MELANESIAN JOURNAL
OF THEOLOGY

**Traditional Toabaitan Methods of Forgiveness
and Reconciliation**
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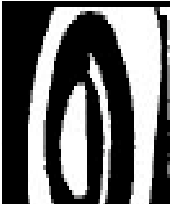Daniel Johnson

Articles and Books Relevant to Melanesia

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The *Melanesian Journal of Theology* aims to stimulate the writing of theology in Melanesia. 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 contributions from non-members and non-Melanesians are welcome.

The *Melanesian Journal of Theology* is committed to the dialogue of Christian faith within 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.

The opinions expressed in the articles 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.

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EDITORIAL

In the first article, James Ofasia digs into his own Solomon Islands' culture to compare traditional Toabaitan methods of forgiveness and reconciliation against scripture. He gives recommendations for the South Seas Evangelical church (SSEC) regarding compensation, the pastor's role, the value of tradition, and contextualisation. If one wants to understand the heartbeat of forgiveness and reconciliation among a Melanesian tribal group, then James' article is a must read.

Charles Horne articulates the purpose of law and grace. Charles answers such questions as "What place does the law have for the Christian?" and "What is liberty?" He stresses that to go back to a life controlled by laws is to deny what God has done for us in Christ. The article is a constant reminder to Christians around the world that we live under grace.

Ossie Fountain presents his second of four articles on contextualisation and globalisation in Bible training in Papua New Guinea. In this article, he looks at three key elements of theological education: curriculum development, theological orientation, and education method. Using these three elements, he analyses four Christian Brethren church (CBC) training programs, and the draft national Bible School Curriculum for CBC schools. The article is thoroughly researched, and presents keen insights.

Daniel Johnson takes us inside the Butonese culture of Indonesia. He suggests possibilities for a culturally-appropriate communication of the gospel to the Butonese people. Daniel discusses Butonese traditions, religion, and fishing, and concludes that God has planted seeds of the knowledge of His character within the Butonese people's culture. His prayer is that those seeds will bear fruit. The depth of the article should challenge each of us to truly understand the culture in which we are ministering.

We wrap up this journal with two items. First is a list of books and articles that are relevant to Melanesia. Second is information about the

ministry of Language Recording Institute (LRI) in Papua New Guinea. I encourage you to read through the LRI information for potential use in your ministry.

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 life and culture.

Doug Hanson.

TRADITIONAL TOABAITAN METHODS OF FORGIVENESS AND RECONCILIATION

James Ofasia

James has ministered for many years in Melanesia, serving as Principal of Kaotave Bible and Vocational School in Guadalcanal, Solomon Islands, as pastor of South Seas Evangelical churches in New Mala, Western Solomons, and Tulgi, Ngela Island, and as Chaplain of Suu High School on Malaita. Currently he is Pastoral Assistant to the Principal of the Christian Leaders' Training College (CLTC) in Papua New Guinea. James holds a B.Th. from CLTC.

INTRODUCTION

Division is a very real problem in the world today: divisions among nations, and divisions among Christians. There are many broken relationships that are left unsolved, and no one dares to care about these broken relationships. In Melanesia, many types of problems, related to divisions, exist: clan problems, racial discrimination, and political injustice. As a Melanesian Christian leader, what am I to do? Do I have something to contribute toward resolving these situations? I feel strongly that the message and ministry of forgiveness and reconciliation is very urgent, and is appropriate for the Melanesian world today.[1] My goal in this article is threefold:[2]

1. To give help to those who are in leadership positions, and who encounter problems in this area in their ministry.

2. To give guidance to those who wish to do some study on the subject.

3. To give help to Christians who wish to live in right relationships with fellow Christian believers, but have problems in the area of forgiveness and reconciliation.

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[1] Penuel Ben Indusulia, "Biblical Sacrifice Through Melanesian Eyes", in *Living Theology in Melanesia, Point* 8 (1985), p. 263.

[2] Ibid., p. 263.

Today, one of the greatest needs of my people, the Toabaitans of Solomon Islands, is forgiveness and reconciliation. I know this subject is very broad, both, in its theory, and in its practical sense; however I want to narrow it down to three points:

1. The traditional way of expressing forgiveness and reconciliation.

2. The strengths and the weakness of traditional forgiveness and reconciliation.

3. The biblical teaching of the subject.

LOCATION OF TOABAITA AND ITS SOCIAL STRUCTURE

LOCATION OF TOABAITA

When someone wishes to study and learn the culture of any particular group of people, one needs to know, and be able to identify, the location of that group of people in the geographical world. It is better, still, if one could visit the area, and get to know the people personally, rather than just reading from other writers. Nevertheless, the island country of the Solomons is a chain of islands that lies to the southeast of Papua New Guinea, and to the northeast of Australia. It received its independence in 1978. The Solomons is made up of six main islands: Choiseul, New Georgia, Santa Isabel, Guadalcanal, San Cristobal (Makira), and Malaita. The main inhabitants of the six main islands are Melanesians, while those of the smaller islands are Polynesians. Malaita is the most densely-populated island of the Solomons.

Language is a common problem in all Melanesians countries. North Malaita, alone, has four different spoken dialects: Baegu, Baelelea, Lau, and Toabaita. The above four groups are locally divided under two main groups of people. The Baegu, Baelelea, and Toabaita, who occupy the inland, are called the "bush" people. The Lau people occupy the little islands (which are mostly man-made) along the lagoon that lies to the northeast of North Malaita. They are locally termed as "salt-water" people.

DEFINITION OF TOABAITA

The word *toabaita* is a combination of two words: *toa* and *baita*. *Toa* means "people" and *baita* means "big". There are two main interpretations of the word *toabaita*. The first interpretation links it with the physical build of the people, as being big in stature. In the past, people believed that the Toabaita were big people. From the word passed on by mouth through the generations, we were told that the Toabaita were physically big, which confirms this idea. The second interpretation links it with the typical characteristics of the Toabaita people.

Firstly, the Toabaita people are viewed as very aggressive. They do not take things lightly. Often a person, who has a very bad temper, is described as a person whose *biranana e baita*. This refers to the person's own character. In singular terms, *nau wane baita* means, "I am a big man". There is a myth, known very well throughout Toabaita, as *Biu Wane tha Forafak*. The title of this myth really describes the character of male Toabaitans.

Secondly, Toabaita is more of an independent term in its meaning. It is hard to accept another's idea or views. Nowadays, we think of the term "Toabaita" as a curse, because of the aggressiveness, the unforgiveness, and the individual independence that characterise the people of Toabaita.[3]

GENERAL COMMENTS ON THE SOCIAL STRUCTURE

The traditional social structure of Toabaitan society is that each family has its own homestead, separated from the next patch of bush. There is nothing to be described as a village. Married sons may live close to their parents, but it may not be, strictly speaking, within the same clearing.

When asked why they live apart, the normal response is, "We live harmoniously, and remain united by living apart." Fights, rows, and friction arise when people live crowded together. If a group of people,

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[3] Ibid., p. 256.

or a family, is found, there is always a house for men, while the women live separately in different houses.

Those within the same clan live within their land boundary. For instance, those who belong to Uala must live within the Uala boundary, and the same for the Omba, Ulubiu, Takinaano, or Manafui. The mountain ranges and streams can easily identify the boundary divisions.

The people of each clan are often spoken of as the *Biu Wane*. When translated, *Biu* means "house", and *Wane* means "men". Therefore, the *Biu Wane Lo Ki Uala* literally means "the people of Uala". This excludes the women, because Toabaitan men are connected with everything, but not so for the women. In traditional Toabaita social structure, there is no such as a chief, but there is a priest, and a war hero.[4]

THREE NEW KINDS OF SOCIAL STRUCTURE

Township

Although it may be too small to be called a town, in the truest sense of the term, Malu'u station could well be termed a town. According to their own evaluation, it is a town, on the basis that it has the Western kind of flash, permanent buildings, and electricity. It is the centre of a Western system of education, the centre for workers (on a small scale) from different parts of Malaita, or even from other islands, and the shopping centre for Western goods. This is a good enough standard for the local Toabaita people to refer to Malu'u station as their own town. Under this kind of social structure, the government representatives maintain law and order.[5]

Village

The first missionaries introduced the village social structure in the early 1900s. It continued to develop with the help of Peter Ambuofa (one of the converts from the Queensland sugar fields) and other

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[4] Ibid., p. 257.
[5] Ibid., p. 258.

converts to Christianity. These villages are termed Christian villages, even to this day, because it was Christians who populated them.

In these villages, the people are not strictly from the same clan, but could be a mixture of clans. The Uala, the Omba, the Takiniano, the Manafui, and the Ulubiu may find themselves living together in the same village, which would have been impossible within the traditional social structure. In this environment, the church pastors help to take responsibility in overseeing the people, otherwise a village chief is usually appointed.

Seeing that all of the villagers are Christian, though many village dwellers are nominal Christians, each village has its own church building, where they can carry out the practices of their new faith.[6]

The Traditional Social Structure Still Serves

Despite the fact that Christianity has been in the Toabaita area for 100 years, the traditional social structure still exists among the few people up in the mountains of North Malaita. They remain active in the traditional culture and religion of the Toabaita people, and still observe cultural taboos.

Husband and wives still live in their separate houses. The men live in the *Biu*, a term that refers to the men's house, and women live in the *luma* or *fera*, the women's houses. The priests of Toabaita traditional religion still carry out their function on behalf of the few who still remain faithful. Such a situation brings about problems in Toabaitan society, especially in the sphere of morality. Often there are situations, when men take the law of the country into their own hands, since the law of the country does not match the standards of the traditional society.[7]

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[6] Ibid., p. 259.

[7] Ibid., p. 260.

EXCHANGES: A MEANS OF FORGIVENESS AND RECONCILIATION

RECONCILIATION IN TOABAITAN CULTURE

The concern with forgiveness and reconciliation, in Toabaita culture, comes from four areas. These are when relationships are broken between tribes, families, individuals, and when there is defilement against the ancestral spirits.

Whenever a relationship has been broken, a seeking to restore the relationship will occur. People in Toabaita will not allow problems to go unsolved, or relationships to remain unrestored. When the relationships with other groups, families, or individuals have been broken, they have to find the means to restore that broken relationship.

The local term *manatalubea*, "forgiveness", involves an open public statement and action, which occurs when the cause of division between two lines, clans or tribes, families, or individuals has been resolved. This kind of *manatalubea* and *kwaimania*, "reconciliation", is more than an exchange of mere words, there must be a symbol of reconciliation, given in front of the community.

There are two Toabaitan terms, which give the meaning of forgiveness and reconciliation:

(a) *Manatalubea* means "forgiveness"; *menata* means "the mind or the thoughts of the heart"; *lubea* means "no longer bound by the offence", and the obligation that must be satisfied.

(b) *Kwaimania* means "reconciliation" – the offender and offended are no longer enemies but friends. However, without an exchange of gifts, there will not be true traditional forgiveness and reconciliation within the community.

TYPICAL EXCHANGES OF GIFTS IN TOABAITAN CULTURE

In traditional Toabaitan culture, the typical exchange is varied. The variation depends upon the sort of offence committed by various groups, families, or individuals. The exchanges are also measured

against the size of the offence, and the kind of person, against whom the offence was done. If the offence is against a single individual, then, obviously, the exchange will be small. It is another thing, if the offence is against a group. When the offence is serious, then the exchanges will be quite big and demanding.

Exchanges After Sorcery

The practice of sorcery is very common among some tribes of the Toabaita people. Sorcery practice is a very serious crime in traditional culture. Whoever is found practising sorcery among the tribe is worthy of death. It is thought that sorcery, and nothing else, always caused death in Toabaita. They believe that a spirit of sorcery is the cause of death.

Toabaitans were always eager to find out what causes the death of a person. The reason for their searching is the desire to identify the sorcerer, who is responsible for the death of a person. How do they find the sorcerer? The Toabaitan's process of finding the sorcerer is to ask questions such as, "Who caused problems for this dead person?" Questions such as these are the common ones asked by the dead man's relatives.

In their desire to find the sorcerer, the relatives of the dead person cut some hair from the corpse's head and body. The local term for this practice is known as *afumatala*, meaning "to wrap up in a small parcel the remains of the corpse".

The closest relatives of the dead man proceeds, after nightfall, to the *Gwa-Biu*, "cemetery", and burns the bamboo containing the hair, cut from the corpse, together with some flowers and leaves. These flowers all have a distinctive colouring, such as the scarlet hibiscus, a large white sweet smelling flower, a yellow flower, and the vivid red creeper. When the last ember is cold, the spirit possesses the specialist. According to Toabaitan belief, it is the dead man's spirit, who possesses the leader of the party, and leads them to the house of the sorcerer. We term this process *sule akalo*, which means "come follow the dead man's spirit".

The confirmation of this process occurs when the searchers see a tiny light shining brightly over the roof of the suspected person's house. Later on, the same party plans the date for a raid to take place. After killing the sorcerer, a plan for a peace settlement is carried out by the parties.[8]

The peace settlement is the responsibility of the leader of the tribe. In local terms, he is known as the *wane-inoto*, "rich man", or "mediator". The leadership, in traditional Toabaita, is given to the *wane-inoto*, because he is the means of settling problems. He brings forgiveness and reconciliation between two enemy tribes. He is a man of standing, and is ready to help in times of trouble.

In this section on the exchange of gifts, I will refer to Hogbin's book, *Experiments in Civilisation*. He wrote an account of the Takiniano tribe. Takiniano is one of the tribes within the Toabaitan area. My mother is from this tribe, and, therefore, I am a close member. Hogbin has written an excellent case study, in which he explains traditional forgiveness and reconciliation in Toabaitan culture.

Case Study One. According to Hogbin, the *wane-inoto,* "leader", of the Takiniano died. The whole tribe was moved by his death. In traditional culture, after the funeral, the sons announced their intention of killing the sorcerer, whoever he might prove to be. To attract others to join the raid, they publicly displayed all the valuables they had received from their father, and they indicated that these would be distributed among the raiding party. Having done this, they killed a sorcerer, named of Sekeo, while he was working in his garden with his wives. After their victory, they went back to hold a huge celebration. The sons killed all the pigs they had inherited. The wealth was also distributed among those who had taken part.

Several months later, the two tribes planned to put an end to their enmity, so that they would no longer be enemies but friends, and stop what we term as *funua* (the threat of continuous death on both sides).

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[8] Ian Hogbin, *Experiments in Civilisation: The Effects of European Culture on a Native Community of the Solomon Islands*, London UK: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1939, pp. 90-92.

Both sides agreed on the value of the gifts to be exchanged by both parties. The Takiniano people and Sekeo's tribe agreed that they should give four *tafuliae* (traditional red shell money) and 200 *lioia* (porpoise teeth). The *fonoa* (the name of this type of gift) was given.

On the appointed day, the two parties came together, and exchanged their gifts with each other. Before the gifts were exchanged, the *wane-inoto* from each party made deep apologies for dishonouring and killing each other either by sorcery or by weapons. Then gifts were exchanged, as the traditional means of forgiveness and reconciliation. After the exchange, the hatred ended.[9]

Case Study Two. The second case study from Hogbin's book concerns a man named Aninali, and Molia, the *wane-inoto* of Alilo. Alilo is below the present Malu'u station. Molia, who was believed to be a sorcerer, made sorcery on Aninali's father, who died. Later on, Aninali, with four of his men, planned a raid on the suspected person. Their plan was successful, and they killed Molia.

After an interval of about two years, he inquired as to whether the *wane-inoto* of Alilo could accept the *fonoa*. The Alilo *wane-inoto* accepted that there should be some sort of peace settlement for the problem that had been unresolved. The usual value of the *fonoa* was agreed upon by both parties.

The day came for this presentation. The relatives of both parties came to the prearranged place for the presentation. The two *wane-inoto*s sat down together, before the actual exchanging of the gifts. After this, the two *wane-inoto* stood up and exchanged betel nuts. This signified their mutual trust. When this was done, both parties exchanged their gifts, as a mark of forgiveness and reconciliation. The relationship was restored.[10]

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[9] Ibid., p. 92.

[10] Ibid., p. 93.

Exchanges After Tribal Fighting

Tribal fighting in Toabaita was always a difficult case to handle. People on both sides lived in fear of death from each other, even after the fighting was over. They believed that, although the fighting had stopped, the sorcerers would still perform spells on their enemies, so people still suffered death, even after the tribal fighting was over. In order to quickly put an end to the situation, someone had to step into the gap created between the two groups. This person was seen as the *wane-inoto*. In this context, the term *wane-inoto* takes on a new meaning. The word *wane* means "man" and the term *inoto* means "mediator".

For the *wane-inoto* to bring forgiveness and reconciliation between the two fighting tribes, he had to have some traditional status. For example, he had to have some relationship ties with the two groups. He had to be prepared to offer a large amount of goods from his treasure. He must not be seen among the fighting folk. In other words, the *wane-inoto* was the peacemaker.

Case Study Three. Hogbin has also written an account of a tribal fight between the Ainigaule and the Uala tribes. Both the Uala and Ainigaule are in the same Malu'u area of Toabaita.

The trouble began when some youths from Uala stole a pig belonging to a man from Ainigaule. He retaliated in a drastic way by burning the men's house. He died shortly afterwards, whereupon the father of one of the youths, who owned the house, was proven guilty of sorcery and murder. The two groups then mustered their forces, and met in a pitched battle, in which four men were killed, two on each side, and many were wounded. Eventually, a *wane-inoto* from another district, who had both Uala and Ainigaule ancestors, intervened and arranged a peacemaking ceremony, in which each side gave the other 20 pigs and *tafuliae* (traditional shell money).

Exchange of these gifts was a token of forgiveness and reconciliation from both sides. True traditional forgiveness had to be expressed by both sides. Reconciliation was never recognised if only one party was

involved. The purpose was not to satisfy the demands of the other group, but to put an end to the conflict, and to restore relationships.[11]

Exchanges After Conflict Between Families
A dispute between families often led to serious divisions in the tribe, if it was not dealt with quickly. In this section, we will look at another case study from Hogbin's book. This particular case study was between two elderly men in the Uala tribe, Foakambara and Konofilia. I am closely related to them: Konofilia was my mother's uncle.

Case Study Four. Foakambara killed a pig belonging to Konofilia, and later, Konofilia demanded compensation for his pig. However, Foakambara refused to give in to the demand, and asked Konofilia to meet the cost of the vegetables destroyed by the pig. On the refusal of his request, Konofilia sent his nephew to kill one of Foakambara's pigs in revenge.

The problem began to grow worse and the two parties were prepared for battle. Before anything happened, a woman ran with the news to the *wane-inoto*. Without asking any further questions, he sent two of his *ramos*, "warriors", to the scene, so they stopped the men from fighting. They all went back home quietly, and, some days later, the *wane-inoto* came and made Foakambara and Konofilia exchange an equal number of *tafuliae*, "shell money", and other valuables, as a sign of forgiveness and reconciliation.[12]

TRADITIONAL DIFFERENCES BETWEEN EXCHANGE AND COMPENSATION IN TOABAITAN CULTURE

In this section on forgiveness and compensation, I want to refer back to our Toabaitan understanding of the two local terms, *manatalubea* and *fa'abua*. Although it may be thought that these terms are related to each other, in our Toabaitan culture, these terms are quite different.

The local term *manatalubea* derives its meaning from *manata*, which means "the mind or the thought from the heart". *Lubea* means "to be

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[11] Ibid., p. 94.

[12] Ibid., p. 78.

no longer bound by the offence", which implies that the person now is a free man. In regards to a typical exchange of gifts, the *manatalubea*, "forgiveness", is done by both parties.

The word *fa'abua,* "compensation", has three basic meanings:

  (a) Restoring honour to the one dishonoured.

  (b) Satisfying the mind of the offended.

  (c) The method used to restore peace quickly.

In summary, compensation is aimed at restoring the relationship between the offended and the offender.

The following section will bring out three main points that will clarify this issue of compensation: obligation in compensation, weakness in compensation, and strengths of compensation.

OBLIGATION TO PROVIDE COMPENSATION

In traditional Toabaitan culture, compensation is also another method used for restoring peace. This method is different from the exchange method. As has been mentioned, exchange is aimed at restoring peace between two parties. But, in the case of compensation, the offender is not working at restoring the relationship. His main aim is to satisfy the mind of the offended, in regards to the offence committed. The offender is obligated to meet the demands of the compensation. He has no choice but to the meet the requirements.

Case Study Five. This case study will clarify the obligation to provide compensation. A young man had sexual intercourse with the daughter of the village chief. The girl's father found out about this incident later. He was angered, and, without any delay, he went to the young man's father, and demanded compensation to be paid within one day.

The young man's father did not have the means to pay the compensation, but, because he was obligated to pay, he had to find the money. He went to one of his close relatives to borrow money from them in order to pay the compensation. The young man's father got

the money (traditional *tafuliae*), and gave it to the girl's father the next day.

The compensation payment was not just the responsibility of the father of the young man, but of the extended family as well. Just to make it clear, the borrowing of money, mentioned above, was done by the traditional method: if a close relative runs into a problem, which will demand a compensation payment, the young man's family is obligated to help. In summary, the offender has a very strong obligation to meet the demands of the offended.

WEAKNESSES OF THE COMPENSATION METHOD

Compensation is not done on the basis of agreement, but the offender is forced into the compensation payment. Also, the compensation gift can be rejected, when the value of the gift is considered poor or low. Also, there can be a false acceptance of the compensation from the hands of the offender. This may not change the offended one's heart. He may demand pay back later, or he may inflate the compensation payment to satisfy his greed. The following are two case studies to demonstrate the weaknesses in compensation. Although the first case study is from Papua New Guinea, it demonstrates compensation practices within Melanesian countries.

Case Study Six. In June, 1987, I was invited to speak at a pastor's seminar at Nipa (Southern Highlands of Papua New Guinea) with the Tiliba Christian church. During that time, two tribes from nearby villages were arranging for a payment of compensation over a death of a child, who was believed to have been killed by one of the men from the offender's tribe. The offended tribe demanded 100 pigs and K10,000. When the day came for the compensation to be given to all the people, I was there.

The offenders came with the full compensation payment, and the full number of pigs. When it was given to the offended family, they did not accept it. They were not happy with the size of the pigs. That day, a tribal fight broke out, because of the size of the compensation payment.

Case Study Seven. A son of a *wane-inoto* was involved in adultery with another man's wife. The husband of the adulteress was really angry against the son of this *wane-inoto*. The adulterer hid in a cave in the bush for some time. Later on, when the husband's anger had had time to cool down, the father, *wane-inoto*, offered him 25 *tafuliae*, red shell money, and several pigs, to compensate for what his son had done. The father of this young man was obligated to give the compensation, *fa'abua* or *fa'a-lea*. After these had been accepted, the adulterer began to appear in public once more, though he always took the greatest care to avoid the man he had wronged. If the adulterer ran into the man he had wronged, this man could have retaliated against him, and could have killed him.

Compensation was not very effective, and did not settle the problem for either party, so the incompleteness of compensation, as a means of forgiveness, stands out clearly here. Although the compensation is given to the offended, to solve the problem fully, they have to go back to the traditional exchanging system, and sacrificial methods, to really heal the deep ill-feeling, and restore relationships again with the opposing group.[13]

STRENGTHS OF THE COMPENSATION METHOD

Although compensation is an incomplete means of forgiveness and reconciliation, it has its strengths. The first strength is that compensation, when fully accepted by the offended party, restores peace. For example, when an offence deserving death has been committed, the full acceptance of the *tafuliae* by the offended party secures and protects the life of the offender. The second strength is that compensation restores honour and respect to the offended. It is a way of rebuilding the character of the offended. A third strength is that payment of compensation is a form of traditional discipline. In other words, the demand for compensation improves the character of the offender. Compensation teaches them a lesson, so that they will not get into the habit of committing crime. A fourth strength is that, ideally, it satisfies the offended party. A fifth strength is the building of unity between families. Compensation is never an individual

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[13] Ibid., pp. 79-90.

matter. It always gathers the families together to share in the issues. It is like bearing one another's burdens. It makes one feel responsible for the other, and provides opportunity to get them out of terrible situations.

