP distinguishes these two verbs as transitive (“to wash something or somebody”) and reflexive (“to wash oneself”), with, in the latter case, also a possible ritual meaning. Various church traditions used one of these two terms in the past.

Important for us is that the Greek reference to “deep” and “dip [into water]” closely ties up with the Pauline image of “dying with, being buried with, Christ”, in order to be “raised with Him” (cf. Rom 6:4; 1 Cor 15:4; 2 Tim 2:11). This type of theology is now lost. Instead, the connotation is now that of “washing off” the stain of sin (cf. supra Part II, n. 5). This might well be an acceptable rendering, too, but it has lost the Christological, and more personal, implications of the other image.

7. In line with a general preference, the *Buk Baibel* has abandoned TP: *testamen*, although it is well alive in today’s lawyers’ offices. Instead, the phrases TP: *Nupela* and *Olpela Kontrak* have been introduced. It would seem, as has been indicated above (cf. supra Part II, n. 1), that the ancient church was aware of the difference between Gr: *synthèkè* and *diathèkè*, which led her to choose the latter, and translate it with L: *testamentum*/E: *testament*. This juridical term stands for a particular, one-sided initiative of a donor, who, in view of his/her death, freely transmits a property to somebody he/she has freely chosen. There are examples that TP: *las tok* has been used to express, exactly, this idea. Of course, “God does not die”, so that, after all, the idea of a contract, and of a TP: *las tok*, are not very lucky either. Actually, there are various current uses of TP: *kontrak*, e.g., regarding business transactions for people who work for wages. (On that concern, we have touched already, when referring to TP: *bikpela* and *bekim*). Finally, modern authors might like to note that the clauses with TP: *kontrak* still retain the infelicitous references to the “old” (read obsolete) Testament”, for which they themselves try to introduce the expression of a “first

testament” with Israel, which was never revoked. For all these reasons, TP: *kontrak* might not yet be the best choice.

A lot could probably be learned from a systematic analysis of the *Buk Baibel* (which might also indirectly reveal the kind of theology fostered by the translators).<sup>22</sup> Again, one might also like to study, further, some terms – like TP: *marimari* – which, at first, were probably of ecclesiastical origin, but have now been incorporated into the daily language. However, both these assignments would go beyond the limits set for this essay.

### Conclusion

Would it be possible to substantiate our analysis of PNG theological terms through some statistical data? We will try to make a first attempt, based upon some 50 TP terms, listed below (and leaving out the other Latin derivations, which, I believe, never really entered into the daily spoken TP).

As said before, it is often hard to come to a clear-cut decision in judging what is “indigenous theology” and what is not. There is, in fact, no language court (as is the *Académie Française*), and professional linguists are loath to add, in their lists, any “reference to the correctness of the Pidgin involved”.<sup>23</sup> Again, regarding probably derivations, alternative etymologies often remain possible. Hence, the figures given below in Table 2 are only approximate, leading to very tentative “averages”.

Table 2: Probable Derivations of Religious Terms

English:	103-111 = c107, or	54.87%
German:	30- 42 = c36	18.46%
Latin:	38- 42 = c40	20.51%
Kuanua:	12	6.15%
Total:	c 195 terms	99.99%

Important to note is also that our calculations in Table 2 cover the whole history of the Catholic church’s use of TP theological terms and their equivalents. We thus disregard when, long ago, say, TP: *Son* or *tewel*<sup>24</sup> dropped out of use, or when, more recently, the inclusive TP: *manmeri* was

first introduced. Naturally, the figures for a particular time span (or for a definite printed book) would be different again. With this in mind, we would like to express some tentative conclusions:

1. It is a particular theological opinion that ecclesiastical language is merely Bible-based and nothing else. Hence, to do justice to real life, many traditionally-used words also have to be taken into account.

2. The very example of the scriptures themselves shows that loan words have always been in use, whether taken from the Hebrew, the Greek, or also from the oldest translations in Latin.

3. The influence of non-English means that the Catholic religious vocabulary lies below the usually-quoted 75 percent of English derivations for TP as a whole. Yet, it should be noted, that certain derivations from the English might equally well be brought in by German-speaking missionaries, also familiar with Latin. This fact would even more reduce the English influence.

4. While observing that TP has shown a great inventiveness (as shown by the many recent paraphrases [listed above], and the high number of idioms [listed below], involving, e.g., *tok* and *pasin*), there remain only a dozen or so noteworthy cases, which show some kind of originality (such as TP: *bekim*, *bel*, *lusim*, *peman*, *sekan*, *tambu*, and *i tru*). On the whole, then, there have not been too many real TP “discoveries”, promising to have a lasting life.

5. As to the future, the growing importance of English education would suggest that the day might not be too far off that only English-derived TP words will be used. In fact – if one omits the few “religious” words (such as TP: *lotu*, *matmat*, *tambu*, and *marimari*) – we can affirm that, already, Catholic theology in TP is very close to a wholly-English-derived vocabulary.

## Endnotes

1. Thus, in the OT manuscripts from Qumran, there are two or three different applications of this method.

aa. One way was to write the name of God (i.e., in Latin script: JHWH) in ancient Phoenician characters, in the midst of an otherwise Hebrew text, written in the “square characters” of more recent origin.

bb. Another form was to avoid the name of God completely, and place just four dots, or sometimes four tiny, very carefully written, lozenges.

cc. Finally, people sometimes reverted to circumlocutions or euphemisms (instead of calling the personal name for God), such as “the Angel of God”, “the Heavens”, “the (ineffable) Name”, “the Place”, etc.

2. Theodotion, a second-century Jewish proselyte, who translated the Old Testament, and is known for often preferring transliterations over proper translations, nevertheless rendered *hallelujah* by the Greek equivalent for “Praise the One”. Yet, this was felt to be an unacceptable “innovation”.

3. As to God’s personal name, it seems that, for all practical purposes, its true pronunciation in Hebrew was, long ago, irretrievably lost. Apparently, there existed, in the old days, a kind of taboo surrounding the use of God’s name. Today, one can only conjecture how *J-H-W-H* really sounded. For this, scholars might refer either to the church fathers’ information about *Jabè*, or also to a Jewish euphemistic use of, say  $\text{יהוה}$  (*ha shem*) = “the (divine) Name”, which presents the same sequence of the vowels *a-e*. Only in our age, the so-called *Jerusalem Bible* started the spelling “Jahweh”.

4. Particular Hebrew names may receive a Greek masculine singular ending in *-s*, or a neuter plural ending in *-ma*. From the many examples, one can quote here:  $\text{ישוע}$  (*Y<sup>e</sup>shūā*) =  $\text{Ἰησοῦς}$  (*Iēsous*),  $\text{יהוחנן}$  (*Yehōchanan*) =  $\text{Ἰωάννα}$  (*Iōanna*),  $\text{כֶּפֶז}$  (*Kēfā*) =  $\text{Κηφᾶς}$  (*Kēphas*), or  $\text{שָׂטָן}$  (*sātān*) =  $\text{Σατανᾶς}$  (*Satanas*). The holy city Jerusalem is both called *Iērouśālēm* after the Hebrew ( $\text{ירושלם}$  (*Y<sup>e</sup>rūsālam*)), or – especially in Luke-Acts – *Hierosoluma*, which is clearly a Greek formation ( $\text{Ἱεροσόλυμα}$  (*Hierosoluma*)).

5. Well-known foreign sentences in the Greek NT include clauses like:  $\text{ἐφφθα}$  (*ephphatha*) = “be opened” (Mark 7:34),  $\text{ταλιθα κουμ}$  (*talitha koum*) = “little girl, get up” (Mark 5:41),  $\text{ἦλὶ ἦλὶ λεμὰ σαβαχθανί}$  (*ēli, ēli, lema sabachthani*) = “My Lord, My Lord, why have You forsaken Me” (Matt 27:46).

6. Compare the French, where *Pierre* stands for both the person “Peter” and for a “stone”, or the Italian, which has respectively *Pietro* and *pietra*.



7. Although some derive the Ge: *Ostern* (and E: Easter) from the old German word for “Resurrection”(?), the usually-given etymology links the term with the Old Saxon *Eastron*, pl: *Eastre*. This term would indicate the pagan goddess *Eostre*, whose feast was celebrated at the spring equinox, and whose name has its ultimate roots in our word for “East”.

8. See, for another example, the complex of H: שְׁאוֹל (*she’ol*)/Gr: ἄδης (*haidēs*)/L: *tartarus*, *infernum*, *inferi*/E: hell, briefly treated in Part II, under B, d.

9. In many cases, the English has used loan words, even in turning “Pentecost” (in Gr: “the 50th [day after Easter]” into “Whitsunday” (hence also: the end of “Whitsuntide”, in Latin: “[Dies] Dominica in [deponendis vertimentis] albis”). Other examples of old European creations and adaptations would include the following theological and ecclesiastical terms:

Gr <i>Pentekostēs</i>	Ge <i>Pfingsten</i>
L <i>confessio</i>	Ge <i>bi + jehen</i> (cf. Old High German)
L <i>Corpus Christi</i>	Ge <i>Fronleichnam</i> [ <i>Fron-</i> = “Lord”]
L <i>diluvium</i>	Ge <i>Sintflut</i> [ <i>Sint-</i> = “general”]
L <i>hebdomada sancta</i>	Ge <i>Karwoche</i> [cf. Kümmer cf. E: “care”]
L <i>Pascha</i>	Ge <i>Ostern</i> (= Resurrection, in Old Ge)
L <i>purgatorium</i>	Ge <i>Fegfeuer</i> [“fire” added!]
L <i>superstitio</i>	Ge <i>Aberglaube</i>
L <i>Trinitas</i>	Ge <i>Dreieinigkei</i> t
[E Holy Thursday]	Ge <i>Gruene Donnerstag</i> [ <i>grienen</i> = “to cry”]
	E Maundy Thursday [cf. L: <i>mandatum</i> ]

One might observe here that, besides the terms L: *Trinitas*/Ge: *Dreieinigkei*t (from which TP derived *God Triwan*), there appeared also Ge: *Dreifaltigkeit*, which does not stress the unity of God’s nature, but, rather, the distinction of the three persons, which has been more developed in Christian Oriental theology.

10. Mühlhäusler, 1979, p. 219, has noted that “the number of lexical items, which can be derived equally well from German or English is quite large”, but he does not consider the possibility that German missionaries might have been instrumental, too, in passing on derivations from the Latin.

11. Interesting for translators, is the option that, in early Christianity, the Hebrew God has not taken on the name of the highest God in the Greek/Roman pantheon, *Zeus* or *Jupiter*, whereas the common name *theos*/god has been used – a lesson for all future Christian translators. As to TP, Pech, 1985, has suggested to render the Hebrew אֱלֹהִים (*’ēl*)/אֱלֹהִים (*’elohim*) by TP *tambaran*, and TP *masalai* for the Gr: δαίμων (*daimōn*) (to replace the loaded TP *spirit nogut* or *spirit doti*).

12. As early as 1913, C. King collected a list of over 30 theological concepts, mainly Austronesian languages, while the Catholic Fathers O. Meyer, J. Bender, and H. Zwinge, did the same for over 170 theological-ascetical terms in Kuanua only (1924). For the erstwhile Papua, there also exists a 1945 Confessor's guide, with parallel texts in English, and in 11 vernacular languages.

13. Some Kuanua derivations, which come immediately to mind are *balus, birua, bung, diwai, dinau, garamut, guria, kakaruk, kiau, kundu, liklik, longlong, luluai, malolo, malira, marimari, matmat, pukpuk, tambaran, tambu, tultul, tumbuna*, etc. However, the estimate of 15 percent Kuanua loans in TP is no doubt too high, except, maybe, for previous generations around Rabaul. Mihalic's and Sievert's Dictionaries have actually recorded less than 10 percent words from Kuanua origin (Fry, 1977, p. 872, n. 11).

14. Modern German examples would include such eloquent terms as Ge: *Autobahn, Fernsprecher, Fahrrad*, etc., but also from the recent theological vocabulary, L: *testamentum* = Ge: *Bund*; Gr: *euaggelion* = Ge: *Frohbotschaft, Gute Nachricht*, etc. However, as for any other language, German, too, fully integrated many words of foreign origin (e.g., *Agitator, Fenster, Polizei*, etc.).

