Vol 17, No 2 2001

MELANESIAN JOURNAL OF THEOLOGY

Journal of the Melanesian Association of Theological Schools

SUBSCRIPTION (2 copies per year)

	1 copy	1 year	2 years	3 years
Overseas (USA dollars)				
Developed countries	$14.00	$26.00	$50.00	$72.00
Developing countries	$11.00	$20.00	$38.00	$56.00
Papua New Guinea (Kina)	K12.00	K20.00	K38.00	K56.00
Students at MATS Colleges	K10.00			

Subscription prices include airmail. We do not offer surface-mail prices. Some back issues are available.

All Bible quotations are from the New International Version (NIV) unless otherwise noted.

Cover design by Br Jeff Daly CP, and John Kua

ISSN 0256-856X Volume 17, Number 2 2001

ADDRESS (Editorial and Subscription):
Melanesian Journal of Theology
Christian Leaders' Training College
PO Box 382, Mt Hagen, WHP
Papua New Guinea

E-mail: cltc@maf.org

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 scholarly level by staff and students of the member schools of the Melanesian Association of Theological Schools (MATS), though contribution 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 Editorial Team will consider for publication all manuscripts of scholarly standard on matters of concern to Melanesian Christians and of general theological interest.

E-mail manuscripts to cltc@maf.org

The opinions expressed in the articles, book reviews, etc, are those of the authors and do not necessarily represent the views of the Editor, Editorial Team, or the member colleges of MATS. All articles have been edited to meet the requirements of the journal.

The *Melanesian Journal of Theology* normally appears twice yearly, in April and October.

Editor:	**Doug Hanson** Christian Leaders' Training College
Editorial Team:	**Patrick Gaiyer** **Patrick Hall** **David Hodgens** **Russell Thorp** All of Christian Leaders' Training College
Subscriptions:	**Doug Hanson** Christian Leaders' Training College

INDEX

EDITORIAL

All articles have been provided by the Christian Leaders' Training College. Two articles are by Marilyn Rowsome. She wrote these articles in 1982, but never published them. Both articles discuss traditional Melanesian ways, ways that have changed since the articles were written. We decided to print the articles now, because they capture, in writing, dying traditions.

Joshua Daimoi reveals the mindset of Melanesians. He shows the importance of the spiritual world, and the concept of community, to Melanesians. Joshua stresses that missionaries must understand this mindset, to effectively reach Melanesians for Christ.

Marilyn Rowsome describes the traditional Papua New Guinea Highland's wedding ceremony. From personal experience, she paints a colourful picture of the activities surrounding the ceremony: from a steam bath to the bridal march. She concludes with recommendations for Papua New Guinea Christians to adapt cultural practices to Christian principles.

Marilyn Rowsome compares Melanesian traditional religion and Christianity. She discusses the meaning of Melanesian terms, which are at the core of Melanesian traditional religion. She compares four approaches Christianity could have towards Melanesian traditional religion, and concludes that contextualisation is needed. "The result will be a relevant, meaningful Melanesian theology."

Wayne Kendi examines the link between mission and suffering. Wayne argues that the two concepts are often seen working together in the Old Testament, as well as in the life of the New Testament church, so it should be no surprise to us that, in the contemporary church, the same dynamic is at work.

David Hodgens examines Paul's theological teaching on the nature of the resurrection body in an exegetical essay on 1 Cor 15:42-49. Paul writes to a church, which is confused about the nature of the post-resurrection body, debunking their wrong thinking about the current

body, correcting their misunderstandings about the post-resurrection body, and laying out his own eschatological understanding of the nature of the believer's new body.

Not everyone will agree with the conclusions reached by the authors. However, we hope that, as you wrestle through these issues, the thoughts of the authors will help you to grow in your understanding of God's Word, and what it may say to your culture.

Doug Hanson.

UNDERSTANDING MELANESIANS

Joshua Daimoi

Joshua Daimoi is President of the Christian Leaders' Training College. He holds a Masters degree in Theology from Fuller School in World Missions, and is currently writing his doctoral thesis on the concept of community. This article is from a presentation he made to CLTC faculty.

Introduction

"[O]ne of the first duties of a missionary (regardless of nationality) is to try to understand the people among whom he works" (Codrington, 1891, p. vii). As conversion and disciple-making are the primary tasks of Christian mission, advocates of the Christian faith cannot afford to ignore the people they seek to serve. Unless we understand how the people think, what they believe, and how their societies function, our best efforts will be like loose soil crumbling down with the first drop of rain. Understanding people is a very taxing exercise, and demands the very best of a man or a woman, especially one involved in cross-cultural missionary enterprise. The missionary can only know what people assume about the world by digging it out, through painstaking effort, patience, and participation (Reyburn, 1958a, p. 173). For the gospel to take permanent root in a new culture, the missionary must fully identify with the people, thinking their thoughts, eating their food, speaking their language, living incarnationally, until the people eventually accept him as one of their own (Wagner, 1979, pp. 203, 205).

In Papua New Guinea, with over 750 tribes inhabiting the islands, understanding the people is a formidable challenge. In spite of their similarities, "each community is unique, an identity comparable to no other" (Knoebel, 1/1972, p. 35). Although present Papua New Guinean societies have experienced, and are experiencing, dramatic changes, the lives of the people are still rooted in the traditions of the past. The past is still with the people. In times of crisis, the people

turn to their past. The past is the people's foundation for the present, their hope for tomorrow.

The past, we want to look at in this paper, covers these areas – the people's belief system, their thought patterns, and the structure of their communities.

Understanding the Melanesian Belief System

The Melanesian or Papua New Guinean belief system is centred in the spirits. All Papua New Guineans believe in the existence of spirit beings. From conception to the grave, Papua New Guineans live with the consciousness of the spirits. They know that the spirits are real. "[T]he Melanesian is born to the knowledge that he lives and works within a spirit world" (Narokobi, 1977, p. 9). These spirit beings, while possessing their own distinctive "beingness", live on the same plane as human beings. They are within the reach of anyone, if the conditions are right (Narokobi, 1977, p. 9).

Spiritual Authority

This awareness of intermingling with spirit beings led people to believe that the birth of twin babies was due to activities of the spirits. One of the early students at CLTC, now a respected church leader and Bible teacher, was deeply troubled when he learned that his wife was to have twins. It took some time for the staff to convince him and his wife that sometimes a woman can have twins. The consciousness of spirit beings gave traditional priests, magicians, and witchdoctors their spiritual authority. The Siwai people of North Solomon Province believe that when the *Mumiaku* – the clan leader – performs the rituals, the clan god – *Hagoro* – is actually present, and will give power to the *Mumiaku*. The people believe that *Hagaro* knows what the people need, and, therefore, *Hagoro* will grant *Mumiaku* the petition of the people (Dawia, 1980, p. 28).

Categories of Spirits

In the mind of the people, spirits exist in different categories. Robertson writes:

> For the Melanesians, the spirit world consists of autonomous creative spirit beings – cultural heroes, gods and goddesses, who established the cosmos; autonomous spirit beings – demons, *masalai*, which inhabit the earth; ancestral spirit beings – the spirits of the recent dead, and the remote dead, who are still part of the living; and impersonal occult forces, which can be controlled, so as to cause some good or evil (1982, p. 2).

Life-force

Melanesians believe the life, or the life force, is something that survives death. Death does not destroy, or annihilate, the life force that separates itself from the body. Death gives the life force the opportunity to shed the old skin, and put on the new one, like the snake (Narokobi, 1977, p. 10).

The existence of the life force beyond death prepared the Melanesians for the reception of the gospel. The Danis of Irian Jaya have a myth that is related to a fight between a bird and snake, the outcome of which would determine their future happiness. The bird lost the fight, man is doomed to die. To this day the Danis believe that, one day, the cosmic order will be changed to allow them to slough off the old skin and continue to live on (Groves, 1982, p. 6). When the missionary, for the first time, uttered the words *Ki wone* – "the words of life", the Danis responded with deep awe. They saw in the missionary, the embodiment of their traditional myth.

> When immortality returns to mankind, those who learned its secret first will come over the mountains, and tell you that secret. Their skins will be white, because they are constantly being renewed, like the skin of a snake. Be sure to listen to them, when they come, otherwise *nabelan – kabelan* – my skin – your skin – or "immortality" – will pass you by (Richardson, 1975, p. 328).

At the heart of Melanesian spirituality is the idea that life is sacred. Melanesians live with the consciousness of being surrounded by life, or life force, generally referred to as *mana*. *Mana* is both good and bad. It is good for the one who uses it, but bad against the one it is

worked on. *Mana* functions in ensuring harmony, good relationships, and abundance of food supply or harvest. True harmony and wholeness are associated with *mana* (Dye, 1982, p. 3). *Mana* can be obtained supernaturally; transferred from father to son, or from an older person to a younger person; passed to others, through initiation, or other ritual rites.

Understanding Melanesian Thought Patterns

To believe in the existence of the spirit beings for Melanesians means to live in constant interaction with them. Another way of saying this is Melanesians believe and think in terms of spirit beings. In the final analysis, "to believe" and "to think", for Melanesians, are inseparable. To believe in, and be dependent on, spirit beings is to think about spirit beings, and to constantly adjust one's life to maintain harmonious relationships with everyone, and everything that surrounds life.

Melanesian Concept of Relationships

Melanesian thought patterns, in general terms, operate in terms of relationships. The Melanesian thought pattern is synthetic, rather than analytical; community-oriented, rather than individualistic; harmony-conscious, rather than antagonistic; operates from the known to the unknown.

While Westerners are more analytical in their thought process: dividing life and matters into segments and units, Melanesians see everything interrelated and interdependent. Melanesians see the world as a totality, a unity, and homogeneous (Koschade, 1967, pp. 115-116).

For Melanesians, religion, economics, politics, and education constitute one integrated, interrelated, interdependent unity. In the words of a former missionary,

> The totality, of which we speak, embraces the overt, as well as the covert, responses, the manifest, as well as the implicit, the

> theoretical, or ideal, as well as the actual or real, the universal, alternatives, and specialities (Luzbetak, 1970, p. 62).

The Melanesian community is integrated, and consists of people, animals, the environment, the spirit world, and the dead (in particular, the ancestors). The Melanesian situation is quite similar to the African. What is said concerning the Bantu is applicable also to the Melanesian.

> Bantu psychology cannot conceive a man as an individual, existing by himself, unrelated to the animals, and inanimate forces surrounding him. It is not sufficient to say he is a social being; he feels himself a vital force in actual, intimate and permanent rapport with other forces – a vital force, both influenced by, and influencing them (Smith, 1962, p. 20).

When Samana was Premier of Morobe Province, he was called to preside over a dispute between two groups. A foreign timber company made payments to one group and not the other. The argument was solved, not by Samana, but by a dragon lizard.

> We were meeting under a mango tree, Samana recalls, and a dragon lizard fell from the top of the mango tree, right into the centre of the village meeting. It startled them all. Everybody was scared, and started running in all directions. Samana's secretary reached down, and picked up the dragon lizard. Slowly the villagers returned. When they came back, I told them you realise you were all arguing over timber resources, and arguing how you were going to benefit monetarily. But you forget that the animals also own those resources as well. You forgot to invite them to this meeting. You forgot to indicate to them where they fit in, how they are being affected. They are trying to show you that they are not happy, that you have not invited them here, too, to hear their views about how you are disturbing the environment, and destroying their habitat. Samana says that solved the problem! The people did not argue any further. They understood that kind of a sign. They came to

terms, and decided to make sure the distribution was equitable (Dorney, 1990, pp. 19-20).

Impact of Western Thought Patterns

It is important to point out the impact Western thought patterns are having on contemporary Papua New Guineans. Many educated Papua New Guineans are becoming more and more fragmented in their thinking. They view religion as something for Sunday, or village life. Church buildings are seen as very sacred places, reserved for Sunday services only. Church buildings cost a lot of money and energy, but are used for not more than ten hours a week. Many institutions are unrelated to each other, schools, hospitals, universities, colleges, Bible and theological colleges, are fenced off from each other. The secular and the sacred are kept apart. Government institutions don't always value religious disciplines. Bible and theological colleges, on the other hand, make very little room for secular subjects. As a result of this dichotomised thinking, many educated Papua New Guineans see little significance in organised religion. Many are nominally religious, but they follow neither the Christian, nor the traditional, belief system. "It is truly sad that a people, who were once always spiritual, have suddenly become apathetic, indifferent, and often quite antagonistic, toward any form of organised religious experience" (Narokobi, 1977, p. 11).

Melanesian Concept of Community

The idea of homogeneity is seen more clearly in the life of the community. Melanesian communities provide security, support, and care for all the people. In these community-oriented societies, the concerns of the community take precedence over the individual. The individual exists for the community. This does not mean individuals are not important or ignored. We will return to this idea, further, below.

The concept of community solidarity stems from the fact that, for Papua New Guineans, "to be" means to be a unity, a totality, not a fragmentation of disconnected and "isolated components" (Koschade, 1967, p. 122). To put it in another way, "I am", because "they are" –

to be a person in Papua New Guinea is to belong to the community. A man may lose his *mana*, but he cannot afford to lose his community.

Melanesian Concept of Sin

This leads us to another important concept – sin. Sin in Melanesian society has to do with broken relationship with human beings and the gods. Papua New Guinean community, as noted above, consists of people, gods, ancestors, the environment, and the animals. Sin, to them, is the breaking of relationship with any of these entities. Natural disasters, sickness, and death are due to the breaking of relationships.

The principle that governs these relationships is called *Lo*, a Pidgin version for "law" in English. In general, *Lo* is the visible, and invisible, ethical and religious standard of the community. *Lo* stands for the right religious rituals, social patterns of behaviour, and legal and religious obligations (Fugmann, 1977, p. 124). Sin, therefore, is the breaking of *Lo* that governs relationships within the community. Personal sin is sin against the accepted community standard of behaviour. As Wayne Dye points out, "disobeying husbands and leaders, refusing hospitality and inter-clan payments, and expressing anger are, to them (Papua New Guineans), far more serious 'sin' " (1976, pp. 28-29).

Lo is directly related to *i stap stret*, that is "he, she, or it stays straight", a Papua New Guinean equivalent for righteousness or righteous living, which, in this case, means living by the *Lo* of the community, *i stap stret* within the community. Traditionally, an individual, who transgressed against the *Lo*, had to pay for it with his own life. From the moment of his birth, the individual knows to whom he belongs, and what is expected of him.

He (the Melanesian) is given a culture and autonomy, within a defined community territory, and in terms of human relationships. The concept of community solidarity has its negative aspects as well. This is seen in the area of harmony, rather than antagonism. The positive side of harmony, rather than antagonism, is better demonstrated by the individual's reluctance to reveal community secrets. Since the

community provides "salvation" for everyone within the society, no Melanesian would openly conceal anything that is related to the community. To do so, is to betray the community, to break the *Lo*, thus disturbing the harmony of the community. Melanesian politeness guards the people from speaking out their mind and heart until a trusting relationship is established. In Melanesian society, one must earn the right to be listened to, and obeyed. A stranger (Melanesian or expatriate), as an outsider, will not be trusted with community secrets.

Melanesian Concept of Ancestral Spirits

Melanesians welcomed, and accepted, outsiders with different skin colour, because they associated them with ancestral spirits or ghosts. Their myths and legends assured them that, one day, the long-departed ancestors will return with the secret to eternal bliss. The people "received them peacefully as they would receive a ghost" (Codrington, 1891, p. 11).

The return of the ancestors, or ancestor, is associated with the ushering in of material goods, the arrival of the millennium, a time of universal prosperity. This is the time, marked by youthfulness for the aged, disappearance of sickness, death, hunger, poverty, and all other deficiencies (Thimme, 1977, p. 35).

The reluctance on the part of Melanesians to give out community secrets is because it will prevent the arrival of the millennium. When the Melanesians heard about eternal life, *laip i stap gut oltaim oltaim*, they interpreted it according to their cultural understanding.

> A father and son ate together. They were eating a taro. Then the father picked a flower, which the son wanted. But the father said, "No, you have the taro, that should satisfy you. I am the stronger, therefore, the flowers belong only to me". The people said to the missionary: "You have given us the taro, i.e., the gospel. When are you going to give us the flower, the secret of strength and cargo?" (Frerichs, 1957, p. 109).

I can still recall the shock that came over me, as I sat talking with one of the pastors in a village in the Sepik. "What did the people think

about the message I preached yesterday?", I asked. "They liked it very much," came the answer. I asked, "Why?" "What else did they say?" The pastor responded, "Well . . . the people attended all three services yesterday, because they wanted to know the secret you have for them. You are one of us. Your skin is like our skin. You have been educated in Australia. When you preached about Jesus raising Lazarus from death, we realised that you have come to tell us the secret that the missionaries have been holding back from us all this time." I had preached three messages on the resurrection of Lazarus from John 11. I decided to speak on the same passage three times, because I did not want to confuse the people. This serves to highlight the difficulty of understanding the way the people interpret the message they hear. It is even more difficult to correct the misinterpreted truth, without personal follow up.

Melanesians and Harmony

Papua New Guineans value harmony more than confrontation. They would rather follow a half-understood truth than argue over it.

When people value harmony more than confrontation, it affects their relationship with each other. Many times, the people will not speak up, or correct, someone who slips back in his/her Christian life.

Human beings everywhere are very much experience-oriented. Experience validates belief or practice. What Melanesians experienced, in the past, becomes the basis for judgment and decision-making. This universal characteristic was the basis, on which Melanesians made their decisions, as they confronted new ideas. When Melanesians met white people for the first time, they took them for their ancestors, returning from death. Not only did they listen to them, but their mistaken understanding, in many cases, saved the lives of the newcomers.

When the wife and children of the pioneering missionary arrived in Baiyer River, the Engans, who carried the children to the mission station, pinched their skin to satisfy their curiosity, to be doubly sure that they were real human beings, like the brown children.

The arrival of white people, with their personal belongings – *cargo* – bewildered the people. They looked on the missionaries, and the government officers, whose *cargo* they carried over the mountains and the valleys, as people of wealth. They became convinced that, one day, when the time is right, they would discover *rot bilong cargo*, "the cargo road" – the secret to wealth and well-being.

> The villages assumed that government law, and Christianity, with its ritual, operated in the same way as traditional religion, but that the government and Christianity would supply the material success, growth and prosperity, connected with the way of life of the expatriates, which the villages saw and desired, just as their traditional religious ritual has assured them of fertility, growth, and continuity in their traditional way of life (Knoebel, 1/1972, p. 40).