Case Study Eight. One man killed another man from his village in an argument. The relatives of the victim hunted for the other man. This man had to run away from his own home to another area to save his life. When he arrived in another village, he was taken into the *biu'u*, "men's house". Upon entering the men's house, the chief of the village welcomed him. The murderer told the chief what happened, and the reason he was running away.

After the chief heard the story, he stood up, got two *tafuliea*, a pig, and a band of his men, and took the compensation to the victim's tribe. When they arrived, the chief went to the victim's family, and offered them the gift. When the people of the dead man received the gift, they made a promise to the chief not to take the life of the murderer.

THE TRADITIONAL MEDIATOR: *WANE-INOTO'O*

In traditional Toabaitan society, the mediator plays an important role in the community. He is known as the *wane-inoto'o*. The term *wane-inoto* has a different meaning from *wane-inoto'o*. *Wane-inoto* means "rich man" or "wealthy person". The term *wane-inoto'o* means the "middle man" or "mediator". When there is an argument between two brother clans, a *wane-inoto'o* is always called upon to calm down the angry men, and help them reconcile. His main job is to make peace.

The Nature of the Wane-Inoto'o

The *wane-inoto'o* is an important person in the community, in the sense of his wealth and openness to help in times of trouble. His ministry, as a mediator, is also extended beyond his own tribe or clan. When a person from another tribe or clan is involved in serious trouble, which may deserve death, the *wane-inoto'o* is prepared to offer help to the offender, if he runs into the *biu'u*. Whenever a person is in trouble, and is chased, the moment he runs into the house of the *wane-inoto'o*, he is safe, regardless of what clan or tribe he comes

from. The mediator will wait for the offender's enemies, not to pay back, but to offer them a gift, known in Toabaita as *rete malefota*.

This gift is understood to be a ransom for the offender's life. The offender is now a free person. He has the right to be treated as a son of the *wane-inoto'o*. He is free from harm by the enemy tribe. He is not bound to his new family, but he is also free to go back to his own people. The offender's life is secure. Any person, who intends to kill or hang him, will be in great trouble for not honouring and respecting the *malefota*, which the *wane-inoto'o* gives. There are many things that are tied to this gift: peace, unity, forgiveness, and reconciliation.

Within the exchange system, the *wane-inoto'o* is the initiator of this method, and he is the one who brings about reconciliation. Without the mediating ministry of the *wane-inoto'o*, there would be many unsolved problems in the community. Every tribe in the Toabaitan area must have a *wane-inoto'o*. His service has nothing to do with the spirits; rather he depends entirely on his wealth, to bring peace, or to settle conflicts. The authority of his service comes from his treasury. He relies heavily on his riches to meet the urgent needs.

One good example is the case study between Foakambara and Konofilia, quoted earlier in this paper. Here we saw the *wane-inoto'o* of Uala tribe step in and stop the fight. Later on, Foakambara and Konofilia were reconciled by exchanging goods, as ordered by the *wane-inoto'o* of Uala.

Case Study Nine. A man had a sexual affair with a girl. This man was an orphan, a *wela-inomal,* who had, some years before, attached himself to the girl's father. Therefore, the girl's relatives decided to take the life of this *wela-inomal*. The father came into the village, and started shouting out threats. However, the *wane-inoto* came and took the girl's father to his house, where food was served. Subsequently, three *tafuliae*, and three pigs were given as compensation for the girl's pregnancy. Here, the *wane-inoto* acted again as a mediator between the *wela-inomal* and the father of the girl.

Case Study Ten. In another case, a young man's settlement was actually attacked before compensation was accepted. Adequate preparations for defence had been made, and a number of his relatives were ready to fight. Before blood was shed, one of the older men, who was believed to be the *wane-inoto*, came forward and offered one *tafuliae* and pigs to cool the attacker's anger. This brought peace to the situation.

It is necessary to clarify one point that might cause confusion to the reader. The *wane-inoto*, "rich person", is the same person who becomes the *wane-inoto'o*, "mediator", because of his wealth.

After going through these case studies, we see clearly who the traditional mediator really was. He was a man of courage, wealth, and of great importance in the community. His wealth made him brave, and he was ready to act, when the situation was tense. He was a well-respected person in the community.[14]

EXCHANGE IN THE OLD TESTAMENT

The exchange of gifts in Toabaitan culture is for the purpose of forgiveness, and restoration of broken relationships. This practice contributed a lot to the unity of the group. In this part, we will explore gift exchanges, in Hebrew culture, to see whether there are similarities between Toabaitan and Hebrew culture.

THE GIFT EXCHANGE BETWEEN JACOB AND ESAU

We know very well the account of Jacob and Esau, and how they became enemies, after Jacob deceived his father. Jacob then fled to Mesopotamia, the land of his uncle Laban, because Esau was planning to kill him. He went to Mesopotamia, and settled there with his uncle, and he later married two of his uncle's daughters, Leah and Rachel. Jacob stayed there for 20 years, serving 14 of those for the bride-price of his two wives (Gen 29:20-27).

As his family continued to grow, he had a problem with his father-in-law: "The sons of Laban said, Jacob has taken everything our father

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[14] Ibid., p. 91.

owned, and has gained all his wealth from what belonged to our father" (Gen 31:1-2). So Jacob was looking for a way to escape from Laban. However, he still had an unsolved problem with his brother, which he had caused 20 years earlier. He knew he had to go back to his own land, but would Esau accept him?

As a good Hebrew, Jacob knew the traditional way of dealing with his problem with his brother. He followed the ritual prescribed in his Hebrew culture to solve the conflict. The only way to overcome Esau's anger was to offer him a present. Offering presents was the traditional way to resolve broken relationships (Gen 32:14-15; 33:1-15).

Jacob prepared an enormous gift of great value for his brother. The purpose of this present was to restore brotherly love. The present consisted of 200 female goats, 20 male goats, 200 ewes, 20 rams, 30 female camels, with their young, 40 cows, 10 bulls, 20 female donkeys, and 10 male donkeys. With difficulty, Esau accepted the gift, and, in exchange, he offered some of his men to Jacob. The acceptance of the gift, of the person seeking reconciliation, was the surest proof that all was well.[15]

In conclusion, brotherly fellowship was restored, since the gift was accepted. Forgiveness occurred when the gift was accepted, and, from that point on, the relationship was now restored.

THE GIFT OFFERED TO DAVID BY NABAL'S WIFE

1 Sam 25:4-35 speaks about an incident that happened between David, his men, and Nabal. The Bible tells us that David sent ten of his young men, with orders to go to Carmel to find Nabal, and give him his greetings, as well as a message. Nabal was a wealthy, but wicked, landowner.

After passing on the message, Nabal did not accept David's message. David's ten young men went back, without anything given to them.

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[15] H. Leupold, *Exposition of Genesis*, vol 2, Grand Rapids MI: Baker Book House, 1942, p. 2:889.

After arriving back, they told David about their trip, and how Nabal had treated David's message.

Nabal's response to this particular message caused David to form an army of 400 footmen to secretly march against Nabal. A concerned servant came and told Nabal's wife, Abigail, about David's secret plan. To save the situation, urgent action was needed. Abigail was a strong woman, who knew the appropriate Hebrew cultural response (1 Sam 25:4-35). She took action, which might be regarded in Melanesia as men's work, by preparing an enormous gift to take to the angry David, and his men, in order that she might save the situation. The gift was made up of 200 loaves of bread, two skins of wine, five dressed sheep, five seahs of roasted grain, 100 cakes of raisins, and 200 cakes of pressed figs.

As she was riding up the road with her present, she saw David and his men coming down the hill. She quickly dismounted, and threw herself on the ground at David's feet, and began to explain the situation. Then she asked David to accept the gift, and share it with his men. She also pleaded for forgiveness from David, and later she asked David to remember her, when he became king.

In response, David praised the Lord God of Israel for what He had done. He also thanked Abigail for her sensible action, through which God saved the situation. David thanked her again for saving him from the crime of murder, and for keeping him from trouble.

In 1 Sam 25:35, David accepted the gift from Abigail, assuring her of a peace treaty, which was signed, through the gift offered. The acceptance of the gift was the outward sign of the reconciliation, expressed in David's word.[16]

Exchanging of gifts plays an important role in both Melanesian and Hebrew cultures. They restore relationships that are difficult to solve. In other words, a gift is a token of a peace settlement. The acceptance of the gift demonstrates forgiveness and peace in any situation.

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[16] Peter Ackroyd, *The First Book of Samuel*, Cambridge UK: Cambridge University Press, 1971, p. 199.

COMPENSATION IN THE OLD TESTAMENT

The Old Testament law supports the necessity of compensation. There are two scripture passages that should be looked at. They are Ex 22:16-17 and Deut 22:28-29.

Ex 22:16-17 says, "If a man seduces a virgin, who is not betrothed, and lies with her, he shall give the marriage present for her, and make her his wife. If her father utterly refuses to give her to him, he shall pay money equivalent to the marriage present for a virgin" (RSV).

"Some scholars consider this as being originally the price paid to the father for the bride, but this is not certain. At this time it was considered compensation."[17]

Secondly, Deut 22:28-29 says, "If a man meets a virgin, who is not betrothed, and seizes her and lies with her, he shall give to the father of the young woman 50 shekels of silver" (RSV). Therefore, when a man uses force on an unbetrothed virgin, he must pay damages to the father.[18] This practice of compensation in the Old Testament is similar to one in Toabaitan culture. According to Toabaitan culture, when a young man is found having practised fornication with another man's daughter, he is obligated to pay compensation to the father. The purpose of this compensation is to restore honour to the father of the young woman. The normal compensation price in Toabaita is one *tafuliae*, "red shell money", and a pig.

From Ex 22:16-17 and Deut 22:28-29, we see the importance of compensation. These passages point out that an offender could not escape compensation for the harm committed. Other passages, such as Num 5:5-8; Lev 6:1-7; and Ex 22:1-5, offer more evidence.

One scholar, commenting on Num 5:5-8, states, "This section calls for the righting of wrongs within the community, the kind of wrong, in which damage has been done, and loss sustained. Confession, full

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[17] Philip Hyatt, *Exodus*, New Century Bible Commentary, London UK: Oliphants, 1971, p. 240.

[18] P. Craigie, *The Book of Deuteronomy*, Grand Rapids MI: William B. Eerdmans, 1976, p. 295.

restitution, and additional payment of 20 percent is required of the guilty party."[19] Although confession of sin was made through sacrifice, the full compensation, or restitution, plus 20 percent, was still required of the guilty party.

The final point to be made is that confession of sin to God, or even offering of sacrifice for the sin committed, does not do away with the need to compensate a man for the damage done.

COMPENSATION IN THE NEW TESTAMENT, AND SOME CONCLUSIONS REGARDING APPLICATION TO TOABAITAN CULTURE

The New Testament does not give explicit teaching on exchange as was seen in the Old Testament. However, in the case of compensation it does give evidence on the subject.

ZACCHEUS (LUKE 19)

As a result of his conversion, Zaccheus demonstrated his willingness to make restitution: "If I have cheated anybody out of anything, I will pay him four times the amount" (Luke 19:8). Under the law, only if the robbery was deliberate, or there was a violent act of destruction, was a four-fold restitution necessary (Ex 22:1). If it had been ordinary robbery, and the original goods were not restorable, then double the value had to be paid (Ex 22:4, 7). If voluntary confession was made, and voluntary restitution offered, then the value of the original goods had to be paid, plus one-fifth (Lev 6:5; Num 5:7). Zaccheus determined to do far more than the law demanded. He showed, by his deeds, that he was a changed man."[20]

PAUL AND PHILEMON

A second case involved Paul, and his relationship with Philemon and Onesimus. Philemon was a Christian slave owner, who owned a slave named Onesimus. Onesimus had run away from Philemon to Rome. It

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[19] Philip Budd, *Numbers*, Word Biblical Commentary, vol 5, Waco TX: Word Books, 1984, p. 5:58.
[20] William Barclay, *The Gospel of Luke*, Edinburgh UK: The Saint Andrew Press, 1965, pp. 244-245.

seems he had stolen from his master. He had been caught, and put in prison. There, he had met Paul, who later led him to the Lord. Paul cared for him, and continued to nurture him in the faith. Paul sent Onesimus back to his own master. He asked Philemon to accept Onesimus back, not as a slave, but as a brother. In Philem 18, Paul offers to make restitution on behalf of Onesimus. The apostle not only asked for forgiveness for Onesimus, but he also offered compensation for the wrong done.[21]

As a Christian, and as a Hebrew, Paul was ready to fulfil his cultural responsibilities. He did not think it inappropriate to pay compensation to Philemon, as an expression of reconciliation and forgiveness, and damages lost. Paul says flatly in Philem 19, "I will repay it."

SIMILARITIES BETWEEN TOABAITAN AND HEBREW CULTURE

Before looking at the similarities between Toabaitan and Hebrew culture, it is necessary to underscore where the Hebrew people got their idea of compensation and restitution. Num 5:5-7 tells us that God Himself gave this command to Moses, "The Lord said to Moses, 'Say to the Israelites: When a man or a woman wrongs another in any way, and so is unfaithful to the Lord, that person is guilty, and must confess the sin he committed. He must make full restitution for his wrong, add one-fifth to it, and give it all to the person he has wronged.' "

God, Himself, initiated the custom of compensation, or restitution. But compensation cannot stand alone. The Bible says that the guilty person must confess his sins, then make full restitution. Toabaitan culture is the same. When a sin or offence is committed, the person has to go to the priest for confession.

For example, if a young man committed fornication with another man's daughter in the community, that young man had to go to the priest, and confess the wrongs committed, before he could make a compensation payment to the offended. The same practice was also followed in the exchange of gifts. Before the exchange would take

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[21] Jac Muller, *The Epistles of Paul to the Philippians and to Philemon*, Grand Rapids MI: William B. Eerdmans, 1967, p. 188.

place, the priest had to offer a sacrifice on behalf of the offender and the offended. This sacrifice was for confession, forgiveness, and reconciliation. After having done that, the two groups were ready to exchange gifts.

COMPENSATION SHOULD NOT BE DONE AWAY WITH

Compensation should not be done away with, because it has a role to play in bringing peace and reconciliation in today's Toabaitan culture. The Bible does not teach against compensation.

As we saw in the Old Testament, this practice of compensation or restitution was a command from God. The New Testament shows us that compensation is still applicable. Jesus did not stop Zaccheus from making full compensation. Zaccheus did what was right, according to his cultural mandate (Num 5:5-8). Another example is from Paul and Philemon. Here, Paul became the initiator of a compensation payment between Philemon and Onesimus. Paul was an apostle, yet still faithful to the demands of his culture. He was prepared to pay compensation on behalf of his brother Onesimus.

From these biblical examples, we will see that compensation and exchange is still appropriate for a Toabaitan Christian, and should not be done away with.

THE ROLE OF MEDIATOR: THE PASTOR AS *WANE-INOTO'O*

As pointed out earlier, the traditional mediator had an important role to play in the culture. He was known as the go-between person. He was the initiator, or negotiator, for exchange and compensation between the conflicting parties. However, this ministry has been taken over by the pastor. The pastor is always called upon, when there is conflict in the community between tribes or individuals. The pastor has become the go between person, instead of the traditional *wane-inoto'o*.

Now, the Toabaitan people see the pastor as their new *wane-inoto'o*, who always helps them to restore their broken relationships, by counselling and praying with the conflicting parties.

However, he does not fully perform the cultural demands. For example, he does not encourage the offender to pay compensation to the offended. The pastor's role should be seen as one, who initiates or negotiates for exchange and compensation, between conflicting parties.

To make this point clearer, the following case study is offered, out of my own experience as a pastor of a local congregation, known as New Mala in the Western Solomons of the Solomon Islands.

Case Study 11. One day, two members of my congregation had an argument, which ended in a fight. During the fight, I stepped in to stop it. Both men stopped. I went between these men, and brought them together. I had a talk with them, and they both agreed to be reconciled with each other. I called for a fellowship meal to be organised by the congregation. In this fellowship meal, the two members apologised to each other, and prayed together. The final thing before the meal started, the offender who had caused the fight, and had caused a lot of harm to the other man's body, made a compensation payment, before they ate the fellowship meal. I felt it was right for the man, who caused bodily harm, to make compensation to his fellow brother.

PREVIOUS MISSIONARY ATTITUDES TOWARDS TRADITIONAL TOABAITAN EXCHANGE AND COMPENSATION METHODS

Our people, to maintain and restore peace and unity, used traditional methods of exchange and compensation, before white missionaries came to the Toabaitan area. To summarise briefly:

1.   Compensation was a gift given quickly by the offender to make up for the loss or damage done to the offended.

2.   The exchange methods were gifts exchanged between the opposing parties based on agreement.

I believe these two methods were "hooks", created by God, in our culture, on which the gospel could "hang". They prepared us for the gospel. However, the missionaries did not see these created hooks. When the missionaries first came, they brought with them the gospel of Jesus Christ. Their main aim was to evangelise, and teach people how to live the Christian life. Their teaching emphasised separation from

our old ways. That meant a Christian man or woman must be different from other non-Christians. This separation was not to take place only in the heart, but it also affected us socially – new Christian villages were created.

There were two reasons for creating these new villages:

1. They were a place where they could teach the people about the new Christian culture and doctrine.

2. They moved us away from the old culture; the traditional culture, which they felt was connected with the worship of the spirits. To do away with these old cultural values, they passed church rules to bring the people from holding on to the old, traditional values.

Because of this separation, many of our important cultural values were lost, including exchange and compensation. The missionaries thought that compensation was of the past, and considered it evil. They enforced church rules that forbade Christians from accepting compensation from the hands of their offenders.

There were three reasons that supported their argument for not allowing Christians to accept compensation:

1. They felt that compensation was a reward for an act of sin. Here is an example: X's son committed fornication with Z's daughter, but X's people gave compensation to Z's people. Because Z is a Christian, and he had accepted the compensation, the church had to put him under discipline for accepting the compensation. The missionaries thought that the gift given to the offended was making money from sin committed.

2. They felt that prayer was to play the central role in the act of forgiveness and reconciliation. Prayer had taken the place of exchange and compensation. The opposing parties could deal with relationship problems only through prayer. Prayer together, not exchange or compensation,

was the symbol, which stated the conflict had been resolved.

3. The third reason why missionaries forbade compensation was because of a particular understanding of the cross, in the atonement. The main focus was on the finished work of Christ on the cross. In other words, Christ was seen to have offered the final compensation between God and man, and, therefore, if anyone accepted compensation, he was denying the sufficiency of Christ's compensation.

CONTEXTUALISATION

This section will deal with four important areas:

1. Definition of contextualisation

2. God's preparation of Toabaitan culture

3. Rejection of contextualisation

4. Critical contextualisation

DEFINITION OF CONTEXTUALISATION

According to the Christian anthropologist Paul Hiebert, "We refer to this process of translating the gospel into a culture, so that the person understands it, and responds to it, as indigenisation or contextualisation."[22] He further states, "All cultures can adequately serve as vehicles for the communication of the gospel. If this were not so, people would have to change cultures to become Christians. This does not mean that the gospel is fully understood in any culture, but that all people can learn enough to be saved, and to grow in faith within the context of their own culture."[23]

Without the contextualisation of the gospel, our people will treat the gospel as foreign.

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[22] Paul Hiebert, *Anthropological Insights for Missionaries*, Grand Rapids MI: Baker Book House, 1977, p. 54.
[23] Ibid., p. 55.

GOD'S PREPARATION OF TOABAITAN CULTURE

God, indeed, has prepared the Toabaitan culture for His message of forgiveness and reconciliation. When looking at various cultural values in Toabaita, particularly exchange and compensation, we can see that these two values point to the true meaning of God's message of forgiveness, reconciliation, and peace. The entire purpose of exchange and compensation is for peace, forgiveness, and reconciliation among conflicting parties in the community.

The Toabaitan people did not have any problem in understanding the message of God's forgiveness and reconciliation, but they had a problem in accepting that message of reconciliation outside of the cultural values of Toabaitan culture. They rejected the traditional way of doing forgiveness and reconciliation. They did not make use of the "hooks", which God had prepared for them to use, when presenting the gospel.

Case Study 12. *This case study was taken from Don Richardson's book,* Peace Child. *Richardson was a missionary among the Sawi people in Irian Jaya. The Sawi people had a strong traditional Melanesian method of doing forgiveness and reconciliation that was unique to them.*

Two Sawi tribes (Kamur and Heman) collided in a tribal fight. This tribal fight ended in many lives being lost, and some were wounded. The fight continued for some time. On the day of declaring peace, both parties waited on each other as to who would be the first to step down to declare peace. From the Kamur tribe came a man named Kaiyo. In his arms he carried a six-month-old baby boy, who was the peace child. He was to hand this child to the enemy tribe. When the other tribe saw that action, they waited patiently to receive this gift of peace.

On receiving the peace child, the Heman exchanged a child from their tribe with the Kamur tribe. The Sawi people believed that the exchanging of children was a sign of mutual trust between the two tribes. Apart from exchanging children, they also exchanged bows and arrows, and other valuable goods, plus the exchanging of tribal names.

All these exchanges took place during a celebration of the peace and reconciliation ceremony.[24]

Richardson used the cultural method of the peace child to share God's message of peace. He then told them of God's peace child – Jesus Christ. Richardson talked with one of the men, who had given his son as a peace child. "Did you give another man's son or your own son?" In reply, the man said, "I gave my own son." "So did God," exclaimed Richardson. "The child you gave to the other tribe was no cast-off, you wanted to get rid of. He was your beloved son. But the Son of God gave an even more beloved." The man responded to Richardson, "I understand."[25]

We see in this example a missionary who respected the culture of the people, and presented the gospel through the cultural channels, which God had prepared.

REJECTION OF CONTEXTUALISATION

The early missionaries, who came to Toabaita, did not fully contextualise the gospel into our culture. They rejected the culture of the Toabaitan people, and replaced it with their own culture. They thought that Toabaitan culture was evil. The early missionaries told us that, when we became Christians, we must leave our old heathen villages, and move down to the coast to a newly-established Christian village.

The new Christian villages were where the new Christian culture was introduced, and where the old Toabaitan cultural values were rejected, including compensation and exchange.

What was accepted were Toabaitan moral codes, however, anything, apart from that, was rejected. The Toabaitan Christians were not given the freedom to make decisions regarding exchange and compensation. If they had, they would have preserved these two particular cultural values.

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[24] Don Richardson, *Peace Child*, Ventura CA: Regal Books, 1974, pp. 193-206.
[25] Ibid., p. 212.

THE PROCESS OF CONTEXTUALISATION

Hiebert sees three approaches concerning contextualisation:[26]

1.   Denial of the old: rejection of contextualisation

2.   Dealing with the old: critical contextualisation

3.   Acceptance of the old: uncritical contextualisation

The first approach deals with the way the missionaries treated our traditional Toabaitan culture. They denied the old culture. The result was that the gospel remained foreign, and rarely accepted, and the old was hidden, which later resulted in syncretism.