15. Examples of changed personal names in the *Nupela Testamen* would be:

<i>Andreas/Endru</i>	<i>Eva/Iv [sic]</i>	<i>Yakobus/Jems</i>
<i>Kristus/Krais</i>	<i>Lukas/Luk</i>	<i>Markus/Mak</i>
<i>Matias/Matyu</i>	<i>Paulus/Pol</i>	<i>Petrus/Pita</i>
<i>Yesus/Jisas</i>		<i>Yoanes/Jon, etc.</i>

What concerns the apostle Paul, formerly known with his Semitic name,  $\text{פְּאֻלִּי}$  (*Shā'ūl*), probably other factors will have to be taken into account. Thus, ancient literature contains references to the L: *paulus* = "small" (being possibly a nickname, which refers to the apostle's short stature), or a change of name, to honour the proconsul of Cyprus, Sergius Paulus (cf. Acts 13:7-12).

16. English-derived words include some unusual terms as *posin* (rather from "poison", than from "potion") and *giaman(im)* (from "gammon"?). Some authors (like C. King, 1913, p. 11) suggested that *lotu* was derived from "Lord". This would be comparable to our derivation of "church", from Gr:  $\text{κυριακός}$  (*kuriakos*) = "of the Lord". However, P. A. Lanyon-Orgill (1960, p. 237) reports that *lotu/loto/rotu*, etc., which is used all over the South Seas, derives from Fiji (where the term means "message"), or from Samoa (with various meanings).

17. Just one example might do show the gradual move away from obsolete words. Thus the first line of a still-used hymn said:

- 1931/1934: Ju kam, o *Debel Takondo*, kam long ol *boi bolong Deo*.  
1939/1943: Iu kam, iu *Devel Takondo*, iu *Devel* tru belong *Deo*.  
1974: Ya kam, God Spirit *Takondo*, yu Spirit tru bilong God antap.  
1986: Yu kam, God Spirit bilong laip, yu Spirit tru bilong God antap.

18. Now obsolete words, which were still found in *Long ai bilong God* (1979), included:

<i>alou</i> (55, 60, 80: greeting)	<i>kundar</i> (61)	<i>luluai</i>
<i>nukpuku</i> (53, 69)	<i>raring</i> (80, 84, 85, 91)	<i>ruru</i> (42, 104)
<i>santu</i> (from the Latin)	<i>takondo</i>	<i>virua</i> (69).

19. The term “neighbour” usually corresponds in the Bible to L: *proximus* (from a superlative form of the preposition *pro-*, hence “somebody very close”), and used to correspond to Gr: πλησίος (*plēsios*), originally an adverb with the same meaning.

20. On the linguistic *faux pas* – corrected in later editions – to translate Gr: ἀγάπη (*agapē*)/love by TP: *givim bel*, see Mihalic’s review of the *Nupela Testamen* (1971).

21. Linguistically speaking, TP: *bikpela* does not seem to be a lucky choice either, because that term is never used in daily speech to address a human chief, who is rather called TP: *bikman*. The term is an adjective, referring to a person’s huge size (as *draipela*), and not to one’s social position.

22. Compare, e.g., 2 Cor 6:1, where the Gr: χάρις (*charis*) is translated by the older Kuanua term *marimari* – or the English derivative TP: *laik bilong God*, while Catholics, in line with the Latin Vulgate, used to read TP: *grasia*. Another example is the current rendering of Gr: κλάσις τοῦ ἄρτου (*klasis tou 'artou*) (which, in its native language, is open-ended) by the ordinary TP: *kaikai wantaim*. The connotations for either rendering are surely not the same. Some might ask whether a hint at, say, “deification, regeneration, adoption” for “grace” would not have been better, or, also, for the possibility of a sacramental interpretation in “the breaking of the bread”?

23. See Mihalic, 1971a, p. 367.

24. Whatever the etymology, and the older orthographies (see note 17 above), people distinguish nowadays TP: *tewel/dewel* as “soul, spirit, reflection, shade”, from the TP: *devil/satan/spirit nogut*, for Satan, or the Devil, as a person.

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## APPENDICES

The following appendices supplement the data of Tables 1 and 2. However – for simplicity’s sake – German derivations have not been taken up in the second overview.

### APPENDIX 1

Theological terminology in TP, with their suggested origins. Indented terms in the first and second columns indicate either primary- or secondary-derived terms and idioms.

	Tok Pisin terms	TP alternatives	<English	<German	<Latin	<Kuanua
1	amen		amen	Amen		
1a		emen	amen			
1b		tru	(true)			
		i tru				
		kolim tru antap	[= swear]			
1c		i orait olsem	(alright)			
2	bekim		(([to give]back)			
	bekim bek		[= revenge]			
	bekim nogut		[= pay back]			
	bekim pekato		[= penance]			
2a		sori				
		wok sori				
2b		penans	penance		poenitentia	
2c		buse		Busse		
2d		strafe		Straffe		
3	bel		(belly)			
	belgut					
	bel isi					
	mi givim bel big					
	mi long					
3a		hat	heart	(Herz)		
		Santu Hat	(Sacred Heart)			
3b		insait	[= conscience]			

3c	lewa, liva (cf. liver)				
3d	kor Kor Takondo	(cf. cordial)		cor	(takondo, see 14)
	Santu Kor			(sanctus)	
4	Bikpela	(big [person])			
4a	Lord	Lord			
4b	Masta	Master			
4c	Luluai				Luluai
5	blesim	bless			
5a	santuim			(sanctificare)	
5b	varvandoan				varvandoan
6	diken	deacon			
6a	diakon		Diakon	diaconus	
7	ensel arkensel	angel archangel			
7a	engel wasengel	guardian angel	Engel		
7b	angelo wasangelo			angelus	
8	glori	glory		gloria	
8a	bilas	(cf. flash?)			
9	Got God Triwan	God (Trinity)	Gott	Trinitas Deus	
9a	Deo				
10	gut gutwok gutnius evangelio  gutupela sindaun	good [=merit] good news		Evangelium evangelium	
11	haiden(man/ meri)	heathen	Heiden		
11a	pegen	pagan		pagamus	
11b	tematan				tematan
12	hel paia bilong hel	hell (fire of hell)	Hölle		
12a	bikpaia				
12b	inferno paia bilong inferno			infernum	
12c	ples bilong	(place of dead)	[=inferi]		



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	daiman			
13	heven	heaven		
13a	paradais paradiso	paradise	Paradies	paradisum
13b	ples antap ples daun ples hia daun	(<place+on top) (<place+down)		
14	holi holiman	holy	(heilig)	
14a	santu God Santu Triwan papa (santu) santu gjaman santu hostia host bret bilong Yukaris santu lukaut santu wan nem santu wanfamili santu wara santu wel santium Trinitas Santu	saint [= hypocrite] [= patron saint]	(hl. Vater) Hostie	sanctus papa hostia
14b	takondo tewel takondo Trinitas Takondo	[= "holy shade"]		(takondo)
15	insens	incense		incensum
15a	smelsmok, smok smel			
15b	wairau		Weihrauch (Ostern)	
16	Ista	Easter		
16a	Pasova	Passover		
16b	Paska	Pasch		pascha
17	klinpaia liklik klinpela paia	(<clean+fire)		
17a	purgatori	purgatory	(Fegfeuer)	purgatorium
18	konpesio	confession		confessio
18a	baikten		Beichte	

18b	varvai			varvai
19	kontrak	contract		
19a	testamen las tok	testament	Testament	testamentum
20	Krais	Christ		
20a	Kristus		Christus (Kreuz)	Christus
21	kruse mak (bilong) kruse rot (bilong) kruse	cross (mark)  (road, way)		crux
21a	kros diwai kros mak bilong diwai kros			(diwai = tree)
22	lotu(im)			(cf. lotu [imported])
	haus lotu sios	[= church]		
	lotu giaman lotu bilong Sande	[=false religion] [=Sunday service]		
22a	brukim skru	(<to bend+ screw)		
22b	nildaun	(to kneel down)		
22c	sevis	service		(servitium)
23	marit bagarapim marit brukim katim mari senisim marit	marriage (adultery)  (divorce) (divorce) (remarriage)	(Ehebruch)	
23a	matrimonio	matrimony		matrimonium
24	misteri	mystery		
24a	tok hait	(<talk+to hide)		
25	ofa ofaim, ofrim		Opfer opfern	
25a	brukim laik bilong bodi	(<to bend+liking)		
25b	sakrifais	sacrifice		sacrificium
26	ona onaim, onrim	honour		
26a	rispek	respect		

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	rispektim			
26b	litimapim nem	(<to lift up+name)		
26c	bilas bilasim	(to flash?)		
26d	ruru			ruru
27	paia bikpaia	(fire) (big fire)		
	hel (also n. 12)	hell	Hölle	
28	pasin daunpasin jeles pasin mipasin pasin i gat sem pasin nogut	fashion [= humility] [= jealousy] [= egoism] [= impurity] [= immorality, sin]		
29	peman namelman	(<pay+man) (mediator)		
29a	redima redimin	redeemer	(Erlöser)	redemptor
30	pikinini			
30a	Son	son	Sohn	
31	pis	peace		
31a	bel isi			
31b	sekan sekanim	(shake hands)		
32	pre, prea buk pre pre bilong helpim	pray prayer book [= intercede]		precare
32a	beten buk beten	(bid)	Beten	
32b	raring buk raring			raring
33	promis	promise		
33a	profesio	profession		professio
33b	voto	vow		votum
34	prosesio	procession	Prozession	processio
34a	varvaliu			varvaliu
35	roseri	rosary		
35a	korona			corona
35b	kurkurua			kurkurua
36	sem	shame	(beschämt)	

	pasin i gat sem		[= impurity]	
	pilai long sem		[= masturbation]	
37	semetri		cemetery	coemiterium
37a	matmat			
38	sin		sin (Sünde)	
	pogivim sin		forgive sins	
	larim sin			
	lusim sin			
	tekewe sin			
	rausim sin		(heraus)	
	sin bilong		[original sin]	
	kamap			
	i no gat sin		(immaculate)	(immaculate)
38a	asua		(<as you were?)	
38b	pasin nogut			
38c	pekato			peccatum
39	sios		church	
	brukim sios		(schism)	
39a	eklesia			ecclesia
40	sori		sorry	
	sori nambatu		(attrition)	
	sori nambatu		(contrition)	
40a	nukpuku			nukpuku
	nupuku-laik		(contrition)	
	nukpuku-pret		(attrition)	
41	spirit		spirit	spiritus
	spirit bilong			
	daiman			
	spirit nogut			
	(rausin) spirit		exorcism	
	nogut			
	spirit doti			
	Spiritu Santu			
	Spirit Takondo			
	bilong God			
	(God) Spirit			
	Takondo			
41a	sol		soul (Seele)	
41b	win		[= wind]	
	tewel		[=shadow] (Teufel)	
42	stret		straight	
42a	takondo			Takondo[see holi n. 14]

takondoim  
Trinitas  
Takondo

43	tambu	taboo	tabu	tambu
	buk tambu	[Holy Bible]		
	Fonde tambu	(Holy Thursday)		
	Gut Fonde			
	Fraide tambu			
	Gut Fraide	Good Friday		
	hostia tambu	sacred host	(hlg Hostie)	
	kaikai tambu	sacred food		
	bret bilong			
	Yukaris			
	man/meri i stap	[= celibate]		
	tambu			
	tambu long	[= fast]		
	bikkaikai			
	tambu long mit	[= abstinence]		
	hapim kaikai			
	vinivel	[= Lent]		vinivel
	tebol tambu	[= altar]		
	alta			
	wara tambu	(holy water)		
	santu wara			
	holiwara			
	wel tambu	(holy oils)		
	wik tambu	Holy Week		
44	tok	talk		
	bikpela tok	[commandment]		
	brukim tok	(break a promise)		
	sakim tok	[= disobey]		
	senisim tok	[= perjury]		
	tok antap tru	[= oath]		
	tok bilas	[= ridicule]		
	tok bilip	[=act of faith]		
	credo		credo	
	tok bokis	[= parable]		
	tok giaman	[= lie]		
	tok hait	mystery		
				misteri
	tok nogut	[= bad language]		
	tok piksa	[= parable]		

	tok bokis			
	parabel			
	tok skul, skul	[= sermon]		
	omili	homily		
	tok stil	[= divulge a secret]		
	deskraib(im)	[= slander]		
	wantok	(one talk)		
44a	lo	law		
44b	mandato	[= commandment]		mandatum
	varvato			varतोवo
	varvato bilong	[tradition]		
	bipo			
45	trabel	trouble [= promiscuity]		
	mekim trabel	[= adultery]		
	bagarapim			
	marit			
46	virgo	virgin		virgo
46a	virjin, virsin			
46b	man/meri i stap tambu (also n. 43)			
47	wasim	wash	waschen	
47a	waswas			
47b	baptais	baptism/-tise		baptismus/-izare
	baptaisim			
	baptisem	baptism oil	Ol	baptisma/-mus
48	wel			
	wel tambu			
	welim	[= extreme unction]		
	sikmanmeri			
48a	unsio			unctio
49	wetim	to wait	warten	
49a	hop	to hope	hoffen	
50	yukaris	eucharist		
	ekaristia	eucharist		
	oikaristia	eucharist		
	eukaristia		eucharistia	
50a	misa	mass	Messe	missa
50b	komunio	communion	Kommunion	communio