What the people observed, and touched, also influenced their traditional belief system. The new Christian rituals, such as baptism and communion, came to be associated with traditional rituals. Concerning the African attitude to communion, Reyburn observed "communion Sunday is the only one, which is attended in force" (1958a, p. 171). Melanesian societies operate under duties and obligations. It is not difficult to imagine that the people viewed communion as an opportunity to establish favour with God. Some people in Papua New Guinea have seen the idea of being a Christian as putting God under obligation. They attended church services, helped the minister, and carried out church activities, in order to put God under obligation.

Summary

To summarise this section, we note that Papua New Guineans and Melanesians, in general, think synthetically, rather than analytically. They think more in terms of communities, rather than individuals. Unless they know and trust an outsider, they will not reveal their minds and hearts, but respond in ways they think the outsider wants them to. They understand, and explain, the new in terms of the old and familiar.

These four categories of thought patterns have been purposely divided for clear presentation. In reality, Papua New Guineans think in totality. Even making statements like these do not fully represent the total situation. For, clearly, there are distinct differences from place to place, from individual to individual. As Koschade puts it,

> New Guinea society, like any other society, also has its mystics and "scientists", its conservatives and its liberals, its opportunists, quacks, intellectuals, and visionaries. It has its men (and women), who were born before their time (1967, p. 115).

Understanding the Structure of Melanesian Communities

The Papua New Guinean belief system, and thought patterns, are clearly influenced by the structure of the communities – the way the people respect and relate to each other.

An important aspect of village life is the way people make decisions, and the importance of these decisions for the well-being of their communities.

The coastal and the highlands' villages are structured differently. While the coastal people, on the whole, live together as a community, many highlands' villages are scattered through the jungles. To an outsider, these villages consist of buildings, with no relationship to each other. The people in the village, or the community, however, do know their relationship to each other. They know their family members, their clan, tribe, and the people group to whom they belong. A Papua New Guinean village represents the history of the people, their customs, and religious practices. The village offers the people security, and a sense of destiny. The tribal groupings are political, and social units, within which marriages, and other intertribal interactions, takes place.

Melanesian Concept of Leadership

The village elders represent the authority of the villages. The elders consist of chief/s, and the heads of each tribe, clan, and family. A

tribe consists of a number of clans, a clan represents a number of families. The chief/s, as heads of the tribes, are decision-makers. The clan, and family, heads are working leaders. They, and the young men and women, are responsible to carry out the decisions made by the chiefs.

Leadership patterns differ from place to place. On the coastal areas, leadership is hereditary, by nature. In this case, leadership is passed from the father to his first-born son, the first-born son to his first-born son. Normally, there is no argument as to who should be the leader. This male leadership is characteristic of patrilineal communities. In these communities, all property rights are held by the male leaders. All the members of the tribe, clan, and families know the property that belongs to them. All property is community-owned. It is the responsibility of the first-born of the family to allocate family property to the members of his tribe. Once the allocation is made, the clan, or the family, members are responsible to develop their piece of ground. This becomes their clan, or family, heritage.

In matrilineal communities, male members hold leadership responsibilities, but the right to property belongs to the female members. The first-born daughter of the family inherits the family property. She allocates the property to her brothers and their sons. Without her blessing, the brothers cannot sell or give away land or fishing waters.

In some of the highlands' communities, leadership is by achievement. "A man becomes a community leader by his ability in war and/or oratory, community leadership and/or organising exchange of goods with other villages or clans" (Dye, 1982, p. 13). In other highlands' communities, leadership is hereditary. The first-born inherits leadership from his father, and passes it on to his first-born son, who, in turn, passes it to his first-born.

Melanesian Concept of Decision-Making

Consensus of opinion is the most common decision-making process in the villages – a multi-individual, mutually-interdependent, decision-making. This process of decision-making calls for participation from

all members of the community. This does not take away the chief's right of making the final decision.

There were times, when the leaders, and or the chief, made decisions, without consulting the community, for the good of everybody.

> The authority and power of the chief include the responsibility to maintain harmony and order, to direct the common operations and industries, to represent his people to strangers, to preside at sacrifices, to lead in war, to inflict fines, to order trouble-makers be put to death (Codrington, 1891, p. 47).

Melanesian Concept of Authority

The elders/leaders are custodians of community *Lo*, and regulators of community well-being. The authority of the leaders or the chief is derived from the spirit world. No leader can take up his responsibility without being properly introduced to the spirit world, through initiation. The leader is expected to enter into a personal encounter with the community spirit before taking up his office.

As noted before, the Melanesian community is a community of the living and the dead. Accordingly, no community decision can be made without consulting the departed members of the community. If the community decides to move to a new location, it must first consult the ancestors. Nothing can happen without ancestral consent.

In a homogeneous society, decision-making extends to every part of life, without obscuring the distinctive part of life.

> The idea of totality of homogeneity does not mean that the New Guinean is unable to distinguish between the various aspects of existence, or activity, but he is acutely aware of the interrelatedness, and interdependence, of all things, which have been obscured in Western thought, because of the analytical, fragmentary point of view. Man and nature, seen and unseen, living and dead, past and present, fragment and whole, natural and supernatural – all belong, as a homogeneous totality of life. All of existence is, therefore, brought together into a cosmic

> totality. The individual, the community, nature, spirits, are all aspects of the whole, and representations of it. Everything is interrelated, and interdependent, so that nothing can be isolated, without losing its identity. There is existence, only within the framework of this cosmic totality (Koschade, 1967, pp. 116, 117).

In Papua New Guinea, the individual is an integral part of the community. The individual's identity and rights are interwoven with the identities and rights of the community, but are not obscured by it. Because an individual's action can either invoke the blessing, or the curse, of the spirit beings, he must operate within the accepted standards of the society. This is especially important, when it comes to the transfer of allegiance from spirit worship to Christianity.

Melanesian Concept of Conversion

Traditionally, no Papua New Guinean could ever consider becoming a Christian without involving the community and the elders. Transfer of religious allegiance is a matter of life and death. No transfer of religious allegiance can be affected, without fully discussing its consequences in relation to gardening, hunting, family lives, ancestral spirits, etc.

Conversion, in Papua New Guinea, in a real sense, is the conversion of the society. Missionaries, both foreigners and nationals, in their eagerness to see instant results, have encouraged individuals to make decisions, at the expense of the community. The result has been either antagonism from the community, or a shallow religious life, or both.

It terms of the parable of the sower, the results are like seeds falling on all other soil, except the good soil. The community, in Papua New Guinea, is the soil, in which Christianity is to grow. Unless the soil is properly ploughed, the rocks removed, and the thorns uprooted, it will not bear abundant fruit.

Importance of Consensus Decisions

This highlights the importance of the consensus decision-making process in Papua New Guinean communities. Consensus decision-making is a social mechanism that controls group interaction and interdependence. Interpersonal relationships, and community loyalties, matter more than personal rights. Consensus decision-making ensures security and harmony.

> Human beings, as human beings, experience a need for a home, for a place of belonging, where they share with each other, and care for each other. It is paradoxical that security in a group gives people the courage to reach outside the group, to a wider community (MacDonald, 1982, p. 134).

Consensus decision-making can well be termed the "soul" and the "eye" of the community. It is at the heart of all community activities. It builds the community together, strengthens interpersonal relationships, and offers security and stability to everyone.

> The group does not exist as a living organism, unless the individuals act and interact, each according to its specific role and right. The total group is really the decision-making body. Although it may be for one individual to make pronouncement, as the representative of all. In many communal societies, there is no decision without unanimity of the village, or tribal council (Tippett, 1971, pp. 199-200).

Papua New Guinean communities have been shown to have well-defined structures. Many villages consist of several clans and family units. The heads of the tribes and clans constitute the final decision-making body for the total community.

Conclusion

This paper has highlighted several important factors toward understanding Papua New Guineans. The core of Papua New Guinean communities is the spirit world. Papua New Guineans believe, and

think, spirits. The idea of homogeneity influences the total cosmic community, of which they are part.

Bibliography

Codrington, R. H., *The Melanesians: Studies in Anthropology and Folklore*, Oxford UK: Clarendon Press, 1891.

Dawia, Alexander, "Indigenising Christian Worship", in *Point* 1 (1980), pp. 13-60.

Dorney, Sean, *Papua New Guinea: People, Politics, and History Since 1975*, Milsons Point NSW: Random House, 1990.

Dye, T. Wayne, "Toward a Cross-Cultural Definition of Sin", in *Missiology* 4 (1976), pp. 27-41.

Frerichs, A. C., *Anatu Conquerors in New Guinea*, Columbus OH: Wartburg Press, 1957.

Fugmann, Gernot, "Salvation Expressed in a Melanesian Context", in James Knight, ed., *Christ in Melanesia: Exploring Theological Issues*, *Point* 1&2 (1977).

Knoebel J., "Melanesian Communities", in *Point* (1/1972), pp. 35-48.

Koschade, Alfred, *New Branches on the Vine from Christian Field to Church in New Guinea*, Minneapolis MN: Augsburg Publishing, 1967.

Luzbetak, Louis J., *The Church and Culture*, Pasadena CA: William Carey Library, 1970.

MacDonald, Mary, "Basic Christian Communities", in *Catalyst* 12 (1982), pp. 129-148.

Narokobi, Bernard M., "What is Religious Experience for a Melanesian?", in James Knight, ed., *Christ in Melanesia: Exploring Theological Issues*, *Point* 1&2 (1977).

Reyburn, William D., "Meaning and Restructuring: A Cultural Process", in William A. Smalley, ed., *Readings in Missionary Anthropology*, Tarrytown NJ: Practical Anthropology, 1967.

Robertson, Marilyn, "Mid-Wahgi Religious Belief and Implications for Ministry", Banz PNG: CLTC, unpublished paper, 1982.

Richardson, Don, *Peace Child*, Glendale CA: Regal Books, 1975.

Smith, cited in Koschade, *New Branches*, 1967.

Thimme, Hans Martin, "Manamakeri: Theological Evaluation of an Old Biak Myth", in James Knight, ed., *Christ in Melanesia: Exploring Theological Issues*, *Point* 1&2 (1977), pp. 21-49.

Tippett, Alan R., *Southern Polynesia: A Study in Church Growth*, Chicago IL: Moody Press, 1971.

Wagner, C. Peter, *Your Spiritual Gift Can Help Your Church Grow*, Ventura CA: Regal Books, 1979.

Weymouth, Ross W., "The Gogodala Society in Papua New Guinea and the Unevangelised Fields Mission", Adelaide SA: Flinders University, Ph.D. dissertation, 1978.

A TRADITIONAL WEDDING DUA – "THE BRIDE"

Marilyn Rowsome

Marilyn, as a single missionary from Australia, was a faculty member of the Christian Leaders' Training College. She is now wife to David (Dean of Distance Theological Education at CLTC), and mother to three daughters. She has a ministry in mobilising the Melanesian church in missions. This article, and the next article, were written for course work towards a Master's degree in Missiology from Fuller Theological Seminary. She has lived in Papua New Guinea for over 20 years.

Introduction

A marriage ceremony, in the highlands of Papua New Guinea, is a major event for both communities involved in the union. In an event-orientated society, it is an opportunity for celebration, display of wealth, social interaction, and an exciting change from the routine of everyday life.

Such was the case for the people of the Mid-Wahgi Valley, when Dua, of the Kulaka tribe, was married to John, of the Pagua tribe. Dua is the first-born daughter of Arim, the headman of Sigri village. Her mother had died some time earlier, but Dua has many mothers, fathers, brothers, and sisters, who would play an important part in this special occasion. Dua is about 18 years old, and has received no formal schooling, but has been well trained in gardening and pig-raising, the necessary skills for any wife in Wahgi culture. John, the bridegroom, lives in the same vicinity, but belongs to a different tribe and language group, who came to settle in the valley, because of a land shortage in their own province. There are friendly relations between the two groups, with several other unions in marriage. Because of this, and the custom of sister-exchanges, it is not surprising that these two lines are, once again, cementing their ties

through marriage, for this new union will serve to maintain and strengthen relationships between the groups.

Gifts

Much activity has already preceded the day marked for the wedding ceremony. For several years, Dua and John, separately, have been involved in courting ceremonies (called *karim leg* and *tanim het*) with many of the opposite sex, and yet never with each other. When the time for marriage for John was considered right, his uncle began negotiating with Dua's line, regarding marriage. This included bargaining over an acceptable bride price, a payment collected by the groom from all his relatives, and given to the bride's line on the day of exchange. However, even before this day, gifts were given as a type of betrothal payment, securing Dua for John's line, while they raised the bride price. Dua's initial reaction to news of the intended marriage was to run away into the bush. However, after a long physical and verbal battle between her and her relatives, she submitted to their wishes. The money was raised, half of it being given by a rich uncle, living away in the city. The date for the exchange was marked, and preparations began. I was privileged to be invited to the exchange, and so, in this report, I will describe the events of this marriage ritual, starting at the night before the "big day", and going through the climax of the exchange.

Steam Bath

On the night before her wedding, the bride is subjected to a steam bath. The members of the two groups, highly decorated, gather in the house of a relative of Dua. A roaring fire is made. The two lines sit on opposite sides of the fire, while Dua herself sits beside the fire. Traditionally, the *Kunje Yi* (magic man) is present. He performs his magical ritual throughout the ceremony. He whispers chants over the special firewood, and the leaves, used on this night. But, on this occasion, there was little evidence of magical practices to my eye, and the people themselves claim that they have left these ways behind. Still, this ritual has much meaning. The act of sitting by a raging fire takes much commitment, symbolic of the commitment everyone is making to this marriage. If anyone should move away, it is an

indication that they do not want to continue with the marriage. In particular, Dua's willingness to sit close to the fire is her indication of her desire to go on with the marriage.

It is not long before those gathered begin to sweat. Dua herself sweats profusely. Special leaves are taken, and used to mop off the perspiration from her body. Pig grease is rubbed over Dua, and, as the sweat subsequently builds up, the absorbent leaves again wash it off. This process is repeated continually, and takes the name "washing down the bride". At different stages, others join her close to the fire. During this ritual, Dua is not to move from the fire, or to drink water. The reason for this goes back to the magical significance of this event. By magical power, assurance was given that the marriage would be good. Magical chants and spells ensured that the man would not take other wives, and that he would be faithful. Non-cooperation, or failure to perform the ritual correctly, would break the power of the magic.

Dua, herself, said she was unaware of the significance of the ritual. The older people freely told the meaning of the magical practices, once performed, but insisted that now they did this, just because it was a tradition. I would suggest that, even though the magical performances have ceased, the ritual still retains its meaning for the participants. I believe it provided Dua with a measure of assurance, as she faced the frightening experience of marriage. It assured her of acceptance in her husband's line – something vital to the happiness of her marriage. The ritual of washing also indicated a cleansing inside and out, in preparation for the marriage. There is certainly potential for this meaning to become a major part of this ceremony.

Of course, John's line has not come to this ceremony without the offering of food. A pig has been killed, and presented to Dua's line, as a sign of friendship. In return, food is offered to John's line, for exchange of food is a seal of any transaction.

Singing

Throughout the ritual, there is singing and chanting. The older men from Dua's line chant words of advice and instruction about the way

she should behave in marriage, and the responsibilities of marriage. The women, who have married into her clan, instruct her in the need for hard work, and the necessity of providing food for members of the groom's line. As the fire dies down, songs are sung until early morning. Some of these are special songs of the ancestors, asking for blessing on the marriage. Farewells are sung to the bird leaving its nest, a picture of the bride, leaving her line to join the line of her husband. In fact, this whole ceremony has been a symbolic severing of the ties of the past, in preparation for her new life.

The Bride

About 10 am the following morning, after a few hours sleep, preparations begin for the exchange. For the next couple of hours, great care is taken in washing, dressing, and decorating the bride. She wears a new *purpur*, fastened with a wide, bark belt. She, herself, has made a long apron from dyed and woven bush fibres, and possum fur. Red tanket leaves, pleated, and wiped with pig grease, are clustered to form an attractive covering for her buttocks. Her body is smeared with pig grease, until it shines a beautiful golden brown. Her face is painted with circles, lines, and dots of all colours. Intricately-woven anklets and wristlets hold more leaves, to add to her decoration. The fur of a possum goes around her neck, with the tail hanging down her front. Beads are added.

As a reminder of Western influence, Dua adds dye, several safely pins, and some coloured glitter paper. At the same time, another woman is decorated in a similar fashion. Her name is Maria, a

"mother" of John. She joins Dua in all the activities that follow, acting as a type of bridesmaid.

Kina on a String

While all this was going on, a relative painstakingly threaded 100 K2 notes onto string. She will give this gift from her line to her husband's line, in the first weeks of being with them. Once again, it is a means of assuring her acceptance in her new line. Her father says it will help soften hurt felt by John's line in departing with so much money on this day. The money is draped around her body for all to see. At first, the women from Dua's line decorated her, but now many others are involved, and a crowd gathers to watch the final touches being put to her adornment. Young girls, beautifully decorated, stand by watching. This is their opportunity to display their beauty, and claim that they are potential brides.

The crowning of her decoration is surely her headdress. Her relatives place a knitted cap on her woolly hair. It provides an anchor for the many feathers arranged in rows in the cap. The short red parakeet feathers, the orange-fanned bird of paradise plumes, and the beautiful, long, black single bird of paradise feathers, together, form this spectacular decoration that, in itself, is a significant display of wealth. This, too, will be given to the relatives of the groom.

Magic

During this decoration, I saw no visible sign of magical practices. Later I was told that Dua was, at one stage, taken into a house, where leaders gathered to school her. The local magic man was present. He squeezed pig grease over her hair, while whispering his chants. If the grease ran straight down her face, then the marriage would be good, but if it ran down the side of her face, she would fight with her husband. I am told that the latter happened. (After a year's reflection, this has been proved true, affirming the validity of the method, and the magic man.) I heard this story from only one informant. There is an obvious reluctance to talk with the missionary about any of these things happening today. I have been told that, in the past, magical charms were said over the paint, grease, and plumes, to cause them to

shine with the blessing of the spirits, also a magic potion was given to the bride to ensure marital faithfulness.

The Wedding Ceremony

And so, in all her beauty, Dua waits behind the bush houses of her village, because it is not yet time for her to appear. Attention now shifts to the open area in the middle of the village. Here, the exchange will take place. Visitors are inspecting the 20 cooked pigs, arranged side by side on banana leaves, so that the snouts are all facing in the same direction. The entrails are dumped unceremoniously on top of the cooked halves of pig. This has been carefully prepared as a gift of food for John's line. It is also a sign that the line is capable of looking after pigs, a trait essential, if the bride is to find favour with her in-laws.