The second approach deals with the old, with a real desire to see the gospel contextualised. This is gathering information about the old culture, studying the biblical teachings about the issue, and then evaluating the old culture, in the light of the biblical teaching. Then, after all this, a new contextualised Christian practice is created. The culture is accepted and challenged, in light of scripture.

The third approach is an uncritical acceptance of the old culture. It shows that there are some, who quickly accept the culture without thinking – a practice which results in syncretism. This is a point of warning not to accept everything in the culture, because there are things in the culture, which go against the scriptures.

CRITICAL CONTEXTUALISATION

What should Christian converts do about their cultural heritage? Hiebert suggests his second approach – critical contextualisation.[27] Old beliefs and customs are neither rejected nor accepted without examination. "They are first studied with regard to the meanings and places they have within their cultural setting and then evaluated in the light of biblical norms."[28]

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[26]   Hiebert, *Anthropological Insights for Missionaries*, pp. 184-188.

[27]   Ibid., p. 186.

[28]   Ibid.

How does this take place? Firstly, an individual or church must recognise the need to deal biblically with all areas of life. This awareness may arise when a new church is faced with births, marriages, or death, and must decide what Christian birth rites, weddings, or funerals should be like. Or it may emerge as people in the church recognise the need to examine certain other culturally-based customs. . . .

Secondly, local church leaders, and the missionary, must lead the congregation in *uncritically* gathering and analysing the traditional customs associated with the question at hand. For example, in dealing with funeral rites, the people should analyse their traditional rites – first describing each song, dance, recitation, and rite that makes up the ceremony, and then discussing its meaning and function, within the overall ritual. The purpose here is to understand the old ways, not to evaluate them. . . .

In the third step, the pastor or missionary should lead the church in a Bible study, related to the question under consideration. . . . This is a crucial step, for, if the people do not clearly understand and accept the biblical teachings, they will be unable to deal with their cultural past. . . . It is important, however, that the congregation be actively involved in the study and interpretation of scripture, so that they will grow in their own abilities to discern the truth.

The fourth step is for the congregation to critically evaluate their own past customs, in the light of their new biblical understandings, and to make a decision regarding their use. It is important, here, that the people, themselves, make the decision, for they must be sure of the outcome, before they will change. . . . To involve the people in evaluating their own culture draws upon their strength. They know their old culture better than the missionary, and are in a better position to critique it, once they

have biblical instruction. Moreover, they will grow spiritually by learning to apply scriptural teachings to their own lives.[29]

SUMMARY OF CONTEXTUALISATION PROCESS

What the South Seas Evangelical church (SSEC) needs today is this process of critical contextualisation to be initiated. Firstly, it needs to gather information about the old traditions from the people, and it needs to prepare biblical teaching material, which addresses the situation. Then, later on, it should organise seminars, which evaluate the old cultural values, in light of the Bible. Then it should develop a new contextualised Christian practice, particularly in the areas, in which church rules conflict with the culture. At the moment, critical contextualisation is an untouched process within the SSEC.

RECOMMENDATION TO THE SSEC

I would like to make recommendations to the SSEC regarding the following four issues:

1. Exchange and compensation

2. The role of pastor as mediator

3. Church attitudes toward cultural values

4. The initiation of critical contextualisation within the SSEC

EXCHANGE AND COMPENSATION

I would like to recommend that the church recognise the value of traditional exchange and compensation, as an important means of demonstrating to the community the reality of reconciliation. After two parties have been helped to reconcile, by the church, they should share a fellowship meal together. During this time, they should pray, and share with one another. At the same time, they should be encouraged to give and accept compensation, and to exchange traditional gifts. Personal restoration of hearts should be made public

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[29] Ibid., pp. 186-187.

again. In other words, there should be a public and symbolic demonstration of reconciliation.

THE ROLE OF PASTOR AS MEDIATOR

The church should recognise the pastor's ministry, not only as a shepherd of the flock, but also as a mediator. They should endorse his involvement in issues facing the community, especially in cultural matters. For example, if one man wrongs another man, the pastor should become the initiator and negotiator for compensation payment and exchange. He should be allowed to deal with conflicts. They should not limit his ministry to the pulpit. That is to say, they should not confine him to "spiritual matters", but he must be allowed to deal with cultural conflict as such.

CHURCH ATTITUDES TOWARD CULTURAL VALUES

The church should recognise and appreciate the importance of their traditions, and heritage, and cultural values. It would be good for the church to review its old church rules, which conflict with cultural values. And they should make changes to the rules, which conflict with the culture, but which remain biblical, especially in the areas of exchange and compensation.

THE INITIATION OF CRITICAL CONTEXTUALISATION WITHIN THE SSEC

The church should ask the Bible schools and Bible colleges to conduct seminars that address the issue of critical contextualisation. Before those seminars are conducted, each Bible school and Bible college should assign their staff to different associations (district or region). That staff member should be sent, with the purpose of gathering information about the old culture, particularly, exchange and compensation. The staff member should study the biblical teachings about these things. During the seminars, the staff and students can evaluate the old, in the light of biblical teachings. Throughout that process, they may be able to create a new contextualised Christian practice in the area of exchange and compensation.

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FREEDOM FROM LAWS AND LEGALISM

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INTRODUCTION

"If the Son makes you free, you will be free indeed" (John 8:26).

"For freedom Christ has set you free; stand fast, therefore, and do not submit again to a yoke of slavery" (Gal 5:1).

"You were called to freedom, brethren; only do not use freedom as an opportunity for the flesh, but, through love, be servants of one another" (Gal 5:13).

What are the laws of your church? Why are the laws of one church different from the laws of another? What is the relationship of a Christian to Old Testament laws? These are questions, which we often hear from Christians of Papua New Guinea, as they face the wide range of churches, with their varying statements of theology, and standards required of members. Where do we turn for an answer? How does a Christian know whether or not he is bound by Old Testament law?

The only safe authority, and reliable answer, is in the Word of God, itself, and, particularly, in the New Testament. Our Lord's teaching in Matt 5-7; 12:1-8, and in various passages in John's gospel, coupled with a wide range of teaching from Paul, give us a true understanding of what the Bible teaches on this subject. We should remember that the God of the New Testament is not different from the God of the Old Testament; His holiness, His love, His judgment on sin, His righteous demands, do not change. He is the same yesterday, today, and forever.

We begin our discussion by considering God Himself, His perfect creation, and His laws, how those laws are broken, and how He has made provision for sinful man to be counted righteous. We will consider, then, whether we are still controlled by those laws, and adjust our lifestyle by those laws, or whether there is some greater power that controls our lives, by which we live.

THE PERFECT CREATION

In discussing this subject, we begin with the nature and character of God. We are discussing the relationship of the "sons of God" to laws and legalism. It will help us, therefore, first to see the relationship of God to laws and legalism.

GOD IS A GOD OF ORDER, NOT OF CONFUSION (1 COR 14:33)

God, in His nature, is perfect in every way. It is not because He has surrounded Himself by laws that He is perfect. He IS perfect, and, therefore, all He does is perfect. His laws come from His nature, not His nature from His laws. When He created the universe, because of the perfect harmony of His nature, His creation was also in perfect harmony, and operating on laws that He Himself established. The universe of the stars operates within these laws, in a harmony of coordinated movement. The rhythm of seasons, the growth and propagation of plants, the life cycle of all living things – He created all these in perfection, each operating within the laws, which God Himself established "for each, after its kind".

MAN MADE IN THE IMAGE OF GOD LIVED FREELY AND FULLY WITHIN GOD'S LAWS

The first Adam, before the fall, was perfect before God. He lived within God's laws, not because he had to, but because he had God's nature. He was like God, and, therefore, kept God's laws by nature. We need to keep this fact in mind, as we discuss the Christian, and his relationship to law.

MAN SEPARATED FROM GOD

When Satan came to Eve, with his temptation, for the first time man looked at the laws, within which he lived, as a restriction, as a fence.

When he was rightly related to God, living in perfect harmony with God, he was not aware of any restriction. He then broke the law, which God had given, and within which he should live. In breaking that law, he separated himself from God, and was no longer in harmony with God. From that time, all the descendants of that first man have been born out of fellowship with God. They are separated from God, because they are descendants of Adam, sinners by nature, and because, as sinners, they live outside God's perfect law. So, Paul describes all men as "dead in sin" (Eph 2:1), "enemies of God" (Rom 5:10), and "sinners" (Rom 5:8). They are "slaves of sin" (Rom 6:6; John 8:34).

LAWS NOW GOVERN

Because of man's sinful nature, and his perverted desire, laws are needed, both to instruct and to curb. God's laws became explicit, and human societies created laws.

GOD'S LAWS GIVEN

The nature of God's laws did not change when man sinned. The Ten Commandments were not necessary before man sinned. Before the fall, there was no need to tell Adam not to make idols, not to kill, or not to commit adultery. Being in right relationship with God, he, by nature, did not do those things, and did not need to be given laws.

Now that man had sinned, his knowledge was clouded, and his desires skewed, so God's laws were given to him. They were made explicit. They showed man the standard God required. If man was to live in harmony with God, he had to live within the laws, which God had given. Those laws were good (Rom 7:12). They came from a holy God, and gave the standard of holiness God requires of those, who would come near to God. They covered man's relationship with God, and his relationship with other people.

EVERY HUMAN SOCIETY HAS SOME KIND OF LAWS

The each of the tribes of Papua New Guinea has their laws. All the people of a tribe are expected to live by the laws of that tribe. There are laws about land ownership, marriage, birth, death, divorce, gardening, hunting, and sickness. When the people of a tribe put aside their laws,

and please themselves, law and order in that society breaks down. The record of the people of Israel, in the book of Judges, where "every man did what was right in his own eyes" (Judges 21:25) shows how a tribe "falls to pieces" if it puts aside its laws, and lives without law. From these tribal laws, we learn three things:

1. Law and order in society come from good laws. Good laws are a pale reflection of God's perfect law. Man, separated from God by sin, is only a pale reflection of the perfect man, made in the image of God, but he is still man, whom God made. Therefore, the laws, which men make for their society, are, to some extent, a reflection of God's laws.

2. No set of tribal laws, or laws made by men, are as good as God's perfect law. Some laws are good, but no human laws, or laws of human society, are perfect.

3. Men, who have been used to living by tribal laws, very easily think of the Christian life as being governed by a set of "Christian" laws, and that all they have to do is to move from one set of laws to another set of laws.

THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN GOD'S LAW AND PEOPLE

Now that the Law is given to people, how do people relate to it? What is its purpose?

PEOPLE ARE UNABLE TO KEEP ALL OF GOD'S LAW

When laws are given, whether God's laws, or the laws of society, they are given for a purpose. That purpose is for people to obey them. And, if people obey good laws, we anticipate that good things will come as a result.

God gave His laws to the people of Israel, and said, "If you keep these laws you will live." But no one has ever been able to keep all God's laws. Paul said, "All have sinned and fall short of the glory of God" (Rom 3:23). No matter how a man tries, he does not measure up to God's perfect standard. Therefore, "no human being will be justified in God's sight by the works of the law" (Gal 2:16; 3:11; Rom 3:20).

The first thing we notice, however, is that, although we fully expect that the response to laws is that they be obeyed, people are unable to. They might be able to keep some of the law, but not all of it. In fact, some people believe that they do keep the law, but they do not, really. The Jewish religious leaders, in the time of Jesus, especially the Pharisees, were like that. They were proud of the fact that they had kept the law. Before his conversion Paul, who was a Pharisee, was like that. He says that he was "faultless" in keeping the legal requirements of the law (Phil 3:6). The rich young ruler, who came to Jesus, looking for eternal life, told Jesus that he had kept all the commandments from the time he was a boy (Mark 10:17-22). But Jesus pointed out to him that he had not kept all the law. He lacked in one thing, and it was a major thing. He was selfish, and lacked love; he did not use his wealth for the benefit of the poor. His love of wealth stood between him and eternal life. Jesus also pointed out to the Pharisees that they had only kept minor points of the law, not the really major issues – justice, mercy, and faithfulness (Matt 23:23), and, of course, the sin of pride prevented them from receiving true spiritual life.

James says that whoever keeps the whole law of God, yet breaks it at only one point, is guilty of breaking the whole of God's law (James 2:10).

So, if people cannot keep the law, what is the use of it? Let us look at what the law can do, and remind ourselves of what the law cannot do.

WHAT THE LAW CAN DO: IT SHOWS UP SIN

One thing we can be certain of: the law shows up sin. By God's law, people see themselves as sinners. James tells us that God's law, His word, is like a mirror (James 1:23). The person who measures himself against the law, sees himself as a lawbreaker. Sin is lawlessness. Every one who commits sin is guilty of lawlessness (1 John 3:4). The law condemns us as guilty. The righteous judge (God) judges the sinner by His perfect law, and pronounces all guilty, and condemned to death.

WHAT THE LAW CANNOT DO: IT CANNOT MAKE PEOPLE RIGHTEOUS

While the law shows man his sin, it has no power to make him righteous. It cannot give him life or power. It cannot help him to keep the law. All it can do is show him God's perfect standard, and condemn the man who does not keep it. The written code (the law) kills, it condemns to death; it cannot make alive (2 Cor 3:6).

GOD SENT HIS SON TO REDEEM THOSE WHO ARE UNDER THE LAW

"All who have sinned without the law will also perish without the law, and all who have sinned under the law will be judged by the law. For it is not the hearers of the law, who are righteous before God, but the doers of the law, who will be justified" (Rom 2:12-13). However, no one has been able to do the law, and, therefore, all are found guilty, and are condemned. But God sent His Son, born under the law, to redeem those who were under the law (Gal 4:4-5). The law was our custodian (guardian), until Christ came (Gal 3:24). It did not give us life and salvation. It did not make us free. However, Christ came to set the slaves free. He took the death penalty Himself when He "bore our sins in His body on the tree" (1 Peter 2:24). He not only came to redeem, and to set free; He came to make slaves into sons. Those who had been guilty sinners, slaves of sin, separated from God by their sin, can now call God their own dear Father. They have been made sons in Jesus Christ (Gal 4:6-7).

HOW DO WE COME INTO THIS NEW RELATIONSHIP?

Sons, instead of slaves of sin! We have been slaves of sin, condemned by the law. How may we come into this relationship of sons, instead of slaves? Paul teaches very clearly in his letters that it is by faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. "No human being will be justified in God's sight by the works of the law, since, through the law, comes knowledge of sin" (Rom 3:20). The gospel concerning God's Son, Jesus Christ, born of a woman, who died and rose again, is the "power of God unto salvation; to every one who has faith. In it, the righteousness of God is revealed through faith for faith" (Rom 1:16-17). The righteousness of God has been manifested, apart from law, the righteousness of God, through faith in Jesus Christ, for all who believe (Rom 3:21-22). Since we are

justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ (Rom 5:1).

Paul's main message, in his letter to the Galatians, is that salvation and life come through faith in Christ, not through keeping the law. God, in His kindness and love, has made a way for sinners to have forgiveness of sin. He "cancelled the bond, which stood against us, with its legal demands" (Col 2:14). We cannot be accepted as righteous through keeping the law, because, no matter how hard we try, we cannot measure up to the righteous requirements of the law. But God has set this aside, and counts as righteous, those who believe in Jesus Christ. They see that He has taken their place. In believing and accepting Jesus Christ, they have received the Holy Spirit. Paul says clearly that we did not receive the Holy Spirit by keeping the law, but by faith (Gal 3:2). There is no condemnation to those who are in Christ Jesus. The just requirement of the law may be fulfilled in us, who walk according to the Spirit (Rom 8:1-8).

WHAT PLACE DOES THE LAW HAVE FOR THE CHRISTIAN?

In Christ, I am no longer under the law. I fulfil the requirements of the law, not through trying to keep the law, but because Christ is in me, and I in Him. So, we come to the point, with which we commenced. God, by His nature, cannot sin, and is in perfect harmony with His law. God's Son, Jesus Christ, "reflects the glory of God, and bears the very stamp of His nature" (Heb 1:3). He is perfect in every way, just as His Father is perfect. He always did what was pleasing to God (John 8:29). As a believer in Christ, I am in Him. My life is hid with Christ in God (Col 3:3). I am made a "partaker of His divine nature" (2 Peter 1:4). As His Son, I share His life, and His Holy Spirit is in me (Rom 8:1-9). The law has already judged me as a sinner, a lawbreaker and guilty. But, Jesus, Who has given His Spirit to me, when I believed, has taken all my sin. Now I can say with Paul, "I, through the law, died to the law, that I might live to God. I have been crucified with Christ. It is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me; and the life I now live in the flesh, I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me, and gave Himself for me" (Gal 2:19-20). All the righteous demands of the law have been fulfilled in Christ; His righteousness has been given to me, through faith, not through my keeping the law, but through my union

with Christ. The Christian life is not determined by whether I keep the law or not. The Christian life is "Christ in me". Our Lord said, "Abide in Me, and I in you" (John 15:4). In Christ, we have redemption of sins. In Christ, we have been chosen, and made sons. In Christ, we have been appointed to live to the praise of His glory. In Christ, we were sealed with the promised Holy Spirit. We have been blessed with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places in Christ (Eph 1:3-14).

WHAT IS THE LIBERTY OF WHICH JESUS AND PAUL SPEAK? (JOHN 8:36; GAL 5:1)

Firstly, it is not liberty to sin. Paul says, most emphatically, that we, who have died to sin, can no longer live in it (Rom 6:1). Jesus said that "everyone who commits sin, is a slave to sin" (John 8:34). The liberty, which Christ gives us, does not give us an excuse to sin. Life in Christ will be marked by hatred of sin, and holiness of living. John points out, in his letters, that the person, who says he loves God, but who continues in sin, is a liar. The Spirit of Christ in us cannot sin, it is against His nature. In so far as we walk in the Spirit, led by the Spirit, we will not commit sin. We will experience the problem, of which Paul speaks in Rom 7, "I do not do the good I want, but the evil I do not want, is what I do" (Rom 7:19). We hate the sin we still do, and long to be more like our Father in holiness and godly living.

Secondly, it is liberty from the curse of sin. We have been condemned. Our own consciences condemn us, because we know we are sinners. The law of God condemns us, because we have broken the law. But, in Christ, we are free from this condemnation. Even though we still come short of God's holiness, and, in thought, word, or deed, sin against God every day, we know that we are not condemned. We stand free from this condemnation, because, as we confess our sin, He forgives us our sin, and the saving death (the blood) of Christ, God's Son, cleanses us from all sin.

Thirdly, it is the liberty of the Spirit-led, and Spirit-controlled, life. We no longer live like servants or slaves, who are continually hemmed in by law. We live like sons, who have liberty to move anywhere, and do anything, within the limits of their Father's will.

Our Lord's words in Matt 11:28-30 are relevant. To those who labour and are heavy laden, weary of trying to keep the law, loaded down with all the burdens and regulations imposed by the law, He says, "Come unto Me and I will give you rest. Take My yoke upon you, and learn from Me; for I am gentle, and lowly in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For My yoke is easy, and My burden is light." We exchange the weariness and bondage of trying to keep the law for the liberty of being servants of Jesus Christ.

Fourthly, it is the liberty of a love relationship. We are not bound by law, but by love for God and men. When a man and his wife really love each other, they find, in this relationship, liberty, not bondage. So it is, in our relationship to Jesus Christ. He loved us, and gave Himself for us, that we might belong to Him. When a woman loves her husband, it is not because of law that she does not go to another man. Because she loves her husband, she does not think about other men. So it is with those who love God. They live in the liberty of this relationship, their lives controlled by love for Christ.

When the scribe asked Jesus which commandment was the first of all (Mark 12:28-34), Jesus replied, "The first is, 'Hear, O Israel, the Lord your God, the Lord, is One; and you shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind, and with all your strength'. The second is this, 'You shall love your neighbour as yourself'." Jesus, did not give commandments as to the things which people should not do; rather He gave two commandments, which, if people do, they will be living inside the law. Paul also gave this same principle (Rom 12:8-10) when he said, "Love is the fulfilling of the law".

WE ARE NOT UNDER LAW BUT UNDER GRACE

We have not become Christians by moving from one set of laws to another set of laws. We are not saved by trying to live inside the fence of the Ten Commandments, or the laws of our church. We are saved by the grace of God, through faith in what our Lord Jesus Christ has done for us. We become Christians by becoming united to Jesus Christ. We continue as Christians as we live in union with Him. It is not by living inside the fence of laws that we continue as Christians. It is by living in

union with Christ that we continue in Christ (John 15:1-6). We have not moved from a tribal fence of laws into a Christian fence of laws. We have moved from the slavery of sin to the freedom of the sons of God.

WHAT IS THE APPLICATION OF THIS PRINCIPLE?

In our Melanesian context, there are two ways we can apply this principle: in how we judge people to be Christians, and in the need to guard against adding to faith "keeping the law", in order to be Christian.

JUDGING OTHERS TO BE CHRISTIAN OR NOT

As Christians, we have tended to surround ourselves with laws, and to say that, if a person does not do these things, he is not a Christian. I have heard a pastor say, "That man is not a Christian; he smokes". When I was a young man, some Evangelical Christians used to say, "That person goes to dances; he is not a Christian". We often judge whether a person is a Christian by whether he keeps certain laws, not by whether he has spiritual life. In this, we are wrong.

It is true, as John says, that, if we say that we have fellowship with God, while we walk in darkness, we lie (1 John 1:6). The way a person lives, shows whether or not he is a Christian. The person who loves sin, who habitually sins, is not a Christian. The way he lives shows up his nature.

What marks a person as a Christian is not whether or not he keeps certain laws, such as, "Do not smoke". It is his union with Christ that marks him as a Christian, the fact that he walks in the light. If we love God with all our heart, soul, mind, and strength, if we love our neighbour as ourselves, our lives will show it.

The Pharisees of our Lord's day put many laws on their people. In many small ways, they were surrounded by laws, but they overlooked the important issues of justice, mercy, and faith (Matt 23:23-24). We so easily become like the Pharisees. We make laws about things like smoking, and we overlook things like criticism, gossip, pride, and covetousness. I am not saying that I agree with smoking, and some of

these things. What I am trying to point out is that it is not living inside a fence that makes us Christians. It is our union with Christ.

A church may have its rules for its members. It is not the keeping those rules, which make a person a Christian. It is being united to Christ, by faith, that makes him a Christian.

ADDING WORKS TO FAITH

Because of the laws we make, we can easily be guilty of the sin of the Galatian Christians. They were adding law-keeping to faith in Christ. They were saying, "We must believe in Jesus Christ, AND keep certain laws, if we are going to be Christians." Paul said to them, very strongly, "If you add anything to faith in Christ, you are believing and preaching another gospel." For our salvation, nothing can be added to the saving work of our Lord Jesus Christ. We are not counted righteous, because of what we do, and the laws we keep. We are counted as righteous, because, by faith, we accept what God has done in Christ. "In Him, we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of our sins, according to the riches of His grace" (Eph 1:7). We have come to fullness of life in Him (Col 2:10), not by putting on laws, but by union with Christ. We are called to abide in Him, to live in Him, to walk in Him. Martin Luther's text, "The just shall live by faith", refers not only to our salvation, but to the whole of our Christian lives. Whatsoever is not of faith is sin.

WHAT ABOUT CHURCH LAWS AND REGULATIONS?