**APPENDIX 2**

	Tok Pisin	English	Latin	Greek	Hebrew
1.	aba	abba	abba	abba	'abba
	amen	amen	amen	amēn	'āmēn
	aleluja	hallelujah	alleluia	hallēlouia	halleluyāh
	osana	hosanna	hosanna	Hōsanna	Hoshi'a-na
	Jisas	Jesus	lesus	lēsous	Yeshua'
	emanuel	emmanuel	emmanuhel	emmanouēl	immanu'el
	maranata	maranatha	maranata	marana tha	maranata
	mesias	messiah	messias	messias	mashiach
	rabi	rabbi	rabbi	rabbi	rabbi
	satān	satān	satānas	satānas	sātān
2.	angel	angelus	aggelos	angelos	
	apospel	apostle	postolus	apostolos	
	baptais	baptise	baptizare	baptizein	
	baibel	bible	bibla	biblion	
	Krais	Christ	Christus	Christos	
	devil/tewel	devil	diabolus	diabolos	
	diakon	deacon	diaconus	diakonos	
	eklesia	ekklēsia	ecclesia	ekklēsia	
	bisop	bishop	episcopus	episkopos	
	yukaris	eucharist	eucharistia	eucharistia	
	evangelio	—	evangelium	euangelion	
	episel	epistle	epistola	epistolē	
	katolik	catholic	catholicus	Katholikos	
	sios/siots	church	—	kuriakos	
	martir	martyr	martyr	martus	
	misteri	mystery	mysterium	mystērion	
	paska	pasch	pasca	Pascha	
	pris(ter)	priest	presbyter	presbuteros	
	profet	prophet	propheta	prophētēs	
	simbolo	symbol(um)	symbolum	sumboulion	
3.	konfirmasi	confirm	confirmare		
	kruse	cross	crux		
	grasis	grace	gratia		
	inferno	—	infernum		
	redima	redeemer	redemptor		
	revelesen	revelation	revelatio		
	sakramen	sacrament	sacramentum		
	testamen	testament	testamentum		
	Triniti	Trinity	Trinitas		

- |    |                                  |   |   |
|----|----------------------------------|---|---|
| 4. | Got<br>Lord<br>hel<br>pre<br>sin | God (Gott)<br>Lord<br>hell (Hölle)<br>pray<br>sin |   |
| 5. | bekim<br>kontrak<br>sekan/pis    | bel/lewa<br>lotu<br>wantok                        | Bikpela i tru<br>peman pikinini<br>wasim/waswas |



# ILLUSTRATING EVIL – THE EFFECT OF THE FALL AS SEEN IN GENESIS 4-11<sup>1</sup>

**Revd Victor James Johnson**

The account of the Fall in Gen 3 is one of the most-tragic events in Bible (and world) history. With Adam's fall into sin came the loss of the perfect relationship, which mankind had with the Creator. The fruits of sin have been displayed in every human life since, with the exception of the incarnate Son of God.

The spread of sin, and its effects, can be clearly seen in the early chapters of Genesis. Amid the spread of sin, we see also the spread of God's grace, as He works within the fallen world to buy back sinners. Sin is a problem, which has no human answer. It blinds the man, hardens his heart, and brings death. It is only through the action of God that sin can be dealt with. Ultimately, this comes only in the work of Jesus Christ. Gen 1-11 contains the first shadows and promise of the gospel of salvation.

## **I. Prolegomemon – the Theme of Genesis 1-11**

David Clines, in his book *The Theme of the Pentateuch*, outlines a number of themes in Gen 1 to 11. Quoting von Rad, he refers to the motif of sin-divine, speech-mitigation-punishment as a recurring cycle in these chapters.<sup>2</sup> He gives five cycles of this motif, namely, the Fall, Cain and Abel, the sons of God, the Flood, and Babel. By his analysis, each one of these cycles has, in turn, the elements of an act of sin, a divine speech of judgment, God mitigating the judgment, and an act of punishment.<sup>3</sup> In my own assessment, however, I believe it is more fitting to see the "sons of God" incident in Gen 6:1-4 as part of the Flood.

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<sup>1</sup> There was no footnote number 1 in the original text. –Revising ed.

<sup>2</sup> David J. A. Clines, *The Theme of the Pentateuch*, JSOT Supp 10, Sheffield UK: Sheffield University Press, 1978, pp. 61-64.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, table p. 63.

Clines also draws attention to another possible theme in Gen 1-11, again, as proposed by von Rad, namely the “spread of sin- spread of grace” theme. This motif is directly relevant to the study before us. Clines outlines it as follows: within these chapters, there is an increase in sinful action, and an increasingly-severe punishment. From Eden to Cain, Lamech, the sons of God, the Flood generation, there is “an ever-growing avalanche of sin, a continually-widening chasm between man and God”. It progresses from disobedience, to murder, to indiscriminate killing, to titanic lust, to total corruption, and uncontrolled violence. This “avalanche of sin” is countered by God’s ever-increasing severity of punishment. However, within this, there is also the increase of God’s grace. While Adam and Eve are punished, they are not killed, but are provided with clothes. Cain is not killed, but given a protective mark. Noah and family are preserved from the Flood. Yet there appears no “grace” within the Babel story.<sup>4</sup>

While there is great merit in this proposal, I tend to think that we should regard the judgment pronounced in Eden as the most severe. The weight of that judgment should be seen in the fact that Adam and Eve (and hence all humanity) are eternally cut off from intimate fellowship with God. They die spiritually, and suffer corruption, the effects of sin, and enmity with God and creation. This is the strength of the curses in Gen 3:14-24. I would argue that, theologically, this is a heavier penalty than those, which follow (including physical death). Those judgments, which follow, are really only manifestations of the curses in Gen 3. To see the expulsion from the Garden as a minor punishment is to miss the theological significance of separation from God, and the broken relationship with Him.

The third theme, to which Clines draws attention, is the “Creation-Uncreation-Recreation” theme. This centres around the Flood narrative. This view sees Gen 3-6 as the “undoing of creation”, the Flood itself is only the final stage of this uncreation, which had begun with the Fall. The Flood is the wiping off of this ever-corrupting creation, and the re-creation of a new order.<sup>5</sup> Yet, the sin after the Flood, shows that the spiritual problem of

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<sup>4</sup> Ibid., pp. 64-65.

<sup>5</sup> Ibid., pp. 73-75.

sin cannot be dealt with by a physical solution. The parallels between the watery and void world of Gen 1:1-2 and the Flood are attractive. The commissions to Adam in Gen 1:26-31, and Noah in Gen 9:7-19, also have a similar function in the “first” and “second” creations. There is much to commend this view, however, it cannot be seen as *the* theme of these chapters, as it leaves the ultimate question unanswered of how sin is to be dealt with.

Clines, in his summary, concludes that both the “spread of sin-spread of grace” theme and the “creation-uncreation-recreation” theme have a place in the theme of primeval history. He suggests that these be seen together as a description of the overall theme. This leads him to conclude two overarching principles from these chapters:

1. Man tends to destroy what God has made good. Sin continues to spread, despite punishment and forgiveness.
2. No matter how drastic man’s sin becomes, God’s grace never fails to deliver man from the consequences of sin.<sup>6</sup>

This is a good starting point for our study. These themes display clearly the character of God, depicted in Gen 1-11, and also the effects of sin in men and in the world. It draws our attention to God’s covenantal promise of redemption, and sets the scene and background for the call of Abraham, and the promise of redemption through Israel, and, ultimately, through Christ. The question we are confronted with, after reading Gen 1-11, is, “How can God buy back sinful man into the perfect relationship lost at the Fall?” This question finds its answer in the revelation of redemptive history.

## **II. The Doctrine of the Fall**

The account of the Fall is found in Gen 3. God placed the first man and woman in the Garden of Eden. They lived in a special, perfect, eternal relationship with God. They enjoyed perfect intimacy with God and each other. They were, in Goldsworthy’s words, “God’s people, in God’s place,

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<sup>6</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 76.

under God's rule".<sup>7</sup> The mark of this intimate relationship is displayed in 2:25 "The man and his wife were both naked, and felt no shame." The rule of God is marked by the single command, "You are free to eat from any tree in the Garden, but you must not eat of the tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil, for when you eat of it you will surely die." (2:16-17). This is the test of obedience. All things are permissible, with this one exception. This command is clear and plain, and its consequences clearly stated. This command is the "boundary fence" for right relationship between humans and God.

Sin comes with the temptations of the snake (3:1-7). He comes to the woman, and firstly sows seeds of doubt, "Did God really say . . . ?" (3:1). Then he casts doubts upon the good character of God: "You will not surely die, for God knows when you eat it your eyes will be opened" (3:4), that God is actually holding something back from them unjustly. The final temptation is the desire to be like God (3:4), having complete knowledge like Him.

The sin is not the actual digestion of this fruit, but the wilful disobedience of the direct and explicit command of God. It is the desire to be their own God, to be independent of the Creator's rule, which is the essence of sin. As Dumbrell has expressed it, "Humankind is thus presented in the narrative as the usurper of the divine prerogatives, and snatching at divinity, a situation which the second Adam would reverse" (Phil 2:6).<sup>8</sup>

The first effect of the Fall, and their "eyes being opened", was the great sense of shame at being naked. Their nakedness had been a sign of their innocence. The second consequence was death. The perfect communion with God had been withdrawn and destroyed.<sup>9</sup> This is clearly seen in their hiding from God's presence (3:8-9). The death they suffer is

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<sup>7</sup> Graeme Goldsworthy, *Gospel and Kingdom*, Exeter UK: Paternoster Press, 1981, p. 47.

<sup>8</sup> William J. Dumbrell, *The Faith of Israel*, Leicester UK: Apollos IVP, 1988, p. 20.

<sup>9</sup> F. Delitzsch, *Old Testament History of Redemption*, Peabody MA: Hendrickson Publishers, 1988, p. 23.

firstly spiritual, but the decaying process, which would eventually lead to physical death, began at that time.<sup>10</sup>

In the curses that follow, God curses nature, then woman, then man, the reversal of the created order, but this is the order in which the temptations occur. The curses actually affect the nature of the role of each party within creation. Dumbrell's point is significant here, "This reversal of order suggests that sin represents an attack upon the harmony of the created order, and not merely a moral lapse."<sup>11</sup> The curses are significant, because, in this "fall", harmony with God, and harmony within creation, is lost. This is the total fracturing of God's world. The effects of this are clearly illustrated in the events recorded in Gen 4-11.

One of the first effects of sin is their attempt to hide from God (3:8). All people since that day have tried to hide their sin from God, a totally futile exercise. Cain tried to hide (4:9), the builders of Babel tried to hide their sin in making a great name for themselves (11:4), and there are many other examples throughout scripture. The openness and trust of the relationship has gone, swallowed by guilt, in the presence of a holy God.<sup>12</sup>

In this sin against God's authority, relationships are broken in creation. As Sailhamer comments, "[the] alienation between the man and the woman went far beyond the shame that each now felt . . . the author now recounts the petty attempt on the man's part to cast blame on the woman, and, obliquely, on God".<sup>13</sup> Calvin is even stronger on this sense of Adam's usurping God's authority. Commenting on 3:12, he writes,

The boldness of Adam now more clearly betrays itself; for, so far being subdued, he breaks forth into coarser blasphemy. He had, before, been tacitly expostulating with God, now he begins openly to

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<sup>10</sup> H. M. Morris, *The Genesis Record*, Grand Rapids MI: Baker Book House, 1976, p. 118.