About 2 pm, those gathered hear shouts and cries in the distance. These grow louder, until, finally, the relatives of the bridegroom are seen slowly making their way, dancing and singing, towards the village. With their unified, mad outbursts of war whoop, the warriors, decked out in magnificent headdresses, with faces splashed with paint, rush towards the open area, advancing in a vicious and realistic war dance. This is a great display of their strength and power as a clan. Some say the vigorous action of the advancing warriors is an attempt to chase away the spirits, who might interfere with the ceremony. With the swirling of their ten-foot long spears, and the twirling of their axes, in quickening, lightened steps, they advance and retreat, alternately. An uninformed spectator could be forgiven for thinking that a full-scale battle is about to take place.

Behind the warriors, the women, also highly decorated, follow, carrying cooked halves of pig high on their heads. The men carry long bamboo poles, decorated with money: paper notes of all denominations. There are several circular display frames, about five feet in diameter, constructed of woven canes, and tied with green vines. These are carried by strong picketers on six-foot high poles, so that all can see them. The outer edges are decorated with plumes of the bird of paradise, shells, and possum fur. Hundreds of paper notes are slipped under the single strands of woven cane. On this occasion,

K4,000 was displayed on these frames and poles – quite an impressive display of wealth. The bride's line will receive this bride price, or bride wealth. It is not really a payment, but an exchange – and exchange of the most highly-valued objects of wealth in this society: women, pigs, and money. It is a compensation, paid to the bride's family, because of the potential in her, as a worker and child bearer, which they are losing in offering her to the other line.

When the apparently enraged warriors reach their destination, just as suddenly as the dance began, it comes to an abrupt halt. In one body, a terrific male booming shout is sounded, the well-decorated frames are presented, and their posts secured in the ground. All this has taken place while the bride's line has sat expressionless, and in silence, on the far side of the *singsing* ground.

The Exchange

Now comes the exchange. Firstly, the negotiator, the bride's uncle receives his share of the bride price for the task he has done, to everyone's approval. A man of great oratory ability, called a rhetoric thumper, rises, and makes a speech to the bride's line concerning the value of the wealth they are giving for the bride. This includes about 30 cooked pigs, already laid out on banana leaves. In the past, other articles, such as shells, plumes, axes, spades, bush knives, and silver shillings would make up the bride wealth. These would have been spread on a blanket, and proudly displayed. However, today, it is the kina paper notes that are highly valued, and attract the attention of all.

Several orators make their long speeches, while strutting vigorously backwards and forwards, eight or so paces, as they chant and swing their axes. As the groom's line speaks of the value of the wealth they have brought, it is proudly displayed. One pole is raised high. "Here is K500 that we have attached to this pole. We give this great wealth to you." Then the pole is handed to the bride's line. This is done with singing, shouting, and play-acting. The pole bearer pretends to hand it over, and then takes it, and retreats several steps. The receiver follows. Then the giver advances again, pretending to hand over the pole, as the receiver retreats. This process continues until the pole is finally handed over, and bearer retreats to his place, as shouts of

delight rise from the crowd. I expect that this performance symbolises the great cost to the line, in parting with the wealth. They certainly will be expecting something good in return.

The orator from Dua's line then rises to assure them of the virtues of their girl, and then proceeds to tell them how they should look after her. With this, cooked pigs are presented to the groom's line, and some of the money is returned to them. This is like a counter-gift. This return transaction initiates the affinal relationship, and emphasises its chief characteristic – friendly reciprocity. In more pragmatic terms, the headman recognises that this generosity on his part will go a long way towards ensuring his daughter's acceptance in her new family, and may help to compensate for some of her inevitable weaknesses! All the speeches given emphasise the cementing roles of marriage, as these two groups are brought together. There are repeated reminders to both groups of the mutual responsibilities that are now theirs, as intermarrying groups.

At this point in the traditional ceremony, a pastor rises to read the Word of God, and give a short explanation of Christian marriage. Neither John nor Dua are Christian, but Arim has just recently given his life over to the Lord, and so, is keen to see the name of God heard on this special occasion.

The Bridal March

Finally, comes the bridal march. The feather-bedecked and grease-smeared bride, with her "mother-in-law", approach the *singsing* area, performing the dance called *troim-away leg*, which consists of tiny, vigorous movements of the legs backwards. The dancers move in a circle, slowly advancing a little with each turn. All the while, each one twirls an axe to the beat of the dance. Women rush forward, screaming noisily, and shaking hands, thus welcoming the bride into their tribe. Finally, the noise stops, and all are still. Slowly, one by one, the female relatives of Dua step forward, and solemnly press money into her hand as a personal gift. The only noise to be heard is an occasional sob, as emotions soar high. This is a very sad moment, as her close relatives say their final good-byes to one, who has been such a part of their lives. There is no such display from the men, even

her father. Dua, in fact, will live in the district, and be seen with great frequency, but, even so, she will no longer be part of them, but will belong to the other line.

Again, the dancing begins, for now the climax is reached. Dua is to be given to the groom's line. Dua and Maria are placed high on the shoulders of strong men. With much shouting and singing, they are raced backwards and forwards between the two lines in a similar performance to the one seen in the giving of the money. Finally, as her line decides to let her go, she is delivered to her new line. Again, this hesitancy is symbolic of the cost of giving Dua in this way. A big piece of pig fat is held high, and Dua, and her new relatives, bite pieces from the grease, together, as they dance, sing, and shout. This is the symbolic sealing of the exchange.

There only remains the task of dividing the wealth. The following day, the father and uncle see that all Dua's line receive an appropriate amount. One "brother", actually a distant cousin in our terms, claimed to receive K20.

The Groom

In all this, the groom was not to be seen. Some said he was hiding behind the bamboo, but I did not spot him. It seemed that no one was interested in him. In fact, he has had little to do with the whole event. In some cases, the groom may be away at the coast working, not even aware that he is being married off to a girl he doesn't even know. This highlights the fact that marriage is not an individual affair, but a community one. Marriage not only encourages and maintains friendly relationships between groups, but also is a means of increasing tribal strength. The communal nature of this social transaction is seen in the group-courting ceremonies, the choosing of the bride by the group, the transactions between the groups, the contribution that all make to the bride price, and in the participation of the communities in the actual exchanges.

Western Weddings

In all this, it is obvious that there are big differences between an individualistic Western-style wedding, centred on the bride and groom, and the traditional Mid-Wahgi ceremony, centred on the groups. Yet, as Western influence spreads, it is common to see a wedding following the Western pattern. The bride, attended by bridesmaids, will be dressed in white, with a veil and a bouquet. After the exchange of vows, the bridal party will line up to have photographs taken. A wedding reception will follow, complete with the cutting of the cake and toasts. Many Christians, in desiring to have a Christian wedding, have accepted the Western form in totality. This has often been done with little thought about what could be a Christian Melanesian wedding. So, to conclude this account, I would like to raise some questions, in an attempt to stimulate Papua New Guineans to struggle with these issues to find a meaningful Melanesian wedding ceremony.

Christian Weddings

What can Christians retain of the traditional ceremony? Certainly, dress. A Melanesian bride can be truly Christian, without donningWestern bridal fashion. A Christian girl may not feel comfortable bare-breasted, but, if so, this can be overcome by a simple top, made of traditional materials. If the bride was not willing to wear traditional village dress, then the dress of the towns, a *laplap* and *meri* blouse would be very appropriate.

What about the bride price? Should a Christian family demand a bride price for their daughter? To Western thinking, the purchase of a bride is a repulsive practice. However, the meaning and significance of the bride price should be understood, before it is condemned. The bride price acknowledges the value of womanhood, and gives expression of the girl's worth and quality. It acts as a stabiliser for the marriage. It provides security for each partner. Because of the bride price, the whole community has a stake in the marriage, one line having given, the other having received. Therefore, the community is responsible to see that the marriage works. A breakdown in marriage is not only the couple's decision; the whole community is involved, for the bride

price will have to be returned. Therefore, each person will do all they can to support the marriage, and help the couple through the hard times. With such value in this custom, there is no need for it to be discarded. However, control is necessary, so that exorbitant prices are not demanded. Here, the church could have a role in regulating and controlling such exchanges.

Could the church also play a role in the matching of partners? The Western fashion of individual choice, based on emotions, may not be the ideal. Christian parents, pastors, and church leaders could be acting positively, in taking the initiative to arrange Christian marriages, with the approval of the young people. The church certainly has a responsibility in providing suitable courting activities, before God, for its young people.

The Christian community can continue to play an important part in the wedding ceremony. Their commitment to the marriage should be just as strong as in the traditional ceremony, and a visible means of expressing this commitment need to be developed. Gifts between lines could be given, speeches could be made, and verbal responses to each other could be read. A Christian Melanesian wedding ceremony needs to continue to be a union between groups, and not just the witnessing of the two individuals being united. The dimensions of commitment of the couple to God, and to each other, need to be introduced also.

The tradition of speech-making provides excellent opportunity, within the wedding, for Christian instruction to the bride, the groom, and both lines, on the meaning of Christian marriage, and the responsibilities of all involved. This teaching could be presented in the traditional form used by the skilled orator.

The washing of the bride need not be a ceremony that is discarded, but one that could be filled with new meaning. This brings us to the question of the meaning behind the traditional forms I have described here. Form and meaning need to be separated. It would be ideal to retain the old forms of the wedding ceremony, and to introduce new meanings that are Christian. For example, the washing of the bride

could continue to be a meaningful expression of commitment, on the part of the bride, and both lines involved. Intercession to God could be made for the success of the marriage. The Lordship of Christ, in the family and home, could be taught during the ritual, as the elders schooled the couple in Christian ways. Songs, expressing the meaning of Christian marriage, could be sung. In the situation described in this article, there appears to be an excellent opportunity to introduce new meanings. Dua, herself, did not understand the meaning of many of the things done at her wedding. The older men and women know the meaning of the magical practices, but, it seems that this is not being communicated to the younger generation. Forms are being performed for tradition's sake. The village has recently turned to Christianity. This is the time for Christian meaning to be introduced to the old forms.

This will not always be the case, and care must be taken. If the old meaning, associated with spirit beliefs, is still vivid, then it is not a simple matter of substituting a new meaning. The association of the form with the old meaning is still there in the minds of the people. For the bride to be washed down, while chanting prayers to God, may be acceptable culturally and theologically. However, it may pose real problems for those involved, as their thoughts automatically turn to the spirits, and the need to seek their favour for blessing on human affairs. In this case, a new form may need to be developed, which expresses the concept of cleansing, and preparation for marriage. Then, into this, could be incorporated Christian prayers and chants. Yet, it should still be uniquely Melanesian, and not Western. Decisions in these areas must be in the hands of Melanesians themselves.

Conclusion

Only Melanesians can develop a meaningful wedding ceremony for Melanesians. Yet, the missionary has a part to play. He, firstly, must stimulate national Christians to grapple with these things. They must understand that Western forms of marriage are not necessarily Christian. The missionary's attitude to his own Western forms, and traditional Melanesian forms, will certainly convey a message of

acceptance, or rejection, which national Christians are likely to imitate. Clear teaching on Christian marriage needs to be given. Alternatives can be suggested, guidelines given, and innovations from other areas shared. However, ultimately, it is their task to take the teaching of scripture, and their traditional ways, and allow them to interact, so that the result is a meaningful Christian Melanesian wedding ceremony.

Bibliography

Blowers, R., and Blowers, B., *Notes by Mid-Wahgi People: Kuma Marriage System*, unpublished paper, 1966.

Glasse, R. M., and Meggitt, M. T., *Pigs, Pearlshells, and Women: Marriage in the New Guinea Highlands*, Englewood Cliffs NJ: Prentice Hall, 1969.

Ramsey, E., *Middle Wahgi Dictionary*, Ukarumpa PNG: SIL, 1974.

Reay, M., *The Kuma: Freedom and Conformity in the New Guinea Highlands*, London UK: Cambridge Press, 1959.

Strathern, M., *Women in Between: Female Roles in the 1972 Male World: Mt Hagen PNG*, London UK: Seminar Press, 1972.

Melanesian Journal of Theology 17-2 (2001)

MELANESIAN TRADITIONAL RELIGION

Marilyn Rowsome

Introduction

The Melanesian is immersed in his own culture, at the core of which is a set of beliefs, assumptions, and expectations about life. Into this context, the gospel of Jesus Christ penetrates. The bearer of the Christian message seeks to communicate a biblical understanding of salvation, and its implications. The Melanesian can only conceive the new message from within his own religious traditions. A basic principle of education and communication is to move from the known to the unknown, the felt need to the unfelt need, what is already sought to the unsought. We must take seriously this principle, in the communication of the gospel in a different culture. We start with a people with a rich religious tradition. Our goal is to move them, by the power of the Holy Spirit, to accept and to live according to the Christian tradition. Melanesian traditional religion and Christianity, the subject of this article, is the relationship between these two systems of belief. Firstly, I will describe Melanesian traditional religion. Then I will outline several possible approaches to this tradition, showing what I believe to be the best approach for an effective communication of the gospel to Melanesians.

Melanesian Traditional Religion

Actually, there is no such reality as a Melanesian religion. In Whiteman's words "it is an abstraction, built upon a diversity of realities" (1981, p. 1). Melanesia encompasses the islands of Papua New Guinea, the Solomons, Vanuatu, North Caledonia, and Fiji in the Pacific Ocean.

This is a land of great diversity – diversity in languages (over 1,200 are spoken), in environments (from island to coastal highland), and so, in cultures. It is impossible to say that Melanesia has one set way of life, or system of beliefs. Yet, different groups do show a relatively similar pattern in their social, political, economic, and religious

behaviour. That, which is the common shared experience of all these cultures, we will call "Melanesian".

Religion is a system of beliefs and practices that enable a group to understand, explain, and validate the origin and existence of the world, its resources, powers, laws, and techniques. Beliefs and practices, which are indigenous to Melanesia, we will call "Melanesian traditional religion". The system that Turner defines as a "primal religion" is animistic. Religion is the focal point of Melanesian thinking and acting. Melanesians are very religious people. Religion *is* life. Life's activities, like gardening, hunting, fighting, giving birth, or even dying, are all religious in nature. Religion permeates all life. In fact, Melanesian life is holistic. There is no dichotomy of secular and sacred, animate and inanimate, living and dead. Melanesian culture is the interaction of all cultural aspects – economics, political, technological, social, and religious – to form a workable system. There is a total view of life, rather than life seen as a number of separate compartments. The real world consists of the supernatural and natural, the physical and non-physical, the living and dead. Man is immersed in this integrated world, and lives in vital relationship with all its parts.

Religion is experience, rather than knowledge. It is in the liver, or stomach (insides), not in the head. It is not a mental assent to a set of doctrines, but a total expression of life. It is not concerned with propositional truth, but with a demonstration of power in daily life. In such a pragmatic ideology, truth is judged by its effectiveness in bringing the desired results. It is true, if it works. As a pragmatic materialistic system, Melanesian traditional religion aims at manipulating the spirits and powers for the concrete this-worldly good of the community, seen as material wealth, fertility, health, power, and prestige.

Melanesian traditional religion is dynamic, not static. There have always been changes going on. When success and well-being are seen as the products of religion, then that religion easily adopts changes, in its search for new rituals, and means to obtain its goal. As goods

passed along the ancient trade routes, so did myths, rituals, and beliefs. Through such interaction, there was significant change.

Robert Glasser says:

> The historical context and substance of religious life, belief, and ritual in pre-colonial Papua New Guinea was a situation of change, fluidity and movement (Whiteman, p. 3).

And so, too, in post-contact times, Melanesians, themselves, have been quick to abandon their traditional forms, in the light of the white-man's supremacy. Adoption of European rituals would mean access to European successful life. However, the basic thrust of the Melanesian search remains unchanged – the striving for cosmic life and renewal. And so, in understanding Melanesian traditional religion, it is not enough to describe forms, but it is necessary to reach deeper into meanings – the basic hopes, aspirations, and longings, which find expression in religious beliefs. To these we now turn.

The Core of Melanesian Traditional Religion

Whiteman maintains that the central value of Melanesian religion is cosmic life and renewal. At the core of all belief and activity is the continuation, protection, maintenance, and celebration of life. Life is not mere biological existence and survival, but it is abundant life, life in its fullness. This good life cannot be described abstractly. Rather, it is judged by concrete things, like great feasting, fertility of women, health of children, strength of the tribe, and status of man. In Pidgin, all this is included in the term *kago***,** "cargo". "Cargo" is the ultimate expression of the abundant life. "Cargo" is a symbol. Strelan says:

> [I]t includes such things as money, freedom from hunger and death, release from the pressures and frustrations of work, the regaining of status and dignity, as a man, the effortless acquisition of knowledge and power (1977, p. 70).

Abundant life, then, is harmony, peace, unity, and social justice, release from oppression, wholeness, restoration, freedom, security, abundance: this is the desired life, the good life. The Melanesian

strives for this *gutpela sindaun*, "good life". It is only possible when things are "right". Man must be in right relationships with others, nature, and the supernatural. When all is well, cargo is abundant. This idealised, meaningful existence is symbolised by wealth.

> Wealth indicates a man's competence at dealing successfully with the earth, his fellow man, and the spiritual powers, at managing well his total environment (Schwarz, 1980, p. 18).

There is, deep within Melanesian religion, a search for salvation, a search for new identity. Time, energy, and attention are given to pursuing this value. Salvation is viewed as a concrete, this-worldly hope. It is a salvation, orientated to the here and now, and not the after life. It will eventuate here on this earth, in this present age. There will be a new order, in which there is "attainment of new power, bestowal of new identity, the formation of a new society, and a renewed fullness of life" (Ibid., p. 20). Cargo is the natural symbol of this new order, in which there is fullness of life and salvation.

> Cargo has a deeply-religious significance. It symbolises the action of some power, or powers, to deliver man from what it regarded as evil, and to renew him, his society, and, indeed, his whole world (Ibid., p. 25).

This is the basis of cargo cults, which have emerged as religious millennial movements, seeking a new order and identity, symbo1ised by cargo. The basic concern of cargo cults is access to divine power, for the purpose of renewal, and the fulfilment of the good life.

In Melanesia, one cannot talk about abundant life, cargo, or salvation, apart from the concept of *mana*. *Mana* is a term used by Codrington, in his study of the Melanesians late last century.

> *Mana* is a power or influence, not physical, and, in a way, supernatural; but it shows itself in physical force, or in any kind of power or excellence, which a man possesses. This *mana* is not fixed in anything, and can be conveyed in almost anything, but spirits, whether disembodied souls, or supernatural beings,

> have it, and can impart it; and it essentially belongs to personal beings to originate it, though it may act through the medium of water, or a stone, or a bone. All Melanesian religion consists, in fact, in getting this *mana* for one's self, or getting it used for one's benefit – all religion, that is, as far as religious practices go, prayers and sacrifices (Codrington, 1891, p. 119).