Churches have the right to have certain laws, and require certain standards of their members. I am not suggesting that churches should have no standards or laws. But we need to hold these laws in the light of Rom 14. There, we see one man (or church), who has certain laws about what he may eat, or what days he must keep as holy days. Another man (or church) has no taboos about food or drink, and regards all days as the same. Paul's emphasis here is, once again, on the principle of loving our neighbour as ourselves. We will neither judge those, whose laws are different from ours, or give offence to them. A very important verse is Rom 14:17, 19. "The kingdom of God does not mean food and drink, but righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy

Spirit. He who serves Christ is acceptable to God." Neither having taboos, or having no taboos, count for anything; it is serving Christ that counts. The guiding principle is our relationship to Christ.

Let us not put fences of laws and taboos around ourselves, which destroy the liberty we have in Christ. Each denomination tends to build its own fence, and to judge those who have different fences. We belong to Christ; we are sons of God. Paul said to the Colossian Christians, "Don't let anyone pass judgment on you on questions of food and drink, or with regard to a festival, or a new moon, or a sabbath. These are only a shadow of what is to come, but the substance belongs to Christ" (Col 2:1, 17). To quote John Stott:

> Your religion has developed into an external formalism. It is no longer the free and joyful communion of children with their Father. It has become a dreary routine of rules and regulations. . . . Instead of growing in the liberty, with which Christ has set them free, they have slipped back into old bondage.[1]

John Stott further says, concerning the prodigal son, "How foolish he would have been to say, 'You have made me a son, but I would rather be a slave'." That was the foolishness of the Galatians. We sometimes are guilty of the same foolishness.

God has not rejected His own laws. But all the requirements of His law are met in Christ. As we live in Him, so we are acceptable to God. Our Lord said, "Not an iota, not a dot, will pass from the law till all is accomplished" (Matt 5:18). Then He went on to teach that His demands were higher than those of the law. If we are unable to keep the demands of the law, how can we ever measure up to the high demands of Christ? The answer is in Him. He is our righteousness, and He qualifies us before God. The more closely we are united to Christ, the less important our church laws and regulations become. He becomes the centre, and the whole, of our life.

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[1] John Stott, *The Cross of Christ*, Chicago IL: IVP, 1986, p. 108.

CONCLUSION

In closing, let me set out how to live the Christian life. Paul's message was, "Once you were slaves, now you are sons. How can you go back to slavery?" The Galatians had gone back to slavery, and so do we, if we put ourselves under laws, and do not live in the liberty of union with Christ. To go back to a life, controlled by laws, is to deny what God has done for us in Christ.

We must keep on reminding ourselves what we have, and what we are, in Christ. We need to say to ourselves, "Once I was a slave, but God has made me His son, and put the Spirit of His Son in my heart. How can I go back to the old slavery? Once I did not know God, but now I know Him, and He knows me." Our life comes from Him, and, because we belong to Him, we continually seek to live as He wants us to live, and to do the things that He wants us to do. Those, who live according to the Spirit, set their minds on the things of the Spirit. Those, who walk in the Spirit, do not fulfil the desires of the flesh. We live by the Spirit, not by laws. We live within the law, because we live by the Spirit.

We are free from the bondage of sin. The Son has made us free. We are free, indeed. Therefore, we should not allow ourselves to become entangled again in slavery of any kind. We are discharged from the law, dead to that which held us captive, so that we serve, not under the old written code (the law), but in the new life of the Spirit (Rom 7:6). You were called to freedom. Stand fast in it.

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CONTEXTUALISATION AND GLOBALISATION IN THE BIBLE TRAINING MINISTRY OF THE CHRISTIAN BRETHERN CHURCHES OF PAPUA NEW GUINEA (PART 2 OF 4)

Ossie Fountain

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INTRODUCTION

In Part 1 of this series of articles, I looked at the two major forces that impact Bible school ministry – contextualisation and globalisation. The first embraces the assumption that Bible schools must adapt rigorously to their local context; the second, that Bible schools, everywhere, should be similar in form and function, in goals and outcomes. In this series of articles, we examine the balance between these two approaches, in the Bible schools of the Christian Brethren churches of Papua New Guinea (CBC), and seek to draw lessons for theological education in Melanesia.

In this, and the next two articles, I look at three key elements of theological education – curriculum content, theological orientation, and educational method[1] – to demonstrate how global and contextual orientations have impacted CBC Bible schools.

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[1] Curriculum content provides essential background for the theological and educational aspects, and, for this reason, it is placed first.

I begin with the curriculum framework of the schools. What should they teach? What should the curriculum contain? What is essential, and what is optional? I define the term "curriculum", and then observe that an adequate curriculum can be developed, only with reference to the aims and purpose statements of the Bible schools. I take four schools as examples – the earliest, the West Sepik Bible School at Yebil; its sequel, the Baibel Tisa Trening Skul[2] at Amanab; Yimbrasi Bible School in the Nuku area; and the English-language Bible School at Anguganak – to examine this relationship in each case. I then look at a draft national Bible school curriculum for all CBC schools running on the four-year, six-month cycle. Certain imbalances in the curriculum statements emerge.

Both global and contextual factors provide a framework for a balanced curriculum. Two important globalising factors are the Western Bible school model, and the denominational distinctives of the Brethren. At least five contextual factors are: the language medium of instruction; Melanesian worldviews; issues emerging from the gospel's interaction with Melanesian cultures; tensions and dislocations arising from social change and modern development; and the history and character of Brethrenism in Papua New Guinea.

Adequate attention to these factors shape and bring balance to the curriculum. I explore ways in which both contextual and global factors can be accommodated in a balanced curriculum for the CBC in Melanesia. Finally, two propositions, developed by Ted Ward, help us in this task.

A. Defining "Curriculum"

In 1994, Donald Senior and Timothy Weber[3] described three ways, in which the term "curriculum" is used:

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[2] In English: Bible Teacher Training School.

[3] Donald Senior, and Timothy Weber, "What is the character of curriculum, formation, and cultivation of ministerial leadership in the good theological school?", in *Theological Education,* 30:2 (1994), pp. 17-33, reporting on a two-day consultation of the North American Association of Theological Schools (ATS).

1. Curriculum refers to "all that is required to earn the [qualification]: core courses, electives, field education, supervised ministry hours, etc."

2. Curriculum refers "to everything that happens to students, under the aegis of the school", including "not only academic requirements, but the other events, or processes that the institution provides: worship, fellowship groups, trips . . . special programs, or lectureships, retreats, social events, and the like".

3. Less frequently, curriculum refers "to whatever happens to an individual student during his or her seminary years: classes, internship, worship, friendships with fellow students and professors, financial pressures, personal growth, and crisis experiences, family life, and other similar experiences".[4]

These definitions overlap, their difference depending largely on whether the focus is on the achievement of a qualification (definition 1.), the description of the school (definition 2.), or the experience of the student (definition 3.). We shall use definition 2., while acknowledging the importance of the others.

Central issues, in the minds of both stakeholders and potential students, are, "What is taught there? What will the students learn? How will this Bible school course fit him or her for a future ministry?"

Immediately, we strike a central issue for CBC Bible schools. What is their purpose, and for whom are they catering? Questions of curriculum content are closely related to questions of purpose.

B. THE PURPOSES AND AIMS OF CBC BIBLE SCHOOLS AND THEIR RELATION TO CURRICULA

Not all the Bible schools have clearly stated aims and purposes. Some have changed in character, and also in purpose, as time has gone by. Consistent curriculum decisions cannot be made, let alone effective

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[4] Ibid., p. 20.

evaluation, without clarity in this area. For this study, we examine the purpose statements, and curriculum content, of four schools.

1. WEST SEPIK BIBLE SCHOOL

In planning for the West Sepik Bible School (WSBS) to commence at Yebil in 1967, the missionaries clarified the aims and purposes, at their 1966 conference.

> The prime aim is to build up, and strengthen, the indigenous church, and, to this end, it is planned to graduate the students as Christian leaders, fulfilling a full- or part-time pastoral and/or evangelistic ministry. These men [are] to be able to feed daily on the word of God in Pidgin, and to teach others, systematically, from it. They would need to be able to teach Bible stories consecutively for baptismal instruction, and also to expound passages of scripture for the teaching and building up of Christians. Further, it would be valuable for them to be trained as literacy teachers.[5]

According to this statement, WSBS had a primary focus of establishing a strong indigenous church, for which a literate and Bible-trained leadership was deemed essential. Implicitly, recognition was given to the Eph 4:11 gifts of evangelists, pastors, and teachers, as being the three most important spiritual gifts for leadership in local churches.[6]

The description assumes that both pastors and evangelists need to exercise a teaching ministry. The teaching pastor represents a tension in Brethren leadership patterns. The term "pastor" is used cautiously, because many Brethren churches have taken a strong stand against

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[5] CMML Conference minutes, Anguganak, July, 1966.

[6] The Brethren regard apostles, in particular, and depending on how the term is used, prophets, as being for the New Testament era only, being replaced, in time, by the completed scriptures of both Old and New Testaments. See, for example, Henry Hitchman, *Some Scriptural Principles of the Christian Assembly*, Kilmarnock UK: John Ritchie, 1929, pp. 102-103; J. M. Davies, *The Lord and the Churches*, London UK: Pickering & Inglis, 1967, pp. 67-68. Davies states, "The apostles and the prophets were gifts God used to lay the foundation. This having been laid, the need for such gifts has ceased, but their ministry is abiding; it is permanently embodied in the New Testament."

one-man leadership. The issue is compounded by the rather-different spiritual gifts required of a teacher, compared with those of a pastor.

We should remember that the CBC churches were at a very early, and formative, stage, when the above purpose statement was written. Many had no elders, and, in any case, recognition as an elder is not seen by Brethren as a consequence of formal training. An elder is equipped by the Holy Spirit, appointed by God, and recognised by the local church.[7] It is not a Bible school function to offer pre-service training to potential elders, although Bible schools can, and did, run courses to upgrade and up-skill existing elders. In some places, the need was seen to be for evangelists and church planters, rather than for a more-settled form of ministry.[8]

Jenny Fountain has pointed out that the first CBC Bible school was established on the pragmatic grounds of the situation in PNG, in the face of the missionary desire to rapidly establish a fellowship of strong indigenous, and autonomous, local churches.[9] A paper presented by Kay Liddle had argued for a settled pastoral ministry, as being valid, from New Testament church practice, and required, in the Melanesian context the missionaries faced.[10]

Another aspect of the purpose statement, quoted above, is that, since Bible teaching was deemed to be a core function of strong indigenous churches, there is an implicit expectation that those who graduate would exercise a church-leadership function.

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[7] "*Toksave long sios*" BTTS Bible School notes, nd, states "*God i makim na putim ol wasman long sios*" [God appoints and places elders in the church(es)], and adds the references Acts 20:28; 1 Pet 5:3; 1 Thess 5:12-13. See also "*Wokim rot bilong strongim ol sios*" [Making a way to strengthen the churches]. Notes prepared by L. A. Marsh, BTTS, nd. Both these were, however, produced later than the period under discussion.

[8] The relationship of church elders and church workers is a matter of some uncertainty among the Brethren. See Peter J. Lineham, "Pastor-Elders relationships in the Brethren: Revisioning a troubled relationship", unpublished paper presented at a Brethren Pastor's Retreat, July 1999.

[9] Jenny Fountain, *To Teach Others Also*, MS, pp. 17, 20-21.

[10] Ibid., pp. 21-22.

In the light of increasingly urgent pressure for a trained indigenous leadership, the decision was made to establish the first residential Bible school,[11] and to cover a basic curriculum over a two-year period of six 12-week terms.[12]

The primary goal of the first long-term Bible school, then, was to train pastor-teachers and evangelist-teachers for the CBC churches.[13] This was broken into a number of specific curriculum objectives for each major subject field (see Appendix, Table 1.1).

These objectives[14] demonstrated the range of knowledge, and the devotional and communication skills (especially preaching) expected of a Christian leader. They placed high value on knowledge of the Bible, the flow of biblical history, and the interconnectedness of the biblical story, even when significant parts of the Christian scriptures were unavailable. Relating the Bible to the present world, including geography, church history, and rival religious alternatives, were also important, especially those aspects that Melanesian rural adults may not have been aware of.

The Bible was seen to be the source of knowledge of biblical history, of instruction about the Christian faith, and of devotional nurture. The Brethren have placed great emphasis on the inspired scriptures, as the basis of strong, independent churches, led by godly Christian leaders.

Naturally, the Brethren denominational distinctives, and distinctions, were implied. Brethren ecclesiology (termed, "assembly principles"),

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[11] Ibid., pp. 22-23.

[12] CMML Conference minutes, Anguganak, July, 1966.

[13] Fountain, *To Teach Others Also*, p. 25.

[14] Jenny Fountain indicates that the subjects actually taught in the first two years differed somewhat from this plan. Ibid., p. 36.

opposition to Roman Catholicism,[15] and links with other evangelical groups,[16] appeared as specific issues in the curriculum.

Spiritual formation was also very important. Besides the emphasis on a personal devotional life, group-centred, and group-led, worship and instruction, in the form of daily chapels, were seen as important aspects of spiritual formation. Here, traditional, Western, institutional Bible training overlapped with Melanesian cultural forms. The Brethren emphasis on scripture memorisation also overlapped significantly with the importance of memory in the oral cultures of Melanesia.

But, as one might expect from a programme developed by expatriate missionaries of that era, a measure of paternalism was revealed in places. In music, the objective was "To teach an appreciation of hymnology, and of keeping to time". The fact that Papua New Guineans struggled with Tok Pisin songs, set to Western tunes, demonstrates how difficult these were among the varied Sepik cultures, and how little emphasis was laid on attempts to develop an indigenous hymnology.[17] Given that much traditional wisdom was communicated in song and chant, it is all the more surprising.

2. *BAIBEL TISA TRENING SKUL*

When Les and Hazel Marsh moved to Amanab in 1974, the focus of the school became more narrowly defined.[18] He renamed the school

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[15] Addressed even more specifically here than in Western Brethren literature, because the Catholic faith was the principal Christian alternative, and dominant religious affiliation, in the Western Sepik at this time.

[16] The Brethren used the interdenominational Missionary Aviation Fellowship flying service, and had comity agreements with the South Seas Evangelical Mission to the east, and the Baptists to the south, and had taken over the work of the Sola Fidei Mission in the Lumi area.

[17] The writer recalls, with what sense of pride, the Wulukum villagers in 1964 were prepared to sing a single song they knew that had been translated into their vernacular.

[18] Jenny Fountain describes how Marsh had the vision of moving around the villages, encouraging the Christians, and teaching the Word of God, while Les and Kay Loader worked in the Bible school. However, he came to see that, through the Bible school, he could multiply Bible teachers by training the students, who, in turn, would give

Baibel Tisa Trening Skul (BTTS), and focused on equipping men and their wives as Bible teachers. Jenny Fountain notes that a further motivation for the new focus was to safeguard against the "views filtering through from other missions, and influencing the thinking of CBC people, especially the idea that when a person goes to Bible school, he or she will return home as a pastor, and be paid".[19] This reflected the different views of some CMML leaders in the 1970s, from the more flexible and experimental ones of Kay Liddle and others, in the 1960s, who were happy to use more overtly "pastor" training institutions, and to defend this approach from scripture.

Despite the specific focus of Les Marsh, the 1988 constitution of BTTS preserved the broad definition "to develop disciples and to prepare people for service".[20] Although literacy[21] and other training programmes became important on a shorter-term basis, through Les Marsh's continuing involvement, the primary focus on training "servant"-style Bible teachers remained the dominant objective of BTTS.

BTTS staff felt limited by the shortage of written materials, when constructing the curriculum,[22] so, in 1982, the staff produced a comprehensive two-year programme (see Appendix, Table 1.2).[23]

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consecutive Bible teaching, and expository preaching, in their weekend ministries, and quarterly treks to outlying villages.

[19] Fountain, *To Teach Others Also*, p. 43.

[20] Ibid., p. 44. The December, 1988, Amanab Bible Teachers' Training School (BTTS) constitution stated, "*Dispela skul i (sic) kirap bilong redim ol Kristen long wokabaut wantaim Bikpela, na mekim wok bilong Bikpela*". Literally translated, this is "This school has been built to prepare Christians to walk with the Lord and to do the Lord's work".

[21] L. A. Marsh, and H. D. Erlam, *In His Name*, 2nd edn, Palmerston North NZ: GPH Society, 1987, pp. 261, 269.

[22] The October, 1982, document, "Tripela hap tok bilong 'kirikyulam' bilong BTTS". Three parts of the curriculum of BTTS stated, "*i mas i gat not o buk bilong autim tok na dispela i karamapim dispela silibas o autlain na yusim taim yumi makim long en long progrem bilong skul*". (There must be notes or a book for teaching that covers [each part of] this syllabus or outline to use in the time allocated in the programme of the school.)

[23] Source: "Tripela hap tok bilong 'kirikyulam' bilong BTTS", mimeographed paper, October, 1982 (translation mine).

Compared with WSBS, the BTTS curriculum is more comprehensive. Written 16 years later, it reflects a higher level of literacy and understanding on the part of the students. It is, therefore, considerably more ambitious than what was attempted at WSBS in 1967.

The curriculum reflected the knowledge and skills considered basic equipment of a Bible teacher. These appear to be:

1. A broad knowledge of the contents of all the books of the Bible, studied as books, rather than as a continuous story. A variety of scripture genre, from both Old and New Testaments, were studied concurrently.

2. A different approach was used to teach the Old Testament, but this was more a factor of the books of the Old Testament that were available than a variation in exegetical approach. Where a book of the Bible was not directly available, recourse was made to secondary sources.

3. The strong focus on mastering the contents of the Bible was supplemented by courses on basic Bible doctrines, Brethren church history, ecclesiology and practices, Christian character and discipleship.

4. The skills related to evangelism, Bible teaching, and specialist ministries (youth, Sunday school teaching, religious instruction, and literacy teaching).

The curriculum differs mainly in emphasis from what might be taught in a more general course for leadership among the CBC. Despite the strong Brethren commitment to leadership of local churches by a part-time, plural eldership, the fact remains that the graduating Bible teacher from BTTS in the early 1980's was likely to have been the best-trained member of most congregations, when viewed from a Western perspective. In Brethren church practice, the system of extractive Bible training relies heavily for its implementation on the development of Christian character. In reality, the "servant" attitude, emphasised by Christ (e.g., John 13:12-17) may easily be sublimated into an authoritarian style, especially if a dogmatic theology reinforces

the conviction that the Bible school graduate now has a knowledge of the truth, above others.

The effectiveness of Bible teacher-training also relied on balancing the students' classroom intake of the teaching content, with the out-of-class ministries, as they participated in weekend village preaching and ministries, in their holiday periods.

Over time, three important developments impinged on the training of BTTS, and impacted the curriculum. The first, highlighted by Jenny Fountain,[24] was the writing and publication of the *Baibel Tisa* New Testament commentary series, over the 12 years: 1979-1991, although the books were available, in draft form, to BTTS students before their final publication. There is an inevitable shift involved in tying a Bible school teaching programme to a commentary publication process. That shift moves even further away from the dynamic of personal interaction and discovery, essential to the hermeneutical process involved in developing a living and relevant theology, towards an exposition of Bible truth, as a given body of knowledge. A commentary, purporting to teach what the text means and how it should be applied, is inserted between reading and interpreting the biblical text, on the one hand, and the resulting lived and communicated message on the other. A continuing temptation for the Bible student, then, is to rely more on the expository explanation of the commentary than to grapple directly with interpreting the biblical text.

A second development was the transition from the nine-month, two-year cycle towards six-month courses in 1986, and further shortening to four-month courses in a three-year cycle in 1990.[25] The change was accompanied by a reduction in the catchment area, from which students were drawn, necessitated by the increasing poverty of the school's land for food production, the loss of profits from the school's store to finance imported or locally-purchased foods, and the higher cost of air fares. The overall impact was two-fold. Amanab, as a Bible training centre, lost its national focus, and became a regional training

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[24] Fountain, *To Teach Others Also*, pp. 51-52.
[25] Ibid., pp. 50-51.

institution. It has since become only a local one. But, through the vision and input of Les Marsh, other local training programmes, essentially based on the Amanab model, have been spawned at Guriaso and Green River.

The third change that impacted curriculum development, is the publication of the Tok Pisin Old Testament in a completed Bible in 1989. In 1978, a revised New Testament with Psalms had been published, and the completed Bible gave further impetus to expansion of the study of the whole corpus of scripture. The combination of a reduction in the total length of training, and the increased scope of the courses, must make for a more cursory overview of the biblical material, with consequent losses. This would seem to be especially so with a content-focused curriculum, compared with a more skills-focused one.

3.   YIMBRASI BIBLE SCHOOL

A different purpose lay behind the Yimbrasi Bible School (officially known as the Yimbrasi Adult Christian Education Centre).[26] It was to meet "general adult Christian education" needs, rather than for pre-service training of Christian leaders. Max and Heather Tuck, who spearheaded the establishment phase, felt the need to cater for those who would not otherwise go to study at either the Christian Leaders' Training College (CLTC) or Amanab. They wanted to avoid the danger of dislocation, involved in sending people away for long periods from their village environment. The powerful model of secular institutions, and the expectations of paid employment, were also problems they wished to avoid.[27] The advice of Professor Alan Tippett, who visited Yimbrasi at an early stage, and saw the potential for a new pattern of theological education, became powerfully important for Tuck, in his vision for Yimbrasi.

Tippett advised Tuck to avoid five dangers – removing students for long periods from their cultural environment; transplanting Western training programmes and theological college curricula; educating

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[26] Ibid., p. 61.
[27] Ibid., p. 67.

trainees too far ahead of their target congregations; graduating trainees as an elite minority; and establishing a centralised, hierarchical church structure. He recommended four aspects of an effective programme – in-service training, using short courses about topics faced by the growing church; communicating culturally-relevant and biblically-centred truth; teaching a broad selection of active Christians, including male *and* female, the elderly (with *mana*), the mature, and youth; and cultivating an attitude of ongoing learning.[28]

Clearly, a profoundly different set of guiding objectives would result in a very different function and curriculum for Yimbrasi, when compared with BTTS.

The impact on the curriculum was to allow very great flexibility in the type of courses offered. This was a weakness, as well as a strength. The strength was that, with a deep sensitivity to local church needs, courses could be dovetailed to suit those needs. The weakness was that the programme was open to dislocation, external pressures from partisan groups, and individual whim.

Such weaknesses can be avoided by long-term planning, a stable staffing of the school, by teachers closely integrated into the life of the surrounding churches, and a strong and theologically-aware board of control. Despite its very committed staff, unfortunately, the history of Yimbrasi does not lead this writer to believe the best use has always been made of this facility.

Over the years, Yimbrasi moved away, somewhat, from its original vision. This was partly due to changing personnel. Other factors, such as the continuing difficulty of moving students to the longer-term training institutions at Amanab and CLTC, resulting in a lack of skilled Bible teachers in the area, and the pressures from other denominations encroaching into the Palai-Maimai,[29] perhaps more than elsewhere, brought pressure for change.

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[28] Ibid., pp. 67-68.
[29] During the 1980s, several emotionally-charged confrontations took place in this area, when national Pentecostal preachers worked to divide Protestant congregations.

If we regard the period from 1971-1977 as the first phase of Yimbrasi Bible School, Jenny Fountain has helpfully outlined five stages of the change and development.[30] Short courses, serving mainly local church leadership needs continued, but a four-year cycle of six-month courses in Tok Pisin, catering for male and female students was developed.