<sup>11</sup> Dumbrell, *The Faith of Israel*, p. 20.

<sup>12</sup> G. C. Aalders, *Genesis*, vol 1, Grand Rapids MI: Zondervan, 1981, p. 104.

<sup>13</sup> J. H. Sailhamer, *Genesis*, The Expositor's Bible Commentary, vol 2, F. E. Gaebelien, ed., Grand Rapids MI: Zondervan, 1990, p. 54.

contend with Him, and triumphs as one who has broken through all barriers.<sup>14</sup>

I believe these comments are justified. Whereas we experience these words of Adam in verse 12 in our daily lives and actions, here Adam, for the first time in eternity, brings such charges against the Almighty. Here is sin. Here is the creature accusing the Creator. We may have grown accustomed to such blame-shifting, but here we have a watershed in relationships. This attitude, which is displayed in 3:12, recurs in relationships throughout Gen 1-11, throughout the rest of the book, and throughout the Bible.

We will now examine these motifs, as they occur in subsequent narratives.

### **III. The Progress of Sin in Genesis 4-11**

#### **a. Cain and Abel**

The difficulties in the relationship between Cain and his brother, Abel, rose out of the context of worship. Both were worshippers of God, and offered sacrifices. Yet their attitudes were different. Cain offered grain or fruit, while Abel offered animals. Abel was accepted, while Cain was not. Was Cain's sacrifice not accepted by God because he offered plant, rather than animal, sacrifices? Morris thinks that this is the case. He postulates that God had revealed how sacrifices were to be made, after the expulsion from Eden. "The entire occurrence can only be really understood in the context of an original revelation by God regarding the necessity of substitutionary sacrifice, as a prerequisite to approaching God."<sup>15</sup> This may be true in a wider Pentateuchal context, but I believe that Cain's fault is more fundamental than in forms and practices. The problem lies in his attitude. Sailhamer comments,

Take notice that the author has omitted any explanation [of why Cain's offering was not accepted]. He is apparently less concerned

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<sup>14</sup> John Calvin, *Commentaries on the First Book of Moses called Genesis*, vol 1, J. King, tran., Grand Rapids MI: Baker Book House, reprint 1979, pp. 163-164.

<sup>15</sup> Morris, *The Genesis Record*, pp. 136-137.

about Cain's offering than he was with Cain's response to the Lord's rejection of his offering.<sup>16</sup>

I believe the problem lies in his attitude toward God. Notice his reaction to non-acceptance in verse 5, he is angry. Notice the content of God's advice/rebuke in verse 7: "If you do what is right, will you not be accepted? But if you do not do what is right, sin is crouching at your door; it desires to have you, but you must master it." This suggests an underlying spirit of rebellion. He wants to worship God on his own terms. Cain wants to be "God" of his own life.

The power of this rebellious desire is borne out in his action. In verse 8, he killed his brother. It was not Abel who had not accepted him. Abel had not rebuked him. This is the effect of sin. The light of the righteous Abel shone upon the dark unrepentant heart of Cain. Abel's righteousness showed Cain's offerings to be hypocritical. Rather than repent, and do what is right, Cain preferred to remove the witness, which accused him. Goldsworthy clearly sums up the incident,

Cain refuses God's verdict, in which his offering is rejected, and his brother's accepted. He responds with anger directed at Abel, and kills him. Human conflict is thus shown to be the consequence of broken fellowship with God. There is anger at the grace of God, when shown to another.<sup>17</sup>

Like his parents, when confronted by God, Cain shifts responsibility, (v. 9) first lying, and then denying responsibility for his brother. Once again, the punishment takes the form of curses upon the man's relationship with his fellows and the created world. Cain's sin was anger with God, it bore fruit in destroying his brother, and now results in broken relationships with all people and the creation. Sin is rebellion against God. It is manifest in selfishness, resentment of others, and broken relationships.

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<sup>16</sup> J. H. Sailhamer, *Genesis*, p. 61.

<sup>17</sup> Graeme Goldsworthy, *According to Plan*, Homebush West NSW: Lancer Books, 1991, p. 137.

## **b. The Cainites**

The line of Cain, as shown in Gen 4:17-26, displays the same tendencies. Cain is indeed preserved by God as He promised (4:15). Yet arrogance rises through the line. Lamech, the fifth generation, saw Cain's protection in a different light. Whereas it was God who would avenge Cain if he were killed, Lamech taunts, "I have killed a man for wounding me, a young man for injuring me. If Cain is avenged seven times, then Lamech 77 times" (vv. 23-24). Lamech will do the avenging, and 11 times more than for Cain! His arrogant, sinful attitude is well stated by Hamilton.

Unlike his ancestor, several generations earlier, who felt the desperate need of divine protection, Lamech feels he is his own security. He can handle any difficulty, or any mistreatment, quite adequately by himself.<sup>18</sup>

This genealogy gives us an account of the start of civilisation. God's grace is present, even with the godless line. We read of technology, arts, music, and violence. Society progresses, but sin is the underlying problem. Relationships are fractured. To summarise, we may use Goldsworthy's words, "By the grace of God, human society continues, but, within it, are the seeds of self-destruction in the breakdown of human relationships."<sup>19</sup>

## **c. The Genealogy of Noah**

Gen 5 looks like a harmless record of the generations from Adam to Noah. What is obvious are the great ages of the antediluvian patriarchs. Yet, there is a structure in this genealogy, which is very significant. Each unit is constructed as follows: "When A had lived X years, he became the father of B. And, after he became the father of B, he lived Y years, and he bore sons and daughters. All the days of A were X+Y years. And he died" (my translation). The significance of this is in the last phrase "and he died". No other biblical genealogy contains this. While our attention is on the long lives, we fail to remember that mankind was created to live forever. While

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<sup>18</sup> Victor P. Hamilton, *The Book of Genesis: chapters 1-17*, Grand Rapids MI: William B. Eerdmans, 1983, p. 241.

<sup>19</sup> Goldsworthy, *According to Plan*, p. 138.



these men may live for nearly a millennium, it is a good deal short of forever. Instead of seeing this genealogy as a record of long life, we should note that it is a litany of death.

The only exception to this pattern is Enoch (5:24), who did not die, but was taken by God. As men multiply, so does sin. Death, the promised penalty, has reigned in all lives. However, in the counter-example of Enoch, we see the saving grace of God to reverse this process. His assumption prefigures the resurrection of Christ, and the defeat of sin and death.

#### **d. The Flood**

Chapter 6 highlights the problem of sin. In 6:1-4, we are introduced to a strange union between “the sons of God” and “the daughters of men”, and groups called “Nephilim” and “Giborim”. Interpretations of this event vary, and it is not necessary to go into it here. Regardless of who are meant by these terms, it is obviously not pleasing to God, for note verse 3, “Then the LORD said, ‘My Spirit will not contend (LXX “remain with”) with man forever, for he is mortal; his days will be 120 years.’ ”

These Giborim, the “mighty men”, and men of renown, who resulted from the union (whether totally human or angelic), seem to imply a rise in human strength, and a desire to claim divine rights, and rule for themselves. Here (implicitly) is the desire of Eden again, to take the place of God. This is the social background to the Flood narrative.

Verse 5 is a telling commentary on the spread of sin, clearly portrayed by the NIV translation: “The LORD saw how great man’s wickedness on earth had become, and that every inclination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil all the time” (emphasis mine). In Gen 1, “God saw . . . and it was very good.” Now He sees the opposite, a lost, rebellious world.<sup>20</sup> The result is God’s decision to “uncreate the world”, verse 7.

The knowledge of good and evil, so craved by Adam and Eve, has shown itself as an avalanching desire for evil, a desire for self-rule, and

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<sup>20</sup> Note the comments made by J. H. Sailhamer, *Genesis*, p. 80.

disobedience towards God. The corruption is so great, and relationships so damaged, that God must start again. Only Noah is found, who is righteous.

Following this sinful state, comes God's judgment in the Flood. Yet there is still grace, 120 years elapse before the rain (v. 3), and Noah and his family are preserved.

**e. Noah and Ham**

Has the Flood destroyed the problem of sin? The answer is "No!" The answer comes clearly, immediately after the Flood, in 9:20-29. Noah planted a vineyard, drank its wine, and got drunk. He lay naked, and his son Ham acted shamefully towards him (9:20-22). Again, we are confronted with a perplexing account. Little detail is given. What exactly did Ham do to receive such a curse? We cannot say for sure, but, at the very least, it was disrespect towards his father. Aalders comments here:

He [Ham] was amused by what he discovered, and, later, mockingly shares his amusement with his brothers. Ham, by his very attitude, displayed a tendency towards uncouthness, and lack of respect for his father. . . . The disdain and disrespect that Ham showed toward his father was serious enough to warrant his condemnation.<sup>21</sup>

It is true that respect for parents is paramount in the Old Testament. Respect for parents reflects respect for God. At very least, Ham shows that sinful attitude to exalt one's self over the true authority. He boasts in his own wisdom contrasted to his father's folly. It is the rebellious attitude of Eden again. Once again, sin finds its destructive power in human relationships. A simple incident, yet a telling one. As in the progression of generations from Cain to Lamech, so the generations, from Ham through the descendants of Canaan, would see the increase in this rebellion. What was for Ham a carnal jesting, later manifested itself in the abominations of the Canaanites.

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<sup>21</sup> Aalders, *Genesis*, vol 1, p. 203.

What of Noah's sin? No comment is made regarding him. I think that his folly is clear to all. Here, the one described as righteous and blameless (6:9), is a man of flesh, too. He has the same sinful flaws as his first parents.

**f. Babel**

The tower of Babel gives us the last example of sinful rebellion, and God's judgment, within these chapters. Gen 11:4: "Then they said, 'Come let us build ourselves a city, with a tower that reaches to the heavens (lit. "with its head in heaven"), so that we may make a name for ourselves, and not be scattered over the face of the whole earth.'" Several things are important here. The people were united in building their own city. They wanted to make a name for themselves. (Since they are united, they can only refer to giving themselves a big name before God.) Their tower was to reach the very dwelling place of God. They refused to be scattered, as God had commanded (1:28; 9:1).

This endeavour, again, is direct rebellion against God's authority and command. As Wenham comments,

It seems likely that Genesis views it as sacrilege. For the sky is also heaven, the home of God, and this ancient skyscraper may be another human effort to become like God, and have intercourse with Him.<sup>22</sup>

The desire of Adam and Eve to be like God, and equal His authority, is, once again, demonstrated. Yet, one again, the Sovereign God acts. He scatters the rebels. One cannot attain the divine by human efforts.

Dumbrell's comments are apt at this point:

The implication is that the problem, attacked by God, was the problem of the misplaced centre. Human beings regarded themselves as the measure of all things, able to control the course of their world, able to build better worlds! Of course, by such endeavour, the naked meaning of sin is exposed. Such human attempts, then, and since,

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<sup>22</sup> Gordon J. Wenham, *Genesis 1-15*, Waco TX: Word Books, 1987, p. 239.

which leave God out of consideration, are sin in its baldest, and most-blattant form.<sup>23</sup>

Sin spreads in extent as the population grows, and there are more broken relationships. It spreads in intensity with society. Yet, its nature is still the same as the first sin. It is the usurping of God's authority, and wanting to be our own gods. Mankind is fallen, and only the action of God in history can change this downward spiral.

The sequel of the Babel incident comes in the calling of Abram. God would gather his descendants to a place, give him a great name, and bring him into fellowship with God. This is God's action in redemption, God reversing the curses of the Fall. For man, it means humble submission to the revelation of God, and obedience to His command. It is repentance, and acceptance of God's rule.

## **Conclusion**

The perfect relationship between God, man, woman, and creation was broken by one act of disobedience. Adam and Eve desired to be like God, and know good and evil. In their disobedience, came the knowledge of good and evil, and a never-ending desire to do evil. Their desire to be like God became a trait for all their descendants. We have a desire to want to be free of God's rule, and be our own gods.

This is clearly seen throughout Gen 4-11. Sin is the marking theme. God acts in judgment and grace. Man, by his own efforts, cannot reach God, nor even independence from God. Sin destroys relationships, and brings sorrow and death, as we see in these chapters.