Mana is not an abstract concept, but a reality, whose presence can be proved empirically. All conspicuous success is proof of the possession of *mana*. *Mana* makes abundant life and cosmic renewal possible. Without it, there is only existence and survival. *Mana*, then, is central to the celebration of life. Without it there is no true salvation.

The Way of Salvation

This state of abundant life is not the ideal, in which man now lives. The ancestors of the mythical past knew the secret to the good life. However, the ancestors made certain decisions and performed certain actions that deprived Melanesians of the means to obtain the desired condition. The ancestors, themselves, are responsible for man's present predicament – the loss of his identity, status, and self-respect. Some myths attribute this loss to sin, and subsequent judgment, but others blame it on the foolishness and stupidity of the ancestors (Strelan, 1977, p. 67). But there is hope that what was lost will, one day, be restored.

> Fateful decisions and actions, which were taken in the past, will somehow be reversed, and man will regain his true identity, his dignity and integrity as a human being (Ibid., p. 68).

The "living dead" now have access to the good life, and they are the ones, who will bring the cargo to the living. Melanesian traditional religion looks to the ancestors for salvation. "They are the alpha and omega of Melanesian religion, especially in the Solomons and the Highlands" (Whiteman, 1981, p. 8). The ancestors have the role of sustaining, regulating, and maintaining life in Melanesia. The spirits of the dead control the circumstances of life, bringing the good life, if they are pleased, but withholding it, causing trouble and problems, if

they are not satisfied. Therefore, allegiance is given to these spirits. If there is a concept of a high god, or creative spirits, they are the object of legend and myth, not worship, for they are inactive, and unapproachable. Attention must be given to spirits and ghosts, who are an integral part of life, and upon whom the quality of life depends. Strelan says:

> Man has recourse to magic, to ritual, to various ways of manipulating the powers, who are thought to be responsible for the presence, or absence, of salvation. And he must make sure that his own life, and the lives of all others in his society, conform to appropriate patterns of behaviour. Taboos must be strictly observed; laws must be scrupulously obeyed; good order must be established and maintained. Above all, proper relationships must be preserved between man and man, and between man and the deities or spirits (Ibid., p. 76)

The goal of ritual is the accumulation of *mana*, which, in turn, means cargo. There is a real secrecy to Melanesian religion. For sharing the secrets will mean loss of power. The value of ritual knowledge depends on others not knowing it. Each group personally owns the rituals that they believe work for them. Therefore, there is no desire to share these with others. Since the spirits are local, these rituals may not work in another location, anyway. So Melanesian traditional religion is non-missionary in character.

Salvation is always related to the group, and its well-being. It is not something an individual can experience apart from the community, and the cosmos in which he lives. Identity comes from contribution to the group. Wholeness, harmony, and well-being of the group are expressed in communal feasting, dancing, and celebration. And so, relationships are paramount in Melanesia, and relationships are controlled by *Lo*, "laws". Anerns defines *Lo* as:

> The moral actions, and social behaviour, accepted, and expected, by a group, kept secret from other groups, endorsed by the forefathers, and approved by the ancestral spirits (Aherns, 1974, p. 13).

Lo then is anything that establishes and delineates relationships in the community that, as already noted, includes the living and the dead. *Lo* regulates all aspects of life. It includes the important concept of reciprocity, for it involves obligations.

> Ancestors or deities are, usually, either a partner in the relationship, which is established by *Lo*, or they are expected to safeguard the fulfilment of *Lo*. If *Lo* is properly observed, then the ancestors and deities must keep their part of the agreement: they must meet their obligations. Thus, if, in connection with gardening activities, *Lo* is observed by the ones, who plant and till the gardens, then the spirits and deities, who control fertility, must reciprocate, by ensuring a bountiful harvest. If, on the other hand, *Lo* relationships are neglected, or despised, then misfortune, failure of harvest, loss of power and security may be expected (Strelan, 1977, p. 76).

Therefore, it is essential to establish, maintain, and fulfil *Lo* relationships and obligations, in every sphere of life, in order to achieve salvation.

Christianity's Response to Melanesian Traditional Religion

What then is our response, as Christian communicators to this religious heritage of Melanesians? Bernard Narokobi, himself a Melanesian, appeals to us to take more seriously the Melanesian religious experience.

> The Melanesian is born into a spiritual and religious order. Much of life is devoted towards the maintenance and promotion of that given order. . . . Religious experience remains the foundation of any genuine Melanesian. . . . No one can take it away from him or her. Melanesian experience is not, of course, always right, but time is long overdue for some of our religious experience to be given its proper dignity, as has been given to the religious experience of all the great religions of the world (Narokobi, 1977, pp. 8-12).

We must take this appeal seriously. The basic question is, "What is God's view of culture?" God is supracultural, not bound to any one culture, but working through culture, to reach man. In the incarnation, He entered a specific culture, in order to speak clearly to man. God wants to beautify, transform, and fulfil every culture, by the power of the gospel. We have the responsibility to communicate this life-changing gospel, according to the perspective of the people, and their cultural context. This was Paul's attitude (1 Cor 9:19-23). To the Jews, he preached Christ as the Messiah, the fulfilment of Jewish expectations (Acts 13:16-41). To the Gentiles, he preached about God, the Creator and Giver of all things, who was once unknown and distant, but is now revealed in Jesus Christ (Acts 17:22-31).

Another important question, which will determine our attitude to Melanesian traditional religion, is "Was God at work in Melanesia before the gospel came?" God certainly created Melanesia. Turner says:

> God's presence has always been latent within Melanesian culture – incarnate, but veiled, or covered. The early missionaries were more revealers than bringers. . . . In Christ, His presence becomes clearer (1976, p. 243).

Other cultures have also struggled with this question. African theologians came to this conclusion:

> We believe that the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, Creator of heaven and earth, Lord of history, has been dealing with mankind, at all times, and in all parts of the world. It is with this conviction that we study the rich heritage of our African peoples, and we have evidence that they know Him, and worship Him. We recognise the radical quality of God's self-revelation in Jesus Christ, and yet it is because of this revelation that we can discern what is truly of God in our pre-Christian heritage: this knowledge of God is not totally discontinuous with our people's previous knowledge of Him (Statement of Ibadan Consultation 1965, Wright, 1978, p. 6).

With these questions, and introductory comments, in view, we will now turn to three possible approaches that can be taken to Melanesian traditional religion.

1. Rejection of Melanesian Traditional Religion

Some have totally rejected any Melanesian religious experience, saying that it is all paganistic, satanic, and wrong. Some foreigners, shocked by certain cultural features, like cannibalism, polygamy, and payback, damned the whole culture as evil, and the work of Satan. In Christian circles, this view is held by those, who see traditional religion as a complete deterioration of true religion, because of sin. The pagan world sits in total darkness, and knows nothing about God, for Satan is in control. Those, with this view, see it as their mission to release people from this bondage. No dialogue is possible. Everything of the past must be discarded, and a new start made.

Because of this approach, often missionaries were not able to communicate clearly with Melanesians. Due to the ability of Melanesian religion to accept changes, Christian forms and rituals were often readily accepted, without significant changes at the worldview level. There was no real encounter, at the core of the belief system. There was never a challenge at the level of "Who is Lord? What power source is being trusted? To what is primary allegiance given?" Because of not coming to grips with these real issues, and the answers given by Melanesian traditional religion and Christianity, a superficial Christianity, with little relevance to life, has resulted. People may appear Christian, by their outward forms, but their thinking is animistic. This becomes evident in times of crisis, such as sickness and death, when there is quick reversion to other power sources. Nominalism, today, is one of the major problems of the church in Melanesia. Religion has become a routine Sunday activity, rather than a total life relationship with the supernatural. Christian missions have been accused of such secularising. Narokobi says:

> In terms of religious experience, what was once meaningful, suddenly becomes meaningless, negative, and deserving of abandonment. . . . It is truly sad that a people, who were always spiritual, have suddenly become apathetic, indifferent, and often

> quite antagonistic, towards any form of organised religious experience (1977, pp. 10-11).

Certainly, complete rejection of Melanesian religious tradition will not produce a meaningful and virile indigenous Christian experience, church, or theology.

2. Melanesian Traditional Religion as a Pathway to God

The opposite approach, taken by some, is to see all religions as valid paths to God. All people are on a common search for truth. All religions bear witness to the presence and activity of God. There is continuity between non-Christian religions and Christianity. This thinking is the thrust of "Rethinking Mission", the report of the Laymen's Inquiry into mission in 1930. It said that the aim of missions was:

> to seek, with people of other lands, a true knowledge and love of God, expressing, in life and word, what we have learned through Jesus Christ, and endeavouring to give effect to His Spirit in the life of the world (Hocking) (Price, p. 139).

The task of the missionary is to see the best in other religions, and to help followers of those religions to discover the best of their traditions, and cooperate in seeking social reform, and purified religious experience (Ibid., p. 140). And so, animists must become better animists. With Christian help, the Melanesian can attain the ideals in his tradition that he has not previously been able to meet. This approach is not common in Melanesia today, although Narokobi, I feel, is moving towards this, when he says:

> I have no doubt that, had Christ been born into Melanesia, He would have come to fulfil, and make more perfect, the Melanesian religious experience (1977, p. 11).

Richardson makes a clear distinction between "redeeming" and "redemptive", which helps to explain why this approach is not satisfactory. Melanesian traditional religion is not redeeming, no one can find a relationship with God, through his or her own traditions,

apart from the gospel. However, traditional religion can contribute to the redemption of a people, solely by facilitating their understanding of what redemption means (1981, p. 61). Melanesian culture can be a starting point, but, if it is seen as the means and the goal as well, then the gospel has no cutting edge, and is denied its power to bring change. The gospel and culture must always be held in tension.

If the goal is just the fulfilment of all the longings of Melanesian religion, then Christianity can easily be viewed simply as a means to this end. A village may readily accept Christianity, with the expectation of receiving the cargo of the Europeans. After a time, they become disillusioned, and resent the white man, for withholding the secret to the cargo that he promised he would reveal. The result is a resurgence of animistic practices, a return to the old way, or the emergence of new cargo cults and millenarian movements – maybe these will finally bring the still firmly-held desired goals. Turner gives the name "neo-primal movements" to nativistic attempts to restore traditional religion, with borrowed elements of Christianity. Syncretistic movements are reinterpretations of Christianity, according to the central categories of the Melanesian worldview – the result being an unstable, unbiblical marriage of the two (Turner, 1978). So, to view Melanesian traditional religion as the goal, or the means, of salvation, is an inadequate approach. Between these two extremes, there lies an acceptable healthy response to Melanesian traditional religion.

3. The Gospel Interacting with Melanesian Traditional Religion

The first response is based on the view that all of culture is evil. The second response views all in culture as good. The more appropriate response lies in between, because culture is neither all good, nor all evil. Rather, there are good elements, and evil elements, in any culture. Melanesian culture is not completely evil, and should not be rejected completely, nor is it perfect, with no conflict with God's truth and standards.

Man was created in the image of God (Gen 1:26). God gave him a cultural mandate relating to family, work, and government. These

commands from God became the roots, from which human cultures grew and developed under man's direction and creativity. God has given all mankind a general revelation of Himself (Rom 1:20). He has written on their hearts what the law requires (Rom 2:15). He has continued His work in the world, not leaving Himself without witness among any people (Acts 14:17). Yes, there are good features in any culture. However, man has fallen. Sin has entered the world, and affected man's total life, so that no culture is perfect in truth, beauty, goodness, harmony, and justice. Evil spiritual principalities and powers seek to control man, and separate him from God's love. Some aspects of culture are demonic, being used by evil powers to imprison man in fear and darkness.

Jesus Christ, the God who entered into human culture (John 1:14) is our example in how we should view any culture. He valued, approved, strengthened, and built upon, the Jewish culture, into which He was born. He attended the Jewish wedding, used illustrations from Jewish life, cared for his mother, paid his taxes, all affirmations of his own culture. But He also judged, and rejected, certain ideas, values, and behaviour of those around Him. He ate with publicans and sinners, touched lepers and dead bodies, spoke with a Samaritan prostitute, and drove out the moneychangers from the temple. Some aspects of Jewish tradition He kept, but added new meaning. He had not come to abolish the Law, but He did add new meaning and depth to the contemporary interpretations of the Law (Matt 5:17-48). Yet, there were also radically-new demands placed upon the new Christian community. Jesus said, "love your enemies" (Matt 5:44). This was a completely new idea for them. Therefore, Jesus affirmed, rejected, changed the meaning of, and introduced new meaning to, traditional Jewish beliefs and practices. His example will help us to respond appropriately to Melanesian traditional beliefs and practices. There will be continuity, discontinuity, transformation, and newness, as Christianity interacts with Melanesian traditional religion.

Christianity Affirming and Strengthening Melanesian Traditional Religion

There are certain elements in Melanesian traditional religion that can be approved, praised, encouraged, and incorporated into Christianity, in such a way as to give richer meaning to the Christian experience. The group is central in Melanesian thought. Christianity can affirm this concept, for being a Christian immediately identifies one with a group, the body of Christ. From Paul's writings, it is clear that relationships between members of the Christian community are very important, indeed. The doctrines of the church, brotherhood, fellowship, hospitality, sharing, and social concern can have rich meaning, because of the communal nature of Melanesian life. The Melanesian holistic approach to life needs to be preserved, so that Christ is seen as the Lord and integrator of all of life. Christianity needs to be viewed as a total life experience, just as religion was life to the Melanesian. Christ is to be vitally linked with gardening, hunting, *wantoks* ("relatives"), sickness – in fact, all of life's experiences. Christianity should be a demonstration of power in daily life, not just an assent to a system of belief, the performing of a ritual, or the keeping of a set of rules. In affirming these aspects of Melanesian traditional religion, and carrying them over into Christianity, we have valuable aids to a deeper appreciation of certain Christian truths.

Christianity Judging and Rejecting Melanesian Traditional Religion

The gospel also confronts Melanesian traditional religion, judging it, and exposing areas of thinking, which need to be radically changed. Christianity demands a complete rejection of certain aspects of traditional religion. Where there is rejection of old beliefs, then new teaching must provide an adequate replacement. Therefore, as I suggest, different aspects that need to be rejected, I will suggest the new teaching that should replace these old beliefs.

First of all, the true source of power must be clearly established. God's power is greater than any other power. God demands complete allegiance to Himself. He will not tolerate man's dependence upon

any other power. Spiritual powers, especially spirits of the dead, do not control the circumstances of life. They cannot be "lords" alongside of Christ, the supreme Lord. The idea that the spiritual powers can be manipulated for the good of the living must be rejected. God demands submission to His power and will. We cannot control Him. He must control us (Eph 5:18). The relationship that man had with spiritual powers (especially fear and reciprocity) needs to be completely made new, as the convert relates to God. The privilege of knowing God, doing His will, obeying Him, serving Him as a loving Father, worshipping, praising, adoring Him, confessing our sins and weaknesses to Him, these are all new dimensions in the Christian's relationship with the supernatural.

Melanesian traditional religion is man-centred. The gods, spirits, and powers, as well as society, exist for man. Christianity is God-centred. Man exists for God and society. Salvation is not man's attempt to be right with the supernatural, but God's gracious, free gift to man, through Jesus Christ. It is all God's doing. The idea of immanent local spirits need not be rejected, for the Bible does speak of such spirits, but God must not be viewed like them. He is the transcendent, universal, omnipresent Creator, who is a "totally-other" being, holy and distinct from everything else.

The secrecy of Melanesian traditional religion must be replaced by an openness and willingness to share God's truth with others, yes, even with the enemy tribe. In Melanesia, the "big man" is the key person in the society. Striving for status is a strong motivation behind many social interactions. Jesus was the "big man", who humbled Himself, washing the feet of others, serving His fellow man, and giving His life in obedience to His Father's will. The Christian leader cannot imitate the Melanesian big man. He must imitate Christ. He must be the humble servant of all, the one who denies himself, takes up his cross, and follows his Master, to whom he is always accountable.

These two responses of affirming and judging must go together. Tippet says:

> In non-Christian religions, there are certain elements, which may be described as stepping stones to the gospel. At the same time, there are other elements in diametric hostility to it. The evangelist needs to remember these two facts, and approach people of other religions with courtesy and sympathy, using the stepping-stones to make his contacts, trying to understand what the other religion is saying, but, at the same time, guarding, with care, the basic gospel message he seeks to transmit (1967, p. 87).

Melanesian, Leslie Fugui, calls this "baptising the best parts, and burying the bad ones, in the name of Jesus". He adds, "Our traditional culture is a preparation for the new – the offspring can be a new being, strong, full of new life, and everlasting hope." (Wright, 1978, p. 7) This leads us to the third role of the gospel, as it confronts Melanesian traditional religion.

Christianity Building Upon Melanesian Traditional Religion

Melanesian traditional religion has certain elements that can become beautiful building blocks for a rich understanding of Christian truth. Melanesian hopes, beliefs, and expectations can be used as starting points for communicating the gospel, and bridges or stepping stones to a greater understanding of Christianity. Many things, in fact, can be looked upon as God's preparation for the gospel. Christianity can build upon Melanesian traditional religion, by adding new meaning, and new dimensions, to what is already present in their beliefs.

The Melanesian is searching for identity, restoration, abundant life, and salvation. Man once experienced the good life, but, through the foolishness of an ancestor, he lost this perfection. This is the story of Melanesian religion and genesis. The hopes and longings of the Melanesian can be explained as a search for renewal of the divine image and glory in man. This is a tremendous foundation on which to build. Surely God has pre- pared these people for the gospel, by placing this desire in their hearts. The preparation is there, but the answers to the way of restoration, and the meaning of this restoration, are radically different between Melanesian traditional religion and Christianity. This is where new direction and meaning must be added,

in order to transform these beliefs, and bring them into alignment with God's revealed truth.

Christ, Himself, is the fulfilment of all that Melanesians have been waiting and longing for, over thousands of years. Jesus came to bring life, and life abundantly (John 10:10). Whiteman tells of an incident on Santa Ysabel Island, in which spirits of the dead communicated with the living, saying that they were pleased that the church had come to the village, because it was the fulfilment of all their aspirations! Charles Kraft, in conversation, suggested that John, if writing his gospel in Melanesia, might have been bold enough to proclaim Jesus as the Cargo. This would compare with the impact of the declaration that Jesus was the Logos in Greek culture. John took "a Greek concept, and built upon it, filling it with new meaning". This could have been dangerous, but it certainly would have had a powerful impact, when fully grasped. God is the giver of cargo, but cargo is much more than any Melanesian could imagine. Cargo is a person, Jesus Christ, and a relationship with Him. This is an example of building upon a Melanesian concept, and giving it new meaning.