Purpose statements altered also. In Phase 2 (1978-1982), Bob Davis saw the aims to be:

> To provide a solid grounding in the Christian faith, with training for those who have spiritual motivation and gift, plus encouragement to develop into mature workmen for Christ. Also, to train gifted national brothers to positions of leadership within the school.[31]

Three major changes should be noted in this statement. Firstly, we note a move away from training mature adults towards a younger age group. The qualifications for entry are, apparently, based more on personal motivation, and perceived gift, than actual leadership, and participation in church life. Secondly, rather than targeted training, geared towards equipping in specific areas, the statement reflects a greater desire to offer training for personal growth towards maturity. Thirdly, missionary involvement began to focus on development of national leadership for ministry within the school.

In the next phase, Neal Windsor described the purpose of studying portions of "the Old and New Testaments" within the Bible school as "helping the personal growth of individual students, and equipping them to take their part in the church more effectively".[32] The comment reflects an increasing emphasis, both on younger people, and on the

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[30] These are: (1) 1971-1977: Max and Heather Tuck get started; (2) 1978-1982: Davis, as principal; national staff; six-month courses begin; (3) 1982-1989: national leadership (Hayuruwen, Suren) with missionary (Windsor, Anderson) assistance; (4) 1989-1996: management and leadership training; full national control (Ivan and Tracy Tuck); (5) 1996 to the present: full national staffing of teaching and management, with occasional visits from expatriates.

[31] Fountain, *To Teach Others Also*, p. 76, quoting R. Davis, *Treasury*, 1980.

[32] Ibid., p. 76, quoting N. Windsor and S. Martin, "Letter to Yimbrasi prayer partners", April 20, 1985.

knowledge and skills of personal Christian discipleship.[33]   During Windsor's time, a four-year cycle of six-month courses was established, with courses covering six major curriculum areas. (See Appendix, Table 1.3.) These were: (1) significant portions of the *Old Testament* (the Pentateuch, and the historical books, with four prophets being proposed for the fourth year);[34] (2) *New Testament*, with the exceptions of Matthew and Philemon, and possibly James and Revelation;[35] (3) *Devotions/Quiet Time*, using Psalms or Proverbs in most years; (4) *The Church* (Acts and CBC Beliefs); (5) *Book Study and Other Studies*, using a variety of helpful, published literature; and (6) *Practical* (skills training in specific ministries, including Sunday school, evangelism, outreach, open air, RI, youth work, and rally).[36]

Clear purpose-statements are lacking for the fourth stage, but, during this time, the missionary vision of Ivan Tuck had been to set the school up so that it could run with indigenous staff, and minimal external help. Bible-school teacher in-service courses were commenced during this phase, not only for Yimbrasi staff, but also for all Bible schools.

By 1997, the four-year cycle of six-monthly courses was seen by the fully national Board of Management as being for "young people to come and learn the Word of God, and then go out and help the church of God".[37] The change to a primary focus on younger men and women was now virtually complete, but the training vision of the school had broadened into a general programme of pre-service training for involvement in the church at large.

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[33] It is not without significance that, whereas Bob Davis came to the Bible teaching task from a background of practical experience, Neal Windsor was a primary teacher by profession, but also without formal Bible training.

[34] Brackets and a question mark in the course plan about Daniel, Hosea, Joel, and Jonah raises the question as to whether these prophets were actually taught.

[35] James and Revelation are bracketed in the fourth year, again, raising the question as to whether they were covered.

[36] Every Boys' Rally and Every Girls' Rally are Brethren youth movements, commenced in New Zealand, and have become internationally recognised, principally in Western countries.

[37] Fountain, *To Teach Others Also*, p. 76, reporting a meeting between the Fountains and the Yimbrasi Board of Management, April 26, 1997.

4. ENGLISH LANGUAGE BIBLE SCHOOL

The English Language Bible School (ELBS) represents a fourth model of Bible school curriculum development. A draft constitution was prepared by Graeme Erb, reflecting his personal ethos of the school, rather than a formal or approved statement of aims.[38]

The draft constitution lists the ethos of the school as comprising a commitment to:

- encourage and help students to be the person [sic] God wants them to be;

- a Bible-centred curriculum;

- integrating formal learning with practical experience;

- helping the students develop, and humbly exercise, their spiritual gifts, in the context of the local church, as it seeks to fulfil the great commission.[39]

The constitution also includes the following statement of intended outcomes:

A graduate of the English Language Bible School should, then, be a person who demonstrates the desire to live a godly life, one who is able to handle the word of God well, and one who desires to serve the Lord, humbly and wholeheartedly.[40]

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[38] Erb is one of the most-qualified theological educators working with CBC in PNG. He is a trained secondary-school teacher, who has done post-graduate theological training at Dallas Theological Seminary, and practical missionary training, and training of others with Gospel Literature Outreach in Smithton, Tasmania. See "Commendation notice", in *Tidings*, January/February, 1988, p. 18. Graeme was training supervisor at the GLO Training Centre for four years prior to his commendation.

[39] G. Erb, "English Language Bible School Constitution", draft unpublished paper, nd, Introduction. See also Fountain, *To Teach Others Also*, p. 101.

[40] Erb, "English Language Bible School Constitution", Introduction. See also Fountain, *To Teach Others Also*, section 1.8.

How were these aims and objectives translated into curriculum items? In 1997, Erb supplied the following list of subjects as those being covered during 1994-1997 (the four-year cycle):

Old Testament: Overview of the Old Testament, Genesis, Pentateuch, Exodus, Judges, 1 and 2 Samuel, Esther, Nehemiah, Proverbs, Daniel.

New Testament: Matthew, Mark, Luke, John, Acts, Romans, 1 and 2 Corinthians, Inductive Study of Galatians, Ephesians, Philippians, Colossians, 1 Thessalonians, 2 Timothy, 1 and 2 Peter, Hebrews, Inductive Study of James, Inductive Study of Jude, 1 and 3 John, Revelation.

Topics: Foundations of the Faith (Doctrine), Prayer, Church Leadership, Bible Study Methods, Christian Education, Christian Marriage and Family, Doctrine of the Church, Holy Spirit, Lord Jesus Christ, Worship.

The list reveals some interesting aspects of the ELBS curriculum. The strong focus on the study of the Christian scriptures, like the other Bible schools, remains central. Within this, the emphasis is on the New Testament, rather than the Old, although students have access to the whole Bible in English. Selection, therefore, rather than comprehensive coverage, is a deliberate choice. Most, but not all, New Testament books are listed. Surprising omissions from the New Testament are 1 Timothy (possibly covered in part in the course on Church Leadership), and 2 Thessalonians, and, in the Old Testament, all but Daniel of the major and minor prophets.

In treating biblical material, ELBS has made a breakthrough in the combination of at least three courses, using an inductive approach, and a course on Bible-study methods. This is a strong attempt to use the programme to "kick-start" the disciplined personal study of the scriptures, in a way that develops an essential set of skills in an on-going pattern that is considered important for the evangelical church leader.

Besides biblical courses, the programme develops a range of basic doctrines, personal devotion, and spiritual formation courses, and some relational and practical skills. Much of the latter two are, however, part of the informal learning involved in Erb's approach to the task, his close personal relationships with students and other staff, and his modelling of Christian discipleship and leadership role.

The informal aspect of the curriculum was evident in the interviews conducted in data collection for this research. My wife and I were present over part of a week-long graduates' refresher, and several days with the current students. We were able to interview almost all the present and past students. They were asked what they found most helpful about their ELBS course. As Jenny Fountain notes, *Book-keeping*, *Administration,* and *Typing*, which were not on the official list of courses, were frequently noted as being the most helpful courses students had taken.[41] We note, in passing, that an expectation of the integration of biblical, practical, and relational aspects seems to be absent from formal curriculum statements in all the Bible schools, examined above. The fact that it goes on informally is an important feature of ELBS, and is highly desirable in all Melanesian Bible schools.

The four examples chosen typify alternative models in the CBC Bible school system. If we set aside the early Yimbrasi model, all the others bear some basic similarities. All four are essentially Bible-based. Most attempt to cover the whole (available) Bible in survey form. All add classes on doctrine, sometimes focused on Brethren doctrinal positions. Most have moved, in recent years, towards a programme of using four- or six-month courses, spread over four years.[42]

The schools also differ in several ways. Some are more clearly pre-service training; others focus more on in-service. While all identify their purposes somewhat differently, a common factor is that all are training students for leadership. All of the Bible schools value

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[41] Fountain, *To Teach Others Also*, p. 109. The interviewees were unaware of the publications and experience of Jenny Fountain in these areas, so the danger of a "halo effect" can be discounted.

[42] Amanab, Green River, and Guriaso now run a cycle of three four-month courses.

discipleship, and seek to foster it, through institutional patterns.[43] Discipleship may be emphasised, in the recruitment and application process, in the orientation to Bible school routines, in the explicit provision of the daily timetable, or, informally, in pastoral encouragement by the staff.

5. A NATIONAL CBC BIBLE SCHOOL CURRICULUM

In June 1996, an in-service course for CBC Bible school teachers was held at Yimbrasi. Following discussion about the need for a national curriculum, Reggie Howard drafted a "National CBC *Baibel Skul Kirikulom*" for consideration. He stated that the purpose of writing the curriculum was "not to restrict or limit teachers in what they teach, but, rather, to do a lot of the advanced thinking on their behalf, so that the teachers can concentrate more on the needs of students than on preparing daily lessons".[44]

The "Kirikulom"[45] covers seven sections – introduction, philosophy, four-year plan, weekly schedule, six-month schedule, outlines of some subjects, and a conclusion. In the introduction, Howard expresses the strong desire to move from "a knowledge- and information-based curriculum to a skills-based curriculum", and he proceeds to outline five essential skills – to be able to use good Bible-study skills, preach the gospel, teach God's Word, develop good Christian habits of discipleship, and practice evaluation and discernment.[46]

He further emphasises that it is not merely a matter of revising the subjects, but also improving the teaching methods. If teachers can change from just lecturing to giving assignments and projects, students can learn the skills listed above.

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[43] Patterns of devotional life, established in Bible schools, do not easily transfer into everyday experience of the graduates.

[44] Reggie J. Howard, "National CBC Baibel Skul Kirikulom", unpublished paper, 1996, p. 1.

[45] The "Kirikulom" was written in a mixture of English and Tok Pisin. Some wordings have been translated here.

[46] Howard, "Kirikulom", p. 2.

Howard's proposals revolve around the current pattern of the larger CBC Bible schools, which run the four half-year cycles. He suggests that each six months' course comprise a 23-week programme, with 20 weeks of normal classes, and three special weeks. The first week of a six-month course would be the first special week, involving an immersion style "Bible Study Week". Basic Bible study methods would be taught, and the inductive approach to Bible study commenced. The second special week would be devoted to "outreach". The third, occurring in about the fourth or fifth month, would be devoted to developing Christian spirituality, with a guest speaker, and introducing musicians, to teach some new songs.[47]

As far as the detail of the core curriculum is concerned, Howard proposes a traditional fourfold division of the curriculum into Old Testament, New Testament, Systematic Theology, and Practical Theology. He adds a fifth category of "Other Classes"[48] (see Appendix, Table 1.4), in which he includes two types of courses: a study project on a biblical book (Jonah, Galatians, Job, Ephesians), and practical training (book-keeping, written communication, i.e., various kinds of letters, typing, planning, and administration). The "*Kirikulom*" goes on to outline, among other things, a year-two programme of 20 weeks of Old Testament lectures (Judges-Esther),[49] and a systematic theology outline of topic headings (with some references added).[50]

Howard has done a considerable service to the CBC Bible schools in preparing this 18-page document. It is a genuine effort to help the teachers, many of whom have very limited experience in such institutions. However, there are several matters, pertinent to this study, that are worthy of further consideration.

First, the "Kirikulom" offers a strong call to move from a merely content-centred approach to a skills-focused programme. This important change helps teachers to concentrate on the teaching task of

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[47] Howard calls it a "Rejoice in the Lord week" ("*Amamas long Bikpela wik*").

[48] "*Ol arapela klas*".

[49] Howard, "Kirikulom", pp. 9-13.

[50] Ibid., pp. 14-17.

preparing students for ministry, rather than merely *delivering* "factual content". The "Kirikulom" continues to reflect the Brethren stress on biblical knowledge. For many Brethren, this highly-valued cognitive element perhaps reflects an assumption that, the better one knows one's Bible, the holier one will be in life, and the more skilled one will be in preaching and teaching ministries. The "*Kirikulom*" goes some way to counter that.

Of Howard's six key skills,[51] to be developed through Bible school ministry, three aim at personal equipping, which every Christian needs; two are communication skills, intended for those with gifts of teaching and evangelism. Whether these are, in fact, the key skills, around which all CBC Bible schools should focus their curriculum, needs to be examined from several perspectives. We have already pointed out that the rather broad, even vague, purpose statements sometimes do not match the narrower intentions of the (missionary) teachers. If the Bible schools are to serve the churches adequately, then the purpose statements need clarification, as a prior task. The CBC church leaders, along with other stakeholders, need to express their intentions, in supporting and sending students to the schools.

We also need to ask what place there is for the development of a wider range of spiritual gifts and natural abilities. Evangelicals recognise that the body of Christ is composed of "members", each of whom is Holy Spirit-gifted to fulfil their role in that body. But, it seems a false assumption that such gifts can be exercised effectively without training and/or experience. Furthermore, to focus the role of the CBC Bible schools on only two leadership/communication ministries, appears to unduly limit their role.

Another emphasis, reflected in Howard's "*Kirikulom*", is the concern for spiritual formation, and character-building. It is important that the Bible school curriculum moves, not only from content to skills in its focus, but beyond skills to the task of training *whole people*, and even further, to a vision for training *whole people in communities*.

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[51] "Evaluation" and "discernment" would appear to greatly overlap.

The term "whole people" recognises the necessary integration of personal experience, present giftedness, integrated development of character, knowledge, skills, and ministry, that comprises the growth process for students who enter and pass through the Bible schools. "In communities" deliberately points to the fact that learning takes place in community interactions. In using the term "community", I refer to three different aspects – the school, as a learning community, the local church, as a functioning expression of the body of Christ, and the local Melanesian communities, village, or clan, in which churches and individual Christians express the love of Christ, in action and verbal expression.

Finally, we note that the "*Kirikulom*" makes an implicit assumption that the writing of a curriculum is a global function. Howard claims that "Many big Bible schools appear to have four main subject fields to be covered in their curriculum. These four fields are (1) Old Testament, (2) New Testament, (3) Systematic theology, (4) Practical theology."[52] We ask whether such globalisation of this traditional Western approach to theological training is adequate for the training needs of CBC in PNG, if not balanced by a healthy contextualisation. The inclusion of "Other Classes", as discussed, above, does go some way to develop aspects of the curriculum that emerge from locally-felt needs, rather than from global perspectives. Does the "*Kirikulom*" take this matter far enough?

C. IMBALANCES IN CBC CURRICULA

Reviewing the examples of CBC curricula we have cited, including the proposed national one, there appear to be some significant imbalances. If we accept the definition of curriculum, stated earlier in this chapter, of "everything that happens to students under the aegis of the school", then the curriculum outlines emphasise two principal aspects of the learning process of the Bible schools – the cognitive knowledge base, and the ministry skills. The knowledge base is supplemented further

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[52] I have translated the Tok Pisin, which states, "*Planti ol bikpela Baibel Skul i luksave olsem i gat 4-pela bikpela sabjek ol i mas karamapim insait long kirikulom (sic) bilong ol. Dispela 4-pela sabjek i olsem. 1. Olpela Testamen. 2. Nupela Testamen. 3. Ol bilip bilong yumi (o as tok). 4. Mekim wok bilong God.*" Howard, "*Kirikulom*", p. 3.

by courses in basic Christian doctrine, Brethren beliefs and practices, and their justification, from the Bible, some aspects of church history, cultures of biblical times, and knowledge about other Christian groups.

The skills that are emphasised, fall into three categories. There are basic skills, like becoming literate in Tok Pisin scriptures, and the disciplines of evangelical faith, such as how to pray, how to have a quiet time, memorising scripture verses, and learning Christian songs. ELBS, and some recent trends in Tok Pisin Bible schools, have emphasised the "inductive method" of Bible study. These are disciplines of Christian discipleship, and, perhaps, should be encouraged in every literate Christian.

Ministry skills are focused on a fairly narrow range of Christian involvement, related to certain types of leadership – how to prepare a sermon, how to preach, how to evangelise, teach Sunday school, and religious instruction. At one stage, BTTS was developing translation skills.[53]

A third range of skills, that are popular, but not seen as crucial, in the programme are practical administrative skills – typing, administration, book-keeping, and letter-writing.

If this is the total overt curriculum, then it appears somewhat unbalanced, making huge assumptions about the transfer of Bible school-based learning into post-graduate experience. Undoubtedly, there are desirable, but unstated, outcomes for the schools. For one thing, Brethren acknowledge that developing spirituality, and character-formation, are vital. But explicit goals in these areas are absent, and teachers may assume that cognitive knowledge and skills development will induce progress in these other areas.

In the affective domain, and interpersonal relationships, how do community life and learning, together, foster progress to maturity and harmony? Both of these are biblical goals, and, one would assume,

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[53] Translation processes are an important set of competencies in Melanesia, where a large proportion of Bible school students are trained theologically in one language, and will exercise much of their ministry, after training, in another.

should, therefore, be part of a Bible school's goals, too. Courses, like those on marriage, are included in the programme, and do go some way to fulfil this important function. But is this adequate?

We have noted, further, that largely informal use seems to be made of experience outside the classroom. Regular field education assignments are organised for weekends and outreach weeks, but little use seems to be made to monitor experience in the six months students spend at home. A system of internship monitoring seems to be highly desirable. Graduates from the past, for example, could be used, after appropriate training, for internship supervision.

Finally, apart from the language used, it is not obvious from the curricula that these schools are catering particularly for Melanesian students, and equipping them to operate in Melanesian cultural contexts. In 1997 fieldwork, I did observe very useful dialogue emerging from student questions at the end of lectures, but the lectures did not appear to be structured around Melanesian and contextual issues. Rather, they emerged from a more-globalised and general list of topics students anywhere, and particularly in the West, need to know.

D. MAJOR INFLUENCES ON CURRICULUM DEVELOPMENT

In the foregoing discussion, it was assumed that purpose and objectives statements would have a direct impact on curricula of the Bible schools. That assumption appears broadly correct, even though it is difficult to demonstrate that link precisely.

However, there are a number of factors, other than aims and objectives, that influence curriculum formation, and it is in order to spell some of these out, especially as they relate to competing global and contextual tensions.

1. GLOBAL FACTORS IN CURRICULUM DEVELOPMENT

Two global issues, we develop further, are the Western Bible school model, and Brethren distinctives.

a. The Western Bible School Model

A global impact on the CBC Bible schools is the imported Western model. The missionary founders of Bible schools were influenced, largely unconsciously, I believe, by their experience of theological education in their countries of origin. Writers about Bible schools have described how these emerged, and developed roughly similar curricula in Western countries.[54] Many Brethren missionaries trained in interdenominational Bible colleges, while others came to the field without any formal theological training.[55]

The model of distinctively Brethren Bible schools was established in all three Brethren-sending countries. The earliest was probably Emmaus Bible School in the United States. R. Edward Harlow, while still a missionary in Belgian Congo, expressed the desire, in 1938, for a Bible College, "which taught the principles of New Testament Christianity, without compromise, and where the whole counsel of God could be declared".[56] Ross McLaren identified Harlow, along with John Smart and C. Ernest Tatham as taking the initiative for commencing the Emmaus Bible School, as a part-time evening school

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[54] Virginia L. Brereton, *Training God's army: The American Bible School 1880-1940*, Bloomington IN: Indiana University Press, 1990, especially chapters 7 and 8; Gene A. Getz, *MBI: The story of Moody Bible Institute,* revd edn, by James M. Vincent, Chicago IL: Moody Press, 1986, chapters 6-10 deal with the developing curriculum, as the range of ministries grew. Interestingly, Peter Lineham, the historian of the New Zealand Brethren, makes only brief mention of the New Zealand Assembly Bible School (Peter J. Lineham, *There We Found Brethren: A History of Assemblies of Brethren in New Zealand*, Palmerston North NZ: GPH Society, 1977, p. 159), while Ken Newton, historian for the Brethren in Australia, devotes a whole chapter to training for leadership, but devotes only one paragraph to the curriculum of the principal Bible school, Emmaus (Kenneth J. Newton, *A History of the Brethren in Australia*, Gailes Australia: Aberdeen Desktop, 1999, p. 84).

[55] Several of the missionaries involved in the commencement of CBC Bible schools were trained teachers, including Bruce Crowther, Dennis Thorp, Les Loader, Ben Poulson, Neal Windsor, Ossie and Jenny Fountain, and Graham Erb. Many of these came with the mental model, and understood the value, of institutionally-based education.

[56] Emmaus Bible College, *Student handbook 1999-2000*, Epping NSW: Emmaus Bible College, p. 6. "Without compromise" may express a concern that the whole counsel of God, as the Brethren view it, could not be freely taught in interdenominational theological colleges.

in 1941, and full-time classes in 1945, first in Toronto Canada, and then in Chicago USA.[57] The two schools merged into one in Chicago in 1947.[58]

In Australia, Emmaus Bible School is the most well-known Brethren theological training institution. It began in 1952 as "an arm" of its American counterpart, by printing and distributing Emmaus correspondence courses from an office in Brisbane.[59] Although many others were involved, Ken Newton attributes the founding of Emmaus Bible School to New Zealander Gordon Blair in 1954, with evening classes. Unfortunately, a full-time programme did not eventuate until 1959, less than a year after Blair died.[60]

In New Zealand also, the New Zealand Assembly Bible School began in 1958,[61] under the instigation and encouragement of a number of Auckland Brethren, notably Robert A. Laidlaw.[62]

A further mental model was provided, in Australia and New Zealand at least, with the missionary-training ministries of Gospel Literature Outreach, which began in 1968.[63] GLO commenced training colleges in Smithton, Tasmania, and Te Awamutu, NZ, in 1975, running some training courses from its head office in Riverstone, Sydney.[64] Several missionaries, who worked in the CBC Bible schools, attended a

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[57] Ross H. McLaren, "The triple tradition: The origin and development of the Open Brethren in North America", MA thesis, Nashville TN: Vanderbilt University, 1982, pp. 139-150.

[58] It is currently located in Dubuque, Iowa. See *Student handbook 1999-2000*, p. 6.

[59] *Student handbook 1999-2000*, p. 6.

[60] Newton, *History of the Brethren in Australia*, 1999, pp. 83-84.

[61] At 9 Lovelock Avenue, Mount Eden, moving to 20 Palmer Avenue, Kelston, in 1964. (Noel McKernon, personal communication, March 27, 2000).

[62] Peter J. Lineham, *There We Found Brethren*, 1977, p. 159. By February, 2000, NZ Assembly Bible School and GLO College of Bible and Mission had merged, and commenced classes as Pathways College on the NZABS campus.

[63] Noel McKernon, personal communication.

[64] Kevin White, personal communications, March 26 and 31, 2000.

Brethren-related Bible training institution, either in preparation, or as in-service missionary training.[65]

The *Student Handbook* of Emmaus Bible College, Sydney, while foreshadowing possible changes to the order in which courses are taught, offers a basic core in the first year of its three-year Certificate and Diploma programmes, comprising *Old Testament survey; New Testament survey; Survey of Bible doctrine; Genesis; Foundations for ministry; Evangelism; Hermeneutics: interpreting and applying the text; History and perspectives of Christian missions; Contemporary communication; a choice from various electives*.[66] Comparison with the curricula of the CBC Bible schools in Papua New Guinea, reinforces the claim of a globalising tendency among the latter, from overseas models.