Only God's action can right this wrong. In Gen 3:15, God foretold of a descendant of the woman, who would crush the snake's head, while He would be bruised. The Son of God came as the fulfilment of this word. He defeated Satan, sin, and death, and has brought those who believe back into a restored relationship with God.

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<sup>23</sup> Dumbrell, *The Faith of Israel*, p. 23.

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# THE RELATIONSHIP OF ISLAM TO JUDAISM AND CHRISTIANITY

**Wanis Semaan**

A typical, traditional Muslim self-understanding is that Islam offers the fullness of God's revelation in a very special and unique way. God's revelation in Islam is special and unique, in so far as God spoke through the archangel Gabriel. Muhammad heard, and repeated what he had heard. In this manner, the difference between revelation in Islam, and revelation in both Judaism and Christianity, lies in the fact that, here, God acted directly, and that the human dimension in revelation was merely that of a medium, which carried the revelation, as he heard it, without making any contribution, or taking anything away from what God Himself transmitted.

W. Montgomery Watt posits three points as Islam's understanding of itself. 1) Islam, he says, owes nothing to any system of thought or religion that preceded it. 2) Islam is superior to both Judaism and Christianity. 3) Islam possesses, furthermore, all the answers to the most-perplexing question of life. Watt goes on to say that such a self-understanding is sometimes exaggerated beyond limits that may be warranted.<sup>1</sup> Despite Watt's conciliatory, and irenic reservation, these points remain the essential self-understanding of Islam that we may deduce from the Qur'an itself.

These three points are directly related to Islam's understanding of revelation. The Qur'an is the direct revelation of God to humankind. In the formation of the Qur'an, and its authorship, the human element played no role at all. The archangel Gabriel carried God's message, the illiterate Prophet Muhammad heard, and repeated what he had heard, faithfully. Later, actually after the death of Muhammad, the text was written.

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[N.B.: The footnote numbers in the original printed edition were incorrectly numbered. They have now been numbered correctly. –Revising ed.]

<sup>1</sup> See W. Montgomery Watt's essay in R. G. Hovannisian, and Speros Vryonis Jr, eds, *Islam's Understanding of Itself*, Malibu CA: Undena Publications, 1983, pp. 5ff.

Many a Muslim scholar would suggest that revelation, as Christians understand it, is the incarnate Word of God. The Word of God became flesh in the person of Jesus of Nazareth. For Muslims, on the other hand, revelation is the Qur'an, itself, in other words, the Word of God for Muslims became a book. It came directly from God, and the Arabic language. Gabriel, in the Muslims' sense, read from the original Qur'an that is kept by God Himself.

I have purposely begun here with the unique self-understanding of Islam, and did not begin with the typically-Western proposition that Judaism, Christianity, and Islam form the three monotheistic, Abrahamic religions. If we begin with such a statement, then, as in all logical statements, or syllogisms, the conclusion is already inherent in the proposed axiom. Then, the conclusion would be: "Hurrah, we are one, big, happy family!" That is more the wishful thinking of well-meaning, but sometimes naive, Orientalists, to whom I do not belong.

By training and discipline, I am a sociologist of religion. Sociologists of religion propose that religion, especially for those who fall in the Durkheimian school, is a collective product of society. For Durkheim, "religion is a unified system of belief and practices, relative to sacred things, which is to say, things set apart and forbidden – beliefs and practices, which unite one, single, moral community called a church, and all those who adhere to them".<sup>2</sup> Here we see what Durkheim meant with the statement that religion is an "eminently social thing".<sup>3</sup> Such teaching would immediately provoke a negative stance from Muslims, since religion is something that God gives, and whose development has nothing to do with the practices of any society.

The Prophet Muhammad was born in the year 570 AD in Mecca. At the time of his birth, Arabia did not have a religious vacuum. Jews,

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<sup>2</sup> Emile Durkheim, *The Elementary Forms of the Religious Life*, New York NY: The Free Press, 1965, p. 62.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 62f. See J. Spencer Trimmingham, *Christianity Among the Arabs in Pre-Islamic Times*, London UK: Longman and Librarie du Libon, 1979, the first five chapters.



Christians, polytheists, as well as a wide variety of heathen practices, were present. The Arabian society was a “religious” society, if we mean by religious, that people sought and found the answers that most stilled their thirst for satisfying explanations of the complex and bewildering nature of their universes. The Jews, who were in Arabia, were in diaspora, and separated from the land, in which Jahweh chose to take up His residence. In Psalm 137, we read of the mournful cry of the Jew in exile: “How can I sing the Lord’s song in a strange land?” This was the mournful cry of Jews that were in exile. The connection between Jahweh, and the land of Palestine is clearly seen in the Old Testament. Jahweh is the God, whose residence is the mountains and hills of Palestine. In Psalm 122, we read: “I lift up my eyes to the hills from whence comes my help; my help comes from the Lord, who made heaven and earth.” The Jew in exile felt cut off, and isolated, from Jahweh. The Jew in Arabia was not any nearer to Jahweh than his brother that was in exile. But, nonetheless, he was a Jew, and was in Mecca, and in Medina. No doubt, we are aware that the first five centuries in the history of Christianity were resplendent with doctrinal controversy. The church, in its first centuries of formation, was undergoing traumatic experiences in training to understand its faith. It was a long, painful, and tedious process, through which the church went, as it sought to define its doctrines. The main seats of the church then were Antioch and Alexandria. Often calumny accompanied the discussions. Those not orthodox in their thought were forced eastward into the desert – into Arabia. Obviously the Arabia, of which we read in Paul’s letter to the Galatians, is not the Arabia of Mecca and Medina, but more of the Syrian desert. Nonetheless, one could meet in Arabia, the Docetists, the Arians, the semi-Arians, the monophysites, and the Nestorians.

So long as my task is not to present a history of the Christological controversies, I shall be satisfied with giving only as brief a definition of these controversial teachings as possible, and hopefully remain intelligible. Docetism taught that Jesus Christ only “appeared”. The Christ did not take on human flesh. By so teaching, Docetists denied the incarnation. The Docetists were genuinely saying, “God cannot become man.” God was in Jesus, the man, only in appearance.

The Arians, as well as the semi-Arians, denied the divinity of Jesus. He was just a man. The monophysites, in their turn, denied the possibility that, in the human person, Jesus of Nazareth, God and man, reside. That Jesus was, at one and the same time, both God and man was not possible for them. They suggested that the divine was assumed in the human, but that Jesus was thoroughly human. He had one nature only.

The Nestorians were also present in Arabia. Nestorius had taught that the virgin Mary could not be the mother of God, as the Fathers of Antioch had taught, since Jesus was essentially a man. For him, she could, at best, be the mother of Christ, and not the mother of God. The Nestorian problem was also a Christological problem.

All these forms of unorthodox teachings were present in Arabia at the time of the rise and development of Islam. By saying this, I am also saying that the development of a religion cannot happen in a vacuum. I am aware Muslims would not be pleased to either hear or read such a statement. I am also aware of the Islamic teaching that the Qur'an is the direct revelation of God's will. It is, for Muslims, that full and perfect revelation. The author is God, and God cannot be subject to societal influences. If we take the subject, which we have at hand, scientifically, seriously, and do not approach it only from the perspective of faith and piety, then we must grant that ideas and understandings of reality do, in fact, reflect the surroundings, in which they arise and develop.

Islamic teaching grants that there are other legitimate revelations of God. These are the Torah and the Injil, namely, the Mosaic law and the gospel. They remain, however, partial and imperfect revelations. Islam believes in a progressive revelation that moves from the partial and incomplete to the full and the perfect. The Qur'an was given to humankind by Gabriel, through the prophet medium of Muhammad, who was illiterate, and with no ability to read or write. Thus, no human agency was employed in the formation and development of the text of the Qur'an. Muhammad heard, and repeated what he had heard. It was after his death that the Qur'an was written. The final form, which is the form in which we have the Qur'an

today, was completed in the reign of the third Caliph Uthman. This was only 20 years after the death of Muhammad.

This is what Muslims believe. To be a Muslim means: to believe that there is no God, except Allah; to believe that Muhammad is his messenger; to believe in angels; to believe that there is a day of judgment; to believe that there is a life to come; to believe in the prophets, whom God has sent; and to believe the revelations, which God sent down on His prophets. Here is the starting point of faith's journey. It is, however, not incumbent on a non-Muslim to believe what Muslims believe. For, if a non-Muslim were to believe what Muslims believe, then he would be a Muslim, and no longer a non-Muslim. The non-Muslim's duty is to respect the fact that Muslims believe what they believe, and to honour their belief as their belief. In respecting the Muslim in his belief, and in honouring him in believing what he believes, it does not mean that the non-Muslim must surrender his critical faculties, and be satisfied with the stance of piety and of faith.

The issue here would probably be simplified, were we to consider that it is possible for a scientist to differentiate between closely-related phenomena without injuring either of them. To say that God speaks to people is an acceptable statement. To say that human beings react to that which God communicates to them, and construct structures that speak to them, and satisfy their longings, is also an acceptable statement. When sociologists suggest that religion develops in society, they are saying that religion is the human reaction to God's intervention in human history. This is what Rudolf Otto referred to in his book, *The Idea of the Holy*, where religion is understood as the encounter between the *mysterium tremendum* and the *mysterium fascinans* with human persons in society. Religion, then, develops as a result of that encounter between God and mankind, but it is mankind which constructs forms, which make sense to them, and which stem out of their experience, and God gives the content.<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>4</sup> I am aware of the Aristotelian discussion on form and content, and that the two cannot be so easily separated one from the other. But I am certain that, for the purpose of clarity, it is legitimate to differentiate the one from the other. Man, in society, chooses that which is

If we were to take the Qur'anic text and study it very carefully, we would find a great deal that the Old Testament backgrounds. The prophets of the Old Testament are referred to – some 20 such prophets from the Old Testament are referred to in the Qur'an. New Testament backgrounds can also be detected. Does this mean that someone sat there in a library and copied from these books? By no means! Muslims answer this accusation by suggesting that the similarity stems from the fact that God is the author of all three texts. All three are revelations from God. Muslims go further and call Jews and Christians, the people of the book, *ahl alkitaab*.

Whether we accept the Muslim point of view, or the critical point of view, with regard to the rise and development of religions, one sees definite similarities and relationships, and, without doubt, also differences. Let us look at some of the similarities. Common to all three religions is the belief in one God. All three religions are recognised as monotheistic, but the monotheism of Judaism and of Islam is regarded by many as stricter than that of Christianity. Christianity's monotheism is seen as less strict than that of Judaism and of Islam, because of the doctrine of the trinity. Evidently, from the perspectives of Christian theology, it would be viewed as a misunderstanding of Christian teaching if the doctrine of the trinity were to lead to non-monotheistic perceptions.

All three religions affirm strongly that the one God is the Creator God. He is the Creator of all that is; without Him was not anything made that was made. As Creator, God is also perceived as sustainer and provider. God is understood by all of the three religions as the righteous and holy one, and who, therefore, will judge all of His creatures. This clearly presupposes a day of judgment, when all human beings will have to render an account of their lives before God's throne.

Judaism, Christianity, and Islam believe that God is a God who speaks to His creatures through prophets. The Old Testament is evidence that Judaism believes and affirms that God speaks through prophets, in different

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familiar to him, in order that he may express that which God communicated through the prophetic medium.

times and places, but the message has to do with God's righteousness, love, and mercy, and with human beings' response to God and His righteousness, love, and mercy. The New Testament affirms the fact that God does speak with His people. In the Letter to the Hebrews, we read that God, in previous times, spoke through the prophets, but now, in a very special way, God speaks through Jesus Christ His Son. The Qur'an repeats the teaching that God sends prophets to different peoples at different times. To each people God sends a prophet. No people are left without a prophet. This means that God would not leave His creatures unguided. If they are to render an account for their life, then they must have a prophet, who should guide them into the ways that please God.

From this very short excursion, we notice that there are many similarities and common elements among the three religions that we are considering. However, the common elements do not, and, indeed, cannot, overshadow the differences. Judaism and Islam share more common elements than do Christianity and Islam. Both Judaism and Islam are religions that are based and founded on law. In Judaism, it is the law that was given to Moses, and, in Islam, it is the shari'a, which is based on the Qur'an, the Sunna, Analogy, and Consensus.