Yes, the means to abundant life is found only in Christ, this is the new way. Christianity must add new meaning and depth to the content of salvation. We have already said that Melanesian traditional religion is very materialistic and pragmatic, concentrating on the now, this-worldly aspects of the good life, symbolised by cargo. Christianity declares that salvation is a present reality, to be experienced in this life, but it is also much more than that. It has future dimensions as well. Salvation is the forgiveness of sins, the gift of the Holy Spirit, peace with God, eternal life, hope of the resurrection, and a future of dwelling with God forever. God is interested in our material, physical well-being now, but much more in our spiritual well-being, both now, and eternally. However, we must be careful not to create a dichotomy between the spiritual and material, the sacred and secular. Both need to be a part of Melanesian theology. Perhaps a liberation-type theology would be very appropriate in Melanesia. But it could not just be an emphasis on salvation now and in this world, for that would not be moving from the traditional view of salvation. This can be the starting point, but the spiritual and eternal realities need to be held

together, with the pragmatic and materialistic approach, to complete a biblical Melanesian theology of salvation.

There is a biblical parallel to illustrate this. The Old Testament concept of salvation was also very materialistic and pragmatic. The blessing of God was evident by wealth, many children, health, and success. There was little concern for life after death. However, by the time of Paul, new dimensions had been added. Salvation was primarily a spiritual relationship, with a definite hope for the future, expressed as everlasting life. Those, blessed by God, suffered persecution, hardships, shortages, and even death. Somewhere in time, this new dimension was added, so that the idea of salvation was built upon the Old Testament concepts, but given new, and even contrasting, depths. Surely this is possible again. The basic concepts, already found in Melanesian religion can be built upon, and new dimensions added, especially in the light of the central proclamation of Christianity, the cross of Jesus Christ.

A warning is appropriate here. We must be careful that Melanesians do not hold fast to the function of Melanesian traditional religion, and use Christian forms as a means to this end, instead of traditional forms. This has happened, when Christian ceremonies, like blessing the cross, saying set prayers, or taking communion, have become the new means of obtaining the good life, which is still viewed in a traditional way. There must be a worldview change, as Christianity is incorporated into the Melanesian lifestyle.

Between Melanesian traditional religion and Christianity, there are points of contact, and areas of agreement, which need to be grasped, and used. Strelan mentions, in particular, the relationship between the Melanesian idea that the ancestors would bring salvation and the Christian truth that Christ our Ancestor, the second Adam, has provided our salvation (*Ibid*,. pp. 78-81). If we take seriously this approach of building upon, and transforming, Melanesian traditional religion, then we will always be searching for redemptive analogies, functional substitutes, illustrations from Melanesian daily life, and traditional means of communication, to present the gospel – all in an

effort to make our message more relevant and meaningful to Melanesians.

Christianity Adding New Concepts to Melanesian Traditional Religion

As Christianity encounters Melanesian traditional religion, there will be certain truths that have no place in traditional thinking, and must be introduced as radical new concepts. In Melanesian traditional religion, there is no satisfactory explanation for sickness, suffering, failure, misfortune, and death. These things can only be the result of man's failure. Salvation and suffering have no part together. Yet, in Christianity, salvation and suffering are mysteriously linked together. Jesus, the Lord of power, was the Suffering Servant, the Saviour, who died a cruel death. The church in Jerusalem experienced amazing growth, and yet suffered persecution, trouble, and martyrdom; Paul, the great apostle of Jesus Christ, whom we would call "successful", endured hardship, trouble, shortages, and sickness (2 Cor 11:16-33). In the life of the Christian, sickness, misfortune, suffering, and even death, can have a purpose, according to God's will. They can mean victory not failure (2 Cor 12:9). It is important for Melanesians to grasp this new truth, otherwise, they will end up with a "success theology", which says that, if Christians are right with God, they should experience no problems, difficulties, or trials. There is a place for suffering, hardships, shortages, and non-success in the world's eyes, and persecution, in God's plan for His children.

Conclusion

All this impresses upon us the urgent need to know and understand the culture, in which we work. It will mean being with the people, listening to their questions, hearing their concerns, and helping them to identify their deep longings, and basic assumptions. It will mean stimulating them, to develop an ethno-theology, which deals with such vital concerns as ancestors, cargo, power, spirits, suffering, guidance, success, and failure. We must not allow these issues to be buried, but to be dealt with, in the light of God's Word. We should expect that this theology will not follow the individual, spiritual, intellectual, and other-worldly emphasis of Western theology, but emphasise more a

present, this-worldly, communal, holistic approach to salvation. It certainly will be centred in daily life experiences, and in living demonstrations of truth, if it is truly Melanesian.

The total process of affirming, rejecting, transforming, and adding new concepts to Melanesian traditional religion is, in fact, the process of contextualisation. The result will be a relevant, meaningful Melanesian theology. But this is a process, and does not happen all at once. Outsiders should not make such decisions about another culture. It will take patience, on our part, as Melanesians are given time to grasp God's truth, and to discover its dynamic interaction with their own traditional beliefs. In this way, changes may come slowly, but they will be more permanent, resulting from personal conviction, and not from following the desires of someone else. If Christianity can initially work through the vehicle of existing worldviews, then changes can come from within, and at the right level, at the right time, and by the right people.

We would do well to follow Don McGregor's advice:

> Communicate Christ, within the context of the existing basic assumptions, beliefs, and village structures, but, at the same time, teach towards a growing understanding of true assumptions, values, and God's world (1976, p. 213).

May God direct national Christians, and us, in this process for His glory.

Bibliography

Aherns, T., "Christian Syncretism", in *Catalyst* 4-1 (1974.

———, "Concepts of Salvation in the NT Tradition and in Western Christianity", in *Orientation Course*, Alexishafen – 1974, Goroka PNG: Melanesian Institute, 1974.

Bergmann, U., "How to Communicate Salvation in Melanesia", in *Orientation Course,* Alexishafen – 1974, Goroka PNG: Melanesian Institute.

Codrington, R. H., *The Melanesians: Studies in Their Anthropology and Folklore*, Oxford UK: Clarendon Press, 1891.

Fugmann, G., "Salvation Expressed in a Melanesian Context", in *Christ in Melanesia: Exploring Theological Issues, Point* 1&2 (1977).

Gaenszbauer, H., "Melanesian Concepts of Salvation", in *Orientation Course*, Alexishafen – 1974, Goroka PNG: Melanesian Institute.

Janssen, H., "Missionary Attitudes to Cargo Culture Movements", in *Orientation Course* Goroka – 1979, Goroka PNG: Melanesian Institute.

Lawrence, P., *Road Belong Cargo*, Carlton Vic: Melbourne University Press, 1964.

Mantovani, E., "A Fundamental Melanesian Religion", in *Christ in Melanesia: Exploring the Issues, Point* 1&2 (1964).

Mbiti, J., "Christianity and Traditional Religions in Africa", in *Crucial Issues in Missions Tomorrow*, McGarvan, D., ed., Chicago IL: Moody Press, 1972.

McGregor, D., "Basic PNG Assumptions", in *Catalyst* 6-3 (1976).

Narokobi, B., "What is Religious Experience for a Melanesian?", in *Christ in Melanesia: Exploring the Issues, Point* 1&2 (1977).

Prenderville, K., "Creative and Regulative Deities in Melanesia", in *Orientation Course*, Goroka – 1979, Goroka PNG: Melanesian Institute.

Price, D., "The Protestant Understanding of Conversion, and Its Implications for Missionary Obedience", unpublished thesis for Doctor of Missiology, Pasadena CA: Fuller Seminary, 1979.

Richardson, D., *Eternity in Their Hearts*, Glendale CA: Regal Books, 1981.

Schwarz, B., "Cargo as Symbol", in *Catalyst* 10-1 (1980).

Stott, J., *Christian Mission in the Modern World*, London UK: Falcon Books, 1975.

Strelan, J., *Search for Salvation*, Adelaide SA: Lutheran Publishing, 1977.

———, "OT and Salvation", in *Orientation Course*, Goroka – 1979, Goroka PNG: Melanesian Institute.

Tippett, A., *Solomon Island Christianity: A Study in Growth and Obstruction*, London UK: Lutterworth Press, 1967.

———, *Verdict Theology in Missionary Theory*, Lincoln NB: Lincoln Christian College Press, 1969.

———, "Possessing the Philosophy of Animism for Christ", in *Crucial Issues in Missions Tomorrow*, McGarvan, D., ed., Chicago IL: Moody Press, 1972.

Turner, B., "Confronting the Gods", in *Catalyst* 6-4 (1976).

Turner, H., "Old and New Religions in Melanesia", in *Point* 5-2 (1978).

Tuza, E., "Spirits and Powers in Melanesia", in *Orientation Course* Goroka – 1979, Goroka PNG: Melanesian Institute.

Whiteman, D., "Melanesian Religion and "Ethnology", unpublished papers given at Orientation Course, Banz PNG: CLTC, 1981.

Wright, C., "Melanesian Culture and Christian Faith", Report on an Education Workshop, Solomon Islands: SICA, nd.

THE LINK BETWEEN SUFFERING AND MISSIONS

Wayne Kendi

Wayne is a second-year Bachelor of Theology student at the Christian Leaders' Training College. The basis for this paper was an essay Wayne wrote as part of a class on Biblical Theology of Mission. The question asked Wayne to describe the link between suffering and mission. Wayne comes from Popendetta, Oro Province.

Introduction

Suffering, in its most basic form, implies the undergoing, or experiencing, of negative forces, such as, pain, persecution, etc., as the direct or indirect consequences of one's actions. According to scripture (Gen 3:15-19), suffering, in the form of conflict, pain, corruption, drudgery, and death entered the world immediately after sin entered into creation.

Mission is a broad subject, but a foundational definition is the bringing of people into a right relationship with God through the Lord Jesus Christ. Both suffering and mission share nothing in common whatsoever, yet, when viewed from a biblical or missiological perspective, there appears to be a strong link between them. This paper shall attempt to highlight some of the different links that make up the chain that holds suffering and mission together.

1. Centripetal Mission and Suffering

The nation of Israel had the God-given responsibility of being set apart to reflect God's glory to the rest of the nations. Israel was to fulfil this mandate, through obedience to God's laws, and holy living, which would, in turn, result in God's glory shining forth from Israel. The nations would be attracted toward Israel, and, ultimately, to God.

Unfortunately, Israel continually failed to fulfil her God-given mandate, because of her ongoing compromise with idolatry,

syncretism, and nominalism: practices that God detested (Lev 26:1; Ps 31:6). This eventually brought God's judgment upon them, and Israel was sent into the exile. It was through the suffering of the exile that Israel was forced, against her own will, to fulfil her mandate (2 Kings 24 and 25). It is within the context of the exile that something of the relationship between centripetal mission and suffering is highlighted. Although the exile appears centrifugal in nature, in that Israel went out, they did not go out with a sense of mission. Israel's mission remained centripetal, only, this time, she was able to reflect God's glory from within the remnant of the nation to those around her. For the first time, Israel began to faithfully acknowledge the sovereignty of God, and, consequently, became strictly monotheistic.

The fulfilment of Israel's centripetal mission mandate came through the experience of suffering. The servant passages in Is 40-55 also signify the relationship of suffering and centripetal mission, in that the prophecy predicted that the suffering of the servant would draw many to him (Is 52:13-15; 53). One contemporary example, which highlights this relationship clearly, is the account of a pastor in a communist nation, who was imprisoned for his faith. Although he suffered greatly from the mental and physical persecution of prison life, he never once went about without a smile, and an attitude of joy. Furthermore, he sacrificed half, or all, of the single piece of bread the prisoners received each week, giving it to fellow prisoners that were weak or sick. Through his actions, his ever-present smile, and attitude of joy, love, and peace amidst the suffering of persecution and depression, many were drawn to him, and ultimately to God.

2. Centrifugal Mission and Suffering

In centrifugal mission, suffering has played a crucial and significant role, in relation to the spread of Christianity. From the OT, right through to the NT, there are accounts of centrifugal mission, which came about, as the result of suffering. It is in these accounts that the relationship, or link, between suffering and centrifugal mission is plainly highlighted, showing both dynamics working closely together, as if in partnership.

From the fall of Adam (Gen 3), to the flood (Gen 6), up to the call of Abraham (Gen 12:1-3), right up to the death of Christ, this relationship can be seen in God's centrifugal mission to a suffering world (John 3:16). The Exodus also falls into this category, in the sense that Moses was sent (Ex 3:7-10) to preach "Yahweh" to the Israelites and Egyptians, thus, bringing about the deliverance of God's suffering people. From this perspective, we can say that suffering plays a significant role in motivating God's centrifugal mission to the world. The account of Jonah is another event that clearly highlights the close link between suffering and centrifugal mission (Jonah 1-4) – beginning with the storm, to his experience in the belly of the whale, and highlighted clearly in his prayer (Jonah 2:1-9). It was suffering that prompted Jonah to respond positively to his God-given mission to the Ninevites.

In the NT, this relationship is brought into clearer perspective, particularly in Acts 8-12, which records the scattering of believers. The scattering occurred as a result of great persecution against the church, and as believers fled from Jerusalem into Judea and Samaria, they took with them the message of Christ. Thus, suffering was once again a precipitator of centrifugal mission. It was during this particular time of suffering that Paul, a central figure in God's plan of centrifugal mission, came onto the scene, a case in which the persecutor (Act 8:3) became the sufferer (2 Cor 12) and missionary (Phil 1 and 3). Thus, we see again the link between suffering and centrifugal mission, and, although suffering was not the sole reason for centrifugal mission, suffering did play, and does play, a significant, if not essential, role in it.

3. Suffering and Church Growth

For many people of the world, both Christians and non-Christians, the church is seen as a place of abundant peace, joy, and love; in other words, it is viewed as a place of perfect tranquillity. Spiritually speaking, the church, which signifies the presence of God among His people, is truly a place of perfect tranquillity, but not in the worldly sense. For, in the church, peace that transcends all understanding,

overflowing joy, and true love, are found amid conflict, pain, corruption, and persecution.

Though very unorthodox in relation to human reasoning, suffering, in its various forms, is the fertile soil, from which the church grows, and thus, from which missions are conceived. Time and time again, history has shown that the times of severe suffering, the very times you least expect anything good to happen, have been the very times that the church has experienced tremendous growth. There are basically two ways that the church grows during suffering: outward, as in relation to centrifugal missions, such as the examples of Acts, and inward growth. Inward growth involves more personal spiritual growth, where the lives of the believers are transformed from mediocre Christianity, into dynamic faith that then acts centripetally. Missions, through suffering, is like sowing seeds in tears (Ps 126:5-6). One reason for the remarkable growth of the church in Korea in the 1960s, through the 1980s, was the fact that the church's founders sowed their faith in suffering.

China is another nation that has, and is, experiencing tremendous underground growth, in the midst of persecution from the communist government. These are only two examples of the many nations that are experiencing tremendous church growth during times of suffering, which comes in the form of persecution from governments, religious opposition, or other factors.

Once again, we see the link between suffering and mission being highlighted. Suffering continues to play a significant role in mission, in the form of church growth. According to human reasoning, this should not be so. Why is it that times of severe suffering are times of tremendous church growth? The basic reason is that when materialistic, and familiar, social forms of security are swept away, people become conscious of their deepest needs. It is during these times, when one's foundations are shaken, that one begins to look for a stronger foundation upon which to stand. Often there comes the recognition that God is the needed foundation. Thus, suffering opens the door to mission, because it is during such times that individuals become open to spiritual things, as they seek answers and solutions to

their situations. They become conscious of their mortality, and seek refuge in the immortal. As a result, there is tremendous church growth, because they are receptive and open to mission, and ultimately to God.

4. The Role of Power Encounters in the Link between Suffering and Mission

Power encounters between the forces of God and evil have proven repeatedly to be another significant link in the chain that links suffering and mission. Although, in mission, power encounters can, and do, occur at other times, apart from times of suffering, its significant role in the link between suffering and mission cannot be denied. Power encounters come about, because of the clashes between the forces of good and evil, in both the physical and spiritual realm. In the physical realm, the forces of evil are often represented by institutional evils, such as corrupt and anti-Christian governments, religious opposition, etc., but it can be in other forms. In the spiritual realm, the forces of Satan are the opposition (Eph 6:10-12) that cause suffering, in the form of afflictions, depression, bondage, etc., and they are also the driving forces behind the physical evil.

The Bible clearly highlights the role of power encounters, in relation to the link between suffering and mission, in both the OT and the NT. The role of power encounters is seen in the Exodus of Israel from bondage under Egypt. The titanic struggle between good and evil was witnessed by both Israelites and Egyptians. The resulting power encounter, in the form of ten plagues (Ex 7:11), came about as the result of the cries of a suffering nation to their God (Ex 2:24), hence, the mission of Moses to the people of Egypt and Israel. Likewise, the confrontation between Elijah and the prophets of Baal (1 Kings 18:16-40) also served the purpose of mission, by turning the people back to God during a time of suffering. Suffering from a severe famine sent by God (1 Kings 17:1), and the ensuring power encounter on Mt Carmel (1 Kings 18:16-46), served the purpose of turning the people of Israel back to God.

In the NT, the role of power encounters is highlighted very clearly in the account of Pentecost. Hiding behind the cover of closed doors,

due to the fear of persecution from the Jews (John 20:19), the believers were experiencing a time of suffering. It was during this time of suffering that a power encounter with the Holy Spirit (Acts 2) changed these timid believers into bold and dedicated missionaries (Acts 2:14-47), who persevered, even in the midst of persecution.

Such examples, which highlight the role of power encounters in the link between suffering and mission are not relegated to the biblical context alone. In the present day, power encounters continue to play a prominent role for mission, during times of suffering, thus, bringing into clearer perspective, the link between suffering and mission. At the time of a power encounter, God's sovereignty is established, and His supremacy proved, amid suffering. Power encounters open a door for missions during times of suffering, a door that can be, and has been, used to bring people back to allegiance to God.

5. Biblical Perspective of Suffering, and its Relation to Mission

In the points, above, we have viewed some biblical and contemporary examples that highlight the link between suffering and mission. We have seen from these examples that suffering, in some way or another, works in partnership with missions, a pattern that greatly contradicts human reasoning.

The Bible gives a lot of reasons for suffering, but it still does not fully answer the "Why?" question. According to the Bible, suffering can be the result of sin, or disobedience, for the individual, community, and the nation (Hos 8:7; Rom 5:12). It can be God's way of punishing, or correcting, His people (Prov 3:11; Judg 2:20-3:4; Heb 12:7-11). It can be to test or purify (Ps 66:10; Jam 1:3-12; 1 Pet 1:6-7; Rom 5:3-6), and it can be a means of drawing closer to God, in a new relationship of dependence and intimacy. Suffering is also the outcome of human deceitfulness and perversity.