Mr Max Lane made insightful audit reports of the two New Zealand colleges in 1989 and 1994 respectively.[67] Although these do not provide a complete listing of courses, sufficient is given to indicate that a similar approach is adopted, with strong emphasis on coverage of the Bible, theology/doctrines, church practices, and communication skills, with possibly a somewhat stronger emphasis on mission in the GLO college.

It is not suggested that the colleges in these Western countries had a direct influence on the formation of CBC Bible schools in Papua New Guinea, and even less on their curriculum. But the precedent was, even so, created, and this provided a measure of legitimacy to the institutional model of training. Visiting speakers, closely associated with the Bible schools of all three sending countries came as CMML

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[65] Two examples are Graeme Erb (GLO Training College in Tasmania) and Ivan Tuck (New Zealand Assembly Bible School). Others became teachers in overseas Bible Colleges after leaving Papua New Guinea, notably Bruce and Margaret Crowther, Dennis and Barbara Thorp, and Kevin and Yvonne White.

[66] Emmaus Bible College, *Student handbook 1999-2000*, p. 32.

[67] Max S. Lane, "New Zealand Assembly Bible School: Report of the visiting evaluation team, April-June, 1989", unpublished report, July, 1989; Max S. Lane, "New Zealand GLO Bible and Missionary College: Report of the visiting evaluator, September, 1994", unpublished report, September, 1994. Access to these confidential reports, with permission of the author.

missionary conference speakers, and visited at least some of the CBC Bible schools as part of their itinerary.[68]

b.   Denominational Distinctives

Another globalising influence for the CBC Bible schools is the common commitment of CMML missionaries to a set of denominational distinctive doctrines and practices (see Chapter 1). Membership in, and commendation by, overseas Brethren assemblies was a pre-requisite, in most cases, for inclusion in the CMML missionary team, and especially in the church-related ministries of CMML and CBC.[69]

Curriculum content was influenced by Brethren background at several levels. Firstly, several schools felt the need to include a course in the programme on "assembly principles". Sometimes, such direct teaching is supplemented by lessons or courses on other streams of Christianity and/or "false cults", especially where these are present in the local area, or in PNG, and students are likely to know about them, or to come in contact with them in the future. This can be viewed as teaching denominational distinctives, by a process of comparison, using the contrasts as polemical teaching points.

Perhaps, inevitably, however, the infusion of denominational distinctives into other aspects of the curriculum is the most-pervasive globalising influence. Passages of scripture, important to Brethren theology or practice, will be valued and taught in a way that emphasises the denominational viewpoint. In this regard, Acts and 1 Corinthians have been more significant for deriving "church truth"

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[68] CMML conference speakers have included Doug Hewlett (Principal, NZABS), John Smart (Emmaus Bible School, Canada/USA), and Ian McDowell (Principal, Emmaus Bible School, Sydney, Australia), among others.

[69] CMML was open to accepting non-Brethren missionaries and coworkers. The most outstanding example is the involvement of German Liebenzell missionaries to run the Anguganak Girls' Bible School. Liebenzell missionaries, coming from an evangelical missionary-sending agency, with personnel from the Lutheran and Reformed churches, have agreed not to contradict distinctive Brethren teachings in their cooperation with CBC.

than Romans.[70]   But Brethren distinctives not only influence the selection of biblical books for course teaching; they influence the interpretation of particular passages as well.

A notable example of the influence of denominational distinctives is how the topic of "church history" is taught. Emerging out of student questions, and the CBC church leaders wanting to know their denominational heritage, church history almost inevitably emphasises Brethren church history.

Brethren distinctives also influence other aspects of the curriculum. The way students are selected for acceptance, how the field experience is structured, and the process of transition upon graduation are often affected by the denominational distinctives of church structure and relationships. This may cause tension for the student or graduate, when, what he or she experiences of local church life, does not match the ideals that have been taught in the school.

These two global influences, overseas models, and Brethren distinctives, have impacted the CBC Bible school curricula, perhaps more profoundly than any others. This may have been inevitable, with the schools emerging from a missionary initiative, rather than from local felt need.[71]

CONTEXTUAL FACTORS IN CURRICULUM DEVELOPMENT

The effectiveness of a particular curriculum, I believe, may depend on the extent to which global influences are interpenetrated by contextual ones.   To discuss this, we need to ask, "In what ways has the curriculum, and the content of courses, been adjusted to suit the

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[70] Rom 16, for example, provides evidence for house churches existing alongside each other in the city of Rome, despite the implication that the letter is written to one local church. We should note, however, that Paul omits the word "church" from his salutation in 1:7.

[71] It was the missionaries who took the initiative to bring PNG church elders together to discuss the concept of a Bible school, and work out ways and means. They also felt the need for rapid localisation of their work, in case independence curtailed their ministry. This was a factor in the commencement of the CBC Bible schools. See J. Hitchen, K. Liddle, and C. Cliffe, "Towards an overall strategy for missionary planning", unpublished CMML discussion paper, 1967, pp. 4-5, 7-8.

perceived needs of students training for ministry in a Melanesian context?" We consider five aspects.

a.   *The Language Medium of Instruction*

The fact that five of the CBC Bible schools surveyed use Tok Pisin is a significant adjustment to the local context. Tok Pisin is widely understood as a medium of largely oral communication, and is employed by PNG radio stations, especially in areas like Sandaun Province, where many vernacular languages have few speakers. Tok Pisin allows the Bible schools to focus on training a clientele, consistent with the Brethren commitment to the priesthood of all believers, rather than an elitist leadership, that might emerge if English was the only medium of instruction. It also allows older Christians to aspire to, and be trained for, leadership, rather than abdicate to younger English-speaking products of the formal education system.

But the strengths of Tok Pisin need to be balanced by the liabilities. There is a very much smaller availability of Tok Pisin-written material than in English. This impacts the curriculum directly in the choice of biblical courses, and the way in which non-biblical subjects are taught. It also influences the breadth of resources, by which students can compare and question what is being taught in the classroom. Inevitably, this places greater authority on the word of the teacher (or the one Tok Pisin Bible commentary). We shall return to this issue in a later article about educational methods.

ELBS uses English as its language medium, and focuses on students, who have acquired English, through their formal education. As a language medium, English makes a somewhat different accommodation to contextual factors. Because English is a second language, and the entrance standard is completion of Grade 8, certainly not all the tools of an English-based theological education are available to the students, although the potential is there. English opens the possibility of further language improvement, and, also, of further theological study at the Christian Leaders' Training College, or even overseas.[72] Even so, curriculum choices, where they are based on

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[72] Fountain, *To Teach Others Also*, p. 100.

availability of written literature, are inevitably greater. The fact is, however, that the ELBS curriculum is possibly narrower than the Tok Pisin alternatives, and this is by deliberate choice. The key methodology of an inductive approach to Bible study intentionally seeks deeper interaction with the biblical text, rather than broader research into commentaries, and other exegetical resources.

An English-based curriculum, and teaching process, limits student recruitment to a younger generation, and to those with competence in the English language. It is, therefore, making a longer-term investment into the life of the Brethren churches than Tok Pisin, as a medium. It also opens up some ministries, not so readily available to Tok Pisin speakers, such as, religious education in schools, and in other English-speaking environments.

English opens the curriculum content to wider global influences, making a greater personal impact. Thus, it forces a greater demand, than Tok Pisin, to bridge the gap between student learning and effective communication to non-English, vernacular speakers.

b.   *Melanesian Worldviews*

A second important area of accommodation to the local context involves asking how Melanesian worldviews and "plausibility structures", to use Peter Berger's terminology, impact curriculum formation and delivery.

Another way of putting the issue, is to ask whether the curriculum has been constructed around Melanesian questions, and local perspectives, or whether global influences have introduced more universal formulations, in the interests of completeness or missionary-determined curriculum ideals. Undoubtedly, local viewpoints about what was to be taught in the Bible schools emerged, out of interaction between the missionaries and local Christians. On the face of it, however, all the curricula look much more globalised than contextualised. The fact that the issue of a single curriculum for the Bible schools could be raised, demonstrates this assumption. If a Melanesian worldview is so different from a Western one, one would

expect that more attention might be paid to linking the Bible-school programme to Melanesian perspectives.

It is acknowledged that an alert and interactive teacher can still deal with local contextual issues, using a globalised curriculum. Issues that relate to the local context will inevitably arise in classroom discussion. But, with a globally-oriented teaching method, they will tend to emerge incidentally, rather than as an automatic, and integral, aspect of the curriculum. If this argument is even somewhat on the right lines, then considerable work remains to be done in revamping existing curricula around local felt needs, and life questions. A process of dialogue with significant Papua New Guineans should be put in place to evaluate the outlooks of local people, the felt needs of the churches, and the directions of the local and national social, economic, and political issues. At another level, renewed study of Melanesian and Western worldviews seems necessary to identify commonalities and diversities. This needs to be done, both on a macro or national level, as well as on the micro or local cultural level. The considerable differences between Highlands, Sepik, and urban cultures makes this task important. Furthermore, in the light of rapid culture change, the process of curriculum review needs to be on going.

c. Issues Emerging from the Gospel's Interaction with Melanesian Cultures

My thesis[73] identified a number of issues, relating to the broad characteristics of the Melanesian cultural context – linguistic diversity, fragmentary political units, kin-based societies, communal land-holding, "big man" leadership, and primal religion. It went on to identify distinctive features of two particular culture areas – the Wape-Au and the Koroba Huli. We now ask, to what extent the curriculum interacts with these contextual realities. How well are students being helped to see how the Bible applies to Melanesian life?

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[73] Oswald Carey Fountain, "Some aspects of globalisation and contextualisation in the Christian Brethren Bible schools in Papua New Guinea", MTh thesis, Auckland NZ: Bible College of New Zealand, 2000, pp. 56-84.

The answer to this lies partly in the oral interaction of the classroom, and, therefore, may not appear in teacher's notes handed out to students. It also depends on access to a full-range of notes, given out in courses. In 1997, the writer was able to attend only a few classes in action, and comprehensive sets of notes were not available, so it is not possible to provide a comprehensive assessment of these questions. To judge from the curriculum outlines, however, apart from an occasional course (land, marriage seminars), few courses seem to be oriented to the Melanesian context, choosing rather a biblical overview, and/or biblical book studies, as the basic framework for curriculum development. It is, therefore, a globally-oriented curriculum.

While a thorough exploration of contextual issues, relating to Melanesian cultures, still waits to be done, there are a wide range of topics that an adequate curriculum would expect to cover, bringing together both exploration of the present context and exegesis of the Christian scriptures. In relation to land, for example, questions of ownership and inheritance, land disputes, conservation, and responsible use, all have biblical, traditional, and developmental implications that are important for Christians to be aware of, speak out about, and act on. Each aspect of the cultural context could be similarly elaborated. Such an approach is essential, because of the integrated nature of the Melanesian worldview.

The argument that, if one teaches through an orderly progression of Bible books, contextual issues will emerge, is not well founded. The class time for each book is limited, creating pressure to cover the books in overview form, rather than to employ an in-depth, context-oriented methodology. Furthermore, the expatriate missionary, and even the traditionally-trained PNG teacher, may not be sufficiently aware of the local issues involved, to be able to draw out interaction in a way that such issues can be explored.

A global approach to curriculum, tends to use the biblical material as directly applicable to all contexts uniformly. But, the mediation of the text, by the missionary teacher (or the biblical commentary), tends to load the exegesis in favour of a Western understanding, rather than a local view of issues.

Undoubtedly, some issues, emerging from the interaction of the Christian message and Melanesian cultures, are being included in curriculum planning, for example, leadership styles. The servant leadership of the New Testament, superficially, would seem to be in direct conflict with the Melanesian "big man" complex. However, the issue is a complex one. Huli big men, for example, do practice some aspects of "servant leadership". They are seen to be good for the community, because they serve their clan associates. The conflict between traditional leadership and Christian ideals may be at a deep level of motivation, but this may parallel Western corporate managers, in a number of respects. It may well be as possible to be a keen Christian, and a "big man", as a Christian, and a corporate manager.

Another contextual issue, given a place in several curricula of the CBC Bible schools, is marriage. Again, the interaction of the Christian faith with the variety of marriage styles, and issues of concern to singles, parents, widows, and so forth, are not simple, black-and-white issues. On-going dialogue between the scriptures, and participants in the local cultures, must continue. It is too easy to identify Christian marriage with Western Christian practices; or Christian family life with the nuclear family in Western societies.

An essential ingredient in curriculum development, is the process of critique, and review, of the courses, and the programme, as a whole. With the current orientation of existing courses, this must include consideration of appropriateness in the Melanesian context.

d. *Tensions and Dislocations Arising from Social Change and Modern Development*

Previously, in looking at the urbanised environment, we highlighted issues of cultural change and dislocation. A Bible-school curriculum must consider the dimension of change, and inevitable tensions and problems that emerge.

Some of the curricula include studies of the wider world, but the outlines in the Appendix suggest that few of the major ethical, political, and socio-economic problems of PNG, and internationally,

are being addressed.[74]   A Bible school provides an excellent opportunity for discussion, and potential for constructing workable and biblical responses to such issues, in a way that equips students to address these in their communities. The rural location of most CBC schools inhibits direct involvement in practical ministry in urban areas, but change in rural areas is also obvious. Dialogue and interaction on such pressing issues as money and gambling, unemployment, nuclear and extended family responsibilities and tensions, health, family planning, and so forth, are important.

An action-reflection model will facilitate contextual learning, in the face of social change. As change accelerates, curriculum review and revision are essential ingredients for ministry. We deal with these issues, further, in a later article.

e.   *The History and Character of Brethrenism in Papua New Guinea*

The particular form that the Brethren Movement has taken in Papua New Guinea emerges from the combined influences of many strands. It includes backgrounds of the missionaries of CMML, and, in urban areas, the expatriate Christian community, who came from Brethren origins overseas, with their giftings, planning, and cooperative relationships.   It also includes the Melanesian Christian church communities, as CBC emerged in PNG, along with the insights, convictions, and strategies of their leaders. It is important that students learn about, interact with, and participate in this on-going history.[75]

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[74] It remains an open question to what extent traditional Brethren pietism and teaching on "separation", as non-involvement in community or nation-wide socio-economic issues, have influenced CBC Bible-school curricula. Some conservative Brethren, in the past, have refused to vote, or participate in the political process. This is changing, but Papua New Guineans seem much more ready to discuss and debate public issues than their missionary counterparts.

[75] Robert J. Schreiter, *Constructing Local Theologies*, Maryknoll NY: Orbis Books, 1985, pp. 95-104, while not restricting the concept of tradition to merely denominational history, provides a valuable discussion of the problems encountered between churches developing a local theology, when they encounter the preserved Christian tradition.

E.   GLOBAL AND CONTEXTUAL ISSUES IN FUTURE BIBLE SCHOOL CURRICULUM DEVELOPMENT

Given a necessary balance between global and contextual factors in curriculum development, this article is not the place to attempt to detail such a curriculum. That must be worked out in local situations, as a product of the interaction we are envisaging.[76] However, we highlight two critical factors, by way of summary. These are global propositions, and, therefore, universally applicable. Professor Ted Ward, in contributing an overview chapter to a series of essays in his honour, identifies two "propositions about curriculum" that guided his professional development as a theological educator. As background, Ward states that "curriculum is the meeting point between purpose and content", and that "[p]urpose must always have priority. The quality, relevance, and contextual worth of purpose is the key to good educational planning."[77]

Proposition One: Every curriculum reflects an image of the future.
Ward points out that underlying any curriculum are assumptions "about the value of the learning process", and the idea of "value has its roots in the future of the learner, or the context, in which the learning will be of use, and will make a positive difference."[78] I would make one slight amendment to Ward's remarks. The future must include a vision for both the learner *and* the context. Curriculum planning must focus on both these aspects.[79]

The future of the learner must include some appraisal of his or her giftings, and potential contribution. Since learning is an on-going and life-long process, the Bible school must grapple with the issues of

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[76] For a similar argument, see Edward Farley, *The Fragility of Knowledge: Theological Education in the Church and the University*, Philadelphia PA: Fortress Press, 1988, p. xi.

[77] Ted W. Ward, "With an eye on the future", in *With an Eye on the Future: Development and Mission in the 21st century*, Duane Elmer, and Lois McKinney, eds, Monrovia CA: MARC, 1996, p. 13.

[78] Ward, *With an Eye on the Future*, p. 14.

[79] In order to move toward this future, we assume, here, that the present is shaped by the past. That past must be understood as shaping both students and context. Western thinking frequently ignores this past.

facilitating a learning process that must continue beyond completion of the course. If there is too great a disjunction between the school and the church, in its community,[80] it is likely that many of the habits and disciplines, developed in the school, will not be carried over into the community living and ministry that follows. That is the first contextual challenge in curriculum for Bible schools.

The second root must involve a vision for the future contexts of ministry for the learner. CBC Bible schools must grapple with facilitating learners for a changing context. One only has to understand the pace of change in Melanesia in the last 20 years to become acutely aware that effective ministry will need to grapple with vastly-increased transformation (and social dislocation) in the future. It is not adequate to prepare Bible teachers and evangelists for the present, or immediate, contexts. Future ministry in Melanesia will need to be in the nature of mission in new and alien contexts. Thus, the second major challenge for Bible school curricula is to address change, in the present, and prepare students to grapple with continual re-contextualisation of the Christian message.

Proposition Two: *The planning of curriculum is a concern for decisions about what should be taught, why, to whom, and under what conditions.*[81] Ward elaborates this statement into four elements. These are, firstly, a *concern for decisions*. Implicit in this, is the question of who takes responsibility for decision-making, and how is decision-making best shared. For CBC Bible schools, the responsibility of the teacher in the school is to actively engage both learners and significant stakeholders in that responsibility. We return to this issue in Part 4 of this series of articles.

The second element is the *what-why connection*. Ward emphasises the connectedness of curriculum content to the issues of "worth, need, and appropriateness".

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[80] See Yau-Man Siew, "Theological Education in Asia", in Duane Elmer, and Lois McKinney, eds, *With an Eye on the Future: Development and Mission in the 21st century*, Monrovia CA: MARC, 1996, p. 61. Siew faults Western education for, among other things, the dangerous church-school dichotomy.
[81] Ward, *With an Eye on the Future*, pp. 14-15.

Ward highlights a third element, linking the *what-why* with the *to whom*. In doing so, he emphasises the selectivity involved in both the process of acceptance of students, and in determining what is to be taught to the particular clientele of the schools. What is the "fit between the intended outcomes [of] the planned learning experiences . . . and the readiness, fitness, and awareness of need in the learners"?[82]

The fourth element asks the question, *under what conditions*. This focuses on the "learning situation itself", and asks questions about such things as length of time, sorts of social relationships, physical-learning situation, resource materials, specific learning exercises, and "exactly where".

> It grieves me to discover, over and over again, that, for many who engage in educational leadership, imagination about learning contexts is limited to classrooms, clocks, hierarchical formal relationships between teacher and learner, and physical space, in which the knowing person looks in one direction, and the ignorant look in the opposite direction.[83]

Here, however, Ward takes us into the issues of our next article.

CONCLUSION

An important question, raised by Jenny Fountain, in relation to the CBC Bible schools, is, "What are the advantages of a unified curriculum?"[84] Despite arguments for efficiency in coordination, she proposes an alternative to a unified curriculum, involving a common core, with local variations. In the light of our analysis of global and contextual factors, this would seem to be a way forward that should be seriously considered. Training can still be coordinated, and transfers of students, and indeed, staff also, become much easier if there is a basic commonality. Local needs, and cultural variations, can also still be met by such an approach, without losing the advantages of mutual coordination.

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[82] Ibid., p. 15.

[83] Ward, *With an Eye on the Future*, p. 15.

[84] Fountain, *To Teach Others Also*, pp. 196-197.

There may be other variations that would also satisfy the globalisation-contextualisation balance, and still be effective. If the range of subjects on offer were developed into learning units, they would be more interchangeable, and could still be grouped into fields of study. These could then be selected by a particular school, and packaged into appropriate modules for a particular programme. This would give a school even more flexibility, and, therefore, greater responsibility to select a balanced curriculum that meets both the needs of the churches and the particular students that are being trained at the time. Under this arrangement, a greater range of courses and flexibility for more specialisation could be achieved.

A further challenge is to consider how other alternatives, such as, Theological Education by Extension courses may fit within Bible school curricula. Students, who miss out on segments of a programme, should not need to repeat, or duplicate, courses if they are able to substitute attendance in a course they have done elsewhere with a suitable TEE alternative. TEE, and other forms of training and experience, should be recognised as acceptable substitutes for taught subjects. More-able students, or those with special experience, for example, in church planting, or eldership, would thus be able to take core courses, and substitute, as warranted. For this to work, much further thought, review of courses, and reshaping into a modular format, would be required. But the proposal is worth consideration.

Any of these alternatives could meet the balance that seems highly desirable between a standardised, globally-based curriculum and a smorgasbord of courses, in an attempt to meet all kinds of contextual demands.

Finally, there are several key areas for curriculum improvement. Greater attention needs to be given to improving field education, with a more adequately-supervised internship. More emphasis should also be given to spiritual formation, and personal growth, as important aspects of Christian theological training programmes. Serious thinking needs to be done as to how to structure and monitor these key aspects of leadership training for Melanesian CBC churches.

Curricula should not merely follow the whim of the missionary, the national teacher, or controlling authority. Global and contextual aspects of curricula must be held in balance, with appropriate flexibility. This requires a higher level of coordination than at present exists among the Bible schools.[85]

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[85] Coordination implies a higher level of accountability, an issue this thesis is unable to deal with.

APPENDICES

Table 1.1: Curricular objectives proposed for the West Sepik Bible School[86]

a. **Old Testament**[87]

　To cover approximately 60 significant stories at the rate of 1 per week to give a clear chronological outline of Bible history.

　To draw out and apply spiritual truths to daily life and work.

　To present each story as an example of "The Bible story-telling method of preaching".

b. **Christology and life of Christ**[88]

　To teach about the person and work of Christ.

　To present a chronological sequence of events.

　To teach the usage of the harmony of the gospels.

　To draw out and apply spiritual truth to daily life and walk.

　To give worked-out sermon material.

c. **Epistles**[89]

　To teach such subjects as church organisation, officers, and ordinances.

　To teach Christian ethics.

　To encourage personal use of the epistles.

d. **Bible doctrines**

　To establish faith in evangelical dogma.

e. **Church history**

　To establish faith in evangelical Christianity and assembly principles.

　To teach the origin and development of the church, Rome, the churches.

　The rise of false cults.

　To explain the work of missions and the relationship of CMML to other evangelical missions.

f. **Theological terminology**[90]

　To explain terms, and maybe illustrate, with Bible stories.

g. **Memory verses**

　To memorise, say, two per week, with revision.

h. **Music**

　To teach appreciation of hymnology and keeping to time.

　To increase repertoire of hymns.

　To teach choice of appropriate hymns for different occasions.

　Application of scripture [sic] to culture.

i. **Homiletics and practical preaching assignments**

j. **Social studies**

　Our country and the world around us.

　Political science, economic development, social change.

k. **Daily chapel**

　We regard the development of the devotional life of the students as being of primary importance.[91]

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[86] Source: CMML Conference minutes, July, 1966.