The chief point of difference between Judaism and Islam is the expectation of the Messiah. The Qur'an speaks of the Messiah, Jesus the Son of Mary, but He is neither the Messiah that Judaism hopes to receive, nor is He the Messiah, who is understood as the Saviour by Christians. The Messiah of Islam does not have the eschatological significance as that of Judaism and of Christianity. He does have some function to play in the last day. That function, however, is very different from the functions that Judaism and Christianity ascribe to Him. The Messiah, for the Jew, is the political deliverer of His people. In Islam, he is essentially only a man, and a good prophet.

The chief point of difference between Christianity and Islam centres on the person of the Messiah, Jesus the Christ, the man from Nazareth. For Christians, He is the eternal Son of God, born before all time, in Him all things were made that are made. He was not accepted by the Jews of His

time because He did not fill, or fulfil, the understanding of and the role the Messiah was to play. He was crucified; He died; He was buried; and God raised Him on the third day from the dead. He sits at the right hand of God the Father, from whence He shall come to judge the living and dead. He shall also raise us up from the dead, because He lives and reigns in honour.

Islam denies this. Islam posits strongly the belief that Jesus was a mere man, although He is believed to have been a very good man, but still He was only a man. He is not divine; He is one among the many prophets whom God had sent at different times to different peoples. Islam denies the crucifixion. Someone who looked like Jesus did, in fact, get crucified. God would not permit such a person to be so brutally killed. God raised Him to Himself. In other words, Jesus, even today, still lives in the body somewhere, and that, some day, He shall die, and, on the day of the general resurrection, He will be raised with all the others. And since He was not crucified, He cannot have been raised from the dead, as Christians claim and believe.

The Jesus of the Qur'an resembles the Jesus of the New Testament in name, in manner of birth, but, in no other ways which are essential to His identity, as Christians perceive Him to be. There are strains of Arianism, strains of Docetism, strains of monophysitism, and strains of Nestorianism in the Qur'anic understanding of the person of Jesus.

In a world, which is growing smaller day by day, and in which people of different cultures and religions are coming closer to each other day by day, it is important that adherents of the different religions ought to get to know what each believes, so that ways for a common life may be found. Dialogue, as Raimon Panikkar says, "is a necessity for life, and for survival".<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>5</sup> Raimon Panikkar, "Begegnung der Religionen", in *Dialog der Religionen* (1991), pp. 11ff.

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# **THE PASTOR AND HIS RESOURCES**

**Gaius Helix**

## **Introduction**

There is, today, in the churches around the world, a renewed vision of their responsibility to bring to people everywhere the Good News of salvation, and to minister to their needs. There is also tremendous growth among churches in Asia, Africa, Latin America, and in Papua New Guinea.

In 1992, I spent three weeks in Seoul Korea, and saw for myself what God is doing in the churches there. For example, one of the congregations, the Yoido Full Gospel church, founded and pastored by Dr Yonggi Cho, has a membership of about 800,000. According to verbal reports that I got from them, every month they have 10,000 new members. What is their secret? Well, there are many important features that mark their church, concerning which I was very much impressed. They are:

1. Prayer life;
2. Ministry of all believers;
3. Dependence on the Holy Spirit;
4. Discipleship training;
5. The Bible;
6. Personal life and commitment of the pastor and the leaders.

In this paper, I will develop these characteristics, in addressing the topic I wish to discuss. We will start by looking at the meaning, and the ministry of the church, as a basis for why the pastor should tap into these resources. Then I will discuss the role of the pastor, which will lead onto his resources.



## **What is a Church?**

“But you are the chosen race, the King’s priests, the holy nation, God’s own people” (1 Peter 2:9 GNB).

Many people are not clear about what the church is. That is why we are also unsure about what the church should do in our world. Christians are God’s special people in the world. He has chosen us to be His very own people. This is a very great honour. Let me explain what the Bible means by the word “church”.

### **a. The Meaning of the Word “Church”**

Our people today use the word “church” in many ways.

- We call the building, in which Christians meet, a “church”. We say, “We are going to church”, when we mean we are going to a building. The Bible never uses the word “church” to mean a building. In the New Testament, the word “church” always means a group of people, never a building.
- We talk about the “Baptist church” or “Roman Catholic church” to mean a denomination, or groups of Christians in different places, who all hold the same teachings. This idea of different denominations, or different kinds of churches, is not found in the New Testament. The Bible does not use the word “church” in this way.

What then is the meaning of the word “church” in the Bible? The Greek word translated “church” is ἐκκλησία (*ekklesia*). It means “a group of people gathered together”. So the basic meaning of the word “church” in the New Testament is “the gathering of God’s people”. It is used in the New Testament in two different ways: a general way, and in a particular way:

- In a general way, when it means all those who believe in Christ, all true disciples, who belong to Christ, are part of the church (e.g., Matt 16:18; Eph 1:22-23).

- Sometimes, in the New Testament, the word “church” is used to mean a particular group of Christians meeting in one place (e.g., 1 Cor 1:2; Acts 14:23).

The pastor of a local church, especially in our Melanesian churches, needs to understand this meaning, as this will change his philosophy of ministry, and his attitude to the resources that God has given to the church. For too long, in many of the churches in Melanesia, the church has been crawling, because of a variety of reasons:

- The pastor and the leaders have not fully understood the biblical meaning and concept of the church.
- They are insecure in their positions, and any involvement by congregation members, who may be more talented than they, is seen as a threat to their position. Therefore, to safeguard their position, they water down any teaching of “the ministry of all believers”.
- I see, also, another area, in which both the pastor and the congregation fail to understand. And that is for the pastor, who sees himself as the only qualified person trained to do everything in the life of the local church. He answers all correspondence, he answers all telephone calls, drives the church bus, dropping off people after night fellowships, he does pastoral visits, he does the preaching, and so the list goes on. From my observation, the pastor, especially in urban churches, spends most of his time on administrative work, and neglects his primary calling (that’s if he understands his calling). I will discuss the pastor’s role later. For the congregation, their view is the pastor is paid to do the church work, whatever it may be; and, in many ways, this traditional church culture enforces this rule.
- Then, maybe, because of how traditional pastors have been trained, the pastor and the congregation see church work as belonging to the professional clergy, and not for the laity. I

believe this, in many ways, also reflects our traditional Melanesian religion, where the work of communicating with the spirits is restricted only to priests. I believe this cripples the biblical teaching on the ministry of all believers, and brings a false fear among the people, which comes from Satan, and is deeply rooted in the traditional religion of our animistic society.

### **b. The Body of Christ**

One of the best-known New Testament descriptions of the church is “the body of Christ”. This is an important picture that Paul uses to describe the church, and can help the pastor in understanding his place and role in the church. Christians, including the pastor, are joined to Christ in such a living way that they become His hands and feet, to show His life, and do His work in the world (see Rom 12:3-8; 1 Cor 12:1-27; Eph 1:22-23).

Christ is the only head of the church, not the pastor. Every local church, and every Christian, are under His direct rule and control. He is the source of their spiritual life. But, just as in the body, every part has a special work to do, so every Christian has a gift or work to do for Christ. No one Christian, including the pastor, can do all the church’s work, and no one person is more important than any other person in the church. Every Christian is needed, and we depend on each other for our life together. When we all work and function together, we will see growth in individual lives, and the church will grow, both in quantity and quality. The Korean church is an example of this. The result of the pastor having to run everything by himself is that often little work is done, and the pastor runs the risk of a nervous breakdown or burnout. I know what it means to spread oneself so thinly, and achieve so little, because I have been through it.

However, having said all that, one of the gifts that God has given to the church is the gift of a “pastor” (Eph 4:11). Let me discuss this in the next section.

### **The Role of the Pastor**

The experience I had in Korea helped me to see how important is the role of the pastor. While the pastor, as a person, is a member of the body of

Christ, the gift of pastor is given to the church to “prepare God’s people for works of service” (Eph 4:11, 12). Peter Wagner writes: “strong pastoral leadership is indeed a vital sign of a healthy church”.<sup>1</sup> The pastor’s role in a local church is an important one. What then is the pastor’s role? Wagner offers this commentary:

“The pastor of a group of Christians is the person responsible, under Jesus, who is the Master Shepherd, for teaching, feeding, healing the wounds, developing unity, helping people find their gifts, doing whatever else is necessary to see that they continue in the faith, and grow in their spiritual lives.”<sup>2</sup>

From this definition we can draw these duties:

1. **A Pastor is under Jesus, the Chief Shepherd.** This is important in helping the pastor to see that, while he is pastoring, those under his care belong to the Chief Shepherd, and the pastor is accountable to Him for how he manages the sheep. This is a big responsibility, and calls for a growing close relationship with the “Big Boss”. This next lot of duties highlights the scope of the pastor’s responsibility.

2. **Equipper.** The primary responsibility of the pastor, I believe, is to “prepare God’s people for words of service” (Eph 4:12). This can be done through:

- a. Systematic teaching and preaching, through church-organised programmes. For example, through Sunday services, adult Sunday School, Men’s and Women’s Fellowship, etc. In this way, the church is fed and built up in the faith.

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[N.B.: The footnote numbers in the original printed edition were incorrectly numbered. They have now been numbered correctly. –Revising ed.]

<sup>1</sup> Peter C. Wagner, *Spiritual Power and Church Growth*, London UK: Hodder & Stoughton, 1986, p. 78.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid*, p. 143.

- b. Training, using training institutions and para-church groups involved in training in various fields of church work.
- c. Healing the wounded is done through counselling and praying for the bruised in the church. I believe this healing should take place in emotional, spiritual, and physical areas, with healing in social, family, and church relationships.
- d. Unity that is founded on love. The pastor must work hard, together with everyone, to maintain this unity. Not that everyone will be just the same, but, as the saying goes, “unity in diversity”. This unity, with all our differences, can be worked, through proper coaching and biblical teaching from the pastor. Love and unity are pillars of the church in its witness to a divided world (John 13:34-35).

From the above list, the pastor’s role in the church is not easy. It is a big and awesome responsibility. We are dealing with people’s lives, and their eternal destinies. But it is a rewarding one, if we know that we are doing it for the Lord, and He has promised to be with us always (Matt 28:20). It is also worth noting that the Lord has given resources to help the pastor in his ministry.

### **The Pastor and His Resources**

From all that I have said above, the following resources can be drawn upon by the pastor.

#### **a. His Personal Life and Commitment**

“Keep watch over yourself” (Acts 20:28a). This, to me, is fundamental, and a resource the pastor can draw upon. This speaks of all areas of the pastor’s life: with God, with his family, the word, prayer, etc. The secret of his ministry hinges on this inner life. As Robert Murray McCheyne said, “According to your holiness, so shall be your success”.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>3</sup> This quote is from a cassette “The Evangelist and His personal life”, by Luis Palau.

**b. Ministry of all Believers**

As I have discussed in this paper, this is the greatest human resource that the pastor has at his disposal that he can tap into. They just need training, and good coaching, from the pastor.

**c. The Ministry of the Holy Spirit**

Jesus promised to send a Helper, the Spirit of Truth, to help us in our lives and ministry. He will give us power for witness (John 14:15-17; Acts 1:8). The pastor should depend on Him, since he is involved in spiritual warfare.

**d. Training Available**

As discussed already, para-church groups are there to assist the pastor train his members. But, as a pastor, he needs continuous training, too. Maybe I should also add the availability of good commentaries, and other study helps today.

**e. The Bible**

The Bible is there to give the pastor help in his ministry. It is God's manual for his work, which the pastor should understand and use. Equipped with the right exegetical tools, the Bible must lead and guide the pastor in his work.

**f. Prayer Life**

One of the characteristics that was true of the lives of Jesus and the early church was their prayer lives, both individually and corporately. This is true among the churches in Korea, and around the world. Churches in the Pacific are discovering this. It is a resource available to the church that needs no further proof, but practice.

**Conclusion**

My simple conclusion would be: the pastor is a gift that God has given to His church, like many other gifts, and the person with the gift must see that the role of the pastor is not to do everything, but to enable others to find their place in the life and ministry of the church to the world. God has also

given and equipped His church with resources that the pastor can tap into, to enable him and the church to grow, and become the church that she ought to be, in a world that does not know God.