An element of mystery surrounds the concept of suffering, especially in the light of the countless numbers of innocent people that are suffering in the world today. Yet, the fact remains, that suffering does work in conjunction with mission, thus implying that, while God is not the author of suffering, He does use suffering to bring about His

purposes. The account of Job, for example, highlights a situation of unexplained suffering. Despite Job's innocence, God did not even attempt to give an explanation for Job's suffering, instead He brought attention to the fact that His ways are beyond human comprehension (Job 38-41; Is 55:8-9).

From this account, we can see that, although the reasons for suffering may remain unanswered, suffering can have positive results. For Job, suffering brought him a fresh vision of God's greatness and sovereignty, and brought him close to God in faith. Even Paul, who underwent much suffering, did not receive any answers for his suffering (2 Cor 12:9; 2 Cor 6:3-10). Yet suffering became the motivation for faith, and zeal to keep on striving in his God-given mission (Phil 3:7-14). From this example, we see that God uses suffering as a means of refocusing our attention onto Himself, thus causing us to draw nearer to Him, in acknowledgment of His sovereignty. This same principle applies in relation to mission, as suffering brings to light the realisation of one's mortality and limitations, causing one to look upward, toward an unlimited and immortal God.

From the contents of this essay, we see that suffering plays a significant role in mission. God uses negative things, like suffering, to accomplish His will and purpose for the world. Thus, we can see that, although suffering usually accompanies mission, we do not have to be discouraged, when we suffer in various ways. All we need to do is look back in history and see that, beyond the pain, tears, and persecution, there is good. All we need to do is endure, for God works all things for our good (Rom 8:23).

Bibliography

Anderson, Gerald H., et al, *Footprints of God*, Monrovia CA: MARC, 1999.

Hafemann, S. J., "Suffering", in *Dictionary of Paul and His Letters*, Gerald F Hawthorne, et al, eds, Downers Grove IL: IVP, 1993.

Amundsen, D. W. A., "Suffering", in *New Dictionary of Theology*, Sinclair B Ferguson, and David F. Wright, eds, Leicester UK: IVP, 1988.

Henry, Matthew, *Matthew Henry's Commentary*, Grand Rapids MI: Zondervan, 1960.

Little, Paul E., *Know Why You Believe*, Wheaton IL: Victor Books, 1978.

Wallace, R. S., "Suffering", in *New Bible Dictionary*, Downers Grove IL: IVP, 1962.

White, R. E. O., *Apostle Extraordinary*, Grand Rapids MI: William B. Eerdmans, 1962.

OUR RESURRECTION BODY: AN EXEGESIS OF 1 CORINTHIANS 15:42-49

David Hodgens

David Hodgens is a lecturer at the Christian Leaders' Training College, lecturing in Bible, Theology, and Community Development. He is from Australia, and holds an Honours degree in Bible and Theology from the Bible College of Victoria. David also graduated from Victoria College (Burwood Victoria) with a Diploma in Teaching.

Introduction

What type of body will I have at the resurrection? This is a legitimate question, asked by many believers. The basis of the question may be eschatological (what is going to take place at the end of life?), theological (what is the relationship between the earthly body and the spiritual body?), or it may be ontological (will I be an old body, young body; what kind of body?). 1 Cor 15:42-49 offers some insights into the nature of the resurrection body, but, by no means, does Paul offer a definitive statement on the matter. Reading the text, to try and establish answers to any or all of the questions above, may be seeking answers to a question that Paul, himself, was not directly addressing.

It would appear to be a more valid approach to argue that Paul was writing this theological corrective in response to a problem that had emerged in the life of the Corinthian church. Many scholars would agree that Paul wrote to a church, which considered the body eschatologically insignificant, and which were operating with an eschatological worldview, which was overrealised.[1] Paul argues that this is an error, and argues for some sort of continuity between the body, which the Christian lives in now, and the resurrection body. With this framework in mind, we are able to make a lot more sense of

[1] See, for example, Gordon Fee, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians*, Grand Rapids MI: William B. Eerdmans, 1987, p. 12.

the text of 1 Cor 15:42-49 than we would if we read it with a view to answer the question "What type of body?"

Background Issues

Authorship

Strong external and internal evidence argues for Pauline authorship. The epistle is attested to by Clement of Rome, and is also frequently cited by Ignatius and Polycarp.[2] Paucity of references to the authorship in later literature indicates general acceptance of its source. Internal evidence for Pauline authorship is strong. The style, language, and theology correlate with other Pauline works. Although there continues to be debate about the precise location of this epistle within the process of interaction between Paul and the church in Corinth, there is, nonetheless, strong congruence between this epistle and the wider Corinthian correspondence, which argues for its authenticity. Furthermore, the fact that the epistle was preserved, despite its strong polemical nature, suggests the recipients were in no doubt as to its authenticity.

Unity

Many scholars doubt the extant form of the epistle is the original.[3] Attempts to defend theories of interpolation can only be sustained if it can be demonstrated different situations lie behind Paul's responses, and many conservative scholars argue such a hypothesis cannot be maintained.[4] Fee argues the divisionists miss the basic form of argumentation in this epistle, and, along with Morris, concludes there

---

[2] 1 Corinthians is the first New Testament document to be cited with the name of the author: 1 Clement 47:1-3, Clement of Rome, *The First Epistle of Clement to the Corinthians*, Kirsopp Lake, tran., Cambridge MA: Harvard University Press, 1912, pp. 89-90. Dating for 1 Clement varies, however, scholarly consensus rests on a date of approximately 95 AD.

[3] W. G. Kummel, *Introduction to the New Testament*, London UK: SCM Press, 1975, pp. 276ff., surveys the reconstructions proposed by Schmithals, Jewett, Dinkler, Hering, and others.

[4] Hans Conzelmann, *1 Corinthians*, J. W. Leitch, tran., Philadelphia PA: Fortress Press, 1975, p. 4. Also Kenneth Bailey, "The Structure of 1 Corinthians", in *Novum Testamentum* 25 (1983), p. 153.

is no doubt this is an authentic letter of the apostle Paul, free from any substantial interpolation.[5] The exegesis of 1 Cor 15:42-49 proceeds upon this assumption.

Recipients

The recipients lived in the city of Corinth, which lay on the narrow isthmus of land between two harbours, Lecheion and Cenchreae. Corinth was a strategic centre for commerce, the source of its wealth, in the trade, which passed through the city. Corinth was multicultural, and religiously pluralistic. The community, Paul addressed, was also socio-economically diverse.[6]

Although attempts have been made to argue for a predominantly Jewish background for the recipients,[7] many scholars reject this thesis.[8] Internal evidence alone makes an argument for predominantly Jewish recipients hard to sustain.[9]

Date

This letter was written some time after Paul's initial visit to the city, and consensus rests on a date between AD 55-58. The accuracy of this date relies heavily on the integrity of the date of Acts 18:1ff.

---

[5] Fee, *First Epistle to the Corinthians*, p. 16; Leon Morris, *1 Corinthians*, Leicester UK: IVP, 1958, p. 28.

[6] The names indicate that there were Jews, Italians, and Greeks among the congregation. 1 Cor 12:13 indicates the diversity of the congregation, while 1 Cor 1:26 indicates not many were from the wealthy class. However, Moffatt argues many of the issues, addressed by Paul, applied specifically to the freeborn citizens of social position, James Moffatt, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians*, London UK: Hodder & Stoughton, 1938, p. xx.

[7] J. M. Ford, "The First Epistle to the Corinthians or the First Epistle to the Hebrews?", in *Catholic Biblical Quarterly* 28 (1966), pp. 402-416. R. Mcl. Wilson, "How Gnostic Were the Corinthians?", in *New Testament Studies* 19 (1972), p. 65, argues the evidence of Acts supports a fairly substantial Jewish element in Corinth

[8] For example: Fee, *First Epistle to the Corinthians*, p. 4, n. 12. Fee also rejects the work of Hurley, who attempted to demonstrate a Jewish readership could be sustained by examination of various passages.

[9] Passages such as 1 Cor 6:1-20; 8:1-10:22; 12:2 are strong evidence for Gentile recipients.

Provenance

This letter has traditionally been understood as a response by Paul to opposition from various groups mentioned in 1 Cor 1:12. Fee argues 1 Corinthians is an *ad hoc* response to issues, which were brought to Paul's attention through a letter he received, as well as to news he received independently of the letter.[10]

Paul's first concern was to reply to questions raised in a letter he received, apparently queries, raised by a former letter he sent, which dealt with issues, such as marriage and idolatrous practices.[11] News, which accompanied the letter, possibly reported by the couriers (1 Cor 16:17), caused Paul to write quite forcibly to the Corinthians.

The benign description of the church asking for Paul's opinion or guidance on certain issues (as has traditionally been proposed), inadequately explains the polemical nature of Paul's reply, and so, Fee proposes an alternative, which contends the divisions at Corinth were primarily between the apostle and the church. Fee, along with Ellis and Witherington, asserts there were no outside agitators present within the church, rather the opposition was from within.[12] The key issue, which occasioned this letter, Fee argues, is that Paul's apostolic authority is being called into question by the church, which is concurrently Hellenising the gospel.[13]

In chapter 15, Paul responds to confusion being exhibited over the nature of the resurrection, confusion which apparently has its foundation in the same Hellenisation, which has contributed to the other aberrations. Hellenistic dualism, combined with the belief by

[10] Fee, *First Epistle to the Corinthians*, p. 4.
[11] A proposed reconstruction of the correspondence by J. C. Hurd can be found in C. K. Barrett, *First Epistle to the Corinthians*, London UK: Adam & Charles Black, 1968, pp. 6-7; also Fee, *First Epistle to the Corinthians,* pp. 6-7.
[12] Earle E. Ellis, *Prophecy and Hermeneutic in Early Christianity*, Grand Rapids MI: Baker Books, 1993, p. 103. Ben Witherington, *Conflict and Community in Corinth: A Socio-Rhetorical Commentary on 1 and 2 Corinthians*, Grand Rapids MI: William B. Eerdmans, 1995, p. 74.
[13] Fee, *First Epistle to the Corinthians*, p. 10.

the Corinthians that they were already spiritual (realised eschatology), appears to be at the base of the opposition.

Literary Context

This chapter falls into a section, which begins at 1 Cor 7:1, being Paul's responses to the correspondence he has received from Corinth. Chapter 15 deals with the question of the resurrection, verses 35-49 with the nature of the resurrection. The abrupt change of subject, and the lack of the usual introductory formula, περὶ δὲ ὧν ἐγράψατε (concerning the matters you wrote about), has caused scholars to hypothesise this section is either a response to a report, or is an interpolation. 1 Cor 15:12 is the only internal clue as to the origin of the response.[14]

The section, beginning at verse 35, is Paul's response to questions of how the dead are raised. He responds with what appears to be a tautology, but is actually an answer to two questions, verses 42-49 dealing with the new corporeality.

Exegesis

Verse 42

So also with the resurrection of the dead

In this verse, Paul applies the two analogies, which began at verse 36, as part of his answer to the assertion by the Corinthians that there was no resurrection. There are a number of views, which have sought to explain why the Corinthians held such a position, including the

[14] Evidence, which supports the argument for a response to a report, rests on the language used by Paul; *how can some among you say* and *but someone will say*. Theories of interpolation have to deal with the chapter in the wider context of the letter, although Schmithals argues this chapter stands alone in the first letter Paul sent to Corinth with Stephanos, Walter Schmithals, *Gnosticism in Corinth*, New York NY: Abingdon Press, 1971, p. 95. Others see this chapter as being part of wider context; cf. Hering in Barrett, *First Epistle to the Corinthians*, p. 12, and Weiss in Conzelmann, *1 Corinthians*, p. 3. It is best to proceed assuming this chapter is an integral part of the epistle.

influence of Sadducean theology,[15] Greek philosophy, Gnosticism,[16] over-realised eschatology,[17] or realised immortality.[18]

To counter the denial of the resurrection of material bodies, as is suggested by the predominance of the use of **σῶμα** (body) throughout verses 35-58,[19] Paul develops two analogies, based on seeds (vv. 37-38) and bodies (39-41). He begins this verse with the phrase **οὕτως καὶ** (so also)[20] to apply the analogies to the resurrection. The verbs, in the antithetical parallelisms, which follow, are all in the present, and permit the inclusion of "is" as the verb in the opening phrase.

---

[15] No belief in a resurrection. Gunter Stemberger, *Jewish Contemporaries of Jesus: Pharisees, Sadducees and Essenes*, Minneapolis MN: Fortress Press, 1995, p. 70ff.

[16] Walter Schmithals has been a key proponent of this theory, and Paul's use of **σοφία** (*sophia* = wisdom) has fuelled this theory, Schmithals, *Gnosticism*, p. 113, cf. Ulrich Wilckens, "**σοφία**", in *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament*, Grand Rapids MI: William B. Eerdmans, 1971, vol 7, p. 519. More recently, scholars have argued fully-developed gnosticism could not be the source of opposition to Paul. See R. Mcl. Wilson, "How Gnostic Were the Corinthians?", in *New Testament Studies* 19 (1972/1973), pp. 65-74. J. Munck, "The New Testament and Gnosticism", in *Current Issues in New Testament Interpretation*, New York NY: Harper & Row, 1962, pp. 234-236, and Fee, *First Epistle to the Corinthians*, p. 11.

[17] Represented in 2 Tim 2:17-18.

[18] The whole question of opposition is summarised by Fee, *First Epistle to the Corinthians,* p. 715, n. 6, A. J. M. Wedderburn, "The Problem of the Denial of the Resurrection in 1 Corinthians XV", in *Novum Testamentum* 23 (1981), pp. 238-239, and C. K. Barrett, "Immortality and Resurrection", in *Resurrection and Immortality: Aspects of Twentieth-century Belief*, Charles Duthie, ed., London UK: Samuel Bagster & Sons, 1979, p. 78. Fee contends a better way to understand the opposition is to see it as part of the underlying division between the apostle and the church, in this case over what it means to be spiritual.

[19] Fee, *First Epistle to the Corinthians*, p. 776; also Ronald J. Sider, "The Pauline Conception of the Resurrection Body in 1 Corinthians 15:35-54", in *New Testament Studies* 21 (1974/1975), p. 430, who argues the issue, addressed by Paul in 1 Cor 39-41, is the substance of things, not just their form, contrary to Bultmann, who argues Paul distinguishes between **σῶμα** (substance) and **εἶδος** (form), Rudolf Bultmann, *Theology of the New Testament*, London UK: SCM Press, 1952, vol 1, p. 192.

[20] A literary device, Paul uses frequently, as he applies metaphors, cf. 1 Cor 2:11; 12:12; 14:9; Gal 3:4; and Rom 6:11.

. . . it is sown in corruption

Paul continues to use the metaphor of the seed, stating, **σπείρεται** (it is sown), but does not provide a subject for the verb. While the body appears to be the subject, particularly in light of **σῶμα ψυχικόν** (a natural body) in verse 44, this is not the only interpretation.[21]

There is a danger, in carrying the metaphor of the seed too far in this verse, believing Paul is only referring to the body in the grave, awaiting the resurrection.[22] It is more appropriate to understand this as a comparison between the body now possessed, "corruptible, tending to decay, subject to disease and death, and, ultimately, entire dissolution",[23] and the future body, which will be incorruptible. It is probable the Corinthians held a contemptuous view of the physical body, a thoroughly-Greek belief, reflected in 1 Cor 6:14-15.

φθορᾷ (corruption) and **ἀφθαρσίᾳ** (incorruption) are opposites, the former used to describe destruction, or deterioration, in the natural world, a process which may begin before death.[24] Paul uses a Greek word, which has the meaning of incorruptibility, immortality, or, as a quality of future life. 2 Tim 1:10, 2 Clement 14:5, and Eph 6:24 demonstrate the word may be used to describe both believers in the present, as well as for Jesus, who already reigns.[25]

---

[21] Barrett sees the verb **σπείρεται** as an impersonal passive, which would require the translation to read *the sowing takes place in corruption*, Barrett, *First Epistle to the Corinthians*, p. 372, also Fee, *First Epistle to the Corinthians*, p. 784, n. 37.

[22] As Walter Bauer, *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and other Early Christian Literature*, 2nd edn, Chicago IL: University of Chicago Press, 1979p. 761, and R. C. H. Lenski, *The Interpretation of I and II Corinthians*, Minneapolis MN: Augsburg Publishing, 1961, p. 711.

[23] Charles Hodge, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians*, London UK: Banner of Truth Trust, 1958, p. 347.

[24] Used in this way, in Col 2:22, as also in other ancient literature. See Bauer, *A Greek-English Lexicon*, p. 858.

[25] Ibid., p. 125.

Excursis on ἀφθαρσία

In secular Greek, ἀφθαρσία (resurrection) means to stand up,[26] raise, awaken, or rouse.[27] Although the Greek philosophical schools had a well-developed idea of the transmigration of souls into some other body, there was a belief that resurrection was either impossible, or an isolated miracle.[28]

The Old Testament concept of death is of death as a final state, notwithstanding the isolated accounts of individuals coming back to life. Dan 12:2 is the only explicit Old Testament reference to resurrection. Some intertestamental literature speaks of a resurrection including 2 Macc 14:46,[29] the Apocalypse of Baruch,[30] and 2 Esdras 7:32-36.[31]

1 Corinthians is perhaps the earliest of the New Testament literature to speak of the resurrection. Resurrection is spoken of as ἀνάστασις τῶν νεκρῶν or ἐξανάστασιν τὴν ἐκ νεκρῶν (resurrection of the dead or resurrection from the dead.)[32] The New Testament concept of resurrection is not merely of corpses, either σῶμα (body), or σάρξ (flesh), but the resurrection of the whole person, in a process Harris describes as accelerated Christification.[33]

---

[26] Josephus uses this term to describe the raising of a statue, Josephus, *Antiquities*, book 18, p. 301, in Josephus, *Jewish Antiquities Books XVIII- XXIX*, H. St J. Thackeray, tran., Cambridge MA: Harvard University Press, 1965, p. 174.

[27] Colin Brown, "Resurrection", in *Dictionary of New Testament Theology*, Exeter UK: Paternoster Press, 1978, vol 3, p. 259.

[28] Albrecht Oepke, ἀνίστημι, in *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament*, G. Kittel, ed., Grand Rapids MI: William B. Eerdmans, 1968, vol 1, p. 361.

[29] Also 2 Macc 7:9, 11, 14, 22ff., 29; 12:43.

[30] *The Old Testament Pseudepigrapha Apocalyptic Literature and Testaments*, James Charlesworth, ed., New York NY: Doubleday, 1983, p. 638.

[31] One piece of Jewish intertestamental literature, which speaks of a dying Messiah.