Table 1.2: The 1982 curriculum outline for the *Baibel Tisa Trening Skul*[92]

Subject Field	First Year	Second Year
Old Testament studies	Panorama Bible study (book) Genesis* Ruth, Jonah, Esther* Stories of the prophets, e.g., Daniel* New Testament prophecies, like the return of Jesus, Revelation* Psalms (devotions)	Panorama Bible study (book) Exodus* Joshua, Judges* Stories of the Kings* Proverbs (devotions) (book)
New Testament: Gospels and Acts	Mark (Book 2) Matthew (Book 1)	John (Book 4) Luke (Book 3) Acts (Book 5)
New Testament: Letters and prophetical	1, 2 Corinthians (Book 7) Revelation (Book 15) Galatians and Ephesians (Book 8) 1, 2 Timothy (Book 11) 1, 2, 3 John, Jude (Book 14)	Romans (Book 6) Hebrews (Book 12) Philippians and Colossians (Book 9) 1, 2 Thessalonians, Titus, Philemon (Book 10) James, 1, 2 Peter (Book 13)
Bible doctrine	The Triune God: Father, Son and Holy Spirit (book) Satan and the angels Bible (inspiration and revelation)	Man Sin Salvation Resurrection of Jesus
Christian ethics	Christian behaviour and the Ten Commandments	Walking in the way of the Spirit (Galatians 5)

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[87] The Pidgin Old Testament was not available at this stage. The basic textbook was a collection of Bible stories titled *Ol stori bilong Baibel*, published by Kristen Pres, Madang PNG.

[88] Based on the Pidgin gospels, *Ol stori bilong Baibel,* and a harmony of the gospels.

[89] The textbook was a Pidgin book, *Sampela Pas Bilong Nu Testamen*, published by the British and Foreign Bible Society.

[90] The textbook was a Pidgin book, *As bilong sampela tok* ("The meanings of some terms").

[91] CMML Conference minutes, Anguganak, July, 1966.

[92] Source: BTTS files, Amanab, 1997.

Helping our own work and life	Time with God (Orientation course)** Bible study and prayer Memory verses Marriage seminar APO work (or "Let's overcome sickness") (book)	Time with God (Orientation course)** The way of discipleship (3 books) Memory verses The two shall be one (book)
Church history	Who are the Christian Brethren churches? (notes) The history of the CBC	
Church practice	Baptism (notes) Dealing with problems in the church	Communion (notes) Giving and using the offering Sending and caring for workers (notes)
The work of the Church	What is the church (book) Evangelism – congregational and personal. How to use the booklets, *Gutnius* and *Wanpela Bris* What kind of a shepherd are you? (book) Praying together and Bible study Doing Bible teaching (notes)	Pastoral work and how to counsel. A Leader like Christ (book) Youth Work Doing Bible teaching (notes)
Christian education	Literacy work (learning to read) How to use a blackboard and pictures Bible reading practice Practice in interpreting (for a speaker)	R.I. and Sunday School Dramatising Bible stories Bible reading practice Practice in interpreting (for a speaker)
Historical and cultural studies	A timeline – Adam to the present Using *Dikseneri bilong NT* (the Pidgin New Testament dictionary)	Jewish customs (book) Bible characters (book)

* Use *Baibel Stori Buk*, and *Piksa Baibel* and Sunday School notes for these.

** Pidgin: *Prep Kos.*

Table 1.3: Curriculum for the four-year cycle at Yimbrasi, 1983-1986[93]

Subject	1983	1984	1985	1986
Old Testament	Genesis Exodus Leviticus Numbers Deuteronomy	Joshua Judges Ruth 1 Samuel 2 Samuel	Revision 1 Kings 2 Kings	1, 2 Chronicles Ezra, Nehemiah Esther (Daniel, Hosea, Joel, Jonah?)
New Testament gospels epistles	John 1, 2 Corinthians James 1, 2 Peter	Mark Galatians Ephesians Philippians 1, 2, 3, John, Jude	Romans 1, 2 Timothy Titus Hebrews	Luke Colossians 1, 2 Thessalonians (James, Revelation)
Devotions Quiet time	Psalms	Proverbs		Psalms 120-150
The church	Acts CBC beliefs	CBC beliefs	CBC beliefs	CBC history CBC beliefs
Book study and other studies	*Samting bilong bus* Social studies	*Stretpela rot*	*Rot bilong laip amamas†* *Bun bilong tok baptais* *Jon i lusim kalabus‡*	*Samting bilong bus* *Kamap disaipel*
Practical	Sunday School	Evangelism Outreach Open Air	Evangelism Outreach Open Air	Sunday School, RI Youth work Rally

† The full title is *Amamas, God i save helpim yumi long taim traim i kamap*.
‡ The full title is *Jon i lusim kalabus long tin bia*.

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[93] Source: Fountain, *To Teach Others Also*, p. 89.

Table 1.4: Four-year plan, National CBC curriculum[94]

Bible Study Week	Bible Study Week	Bible Study Week	Bible Study Week

OT
Genesis-Joshua
	OT
	Judges-Esther
		OT
		Isaiah-Malachi
			OT
			Job-Song of
			    Solomon
			Lamentations,
			    Ezekiel

NT
Acts, Romans,
    Revelation
	NT
	Hebrews-Jude
		NT
		Matthew-John
			NT
			1 Corinthians-
			    Philemon

Our Beliefs Bible Jesus Christ Satan and angelic beings	**Our Beliefs** Salvation Holy Spirit	**Our Beliefs** God Last things	**Our Beliefs** Land (creation?) Mankind The church

**Doing God's
    Work**
True worship
Communion
Giving to God
	**Doing God's
	    Work**
	Prayers of the
	    Bible
	Fasting
		**Doing God's
		    Work**
		Spiritual warfare
		Witnessing to
		    unbelievers
			**Doing God's
			    Work**
			Love, Compassion
			Dealing with
			    wrongs
			Christian marriage
			    and family

Other Classes
Study project:
    Jonah
Bookkeeping
	Other Classes
	Study project:
	    Galatians
	Writing skills
		Other Classes
		Study project: Job
		Typing
			Other Classes
			Study project:
			    Ephesians
			Planning, Admin

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[94] Source: Translated into English by the present author from Howard, "Kirikulom",
p. 5.

BUTONESE CULTURE AND THE GOSPEL (A CASE STUDY)

Daniel Johnson[1]

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INTRODUCTION

This paper is a preliminary survey of Butonese culture and the gospel. It begins to address the boundaries, and make up of identity, for the Butonese people of Indonesia, and begins to suggest possibilities for a culturally-appropriate communication of the gospel to Butonese people. In the form of questions, what I want to do is ask, "What is central to Butonese ethnicity and identity? What does it mean to be Butonese? How might the gospel interact with Butonese culture? What might an indigenous Butonese church look like?" The Butonese people in southeast Sulawesi are centrally located in Indonesia, right between the hot spots of Ambon, Timor, and Kalimantan. They seem to have avoided the conflicts that divide neighbouring groups, though violence and refugees have recently spread to their island as well. There are more than 300,000 Butonese on the island of Buton. They are a beautiful, friendly people, almost all of them confessing Muslims. These reflections on Butonese culture and the gospel will hopefully be relevant to Melanesian believers, whom the Master Fisherman may call west to Indonesia, or who may be living and working among groups of a similar background.

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[1] Not the author's real name.

1.   ETHNICITY AND IDENTITY

Ethnicity and identity are important issues in Indonesia, with its hundreds of different ethnic groups. Sadly, violence has often occurred, and is currently occurring, across ethnic lines. Understanding ethnicity and identity is worthy of investigation, because of its relevance to the preservation of peace, as well as the preservation of cultural diversity. In heaven, people from all different people groups will be worshipping God, and God wants people from all people groups worshipping him here. Part of the beauty of heaven, then, and the church in the meantime, is the cultural diversity of our worship. I want us to look at an observation of those things that are important to Butonese, in particular their political traditions (of the sultanate), their religion (Islam), and the fishing voyages, through which many Butonese gain their livelihood. Furthermore, this paper will comment on which of these cultural forms may be relevant for a church that is consistent with, and at home in, Butonese culture.

2.   GOSPEL AND CULTURE

This paper assumes that the gospel can be discovered by people, who believe and call themselves Butonese, and act in ways that validate their cultural identity, and for those people to still feel at home in their culture. Contextualised attempts at communicating the gospel, and forming a Butonese church, therefore, will aim to help Butonese people discover what the gospel means for them and their culture. Any cultural transformation, including that brought by the gospel, is most valid and effective when done in a way that respects, and is consistent with, local culture (Kraft, 1979). Contextualised communication of the gospel, and contextualised church forms, are those that are at home in a local culture, rather than being imposed from another culture. This recognises the relevance of Christ, and the Christian message (the gospel), for all peoples, and all nations, for all times, and not just for Jews 2,000 years ago, or Westerners today. It is not that the gospel needs accommodating to local culture, but that local people can read and accept the good news as their story (Bediako, 1994). The beauty of a developing local theology is that it will be at home in the local culture. Jacob Loewen said God has buried so much treasure in scripture that we will never find it all until the interpretive perspectives

of each of the languages and societies of the world have been applied to them. Each culture asks different questions, and it will be fascinating to see what questions and contributions we hear and see from Buton (Kraft, 1996, p. 18).

3.   RESEARCH METHOD AND LIMITATIONS

This research is an anthropological literature overview, in preparation for participant observation.[2]   The author is collecting any relevant literature, on which the current paper is based, but, ultimately, would like to live among Butonese people, and observe their lives and society. This approach is one of ethnomethodology, learning about a culture by going and living with the people, learning from them, tuning into their world, taking an interest in their concerns, and generally getting "under the skin" of local people, and seeing life from their perspective. I would like to seek informants, with detailed knowledge of the various facets of Butonese culture, collect life stories through interviews, visit local libraries and cultural associations, and observe rituals, such as, the initiation rites, marriage rites, and mortuary practices described by Yamaguchi (1999, p. 11). This process, however, has begun with a literature overview, three brief trips to Sulawesi, and correspondence with Butonese people, and other researchers.

The approach is limited, because I am not living in Buton, and I am not ethnically Indonesian, let alone Butonese. In the 19th century, anthropologists mostly relied on reports from missionaries and travellers for their data. It is only in the 20th century that a more

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[2] Geertz suggests, if we want to understand what a science is, we should look, firstly, not at its theories or findings, nor what its apologists say about it, but at what its practitioners actually do. Anthropologists (or at least social and cultural anthropologists) do ethnography, and, therefore, to understand ethnography, is to begin to comprehend what anthropology is about (C. Geertz, *Works and Lives: The Anthropologist as Author*, Stanford CA: Stanford University Press, 1988, p. 5, in D. Jacobson, *Reading Ethnography*, Albany NY: State University of New York Press, 1991, pp. 1, 125). Ethnography is the description of a particular culture, typically resulting from participant-observation fieldwork, where the researcher lives and participates in a culture, in order to observe and study it (Jacobson, *Reading Ethnography*, 1991; M. Hammersley, *Reading Ethnographic Research: A Critical Guide*, London UK: Longman, 1998).

sophisticated anthropological method has developed in ethnography, by which anthropologists ideally live among the people they are studying (Hammersley, 1998, pp. 2-3). Ethnographies claim validity, based on the researcher actually having been there in person. For the last half-century, at least, their presence authenticates the basis of an ethnography; in Geertz's words, "of having penetrated, or been penetrated by, the culture, having actually been there" (1988, pp. 4-5).

There is still cultural information that can be discovered without living among a people. However, this information is limited, and will need to be verified by local observation, and by Butonese people themselves. This is particularly true of any suggestions about possible connections that the Christian gospel may make with Butonese culture. Any such suggestions are only possible connections, and will need to be checked with local Butonese, and, particularly, local Butonese Christians, when, and as, a contextualised church forms.

FACTORS OF BUTONESE CULTURAL IDENTITY

Butonese people have a rich cultural heritage. Buton reflects the diverse linguistic situation of the whole of Sulawesi. There are four Butonese languages, and various dialects, including one language (Wolio) which is one of only three in Sulawesi with a literary tradition. Their society is divided into various levels, the ceremonies for appointing new rulers are detailed, and they hold a complex understanding of the spiritual world; mixing animism, Hinduism, and Islam. Historically, the Butonese have been involved in slave-trading, fighting off Australian sailors, accommodating to Dutch and Japanese colonialists, and, finally, integrating with the Republic of Indonesia.

The basis for Butonese identity is unclear. The following sections describe parts of Butonese culture that *may* be the basis for Butonese identity. This outline is based on the available literature, and preliminary exposure to Buton:

1. Butonese political traditions (the Sultanate)

2. Butonese religion (Folk Islam)

3. Butonese livelihood (fishing)

This paper introduces, and where possible, expands on these cultural aspects. Future fieldwork could investigate other factors, and the relative importance of each, in the formation of Butonese cultural identity.

1. BUTON'S SULTANATE TRADITIONS

There are different stories about the origins of Butonese people. One Butonese origin myth relates that, in the 13th century, a Chinese named Teweke followed the vision of a woman, who appeared to him as a bright light, and sailed to the Cia-Cia village of Wabula on south Buton. The remains of the boat – known outside the village as *Wa Kambaibunga* – can still be seen. *Wa Kambaibunga* is a sacred site or *sangia*, and is said to be the ancestor of all Butonese *perahu* (a particular type of fishing boat, common in Buton) (Southon, 1995, p. 13; Yamaguchi, 1999, p. 15). The boat *Wa Kambaibunga* is honoured like a god by the community, and called on when they want a wish fulfilled (Cense, 1954, p. 175). I would like to further investigate these, and any other origin myths. But the most significant part of Butonese history is the sultanate (*Kesultanan Buton*). Buton developed a rich variety of traditions surrounding the sultanate. The history and essence of sultanate traditions are likely to be central to Butonese cultural identity.

a. Sultanate History

The kingdom of Buton was established in the 15th century, and its sixth *raja* (king) converted to Islam in 1540 or 1542, and became the first Sultan.[3] Under his reign, the whole kingdom, including the islands of Muna, Kabaena, Tukang Besi, and Buton, formally converted to Islam, and were ruled from Baubau, the capital on Buton Island. The sultanate remained self-governing through Dutch colonial times, but was dissolved in 1960, and incorporated into Indonesia. However, there is still a locally-recognised sultan in Buton, Drs Haji

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[3] A. M. Zahari, *Sejarah masuknya Islam di Buton dan perkembangannya*, Buton Indon: Baubau, 1980, mimeographed , p. 40, has calculated the transition to the Sultanate took place around 1542. J. W. Schoorl, "Belief in reincarnation on Buton, S.E. Sulawesi, Indonesia", in *Bijdragen tot de taal-, land- en volkenkunde* 141-1 (1985), estimated back from this time that the monarchy must have begun in the first half of the 15th century.

La Ode Munarfa. Sultan Munarfa functions as an important community leader, and as the Rektor of Baubau's University (Universitas Dayanu Ikasanudden). Others say the kingdom of Buton is regarded to have arisen in the beginning of the 14th century. The sultanate had limited supervision under VOC protection during the 17th to 19th centuries, the Dutch colonial period, and even under Japanese occupation. The Butonese are quite proud they maintained their independence, and assert they were never colonised by Dutch or Japanese!

b.   Rulers and Sultans

The first ruler of Buton was Queen Wa-Kaa-Kaa. There is a myth about her divine descent, and being born from bamboo, as with other southeast Sulawesi rulers.[4] She is reputed to be the daughter of Mongolian Kubilai Khan (unique to Buton), who married Majapahit prince Sibatara (common in Indonesian tradition). Another story says she is an adopted child of one of the *pata limbona*, who founded Kerajaan Buton (Schoorl, Zahari). Yet another ascribes Chinese origin to Buton through her (Yamaguchi, 1999, p. 10).

The second *raja* (monarch) was Queen Bulawambona, and her son Bataraguru became the third *raja*, and he visited the court of Mojopahit. His son and successor, Tuarade, the fourth *raja*, also visited Mojopahit, and returned with four regalia, later known as *syara Jawa* (Zahari, 1977, pp. 38-42; Schoorl, 1985, p. 103). Little is known of this period, but, on the basis of these relations, Schoorl postulates Buton was under Hindu-Javanese influence (1985, p. 103).

According to the sultanate's documents, the sixth *raja* Murham became the first Sultan (1538-1584). He is a Butonese folk hero, and is remembered as a ruler who often travelled around Buton and talked

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[4] Myths of the original figure of raja being born from bamboo are found in Muna, Tiworo, Kabaena, and Kolaka Utara (north Kolaka) societies. Sejarah Kebangkitan Nasional Daerah Sulawesi Tenggar (1978/1979), H. Yamaguchi, *A study on cultural representations of the historical past in Buton society, southeast Sulawesi*, Department of Anthropology, Graduate School of Social Studies, Tokyo Japan: Hitotsubashi University Press, 1999, pp. 9-10, 24.

to the people (Zahari, 1977, p. 46; Schoorl, 1985). Some of the subsequent sultans referred to in the literature include:

- Sultan Dayanu Ikhsanuddin, Buton's fourth Sultan (1598-1631), built the Wolio fort, established the sultanate council, which lasted until 1960, and issued *Sarana Wolio*, a constitution for the sultanate (Yamaguchi, 1999, p. 24).

- Sultan Muhammed Idrus (1824-1851) sought to persuade his subjects to give up superstitious practices, including ancestor worship. He built on *Murtubat Tujuh*, to develop a new constitution, the *sarana Wolio* (Zahari, 1977, p. 128).

- Sultan Asyikin (1906-). Aruna Bola was the candidate for the throne before Asyikin, but was not prepared to sign the far-reaching new contract the Dutch East Indies wanted to impose (Schoorl, 1985, pp. 106-107).

- Sultan La Ode Falihi was the last (official) Sultan. La Ode Munarfa, his first son, is locally considered the current Sultan.

There are complex rituals for appointing a sultan (Berg, 1939). The son of a sultan can become his successor, only if he was given birth by the head spouse during the governance of his father. This so seldom happened that a saying developed that "God seldom gives children to a queen during the governance of her husband" (Berg, 1939, p. 481). Apparently, Butonese prefer to choose with their customs rather than allow automatic inheritance. The requirements and rituals for appointing a sultan may have implications for leadership selection for a Butonese church.

The sultan's coronation includes a ceremonial washing. The water is carried in bamboo from different places, covered with a white cloth, and stored the night before at a hill named Lilil, where the grave of the late sultan, and a big holy stone, was located. Ointment was also applied as a sign the king should have a glorious reign, and have no disease during his governance (Berg, 1939). These ceremonies may

have implications for contextualised worship, so investigation of their meaning, and whether they are used for people other than the sultan, could be fruitful.

c.   The Sultanate's Ethos

Schoorl (1994, pp. 28-29) describes the ideology that was developed to stimulate subjects to work for the interests of the sultanate and its inhabitants. The *Sarana Wolio* began by articulating the responsibility of Butonese subjects towards one another's well being:

> "Let it be known to all, that, in the beginning of the drawing up of the constitution for the sultanate of Wolio, there were four fundamental considerations:
>
> - firstly, that you have respect one for another;
>
> - secondly, that you care for one another;
>
> - thirdly, that you love one another;
>
> - fourthly, that you venerate and praise one another.
>
> "Those who are set in authority above us, we respect or fear; those who are equal in station to us, are the objects of our care; to those whom we are placed above, we show compassion. There are different reasons for being venerated and praised: because of greatness of spirit; because of piety; because of skills, which may be valuable for the entire kingdom, and for other reasons also. In brief, those people who are honoured are those who have wrought some good for the whole kingdom. There are different ways of showing our gratitude, for example, in praising someone for these things, by appointing or raising to a certain function or office, by giving gifts or by showing respect and honour. Such a show of honour is the whetstone for the spirit of the people of Wolio, that it grow not idle or enfeebled, that it remain ever mighty, ever keen" (Schoorl, 1994, p. 29).

The *Sarana Wolio* suggests ideals of patriotism and community service were valued, at least in official discourse. Gospel values of living and serving others could connect with these parts of Butonese culture.

2.   BUTON'S FOLK ISLAM AND RELIGIOUS MIX

The religion, almost all Butonese people confess, is (Sunni) Islam. The origins of Islam are not certain, though it may have been brought to Buton by someone from Ternate, after a war they won against Buton. Like other places in Indonesia, Islam was added on top of a mix of Hinduism and animism. Perhaps the success of Islam in Buton, and other areas, is because it has been able to adjust itself to the cultures and beliefs that are already there. In the middle of the 16th century (1540) the sixth ruler of Buton (Haluoleo) converted to Islam, and became the first Sultan. (Kendari's largest university is named after him.) The whole kingdom followed Haluoleo, and changed their religion to follow Islam. Interestingly, the Sultan was considered to be the representative of Allah on earth. The great mosque (*mesjid agung*) on Baubau's old fort (*kraton*), built in the 16th century, is locally considered to be the oldest in East Indonesia. One local reported it was built 2,000 years ago! (We were interested that either his perception of the mosque's age, or his pride in the religious heritage of Buton, meant the mosque would have been built before Muhammed's birth!)

Although Islam has this tradition, there are definite traces of non-orthodox belief. That the Sultan, for example, is considered the representative of Allah on earth echoes the beliefs of Hindu kingdoms throughout the archipelago. The great mosque obviously has pride of place in the centre of Buton's cultural centre (the *Kraton* in Baubau), yet there is a belief that, under the mosque, in a room locked away, people can talk to dead people, though it has been sealed up, because it is dangerous. (I am not sure if the danger is as a potential distraction from orthodox Islam, or dangerous just to tamper with the spirits. A study of the history of the mosque, and its land, could be fruitful to learn what else has stood on the site.) The Islamic teaching in Buton, we can observe from its history and present-day practice, is not "pure Islam" but a mixture of traditions.

a.   *Animist Influences*

There are also clear animist influences in Butonese religious practice. Butonese tend to follow various forms of magic and superstition. This can be seen in practices that are used to deal with the spiritual world.

Butonese give offerings and special gifts to holy places that are considered male and female gods. Shamanism is widespread, practised to guarantee success in agriculture or fishing. There are many spirits that live side-by-side with the visible world, and the spiritual world can be seen by certain people, who have special power. Clever shamans (*dukun pandai*) can relate to the spiritual world, to oppose the influence of spirits. Sometimes they can marry with spirits, or carry weapons, or riches, back from a city in the other world. Guardian spirits (*malaikat pelindung)* guard houses, boats, and villages. Butonese believe spirits can bring sickness and disaster, or also help with guidance. Spirits of ancestors, who have died, still have important tasks. They bring help or sickness to their relatives, depending on what those relatives do. Trees and stones that look extraordinary are considered to contain spirits. If a tree falls, the spirit is then free, and can bring problems to a nearby village or farm (Donohue, 1995, p. 5). I would like to find out more about aspects of Butonese mysticism, and any ancestor worship that may be practised.

b.   Hindu Influences

Hindu settlers. In addition to the Hindu-Javanese influence on Buton's early *rajas*, oral traditions indicate early Hindu presence in the region. According to tradition, after Sultan Murhum's conversion, Buton's inhabitants were obliged to follow. But a group of Javanese Hindus, who had left Mojopahit (Java) after its Islamisation, refused. They preferred voluntary death, and dug their own mass grave on Buton's south coast, near Betauga.

Caste system. The caste system in traditional Butonese politics has a close relationship with religion, though it appears closer to Hindu beliefs than Muslim. The form of government was rather hierarchical including three to four castes. The highest caste in the community was the royal *kaomu*, whose lives and work focused on the *Kraton*. Through until today, these families hold the title *La Ode* (or *Wa Ode* for women) as part of their names. The middle caste are the free community, known as *walaka*. The third caste are the commoners, known as the *papara*. There is also reference to a fourth, lower caste, including slaves, criminals, and prisoners of war, known as *batua*.