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# **THE SIGNIFICANCE OF WATER IN THE BOOK OF NUMBERS**

**Kewai Kero**

## **Introduction**

Water is one of the most important necessities of life. We use it for washing, and we use it for drinking. In the absence of water, nothing can survive. When used in the Bible, the same is equally true in its use, but, in the Bible, it is also used for spiritual purification, and symbolic purposes. This paper is written to highlight the significance of water, as used in the book of Numbers. There are three themes that I will develop when talking of the significance of water. They are:

1. Israel as the redeemed people;
2. God as the sanctifier; and
3. God as Israel's provider.

What place does water have in the book? These three themes are developed in an effort to answer the question of water's significance in the book of Numbers.

## **The Use of Water in the Bible**

There are many uses of water in the Bible. The following are basically how water is used.

1. It is used for drinking by animals and by humans (Gen 24:11-19; Judges 7:4-5).
2. It is used for washing and ordinary bathing (Gen 18:4).
3. It is used for ritual cleaning, i.e., washing necessary for priests and Levites (Ex 30:17-21). It is also used for cleaning a person who is ceremonially or morally defiled.



4. The fourth reason why water is used in the Bible is when used as a symbol:
  - (a) as a symbol of evil people (Gen 49:4; Is 57:20);
  - (b) as a symbol of cleansing from sin (Is 1:16; Ezek 36:25);
  - (c) as a symbol in baptism (Acts 8:36); and
  - (d) as the symbol of the Holy Spirit (Is 44:3; John 7:38).

When used in Numbers, it is for these two reasons:

1. **For Ritual Cleansing.** It is used for bringing a curse upon a wife who is suspected of unfaithfulness (Num 5:17-27). It is used in the dedication of the Levites for priestly service (Ezek 8:17-21). It is used for purification from sin (Num 19:17-21). Finally, for ritual cleansing, men returning from war, together with the valuables taken from enemies, were cleaned with “the water of cleansing” for purification (Num 31:19-24).
2. **For Drinking.** The second reason why water is mentioned in Numbers is that water is used for drinking, both by human beings and livestock. In the desert at Kadesh, the people complained to Moses regarding water to drink, and for the livestock. Moses was instructed to speak to the rock, but, instead, struck the rock and water flowed out (Num 20:1-19). In Num 21:5, the people complained again to Moses regarding water, and forcefully stated that it would be better to go back to Egypt. When mentioned in Num 16:17, it is referring to the Lord’s leading of the people to a place called Beer, where a well was, and the people were refreshed. In Num 21:22, the Israelites pleaded with the Amorites that they be allowed to travel through their land. In the process, they promised not to set their eyes upon any fields, vineyards, or water wells. Finally, the last place in Numbers, where water is mentioned is Num 33:9, 14. Here, it is said, that they camped where they had

12 springs (v. 9), but, in verse 14, there is no water at the place called Rephidim.

From analysing the use of water in Numbers, we can conclude that the use of water is twofold; i.e.,

- (a) for consumption by humans and livestock; and
- (b) for use as a requirement for purification, on the basis of the rules given by God.

### **Why is Water Important in Numbers?**

I will start by quoting Gordon Wenham's comments, when he says the following.

“It is impossible to discuss the theology of Numbers in isolation from the other books of the Pentateuch, particularly Exodus and Leviticus. All are concerned with the outworking of the promises of God to Abraham, and the moulding of Israel into the holy people of God.”<sup>1</sup>

The mention of water in Numbers must be seen in the context of the covenant made by God with Abraham in Gen 12. The history of Israel, up to now (Numbers) has been the working out of this promise into reality. The mention of water in Numbers is best understood in the context of God's covenant relationship with Israel.

#### **(a) God as the Redeemer of Israel**

When the Israelites were in Egypt, the people were under the rule of a foreign king. They were oppressed, and given a terrible time. It looked as though the promise God made to Abraham would never eventuate. At least, this was the understanding, from the worldly view, as suggested by Graeme Goldsworthy, when he says the following:

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[N.B.: The footnote numbers in the original printed edition were incorrectly numbered. They have now been numbered correctly. –Revising ed.]

<sup>1</sup> Gordon J. Wenham *Numbers: Introduction and Commentary* Leicester UK: IVP, 1985, p. 39.

“To all outward appearances, Israel’s God is powerless to keep faith with His chosen, and unable to prevent foreign gods from exercising rule over His people.”<sup>2</sup>

It is when the people of God (Israel) are in a state of despair, a time of total hopelessness, that God intervenes. It is a God, who initiated the covenant, by His grace, and it is He who intervenes, because not doing so would make Him untrue to His word. In other words, their slavery would be seen as a threat to the covenant. On the basis of the promise to Abraham, God demonstrates His faithfulness, by bringing Israel out of Egypt. Into this hopeless situation, the word of God, through Moses, sounds the good news of salvation:

“Don’t be afraid, stand firm, and you will see the deliverance the Lord will bring you today. . . . The Lord will fight for you” (Ex 14:13).

And that is just what happened. Throughout the Pentateuch, we see the promise made to Abraham, in Genesis, that Israel will be God’s own. God will come to Israel, whenever she is in need. Every event that is recorded in the Pentateuch is to be seen in the context of Israel being the redeemed people of God, on their way to the promised land, that is, Canaan. As the redeemed people of God, the use of water in Numbers has two significant implications. These are:

- (a) God is the Provider, and
- (b) God is the Sanctifier.

**(b) God as the Sanctifier**

As the redeemed people of God, there are standards, which will have to be complied with, if they are to be continuously blessed. Goldsworthy says that they must show that their redemption is not merely outward, but a thing of the heart.<sup>3</sup> If they obey God’s word, they shall be His special

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<sup>2</sup> Graeme Goldsworthy, *According to Plan*, Leicester UK: IVP, 1991, p. 169.

<sup>3</sup> Goldsworthy, *According to Plan*, p. 181.

possession out of all the peoples under His sovereign rule. To be God's people continuously means responsibilities under God's rule.

(i) **God is Holy.** Holiness in the Bible is applied in the highest sense to God. In regard to the holiness of God, the *New Bible Dictionary* says that, firstly, it is His separateness from the creation, and duration above it.<sup>4</sup> God is far above anything else, in the sense that nothing is like Him. Secondly, holiness is understood to mean an ethical quality or standard. Kenneth Jones says this, regarding holiness:

“There is a sense, in which the people of Israel were the people of God, and this is given repeatedly as the reason they must keep themselves from the customs and religions of the people around them. They are holy, and must refrain from all defilement rituals using water, because of moral and ceremonial uncleanness.”<sup>5</sup>

(ii) **The Unclean must be Cleansed.** There are basically two kinds of uncleanness, and people are to be put out of the camp when something happens to make them unclean. They are: (1) for physical reasons: such as for diseases, which were contagious; and (2) spiritual reasons. The camp was a place where God was present, and, therefore, in honour of Him, nothing impure should remain. Beside these two reasons the book, *The Treasury of Scripture Knowledge*, proposes a third reason, and that is:

“Further, there was a *typical* reason, for the camp was the emblem of the church, where nothing that is unclean should enter, in which nothing that is defiled should enter, and in which nothing that is unholy should be tolerated.”<sup>6</sup>

While it is true that purity in the church must be maintained, and offenders dealt with immediately. I don't think the writer of Numbers

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<sup>4</sup> J. D. Douglas, ed., *The New Bible Dictionary*, 2nd edn, Leicester UK: IVP, 1982, p. 530.

<sup>5</sup> Kenneth E. Jones, *The Book of Numbers*, Grand Rapids MI: Baker Book House, 1972, p. 89.

<sup>6</sup> *The Treasury of Scripture*, London UK: Samuel Bagster, 1974, p. 94.

envisaged the establishment of the church, in New Testament times. A reading of this interpretation into the context of Numbers would be shallow.

iii) **God is the Basis of Purity.** Just as Israel was not able to do anything in her hopelessness during the enslavement in Egypt, so is she again unable to do anything when there is corporate or individual defilement. It is God, Himself, who provides the remedy to counteract this defilement, either morally or ceremonially. On this, Kenneth Jones says the following:

“It is only God who can make man acceptable to Him. Man cannot approach God on his own terms and conditions. If man is rendered unfit for approach to God, only God, Himself, is able to provide the cleansing he needs.”<sup>7</sup>

Because, without God, there is no cleansing, God again initiates the purification concept. The appointment of priests and Levites to minister in the tabernacle is an act of mercy, designed by God to prevent His wrath upon the nation (12:17; 14:13-20).

(iv) **The Place of Water in Cleaning.** The place of water in the whole purification process is that it is just a symbol of God accepting sinners, when the sinner shows that he is truly sorry for his actions. Apart from the cleaning of physical dirt, it does in no way clean the spiritual ailments of a person. The purification processes, described in the book, in themselves, are mere rituals. That is, they are representing a reality. A very notable scholar in the field of anthropology, Monica Wilson, says the following on rituals, when she analysed rituals in Africa:

“Rituals reveal values at their deepest level . . . men express, in ritual, what moves them most. It is the values of people that are revealed.”<sup>8</sup>

Ritual in Numbers represents the reality that God is forgiving the offender, and the offender is entering into relationship with God again. The

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<sup>7</sup> Jones, *Book of Numbers*, p. 58.

<sup>8</sup> Monica Wilson, “Nyakyusa Ritual and Symbolism”, in *American Anthropologist* 56-2 (April 1954), p. 241.

actual ritual, in itself, has no real physical or spiritual effect. Rituals are symbols, and depend, ultimately, on God for their efficacy.

Water is mentioned here in Numbers as an element in ritual, with the connotation that it is God who sanctifies His people when they are defiled. Besides taking water as drink, and for physical cleanness, the theology of water here is that it is God who cleanses His people, and accepts them. The rituals here are just symbols of that reality. Monica Wilson's comment, though secular, is true of ancient Near-Eastern societies, and is even true here in Melanesia. Rituals are expressions of the reality they represent.

### (c) **God as Provider**

The next implication of water in Numbers that I wish to develop is that of water, as showing God as the provider. The *New Bible Dictionary*, in the article on "Providence", says this:

"Providence is presented in scripture as a function of divine sovereignty, God is king over all, doing what He wills."<sup>9</sup>

I understand this to mean that everything in creation is His, and He does with it what He wants. God chooses who to give to, and what to give. From this I also understand that God is in control of all the events of the world. To understand better the use of water in Numbers, the providence of God is also seen in Israel as the redeemed. Three elements are involved.

(i) **The Physical Environment.** When one reads about the vegetation of the areas the Israelites travelled through, most of the places were dry and rocky in most parts. The rocks make it hard for the soil to store water, and thereby to provide the necessities for plant life. These conditions made it difficult, even for a handful of people to live, and to gather food and water without not having to go through difficulties. This is the kind of physical background to the book of Numbers. To be able to provide for nearly three million people, and their livestock, is

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<sup>9</sup> Douglas, *New Bible Dictionary*, p. 1051.

incomprehensible. As one writer says: "It is small wonder, then, that water became a powerful symbol of God's blessings in biblical times."<sup>10</sup>

Water, here, is used in the sense that it is an expression of God's blessing to His people. Not only with water, but the same is true of food and shelter.

(ii) **Provides Security and Fights for Israel.** The definition of providence given in the *New Bible Dictionary* can also mean that, as well as providing food and shelter, it can further be understood as God fighting wars for His people. This is seen in the battles with Sihon and Og, in which Israel became the victors. God provides them with victory.

(iii) **Providence also Implies Responsibilities.** One of the significances of water (as with food, shelter, etc.) was that of faith. The Israelites were required, on their part, to have faith. They were to know that their deliverance from Egypt, and their pilgrimage through the wilderness, must be seen, by faith, as the work of God, as J. L. Mays presents.<sup>11</sup> The importance of water was that the people would see water as more than a mere drink. They were supposed to see water as the Lord's provision for their need, and were supposed to be reviving their faith in the Lord. The sad thing, though, was that, in the experience of Israel, faith is often missing. There are two ways of seeing faith here in Numbers. They are:

1. God, as the answer to their physical needs, i.e., in food, drink, and protection from their enemies. This was not the case, as we see people in fear at the sight of the Amorites, thereby wishing to return to Egypt.
2. Faith in God means worshipping Yahweh alone, but the people would rather go back to Egypt under the rule of foreign gods. They are not happy with being God's people under God's rule. The ordeal of the unfaithful woman, in chapter five, gives a story of a moral and spiritual connotation. Moral, in that she is

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<sup>10</sup> John A. Thompson, *Handbook of Life in Bible Times*, Leicester UK: IVP, 1986.