[32] The latter only being used in Phil 3:11. It is attested to by Polybuis (2nd century BC) and Hyppocrates (4th-5th century BC), Bauer, *A Greek-English Lexicon*, p. 272.

[33] Murray Harris, "Resurrection and Immortality: Eight Theses", in *Themelios* 1 (1975/1976), p. 51.

Harris argues the Pauline resurrection is a resurrection reserved for the Christian, who, through the resurrection, receives immortality.[34] The biblical doctrine of immortality contrasts with the Platonic, at a number of points. In the New Testament, immortality is not inherently possessed by the soul, only gained through resurrection transformation. There is a somatic connection between what exists now and will exist in the future, a strong theme in the passage at hand. "The only kind of resurrection, of which we believe St Paul could speak, was a bodily resurrection."[35]

Paul also speaks of the resurrection of Christ, as the first fruits, or guarantee, of the future resurrection of believers.[36] This is significant in the context of 1 Corinthians, for the Corinthians appear to be objecting to the latter, not the former. Aquinas carried this imagery even further, declaring the resurrection of Christ causes the resurrection of believers.[37]

Verse 43

It is sown in dishonour, it is raised in glory

The word δόξη (glory) has no direct negative, and Paul chooses to use ἀτιμία, a word which means shame, disgrace, or dishonour.[38]

---

[34] Jeremias disagrees, asserting there is a distinction, drawn by Paul, between the dead unbeliever, where Paul omits the article before νεκρῶν (death) (1 Cor 15:12, 13, 15, 16, 20, 21, 29b, 32) and the dead believer, where Paul includes the Greek article (1 Cor 15:29a, 42, et al), Joachim Jeremias, "Flesh and Blood Cannot Inherit the Kingdom of God", in *New Testament Studies* 2 (1955/1956), p. 155/156. Jeremias further distinguishes between the resurrection of a dead believer and a living believer, an argument not supported by many scholars, L. J. Kreitzer, "Resurrection", in *Dictionary of Paul and His Letters*, R. P. Martin, and G. F. Hawthorne,eds, Downers Grove IL: IVP, 1993, pp. 811/812.

[35] Francis Foulkes, "Some Aspects of St Paul's Treatment of the Resurrection of Christ in 1 Corinthians XV", in *Australian Biblical Review* 16 (1968), p. 30.

[36] See Robert Murray, "New Wine in Old Wineskins: XII Firstfruits", in *Expository Times* 86 (1975), pp. 164-168, for a discussion on Paul's use of this Old Testament imagery.

[37] Thomas Aquinas, *Summa Theologia*, Westminster MD: Christian Classics, 1981, vol 4, p. 2319.

[38] Used also in 2 Cor 6:8, and by Josephus, as describing prohibitions on homosexual relations between animals, lest humans be tempted to engage in similar behaviour,

The meaning of δόξῃ (glory) is diverse, and can refer to literal brightness, splendour, or radiance.

R. J. Sider sees a link between the expression Paul uses here, (humiliation), and a similar one used in Phil 3:21, where Paul says our body of humiliation will be transfigured into the body of Christ's glory, by the power, which enables him to make all things subject to himself. Sider argues for a moral or ethical contrast between the words Paul uses (ἀτιμίᾳ and δόξῃ), for he believes it is possible Paul intended a similar contrast in Phil 3:21, where he speaks of Christ changing τὸ σῶμα τῆς ταπεινώσεωσ ἡμῶν (the body of our humiliation) to τῷ σώματι τῆς δόξης αὐτοῦ (the body of his glory). If we allow a parallel between the δόξῃ of 1 Cor 15:43 and Phil 3:21, where there are ethical implications, we may assert the new body will be free from sin.[39]

Once again, it is clear Paul is taking the Corinthians to task for their attitude toward the physical body, believing the present condition had no bearing upon the manner in which the body was raised. The resurrection body is a glorious body, far surpassing the present body, which the Corinthians were treating with contempt, but there is a link between the two.

It is sown in weakness, it is raised in strength

Paul would ingratiate himself with the Corinthians, if he only spoke of the physical body being sown in weakness. While the Greeks were well known for cultivating bodily prowess, they would have been aware of its limitations, even at its peak, let alone the absolute powerlessness there is in a corpse.

Josephus, *Antiquities IV*, p. 229, in Josephus, *Jewish Antiquities Book I-IV*, H. St J. Thackeray, tran., Cambridge MA: Harvard University Press, 1930, p. 586.

[39] Sider argues the transformation of the σῶμα τῆς ταπεινώσεωσ. implies a reference to sin, for, in Phil 2:6, Jesus humbled Himself, dying an obedient death, which, for Paul, meant death for sin. The change in Phil 3:21, as well as the contrast in 1 Cor 15:43, therefore, can have ethical, or inner religious, implications. Sider can only rely on the context for the vocabulary, and does not make this connection. See Bauer, A *Greek-English Lexicon*, p. 805; R. J. Sider, "The Pauline Conception", p. 433.

Fee argues the δυνάμει (power) is descriptive of the process of the body being raised, rather than the heavenly state. He cites no evidence to support this, but is probably relying on the eschatological use in Mark 9:1, which is descriptive of how the kingdom of God will be inaugurated. This tenet does not easily fit into the pattern established by Paul in these parallelisms, which describe the prior, and fulfilled, existence (corruption/incorruption, dishonour/glory, natural/spiritual). Nor does it account for the possibility that this parallel has an ethical undergirding,[40] which would see the contrast of 43b as ethical superiority, that is, the power of the new body to be free from sin.

Verse 44

It is sown a physical body, it is raised a spiritual body

Paul emphatically answers the question about the nature of the resurrection body, originally alluded to in verse 35. As this is the climax of Paul's argument, he abandons the impersonal form of expression for the more personal: σῶμα ψυχικόν (a natural body) is sown, a σώμα πνευματικόν (spiritual body) is raised.

The word σῶμα (body) originated as a description for a dead body in the period of the 5th century BC, and, through the influence of Greek philosophy, a body-soul dichotomy developed, which is reflected in Sir 23:16ff; 47:19, and through the books of Maccabees.[41]

"In Paul, σῶμα has a specialised meaning, in the sense of person."[42] Jewish anthropology, undoubtedly an influence on Paul, cannot imagine existence without a body, and so, for Paul, *soma* is an essential component of human existence, before and after the resurrection. In this verse, Paul sets up an antitheses between σῶμα ψυχικόν and σώμα πνευματικόν, but there is a danger in simply

[40] Ibid., p. 433.
[41] 4 Macc 14:5; 17:2.
[42] J. A. Motyer, "Body", in *Dictionary of New Testament Theology*, Colin Brown, ed., Exeter UK: Paternoster Press, 1978, vol 1, p. 234.

understanding σώμα as a kind, or form, which could be stamped on different materials.[43]

The English translations of ψυχικόν (variously: animal, sensual, natural, et al) do not adequately convey the meaning of this word.[44] The ψυχή embraces the whole of natural life, and is translated as souls, in reference to individuals, a reflection of Gen 2:7, where the ψυχή is a life force, breathed into animate man. Paul picks up the meaning from Gen 2:7 in his application. His concern is to reflect both the continuity and difference between the ψυχικόν (natural) and the πνευματικόν (spiritual), but, furthermore, as he continues his emphasis is on the fact that the resurrection is wholly an act of God. As the opponents believed they were already in possession of eternal life, they felt no need to refer to God's creative act, for the coming glory was already secure.[45] Paul, therefore, argues, if the body is inseparable from the essential substance of man, the future resurrection is guaranteed as an act of God.[46]

Some have surmised the σώμα πνευματικόν (spiritual body) is a body consisting of πνεῦμα (spirit),[47] however, this does not accord well with Paul's aim, as he seeks to repudiate Greek thinking in terms of substance.[48] It seems better to understand the σώμα πνευματικόν to be a new body, animated by the Spirit of God,[49] a body appropriate to the new life in the Spirit.[50] Furthermore, it is a body, which only

---

[43] Bultmann argues Paul has allowed himself to be misled into arguing along similar lines to his opponents, the use of σῶμα as "shape" being unPauline, Bultmann, *Theology*, vol 1, p. 192.

[44] Barrett, *First Epistle to the Corinthians*, p. 372; Bultmann, *Theology*, vol 1, p. 201.

[45] Eduard Schweizer, "σώμα", in *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament*, vol 7, p. 1062.

[46] Ibid., p. 1062.

[47] So, for Leitzmann, in Conzelmann, *1 Corinthians*, p. 283, n. 27; Hodge, *First Epistle to the Corinthians*, p. 348. Against this, Schweizer, "πνεῦμα πνευματικός", in *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament*, vol 6, p. 420.

[48] Fee, *God's Empowering Presence: The Holy Spirit in the Letters of Paul*, Peabody MA: Hendrickson, 1990, p. 263.

[49] Barrett, *First Epistle to the Corinthians*, p. 372.

[50] Nigel Watson, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians*, London UK: Epworth Press, 1992, p. 176.

comes through the resurrection, which completely alters the somatic condition. Schweizer argues, "There is no thought [in Paul] of a pneumatic body, concealed under the earthly body",[51] a theme, which is picked up by Paul in verse 46.

If there is a natural body, there is a spiritual body

This is the crux of Paul's argument in this verse. It is important to retain *if* at the beginning of this sentence, for this maintains the force of the argument. Likewise the inclusion of *is* is also significant, because what Paul asserts is not mere speculation.

Verse 45

So it is written: "The first Adam became a living being"; the last Adam, a life-giving Spirit

Paul's assertion in verse 44, that the existence of the natural body presupposes the spiritual body, is not entirely self-evident, and Paul attempts to vindicate this on two bases.

1. By reference to scripture;
2. On the evidence of Christ's resurrection.

In this verse, Paul returns to an analogy, drawn earlier in the chapter, describing Christ and Adam (15:21-22), and he uses Gen 2:7 as a scriptural foundation for his argument. His first concern is to demonstrate his assertions about how the σῶμα ψυχικόν (natural body) and the σώμα πνευματικόν (spiritual body) are in accordance with the scriptures. He is also concerned to demonstrate the archetypal nature of the two Adams, in relation to how the two kinds of bodies are sown and raised.[52]

The origin of Paul's designation of Christ, as the second Adam, is uncertain. Hodge argues this designation for the Messiah was not

[51] Schweizer, "πνεῦμα πνευματικός", vol 6, p. 420.
[52] Fee, *First Epistle to the Corinthians*, p. 789.

uncommon among the Jews, though there is no evidence found for this, anywhere in the scriptures.[53]

The first half of the verse is a quote by Paul from Gen 2:7, to which he adds the words πρῶτος (the first) and Ἀδὰμ (Adam). His additions are described by Fee as a type of *midrash pesher*, a quote, which is, at once, a citation and an interpretation.[54] Others prefer to describe the additions as a means, by which Paul makes the text more explicit, without changing the meaning.[55] Ultimately, Paul includes the additions, because they lead to the second line, where his real concern lies.

Paul chooses vocabulary, which reflects the previous verse, as he describes the first man Adam. His concern is to emphasise that, from Adam forward, every human being has σῶμα ψυχικόν (a natural body), which has been created by God. Consequently, πρῶτος (the first) gives Adam a typological interpretation.[56] Paul emphasises this, so he may contrast Christ as the second Adam, the progenitor of a spiritual race, who must, by necessity, come after the first Adam.[57]

In the second half of this verse, Paul changes the language he uses: εἰς πνεῦμα ζωοποιοῦν (life-giving spirit) instead of the anticipated σώμα πνευματικόν (spiritual body). The language, Paul uses in verse 45b, sounds as though he is continuing to quote from scripture, although no extant source can be found. Various alternatives have been proposed to solve the difficulty of sourcing this change. Suggestions include that Paul is referring to a lost document, an

---

[53] Hodge, *First Epistle to the Corinthians*, pp. 349-350. Moffatt, *First Epistle of Paul to the Corinthians*, p. 263, emphatically denies this contention. L. J. Kreitzer, "Adam and Christ", in *Dictionary of Paul and His Letters*, R. P. Martin, and G. F. Hawthorne, eds, Downers Grove IL: IVP, 1993, p. 10, says, despite speculation about Adam in 4 Ezra, 2 Baruch and the Qumran literature, Paul seems to be the first to describe Christ as the last or second Adam.

[54] Fee, *First Epistle to the Corinthians*, p. 788.

[55] Lenski, *Interpretation of I and II Corinthians*, p. 717. Conzelmann argues Paul must have been working within some type of traditional exegetical framework, Conzelmann, *1 Corinthians*, p. 284.

[56] Ibid., p. 284.

[57] Lenski, *Interpretation of I and II Corinthians*, p. 720.

imaginary document, a collection of messianically-interpreted Old Testament passages,[58] that Paul is making assumptions, based on the evidence of there being more than one type of σώμα,[59] or that Paul is making his own Haggadic interpretation of these verses.[60]

A study of the context of this verse, and the Adam-Christ typology Paul has already established in this gospel (15:21-22), provides a solution to the dilemma, which is posed, by assuming Paul is trying to prove the double assertion made in verse 44.

Verse 45a states what would be plainly obvious to the Corinthians. Verse 45b should best be understood as Paul speaking independently of the Genesis citation, thereby identifying Jesus Christ as ὁ ἔσχατος Ἀδὰμ εἰς πνεῦμα ζωοποιοῦν (the last Adam, a life-giving Spirit), on the basis of what has gone before in this chapter, particularly verse 21-28. Paul cannot allow direct parallelism, because the Christian's future existence will never be the same as Christ. While Christians will be recreated in the likeness of the second Adam, there will be one decisive difference; Christ is life-giving. Whether this theological conclusion came from Paul's own reflection, or as a result of his exegesis of the Genesis citation, is inconsequential. What is significant, is the upholding of the tenet that the one who will breathe the life-giving πνεῦμα (spirit) is none other than the risen Christ, a theme found in the language of the previous Adam-Christ passage in verse 21-22.

[58] Ibid., pp. 717-720.
[59] C. K. Barrett, *From First Adam to Last: a Study in Pauline Theology*, London UK: Adam & Charles Black, 1962, p. 74.
[60] Moffatt, *First Epistle of Paul to the Corinthians*, p. 262. There are problems with this view, particularly in that Rabbinical speculation, centred on this verse, only focused on the first half of the verse, while Paul focused on the second half, Robin Scroggs, *The Last Adam*, Philadelphia PA: Fortress Press, 1966, p. 87.

Verse 46

But it is not the spiritual that is first, but the physical, and then the spiritual

Verse 47 appears to more naturally follow on from verse 45, which necessitates exploration of why Paul included verse 46. The beginning **ἀλλ᾽ οὐ** (but not) has led some to believe Paul found it necessary to assert this order of things over against the Corinthians. One suggestion is that the Corinthians were influenced by Philonic theology, which distinguished between two men at creation, the heavenly man and the earthly man. In Philo, the heavenly man was first, the earthly man, a copy of him, was second.[61] The argument suggests Paul was familiar with this Philonic concept, and sought to deny it was a correct description of the two kinds of body they represented.[62] Scroggs rejects this view, arguing a correct exegesis of Philo reveals he did not set out to contrast the heavenly man with the earthly man, nor is one temporally prior to the other.[63] Others have suggested a Gnostic understanding of the physical, after the spiritual is reflected in this verse,[64] however, Kim rejects this, on the lack of evidence of a preChristian Gnostic redeemer myth.[65]

Although the identification of the Corinthian position remains as clouded in this verse as it is in other verses, it would seem fairly likely Paul's target is, once again, the Corinthian's over-realised eschatology. The statement is, therefore, both a summary of Paul's argument, and a repudiation of the Corinthian belief that they had already entered into the fullness of spiritual existence. Believing themselves to already be spiritual had a corollary in the rejection of the natural, and, consequently, of physical resurrection. Accordingly, Paul argues the **πνευματικόν** (spiritual) comes after the **ψυχικόν** (natural), in terms of both Adam and Christ, and in the two forms of

[61] See Philo's exegesis of Gen 2:7 in Philo of Alexandria, "Allegorical Interpretation I", in *Philo*, Cambridge MA: Harvard University Press, 1991, vol 1, p. 166-167.
[62] Barrett, *First Epistle to the Corinthians*, p. 375.
[63] Scroggs, *The Last Adam*, p. 122.
[64] Schmithals, *Gnosticism*, p. 169.
[65] Seyoon Kim, *The Origin of Paul's Gospel*, Tubigen Ger: Mohr, 1981, p. 163.

somatic existence, which Christians will experience.[66] It is a typological exegesis, in which Paul sees the first Adam prefiguring the last, and, consequently, the physical body pointing toward the spiritual.[67]

Verse 47

The first man was from the earth, a man of dust; the second man is from heaven

The text of this verse has undergone a number of revisions, including the deletion of ἄνθρωπος (man) and inclusion of ὁ κύριος (the Lord) by Marcion,[68] a Christological conflation of the text, through the addition of ὁ κύριος,[69] and the addition of πνευματικός (spiritual) or οὐράνιος (heavenly), as attempts to balance the ἐκ γῆς χοϊκός (out of the earth, earthly) in the first clause.[70]

In the previous verses, Paul used the Genesis citation to establish a typological foundation in the ψυχικόν (natural) and πνευματικόν (spiritual) of Adam and Christ. In verse 46, his concern was to demonstrate how one was to prevail, until the inauguration of the other. If, as has traditionally been done, ὁ δεύτερος ἄνθρωπος ἐξ οὐρανοῦ (the second man is out of heaven) is interpreted as being a statement on the origin of Christ, the priority, asserted by Paul in verse 46, would appear to be a stark contradiction.[71] The traditional interpretation need not be followed, allowing for the possibility of contradiction being eliminated.

---

[66] Fee, *God's Empowering Presence*, p. 267.

[67] Andrew T. Lincoln, *Paradise Now and Not Yet: Studies in the Role of the Heavenly Dimension in Paul's Thought with Special Reference to his Eschatology,* Cambridge UK: Cambridge University Press, 1981, p. 43.

[68] Marcion was a second-century heretic, who denied Christ was born as a man, rather He simply appeared, hence this amendment.

[69] The King James Version, following the Majority Text.

[70] Lenski, *Interpretation of I and II Corinthians*, p. 725; Fee, *First Epistle to the Corinthians*, p. 787, n. 2.

[71] If Paul were to talk about the heavenly origin of Christ, in terms of His preexistence, he would be contradicting what he has said in verse 46. Paul is not, however, denying the preexistence of Christ, but this is not his primary concern, in the framework of this argument.

Paul returns to the language of Gen 2:7 in his description of the first man as ἐκ γῆς χοϊκός (out of the earth), paralleled, in the second half of the verse, by Paul's description of Christ as the ὁ δεύτερος ἄνθρωπος ἐξ οὐρανοῦ (the second man, out of heaven). The noun used by Paul in this sentence (γῆς) refers to ground, earth, or dirt.[72] It is duplicated by the use of χοϊκός (earthly), which has no parallel in the second half of the verse, and so, the emphasis that χοϊκός (out of earth) brings, should be understood qualitatively, rather than descriptively. The same principle is applied to the parallel phrase ἐξ οὐρανοῦ (out of heaven)[73]. ἐξ οὐρανοῦ needs to be understood as acting as the predicate to the rest of the phrase, describing the second man as heavenly, rather than from heaven.[74] As the context demands, Paul's concern is not so much with Christ's origins as His somatic existence. Verses 48 and 49 indicate Paul's concern to impress upon the Corinthian believers they share both the image of the earthly man Adam, and, through the resurrection of Christ, the image of the heavenly man.

Verse 48

As was the man of dust, so are those who are of the dust; and as is the man of heaven, so are those who are of heaven

Paul begins to draw his argument towards its conclusion, by further developing the typological concept he introduced in verse 47, and reiterating the priority he emphasised in verse 46. The overriding framework for verses 48 and 49 is the concept of εἰκόνα (image). By showing Adam and Christ are representative of those who belong to them, Paul is able to return to the central plank of his thesis, the nature of the resurrection body.

Once again, Paul reminds the Corinthians of an ontological reality. Like Adam, the first man who was χοϊκός (earthly), they, too, as his progeny, are earthly, sharing his characteristics. Paul continues this verse with another parallel phrase. However, this time, he changes the

[72] Bauer, *A Greek-English Lexicon*, p. 157.
[73] Lincoln, *Paradise*, pp. 45-46.
[74] Ibid., p. 46.

vocabulary, using the adjective, instead of the noun.[75] Scholars, who insisted ἄνθρωπος ἐξ οὐρανοῦ (man [who is] out of heaven) addressed Christ's origin, happily highlight the contrast, as it speaks of Christ's nature as a heavenly being.[76] The change in Paul's vocabulary must be accounted for, if the argument that Paul was not addressing Christ's origin in verse 47 is to be sustained. A simple solution presents itself. The parallelism, Paul established in this verse, prevented him from using ἄνθρωπος ἐξ οὐρανοῦ (the [man] from heaven), because οἱ ἐπουράνιοι (the heavenly ones) are not ἐξ οὐρανοῦ (out of heaven), in the same way Christ is. They are heavenly, only by virtue of the prior resurrection of Christ. (1 Cor 15:23.) The demonstrative pronoun, οἷος (such), indicates οἱ ἐπουράνιοι are only so, by virtue of their relationship to ὁ ἐπουράνιος (the heavenly one). In the context of Paul's argument, he is, once again, highlighting that those, who are in Christ, share the likeness of Jesus, whose resurrection has guaranteed they will share a heavenly body as well.[77]

Verse 49

Just as we have borne the image of the man of dust, we will also bear the image of the man of heaven

In verse 49, Paul reiterates what he has just said, while modifying the metaphor he uses. The word ἐθορέσαμεν (bear) comes from the verb θορέω, which can refer to putting on, or bearing, clothing, a name, or, as is the case with this passage, an image. Paul has deliberately chosen this word for the context. It is a more intense word than a cognate that Paul might have used (θέρω), for θορέω has the sense that the object is put on continually.[78] Paul's deliberate metaphorical use of θορέω provides for another link between the εἰκών and the

[75] ὁ ἐπουράνιος instead of ἄνθρωπος ἐξ οὐρανου.
[76] E.g., Morris, *1 Corinthians*, p. 230.
[77] Fee, *First Epistle to the Corinthians*, p. 794.
[78] Bauer, *A Greek-English Lexicon*, p. 864; Morris, *1 Corinthians*, p. 231.

resurrection body, for, in other places, Paul speaks of the resurrection body as a garment to be put on.[79]

Unfortunately, Paul's description of when the Corinthians would begin sharing the heavenly likeness is complicated by a textual variant in the latter part of this verse. The UBS Greek text has chosen to adopt φορέσομεν (we shall bear) the future indicative, as the preferred vocabulary, despite the slender external support.[80] Accepting this selection, the Greek must be translated as "we shall wear", which means bearing the image of the heavenly man is in the future. Many commentators find this translation attractive, for a number of reasons.[81] Lenski argues it fits well with the didactic nature of the whole passage.[82] As the difficulty, the Corinthians have with the resurrection body, is caused by their over-realised eschatology, it seems inconceivable that Paul would call them οἱ ἐπουράνιοι (heavenly [ones]).

A small number of commentators uphold the integrity of the subjunctive φορέσωμεν. A number of things can be said in favour of this selection, which makes it the preferred rendering.

1. In the context of the Greek, this is the harder rendering, which supports its originality.

2. There does not have to be a stark antithesis of any kind, established by Paul between verse 48 and 49, where Paul speaks of two distinct groups in verse 48, and the implication of believers moving from one to the other in verse 49.[83] Verse 48 could be interpreted as speaking of

[79] Lincoln, *Paradise*, p. 51.
[80] Bruce M.Metzger, *A Textual Commentary on the Greek New Testament*, Stuttgart Ger: United Bible Societies, 1994, p. 502.
[81] E.g., Moffatt, *First Epistle of Paul to the Corinthians*, p. 263; Barrett, *First Epistle to the Corinthians*, p. 377; Conzelmann, *1 Corinthians*, p. 288; Hodge, *First Epistle to the Corinthians*, p. 352; Lenski, *Interpretation of I and II Corinthians*, p. 729.
[82] Ibid., p. 729.
[83] So, F. W. Grosheide, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians*, London UK: Marshall, Morgan & Scott, 1954, p. 388.

the heavenly ones, in the present, the nominative case does not indicate a time aspect.

3. Paul's eschatological framework is reflected in the Adam/Christ analogy of 1 Cor 15, and is characterised by the existence of two ages. Earlier in this epistle, Paul spoke of the end of the age having come (1 Cor 10:11), the form of the world passing away (1 Cor 7:29, 31), and of a future age (1 Cor 13:10, 12.) Therefore, it is entirely consistent to believe Paul considered the Corinthians to already be participants in the putting on of the image of the heavenly man. Determination to see Paul opposing over-realised eschatology must not prevent the upholding of Paul's characteristically-balanced position of realised eschatology.

4. Paul's ethical concerns, reflected throughout 1 Cor, indicate his determination that the Corinthian's behaviour had to be consistent, as those who were no longer fully participants in life as θορέσωμεν.

Such a conclusion fits entirely with the original thesis proposed, describing the Corinthian's objection to the resurrection of the body. They believed they were fully πνευματικόν (spiritual), Paul corrects this, but also asserts there is an overlap between the two stages of existence. They continue with existence in the earthly body, but, through their participation in the resurrection of Christ, they already bear the image of the heavenly one.

Application

Paul's argument, in 1 Cor 42-49, fits very well into his overall eschatological framework that is there is an old system, which is in the process of passing away, and a new one being inaugurated, which is dependent on the death and resurrection of Christ. In the context of the Corinthian opposition, Paul had to assert the dichotomy between the old and the new carefully, lest he reinforce the belief, the Corinthians held, that they had already made it spiritually.

Contemporary Christians continue to debate the form that the resurrection body will take. This passage addresses the simultaneous continuity and discontinuity between the earthly body and the resurrection body, although the emphasis is on the resurrection body. There is a paucity of information in the scripture describing what the resurrection body will actually be like. Some guesses can be made on the nature of the resurrection body, based on the physical body of Christ, as He appeared to the disciples after His death, however, such assumptions must be made cautiously, for, at that stage, He had not ascended, and taken on His glorified body.

The central theological concern, Paul was addressing, was the over-realised eschatology that characterised the Corinthian church. Blomberg says, "Paul's primary concern [was to] guard against an overly-realised eschatology that leads to an overly-triumphalist ecclesiology – that is, claiming, for the present era, too many of the blessings and victories of the age to come."[84] This has a number of implications for mission and ministry in the Melanesian context.

1. The teaching about varieties of resurrection bodies, taught in cults, such as, the Mormons, must be rejected categorically. Though it may be necessary to concede our understanding of the exact nature of the resurrection body may be limited, there are some things, of which we can be certain.

2. There must be cautious assessment of ministries, which promote a "health and wealth" gospel. The Corinthians believed that, in many senses, they had "arrived". They believed that the blessings of the age to come were already being manifest in them. Paul agreed with this, but cautioned them against holding an extreme view on the matter. Likewise, Christians can, and do, experience blessings in this life, but ministries, which exclusively promote a gospel of wealth, health, and prosperity are

[84] Craig Blomberg, *1 Corinthians*, NIV Application Commentary, Grand Rapids MI: Zondervan, 1995, p. 320.

overstepping the mark, in the same way the Corinthians were. When they fail to deliver, such ministries leave the individual in a spiritually-perilous position.

3. Christians must work toward restoration of the image of God in fallen humanity. Paul does not here encourage the believers to sit back and do nothing, awaiting the day, when they will receive the blessings of the end of the age. Christians are exhorted by Paul to "put on the new self" (Eph 4:24), and to become more and more Christ-like.

Bibliography

Primary Sources/Language

Aquinas, Thomas, *Summa Theologia*, 5 vols, Westminster MD: Christian Classics, 1981.

Bauer, Walter, A *Greek English Lexicon of the New Testament and other Early Christian Literature*, 2nd edn, Chicago IL: University of Chicago Press, 1979.

Clement of Rome, *The Epistle of Clement of Rome*, J. B. Lightfoot, tran., London UK: Macmillan, 1893.

———, *The First Epistle of Clement to the Corinthians*, Kirsopp Lake, tran., Cambridge MA: Harvard University Press, 1912.

Josephus, Flavius, *The Works of Josephus*, William Whiston, tran., Peabody MA: Hendrickson, 1987.

———, *Josephus Jewish Antiquities, Book I-IV*, H. St J. Thackeray, tran., Cambridge MA: Harvard University Press, 1930.

Metzger, Bruce M., *A Textual Commentary on the Greek New Testament*, Stuttgart Ger: United Bible Societies, 1994.

Perschbacher, Wesley J., *The New Analytical Greek Lexicon*, Peabody MA: Hendrickson, 1990.

Philo of Alexandria, "Allegorical Interpretation I", in *Philo*, 2 vols, Cambridge MA: Harvard University Press, 1991.

The New Greek-English Interlinear New Testament, R. K. Brown, and P. W. Comfort, trans, J. D. Douglas, Wheaton IL: Tyndale House, 1990.

The Old Testament Pseudepigrapha Apocalyptic Literature and Testaments, James Charlesworth, ed., New York NY: Doubleday, 1983.

The Greek New Testament, 4th edn, Stuttgart Ger: United Bible Societies, 1983.

Dictionary Articles

Blomberg, Craig, *1 Corinthians*, NIV Application Commentary, Grand Rapids MI: Zondervan, 1995.

Brown, C., "Soul", in *Dictionary of New Testament Theology*, 3 vols, Colin Brown, ed., Exeter UK: Paternoster Press, 1978.

———, "Spirit", in *Dictionary of New Testament Theology* 3 vols, Colin Brown, ed., Exeter UK: Paternoster Press, 1978.

———, "Resurrection", in *Dictionary of New Testament Theology*, 3 vols, Colin Brown, ed., Exeter UK: Paternoster Press, 1978.

Kreitzer, L. J., "Adam and Christ", in *Dictionary of Paul and His Letters*, R. P. Martin, and G. F. Hawthorne, eds, Downers Grove IL: IVP, 1993.

———, "Resurrection", in *Dictionary of Paul and His Letters*, R. P. Martin, and G. F. Hawthorne, eds, Downers Grove IL: IVP, 1993.

Motyer, J. A., "Body", in *Dictionary of New Testament Theology*, 3 vols, Colin Brown, ed., Exeter UK: Paternoster Press, 1978.

Oepke, Albrecht, "ἀνίστημῑ", in *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament*, 10 vols, Gerhard Kittel, ed., G. W. Bromiley, tran., Grand Rapids MI: William B. Eerdmans, 1964.

Schweizer, Eduard, "χοϊκός", in *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament*, 10 vols, Gerhard Kittel, ed., G. W. Bromiley, tran., Grand Rapids MI: William B. Eerdmans, 1964.

———, "σῶμα", in *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament*, 10 vols, Gerhard Kittel, ed., G. W. Bromiley, tran., Grand Rapids MI: William B. Eerdmans, 1964.

———, "πνεῦμα νευματικός", in *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament*, 10 vols, Gerhard Kittel, ed., G. W. Bromiley, tran., Grand Rapids MI: William B. Eerdmans, 1964.

Silva, M., "Old Testament in Paul", in *Dictionary of Paul and His Letters*, R. P. Martin, and G. F. Hawthorne, eds, Downers Grove IL: IVP, 1993.

White, R. E. O., "Resurrection of the Dead", in *Evangelical Dictionary of Theology*, Walter Elwell, ed., Grand Rapids MI: Baker Books, 1984.

Wilckens**,** Ulrich, "σοθία", in *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament*, 10 vols, Gerhard Kittel, ed., G. W. Bromiley, tran., Grand Rapids MI: William B. Eerdmans, 1964.

Journal Articles

Bailey, Kenneth, "The Structure of 1 Corinthians", in *Novum Testamentum* 25 (1983), pp. 152-181.

Croy, N. Clayton, "Hellenistic Philosophies and Resurrection", in *Novum Testamentum* 39 (1997), pp. 21-33.

Ford, J. M., "The First Epistle to the Corinthians or the First Epistle to the Hebrews?", in *Catholic Biblical Quarterly* 28 (1966), pp. 402-416.

Foulkes, Francis, "Some Aspects of St Paul's Treatment of the Resurrection of Christ in 1 Corinthians XV", in *Australian Biblical Review* 16 (1968), pp. 15 30.

Harris, Murray, "Resurrection and Immortality: Eight Theses", in *Themelios* 1 (1975/1976), pp. 50-55.

Jeremias, Joachim, "Flesh and Blood Cannot Inherit the Kingdom of God", in *New Testament Studies* (1955/1956), pp. 151-159.

Moule, C. F. D., "St Paul and Dualism", in *New Testament Studies* 12 (1965/1966), pp. 106-123.

Murray, Robert, "New Wine in Old Wineskins: XII Firstfruits", in *Expository Times* 86 (1975), pp. 164-168.

Sharpe, J. L., "The Second Adam in the Apocalypse of Moses", in *Catholic Biblical Quarterly* 35 (1973), pp. 35-46.

Sider, Ronald J., "St Paul's Understanding of the Nature and Significance of the Resurrection in 1 Corinthians 15:1-19", in *Novum Testamentum* 19 (1977). pp. 124-141.

———, "The Pauline Conception of the Resurrection Body in 1 Corinthians 15: 35-54", in *New Testament Studies* 21 (1974/1975), pp. 428-439.

Wedderburn, A. J. M., "The Problem of the Denial of the Resurrection in 1 Corinthians XV", in *Novum Testamentum* 23 (1981), pp. 229-241.

Wilson, R. Mcl., "How Gnostic Were the Corinthians?", in *New Testament Studies* 19 (1972/1973), pp. 65-74.

Secondary Literature

Barrett, C. K., *From First Adam to Last: A Study in Pauline Theology*, London UK: Adam & Charles Black, 1962.

———, "Immortality and Resurrection", in *Resurrection and Immortality: Aspects of Twentieth-century Belief*, Charles Duthie, ed., London UK: Samuel Bagster & Sons, 1979.

———, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians*, London UK: Adam & Charles Black, 1968.

Bruce, F. F., *I and II Corinthians*, Grand Rapids MI: William B. Eerdmans, 1971.

Bultmann, Rudolf, *Theology of the New Testament*, 2 vols, London UK: SCM Press, 1952.

Conzelmann, Hans, *1 Corinthians*, J. W. Leitch, tran., Philadelphia PA: Fortress Press, 1975.

Cullmann, Oscar, *Immortality of the Soul or Resurrection of the Dead?*, London UK: Epworth Press, 1958.

Dahl, M. E., *The Resurrection of the Body*, London UK: SCM Press, 1962.

Dods, Marcus, *The Epistle to the Corinthians*, London UK: Hodder & Stoughton, 1889.

Ellis, Earle E., *Prophecy and Hermeneutic in Early Christianity*, Grand Rapids MI: Baker Books, 1993.

Fee, Gordon, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians*, Grand Rapids MI: William B. Eerdmans, 1987.

———, *God's Empowering Presence: The Holy Spirit in the Letters of Paul*, Peabody MA: Hendrickson, 1994.

Grosheide, F. W., *The First Epistle to the Corinthians*, London UK: Marshall, Morgan & Scott, 1954.

Hodge, Charles, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians*, London UK: Banner of Truth Trust, 1958.

Kim, Seyoon, *The Origin of Paul's Gospel*, Tubigen Ger: Mohr, 1981.

Kruse, Colin G., *The Second Epistle of Paul to the Corinthians*, Leicester UK: IVP, 1987.

Kummel, W. G., *Introduction to the New Testament*, London UK: SCM Press, 1975.

Ladd, George Eldon, *I Believe in the Resurrection of Christ*, London UK: Hodder & Stoughton, 1965.

Lenski, R. C. H., *The Interpretation of I and II Corinthians*, Minneapolis MN: Augsburg Publishing, 1961.

Lincoln, Andrew T., *Paradise Now and Not Yet Studies in the Role of the Heavenly Dimension in Paul's Thought with Special Reference to his Eschatology,* Cambridge UK: Cambridge University Press, 1981.

Moffatt, James, *The First Epistle of Paul to the Corinthians*, London UK: Hodder & Stoughton, 1938.

Morris, Leon, *1 Corinthians*, Leicester UK: IVP, 1958.

Munck, J., "The New Testament and Gnosticism", in *Current Issues in New Testament Interpretation*, W. Klassen, and G. Snyder, eds, New York NY: Harper & Row, 1962.

Schmithals, Walter, *Gnosticism in Corinth*, New York NY: Abingdon Press, 1971.

Scroggs, Robin, *The Last Adam: A Study in Pauline Anthropology*, Philadelphia PA: Fortress Press, 1966.

Stemberger, Gunter, *Jewish Contemporaries of Jesus: Pharisees, Sadducees, and Essenes*, Allan W. Mahnke, tran., Minneapolis MN: Fortress Press, 1995.

Watson, Nigel, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians*, London UK: Epworth Press, 1992.

Witherington, Ben, *Conflict and Community in Corinth: A Social-Rhetorical Commentary on 1 and 2 Corinthians*, Grand Rapids MI: William B. Eerdmans, 1995.