<sup>11</sup> J. L. Mays, *Leviticus and Numbers*, London UK: SCM Press, 1963, p. 109.

unfaithful to her husband, spiritual, in that Israel is just like this to God.

The significance of water, as developed here, is that God provides, and He requires faith on the part of those for whom He provides. Even though, many times, Israel failed God, He is very faithful.

## **Conclusion**

The significance of water in Numbers, as noted in this paper, has been these:

(i) **The Context of God as the Redeemer.** The place of water in Numbers is seen in the context of the Israelites as being the redeemed people of God. Being redeemed means being holy, just as God, is, Himself, holy. Any act, contrary to these special demands, calls for purification, for no one is to come into the vicinity of God with defilement.

The use of water in the ritual is as a symbol of cleansing, both of moral and spiritual impurity.

(ii) **The Context of God as the Sanctifier.** God is the Sanctifier of His people. Man cannot do it on his own. God, Himself, is the basis of declaring who is cleansed and who is not. The use of water in this context is the symbol of God's acceptance, through the ritual of purification. It is not the ritual, but the reality this ritual represents, which cleanses.

(iii) **The Context of God as the Provider.** God, Himself, comes to live among His people. This implies that God will see them through their needs. God provides for needs of food and drink, and also provides protection from their enemies, and from the climate. The use of water here implies that God is the provider for Israel.

As part of this providence, is the demand by God for them to have faith in Him. And having faith means worshipping God alone, and trusting Him for all their needs. Unfortunately, this has not always been the case. But the concept of purification has been the basis where God accepts those



who break these stipulations. This makes God, Himself, to be the Redeemer, the Sanctifier, and also provides the remedy for the offences committed by Israelites. The significance of water, seen in these contexts, is important in Numbers.

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# **PREDESTINATION – A CHRISTIAN’S HOPE OR GOD’S UNFAIRNESS?**

**Gabriel Keni**

## **Introduction**

This is God’s eternal purpose of deliverance of those He has chosen through Jesus Christ.

The doctrine of predestination is one that brings several questions to the minds of Christians. These questions sometimes affect our whole attitude to life and salvation, and towards our trust and joy in God. But the doctrine of predestination is simple to state. It is eternity. God has chosen some for salvation through Christ, but has left others to their own choice of rebellion against Him. On some, He has mercy, drawing them to Christ; others He has hardened, and blinded by Satan, whose plans they willingly fulfil. The basic concept of Christian faith is that God is gracious, as clearly revealed in the Old Testament (Ex 34:6-7). The love of God is the motive for salvation, since God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son (John 3:16).

The Bible teaches clearly, and common sense confirms, that God is sovereign over all aspects of His creation and their characteristics. He is also sovereign over death, so that He can bring back from death to life. We are, by nature, children of wrath, under God’s eternal condemnation of death. The dead cannot save themselves, but a way is open through Jesus Christ, so we must be born by God’s power of His Spirit. The doctrine of predestination is simply the consequence of man’s nature (death in trespasses and sins), and of God’s nature (His goodness and mercy). He exercises His sovereignty and power in choosing people, who are dead in their sins, to be His sons and daughters, according to His own wise, loving, and righteous will. Predestination is basically that God has chosen us to be His people, and confirmed the image of Jesus Christ in us (Rom 8:29-30).

## **How Could We Know of Predestination?**

There are very many passages in the scriptures that teach the doctrine of election and predestination. One illustration, which Paul wrote, is that God chose us in Christ before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blemish before Him in love, having foreordained us unto adoption as sons through Jesus Christ unto Himself according to the good pleasure of His will, to the end that we should be the praise of His glory, we who had before hoped in Jesus Christ (Eph 1:4-12). Paul also tells us in 2 Thess 2:13 that we ought always to thank God, because, from the beginning, God chose us to be saved, through the sanctification of the Spirit, and belief of the truth. In Rom 8:28-29, Paul wrote, "All things work together for good, to them that are called according to God's purpose. For those whom He had already chosen, He also set apart to be conformed to the image of His Son." Paul wrote most fully on the doctrine of predestination in Romans 9. God's choice is not conditional upon anything in those who are predestined.

## **What is Human Understanding of Predestination?**

The doctrine of predestination gives two problems. One, an intellectual problem, and the other, an ethical problem. The intellectual problem is the relationship of our wills, which we know to be real wills, with the sovereign will of God, who chooses us for salvation. The ethical problem is the question of the fairness of God's choice: why choose one and not the other? Let us look at each problem separately to see the different problems.

### **1. The Intellectual Problem – Relationship of God's Will and Our Wills**

This problem of the relationship of the supreme will of Almighty God, and the real will of humans is a difficult one, as there is no parallel in our experience to help us understand it. Our imagination finds difficulty in working out how our human will claims to be a real and true will within God's sovereign will. For example, a faithful Christian prays, with complete confidence in God for guidance, through the intricacies of life, and so, in this, he follows numerous spiritual injunctions to commit his way to the

Lord, who will direct his paths. As the Christian looks back over his life, he can see clearly that God has fulfilled, and is fulfilling, His promise.

At no point is the Christian conscious that his own natural God-given faculties are suspended, in order that the guidance might be piped to him. Every step of the road is his step, every decision is his, through the particular gifts of intellectual reflection and decision, or, perhaps, through the influences of friends and their intellectual wisdom. God is sovereign, yet the reality of our nature and our free will is not infringed. The Lord gave and the Lord took away (Job 1:21). From the historical point of view, the crucifixion was just an ordinary event, not distinguishable from any other human event. But the Bible sees every detail as pre-ordained by God's determination. What is true of Calvary is true of every event, everywhere throughout human history.

The problem of the relationship of God's will to the created will is not solved by denying God's sovereignty, as though, through the creation of human wills and evil wills, He had delimited an area within His creation, over which He had given up control. God never limits Himself in any way at all. Even the Bible knows nothing of such an idea. We could be wrong to say that our own wills are free, because this will is God's natural will for us. We can't say our will is independent of God's will. We may think of Adam's sinning as rebelling against God to become sovereign himself, but no creature can ever become sovereign over against God the Creator. God retains sovereignty, humans remain true people, enslaved now to the devil, against our nature, instead of our true Master, the Lord. God controls His creation, and He remains in control. He is also recreating the will of man, and frees it from sin, according to His own decision and choice. God's sovereignty is only in accordance with the nature of His creation.

Most Christians don't differ from each other on God's real guidance and protection. There's a strong controversy about God's sovereignty, in the transformation of a rebellious sinner into a son of God, and to a new creation in Christ, and his perseverance to the end. We know that we could choose for ourselves such worldly desires at any time and fall away, and be lost eternally. But, by the grace of God, we don't, for the warnings are the way

by which God saves us from our sin, and continues the salvation, through faith in Christ Jesus, that we experience by obedience. Faith and obedience are the work of our own personality, but are also the work of God in the hearts of believers. When God calls His elect, and brings them to glory, He does not need to suspend our natures or overrule our will, but He accomplishes His purposes, determined before the creation of the world, through our free wills. We must, therefore, rely on His faithfulness to keep us to the end, according to His promises. The warning is true, and the promise is true.

Christian perseverance rests on the character of God. The assurance of our salvation rests on that character being known to us through God's promises of faithfulness. Christians misunderstand that full assurance of final perseverance is complete. It is also a mistake to believe that the will is free against its own Creator. There are attitudes of rebellion in man, but these are not true in reality, because we can't be free against our God, nor should we wish it. As sinners, we are far from free in this respect, and are enslaved to our passions, and led captive by evil. Restoration in Christ is where we become free in the only way a creature can be free – that is, free to follow its God-given nature, and not free against the *Giver*, when truly responding to the grace of God.

## **2. The Ethical Problem –Questions of Fairness of God's Choice**

The ethical problem with the doctrine of predestination arises from our God-given sense of fairness. Fairness, righteousness, and justice are the bases for all our relationships with one another. If God is to be fair and just to rebels, we all deserve to receive punishment. But mercy intervenes, and mercy is apart from the realm of justice. Mercy is that which is held out, and given to, those who have absolutely no claim on it. Mercy is also in a completely different category from justice. The Bible constantly testifies that salvation and eternal life are God's gift. A gift is at the complete disposal of the *giver*, that he may give, or he need not give. The same is true of mercy. It is completely at the disposal of the merciful. The giver may give it, or he may not. If salvation is deserved, it ceases to be a gift, then it becomes entirely a reward, from the beginning to the end. The character of

salvation, as a gift, and the merciful provision of salvation, are bound up with the doctrine of God's complete freedom in election and predestination.

To understand the doctrine of predestination correctly, we should stand out, from the standpoint of a Christian, who is experiencing and enjoying fellowship with His heavenly Father in the Holy Spirit, through the forgiveness of our Lord Jesus Christ. There is nothing in ourselves which deserves God's favour, but only God's condemnation. Our relationship to God is God's gift, and it springs entirely from God's initiative. Jesus said to His disciples, you didn't choose Me, but I chose you (John 15:16). God chose us from the beginning unto salvation in sanctification by the Spirit, and belief in the truth (2 Thess 2:13). As Christians, we can experience our status as adopted sons of God, yet all the glory and the thankfulness of this state of things must be given to God.

One clear illustration of God's sovereignty in salvation is in the life of the apostle Paul. He was a man totally immersed in his prejudices. He arrested and imprisoned believers. He didn't seem a bright prospect for conversion, but his conversion resulted from an extraordinary intervention by God on his behalf. He was converted, because the risen Lord Himself chose him to be "a chosen vessel" (Acts 9:15). The initiative is wholly with God. This must be so, because, in ourselves, we are blinded, and cannot see the truth. For when a man is in Christ, Paul says, he is a new creation (2 Cor 5:17). The Bible frequently says that "repentance is the gift of God". So, if anyone repents, it is God's gift to him, and we Christians must know this. The doctrine of predestination is full of comfort, because it is a natural thing from God. The scriptures teach that, for anyone who holds his belief firmly, it has an effect in releasing his spirit from anxiety and stress. People, who believe and receive salvation, reconciliation, adoption, and the Holy Spirit's indwelling, are made inheritors of God's Kingdom, for God is righteous, wise, loving, and has mercy on whom He wills.

Although there are those who do not accept God's message, or gospel, and who reject and rebel against the offer of salvation, yet the offer of salvation for unbelievers is still from God, because He is merciful. We can weep over them when they don't listen to our preaching, but God's

predestination remains. However, we, as the Lord's servants and messengers, must gather His people (Acts 18:10), that is, Christ's elect (Matt 24:31), according to God's eternal purpose, which the scriptures reveal to be an infinite blessing to the world.

The Bible teaches the doctrine of predestination, and so the Christian ought to embrace it without hesitation, for it is true, and we should adjust our attitude in conformity with it. Rom 8:28-30 is a wonderful passage, "and we know that in all things God works together for good, for those who are called according to His purpose". We can notice the *golden chain of blessing*: those whom He predestined He also called, those whom He called, He also justified, and, having justified them, He also glorified them. Nothing is missing, no link is broken, all attain glory.

When considering the doctrine of predestination, we must exclude from our thoughts any concept that God's predestination is based upon merit. Our salvation is the result of God's mercy, and mercy is always unmerited. We must remember that we have no claim on God, because we were created by Him in the first place. God is dealing with a sinful and rebellious race, but He is characterised by wisdom, love, mercy, and righteousness. God chooses. God is free in choosing whomever He will have mercy upon. God's foreordination, and decisions, are based only on Himself, and on His goodness and mercy, and His wisdom and will.

### **How Does He Do This?**

This question is answered in detail from the main ideas in the body of the paper, but, basically, God does it by His own will. He chooses us sinners, and makes us, or conforms us, to be His sons and daughters, in the image of His Son, Jesus Christ. He does it His own way, and in His own exciting timing. His foreordination and decision are exercised through the doctrine and process of predestination, through sinners hearing and responding to the preaching of the gospel.

### **Conclusion**

Because a loving and merciful God chose us by His own will and plan before the foundation of the world that we be predestined, through the

salvation of Jesus Christ, we must make this the prime object of our lives, to conform ourselves to the image of His Son. It is also an important aspect of the doctrine of predestination that God will be faithful, and that we may rest in this faithfulness. He will keep His promises, for He is faithful and will do it (1 Thess 5:23-24; 1 Cor 1:8-9).

**For Further Reading**

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