Every level, or caste, had its own tasks, and Butonese were not permitted to marry outside their caste.

Reincarnation. Schoorl's research of Buton surprisingly revealed a strong belief in reincarnation (1985). Reincarnation is the belief that the soul, or some power, passes, after death, into another body. Because it is predominantly found in Hindu-Buddhist areas, it is surprising to see it also documented among the Butonese. While ancient Butonese religion, or more modern Sufism, may have played a role in reincarnation's adoption, there is stronger evidence that the concept derived from Javanese Hinduism. Early *rajas* (rulers) had contact with the Javanese Mojopahit kingdom, oral traditions indicate early Hindu presence in the region, and the reincarnation beliefs Schoorl documented resemble those in Java, as described by Geertz (1960, p. 75-76; in Schoorl, 1985, p. 123).

The Hindu doctrine of reincarnation teaches that, after death, a person's soul is reborn in another being, according to the law of *karma*. *Karma* is the thoughts, words, and actions that affect later lives. Butonese beliefs have no mention of *karma*, and the form of rebirth is not discussed as much as the speed of return. There is, moreover, difference of belief among the Butonese about whether the speed of return is determined by good works (*amal*), special knowledge (*ilmu*), or people with special power over when and where spirits will return (*pasucu*). The Butonese concept of reincarnation does not dwell on the endless cycle of birth and rebirth (*samsara*), as in Hinduism. Butonese talk more about how reincarnation occurs within families. Spirits are said to return in grandchildren, or children, as the "replacement of the dead" (*kabolosina mia mate*). The belief seems to connect generations, and maintain the memory of ancestors. The wife of the last Sultan Falihi (1938-1960) is said to have returned in her grandson, who displayed similar characteristics to the sultana, and, at a young age, pointed to her jewellery, and said it belonged to him (Schoorl, 1985, pp. 104-117). A belief in reincarnation may reveal Butonese felt needs about respect for ancestors, continuity of existence (through one's descendants), and knowledge of the afterlife. Whatever the particulars, the good news is that Christ, as our guide, and Lord of the future, answers our fear of the unknown, and the resurrection offers hope for

salvation, and life forever with God and His people (Parshall, 1983). This is not earned by good works, or manipulated by secret knowledge, but received by grace through faith.   Ritual experts cannot help anyone's final destiny because eternal life depends on people's own response.

On top of the pre-existing animistic-Hindu mix, Islam has been added. A folk Islam developed that has assimilated Islamic beliefs and worship, with various forms of animism and Hindu-influenced ideas.

c.   *Islam*

Abdul Wahid, according to Butonese tradition, first brought Islam to Buton. He was an Arab from Gujerat, who came to Burangasi on southeast Buton, around 1527. Burangasi inhabitants were the first Butonese converts to Islam. On Wahid's second visit, around 1542, Sultan Murhum converted to Islam (Zahari, 1980, p. 40; Schoorl, 1985, p. 126; Southon, 1995, p. 18). Today, Butonese are almost 100 percent (Sunni) Muslim. Other world religions are very sparsely represented; for example there are only seven Christians that I know of, most of whom have married into neighbouring Christian groups, and do not live on the island. The extent of Butonese identity with their Islamic faith is shown in their statement: "To be Butonese is to be Muslim". Although they say they only believe in Allah, as is taught by Islam, they also believe in matters that are not drawn from orthodox Islam. Many Butonese feel more comfortable with Sufism, rather than orthodox or fanatical Islam, perhaps because Sufism is more like Hinduism.

Butonese religion has been syncretistic and aristocratic.   Thus Butonese practice Islamic rituals, but also hold to traditional practices. In other Indonesian coastal societies, Islam may dominate the worldview of the community, but in no place has it completely replaced indigenous/local religion. Traditional beliefs and practices continue to play an important role in Buton, as elsewhere (Kiem, p. 96). Geertz comments:

> In each locality there is an interesting and usually complementary relationship between the two forms of worship,

which are, in fact, not generally felt by the people to be separate traditions at all (Geertz, 1963, p. 66, in Kiem, p. 96).

Some Islamic belief is merely a light veneer over the older beliefs. Cederroth says they are not dominant and "resemble more a thin veneer through, which the older beliefs are still clearly visible" (1997, pp. 165-167). But, in other practices, Islamic practice is more prominent, if not dominant. Its relegation may be a source of tension with orthodox believers. Islam has not spread completely through Butonese society and religious practice. This could be termed syncretism, though, from a Butonese point of view, there is no inconsistency in beliefs and practices.

It is clear that, for many Muslims in Indonesia, as elsewhere in the Muslim world, the focus of their life has been, and, in many cases, still is, the Islamic order, of which they are members. This faith commitment is intimately connected to family relationships. Membership of an Islamic order is not just a question of religious belief, but an expression of individual and family identity. Yinger maintains that, although many ethnic groups have strong religious ties, the ethnic-religion connection is not unbreakable (1994, p. 270). However, religions, with strong connections to particular ethnic groups, are less likely to lose members to another religion. They may drop out, or become inactive, or switch groups within the religion, but are less likely to feel they can change religion altogether, and still maintain their cultural identity. They can "backslide", as Muslims, and still keep the quasi-ethnic family, neighbourhood, language, and culture ties that formed part of the identity. But, transferring religious allegiance, can and often does reduce one's cultural identity.

d. *Interreligious Relations and Refugees*

In spite of the aim of religious harmony in Indonesia, conflict between religions exists. Conflict between individuals and groups, or anxiety felt by particular individuals or groups, may lie behind the intercommunal violence that has blighted Indonesia in recent years (if not centuries). An understanding of differences, and their origins, will be helpful in understanding Butonese identity. Christian-Muslim relations are stretched to violence in Maluku, and now also in parts of

Sulawesi. To date, southeast Sulawesi has, fortunately, avoided the widespread violence of her nearby neighbours.

My meeting with the locally-recognised sultan in Buton, Drs Haji La Ode Munarfa, was insightful in his desire to live in peace. We were invited to accompany the sultan to a family ceremony celebrating the first haircut of a baby. Sultan Munarfa explained the underlying culture and religion of what we witnessed:

> When we have this party, we invite everyone to come together and eat together happily. . . . On this day, at this moment, they see how a small child has had their hair cut. This is an exceptional activity that we often do, because it has been our custom for hundreds of years. This is because we have our religion, a religion that is perfect and complete, and we all know that by this tradition, today, I have made complete your religion. . . . We all are among the followers that have been here in Buton already for hundreds of years . . . I myself am the Sultan of Buton, the 39th Sultan of Buton. My father was the 38th Sultan of Buton. So we have a culture here which is Islamic culture. This is truly Islamic culture that we have respected and performed for hundreds of years.[5]

Butonese, perhaps typical of Indonesians, take great pride in their religious heritage, while highly valuing their tolerance of other faiths.

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[5] "*Kalau kita berpesta kita undang semua untuk sama-sama kita makan sama-sama kita bergembira. . . . Pada hari ini juga, pada saat ini, mereka melihat bagaimana seorang anak kecil telah dicukur rambutnya. Harus ?dicukur rambutnya baru, ini, menjadikan eh diketahui bahwa sudah dikumpul dan diketahui oleh keluarga dsbnya masyarakat, di kampung atau di desa ini. Ini kejadian yang luar biasa buat kita seamannya, yang sering kita lakukan oleh karena adat istiadat kita ini sudah ratusan tahun berjalan. Oleh karena, kita ini mempunyai agama, agama yang sudah sempurna kita semua tahu tok bahwa adat itu pada hari ini saya sempurnakan agamamu. Coba, dan semua agama, ada kata-katanya pada hari ini saya sempurnakan agama, sudah sempurna dan kita semua ini antara lain penganut itu sudah ratusan tahun di Buton ini, kalau saya katakan sudah ratusan tahun oleh karena ya Islam sudah ratusan tahun. Saya sendiri Sultan Buton, Sultan Buton yang ke39. Ayah saya Sultan Buton yang ke38. Jadi kita punya kebudayaan di sini sudah kebudayaan Islam. Dan benar-benar kebudayaan Islam, yang kita sembah ratusan tahun.*" (Sultan's speech, December, 1999, author's translation.)

Boland writes of an indigenous Javanese tendency to tolerance that is reinforced by Islam's respect of Christianity, as another religion "of the book" (1982, p. 205-206). Tolerance has also been an important aspect of state-promoted and state-sanctioned *pancasila* identity. The Indonesian ideal of tolerance, upheld by the sultan and others, unfortunately, does not always work out in practice. Pak Sultan commented:

> And to make friends with other friends, who are people of another religion, we don't mind, we can live together. Not like in Ambon, where Christians and Muslims are enemies. How can it be true that they are truly religious, Christian or Islam? They are killing one another. This is it, how can it be that prominent religious figures [are fighting]? . . . Ambon has been well known for hundreds of years for its peaceful life, and Islam and Christianity lived peacefully. Why is it like this at this time? . . . There are many from Ambon [here], and you have my mercy. Many from their families have died, and their houses destroyed, and so on. Now that there are such difficulties there, they return to their fatherland, this land of Buton, to the sultanate, which is the territory of Islam. See, there is peace, and so on, here.[6]

After the formal ceremony, we talked with some of the refugees from Ambon. Ibu Indah,[7] for example, moved with her family to Ambon 30 years ago. Recently, however, her children grew more and more distressed, as they witnessed repeated acts of violence. Her daughter

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[6] "*Dan berteman dengan teman-teman yang lain tokoh beragama lain, kita tidak apa-apa, sama-sama hidup dsb. (Ya) Tidak seperti di Ambon itu coba. Kristen and Islam bermusuhan. Apa yang sebenarnya apa mereka itu beragama, beragama Kristen atau beragama Islam dsb. Mereka bermusuhan membunuh-membunuh dsb. Inilah, bagaimana tokoh-tokoh agama dan, ini, kenapa? . . . Yang terkenal di Ambon itu ratusan tahun hidupnya damai dan Islam dan Kristen hidup damai. Kenapa saat ini coba . . . Banyak dari Ambon kasihan setiap orang. Ah, bagaimana di sana itu, eh, ya, keluargannya banyak yang mati, rumahnya keburnnya dsb. Itu coba, sekarang ada di sini lembah ke daerahnya di tanah airnya kembali, Buton ini, ke Sultanan daerah Islam Ya coba ada aman dsb.*" (Sultan's speech, December, 1999, author's translation.)

[7] Not her real name.

Iri[8] found it difficult to feel safe, and sleep at night. Two months previously, Ibu Indah's family returned to their Butonese village. Their family was one of 18,000 families who had returned as part of the 103,000 "Exodus people" (Indonesian government statistics, 9/12/99). Along with 16,000 of these families, Ibu Indah's family did not have their own accommodation, and so lived with the extended family. "Please send us help from Australia", Ibu Indah asked. I am interested in how migration and forced migration of refugees from Ambon (the "Exodus people") may be affecting Butonese identity, and how much such migration is historically typical, as many Butonese had to move around, in earlier centuries, pursuing work, or avoiding slave traders.

3.   BUTONESE FISHING

Butonese are renowned as seafarers, boat-builders, fishermen, traders, and gatherers of *tripang* "sea cucumber", and commercial seashells (Anceaux, Grimes, et al, 1995, p. 573). There are four sources of income for most Butonese: fishing, agriculture, small-scale market trading, and sailing/*merantau* (Southon, 1995, pp. 73-74). Sailing/*merantau* is the most-lucrative activity.[9] Sailing is a higher-status activity, and this is reflected in skin colour (lighter for women of sailing households, known as people of the beach (*orang pantai*), who spend more time inside than their agricultural neighbours, who work more outside, known as people of the mountain (*orang gunung*) (Southon, 1995, p. 32). Sailing imagery is central in Butonese life, and the best anthropological source on this aspect of Butonese culture is Michael Southon, *The Navel of the Perahu: Meaning and Values in the Maritime Trading Economy of a Butonese Village* (1995).[10]

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[8] Not her real name.

[9] Historically, Butonese have had involvement in slave-trading; both as traders, and its product. A VOC report on Celebes, at the beginning of the 19th century, said the following about Buton: "We know nothing about the population, only that repeated attacks from pirates have driven the people gradually away from the coast, and have also decreased the population; moreover, we know of no place in the Indies, where the poverty is so widespread and acute as on Buton" (Schoorl, 1994).

[10] See the author's unpublished paper "Reading the Navel of the Perahu – An Assessment of an Ethnography". For other reviews, see G. Ammarell, "The Navel of

Southon's work suggests some metaphors, or cultural keys, for Jesus' call to discipleship and the Christian community (cf. Schreiter, 1985, pp. 73-74). These would need to be checked with locals for their validity and relevance, but are worth exploring. Many Butonese work as fishermen or sailors, and spend long days and nights at sea. They could, perhaps, identify with Peter and other fishermen called by Jesus; "Come, be My disciples, and I will show you how to fish for people" (Matt 4:19). Hopefully, Butonese people will hear that call to follow Christ, and, themselves, become fishers of people. The fishing imagery that Southon describes suggests four other possibilities for contextualisation of the gospel.

a.   *Voyage as Joint Venture*

Firstly, Southon argues *perahu* sailing is based on an ideology of a joint enterprise: based on evidence of financial arrangements, decision-making, and historical precedent. Profit for the voyage is jointly shared by all. The crew and captain divide up their profit, according to shares. Captain and crew (and boat owner, if his profit is share-based) all risk loss, and all benefit, in fixed proportion, from success as they "search for a living together" (*mencari nafkah bersama-sama*) (Southon, 1995, pp. 61-71, 138). Those who sail on *perahu* share the risks equally, and thus decide together where to sail, and what cargoes to purchase. Southon reported Lande had an emphasis on the *musyawarah* (conference) and decision-making, through consensus. One of the captains commented on the *musyawarah*:

> The cargoes that we carry, such as (empty) bottles, timber, we decide together in the conference. No one can make that

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the *Perahu*: Meaning and Values in the Maritime Trading Economy of a Butonese Village" (book review), *Journal of Asian Studies* 55-3 (1996); H. B. Broch, "The Navel of the *Perahu*: Meaning and Values in the Maritime Trading Economy of a Butonese Village" (book review), in *Journal of the Royal Anthropological Institute* 2-3 (1996); C. Healey, "The Navel of the *Perahu*: Meaning and Values in the Maritime Trading Economy of a Butonese Village" (book review), in *Oceania* 67-3 (1997); P. Alexander, "The Navel of the *Perahu*: Meaning and Values in the Maritime Trading Economy of a Butonese Village" (book review), *The Australian Journal of Anthropology* 9-2 (1998).

decision alone, it must be together. If there is no agreement, you can't sail (Southon, 1995, p. 63).

Sailing voyages, as joint ventures, and the crew as a family, are metaphors consistent with images of the church as a group of people on a journey together. Jesus' followers often travelled in *the boat*, and in that context, learned a number of discipleship lessons.[11] They are carried in the boat around on their mission from the scenes of feeding the thousands. As fellow pilgrims and sailors, they can be pictured sharing their hopes and fears of what may be on the other side, encouraging one another in their calls to ministry, challenging each other to faith and integrity, and supporting each other in storms (Hunter, 2001, p. 8). In Buton, it may be appropriate to represent the church in terms of "voyaging together in the boat". A *perahu* crew's equality, joint decision-making, shared risks, and being cast as a family, are all consistent with (and, in fact, could enrich) biblical views of the church.[12] While boats are defined in terms of the house, the larger village unit is defined in terms of the boat, and so, too, the church could be likened to a boat[13] (Southon, 1995, pp. 121-122, 140).

b.   *Butonese Gender and Work Roles*

Butonese gender relations combine a distinction of roles, with a valuing of marital harmony. Men are seen as mobile, and women immobile. The men come and go, searching for income (*merantau*), and build a house, and the women stay and maintain the house (Southon, 1995, p. 97). A Butonese woman emphasised her "staying"

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[11] Cf. Mark 1-8, esp. 1:16; 6:45-52; Luke 5:1-11; John 21:1-14; cf. other metaphors in 1 Cor 12:27; Eph 2:19; 1 Peter 2:10.

[12] Theology needs the contribution of all of the world's cultures to be complete (L. J. Luzbetak, *The Church and Cultures: New Perspectives in Missiological Anthropology*, Maryknoll NY: Orbis Books, 1988, p. 397; C. Kraft, *Anthropology for Christian Witness*, Maryknoll NY: Orbis Books, 1996, p. 330).

[13] Boats are built with odd-numbered planks, with something leftover or incomplete, which contains within itself the possibility of renewal. Perhaps this should be observed, when building any church buildings, or the symbol could be mentioned, when urging renewal (M. Southon, *The navel of the* perahu*: meaning and values in the maritime trading economy of a Butonese village*. Canberra ACT: Department of Anthropology, Research School of Pacific and Asian Studies, Australian National University Press, 1995, pp. 107-108).

(*tinggal*) role when she said, ideally, a man should die before his wife, to go ahead to the after-world to build a house; "We don't know how to build houses, we only stay" (*kita tidak tahu bikin rumah, kita hanya tinggal*) (Southon, 1995, pp. 115, 124). Women, with this perspective (or men, aware of this cultural idea), may be particularly receptive to the gospel being presented in Jesus' words of going ahead to prepare a place, in a house of many rooms for His followers (John 14:1-4; Southon, 1995, pp. 97, 124).

Furthermore, before embarking, a man must have his wife's permission (*izin*). Harmony between husband and wife is seen as very important, and the bringer of good fortune. Butonese husbands and wives refer to each other "as one boat" (like the scriptural "one flesh") (Gen 2:23, Eph 5:28-30, Kraft, 1979, p. 59; Southon, 1995, pp. 98, 111, 117, 119). The importance placed on harmony between husband and wife, as a bringer of good fortune, would be echoed for them in scripture:

> You husbands must give honour to your wives. Treat her with understanding, as you live together. She may be weaker than you are, but she is your equal partner in God's gift of new life. If you don't treat her as you should, your prayers will not be heard (1 Peter 3:7).

c.   **Perahu** *as Person*

Perahu are represented as being born as people: Christ invites Butonese people to be reborn by God's Spirit. While, sometimes, *perahu* are rebuilt: God invites people to be rebuilt with Christ as a new captain or leader. *Perahu* have their navels drilled with the life-giving *lamba puse* by the *pande* (ritual expert), who imparts something of his own spirit in the process: Jesus offers to blow his Spirit on His people, and launch them out in the world (John 20:21-22).

d.   *Community Leaders as Holders of* **Ilmu**

Community leaders, captains, or *pande* hold their position, by virtue of acquired and demonstrated *ilmu* (esoteric knowledge), which is a major preoccupation of Butonese (Southon, 1995, p. 129). Students give

their teachers ritual payments, accompanied by verses (*pantum*) that extol the virtues of the knowledge gained:

> I give you money, Money that I could finish,
>
> But you give me knowledge, Knowledge that will not finish until the end of the world.
>
> (*Di situ diberikan uang, Saya bisa kasih habis,*
>
> *Tapi diberikan ilmu ini,Dunia kiama, baru bisa haniskan.*)
>
> The fish is dead because of the bait, Humankind is stupid because of the mind.
>
> (*Ikan mati karna umpan, Manusia bodoh karna budi*) (Southon, 1995, p. 129).

When this esoteric knowledge is demonstrated, the user acquires, or maintains, status and power in their community. The arena for demonstrating *ilmu* is often the *perahu*, as when the *pande* drills the *lamba puse* in the keel, or a captain shows great skill. Respected captains meditate on where and how long to sail, and reach decisions through awareness of their body, for example, sailing to the right if indicated by the right side of their bodies. Captains of earlier eras could summon or subdue the weather at will, and cure crew members of illnesses. Good captains are also known to be able to deal with crew and challenges with a cool and collected mind.

Church leaders, therefore, should be people with the positive qualities of *ilmu*. For example, leaders are respected, who can achieve their ends with a minimum of outer display, rather than getting angry, which is a definite sign of weakness. Church leaders, like boat captains, have a mandate to lead, but should do so with patience and self-control, and with respect for the equality and mutuality inherent in Butonese culture and the gospel[14] (Southon, 1995, pp. 66-67). The Butonese sayings

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[14] Butonese culture values humility, and has a tradition similar to some of Jesus' teaching. At Butonese ceremonial meals, higher-status individuals sit closer to the

about the desirability of *ilmu* reflect proverbs that urge the seeking of wisdom, and of the knowledge of God;

> Choose my instruction rather than silver, and knowledge over pure gold. For wisdom is far more valuable than rubies. Nothing you desire can be compared with it. . . . Fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom. Knowledge of the Holy One results in understanding (Prov 8:10-11; 9:10; cf. 1:7; 10:27; 22:4; 12:8; Eccles 12:12-14).

Butonese sailors have a trust in their captain, and Butonese villagers trust their community leaders, to understand and provide leadership in how things best operate (Southon, 1995, pp. 12-122). The gospel is about the chief captain, who showed captainly behaviour and *ilmu* in His command over nature and disease (cf. Matt 14:25; Mark 4:39-41). Christ could be presented as the captain of great *ilmu*, who invites people to follow Him, and have new life blown into their navels. Butonese perspectives on marital harmony, equality, humility, and corporate life (as voyaging together), echo gospel values that could be the basis for teaching a Butonese community about discipleship, and for them to contribute to the wider church.

CONCLUSION

Studying Butonese culture is welcomed by Butonese people. When foreign anthropologists tell Butonese people their vocation, a typical response seems to imply Butonese people find it quite natural that others would be fascinated with Butonese culture. Sultan Munarfa expressed his desire to give (and receive) help:

> Two people here from Australia want to study Indonesian and anthropology. And we are also are being given the opportunity to study English. It is good to build relationships with people

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architectural "head" of the house, but, as a rule, should sit one or two places "down" from the position their status entitles them to until their host repeatedly calls them "up" (Southon, *The navel of the* perahu, p. 95). Jesus said to take the lowest place at a banquet, rather than the place of honour, in order to teach people not to proudly seek honour for themselves; "For everyone who exalts himself will be humbled, and he who humbles himself will be exalted" (Luke 14:7-11; cf. 11:43).

from outside the country. They want help with their studies, and we can also study with them. They want to help. When they heard I was invited here, they were very happy to come and observe our customs and traditions from our area.[15]

We can be thankful to God, who created a diversity of cultures, and planted seeds of the knowledge of His character and ways within people's cultures, including the Butonese. It is my prayer that Butonese people would find fulfilment in the gospel, express it in worship and discipleship within their culture, and share their insights with the wider church.

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Narekko takkala mallebbani sompe'e ulebbirenni tellengnge nanrewe'e.
"The sail once raised, Better to sink than to go back."
(South Sulawesi Bugis' chant, from Ammarell, 1996)

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[15] "*Orang dari Australia yang mau belajar Bahasa Indonesia, mau belajar tentang antropologi, dan kita juga diberikan kesempatan untuk belajar Bahasa Inggris coba hubungan dengan luar negeri. Mereka mau membantu untuk dapat/tempat belajar dan kita juga dapat belajar dengan mereka. Mereka mau membantu. Mereka dengar saya akan ke sini diundang, oh mereka amat gembira sekali juga mau melihat bagaimana adat istiadat kita di daerah kita ini.*" (Sultan's speech, December, 1999, author's translation.)

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ARTICLES AND BOOKS
RELEVANT TO MELANESIA

"What is Contextual Theology: A View from Oceania", by Revd Dr Illaitia S. Tuwere, in *The Pacific Journal of Theology* 27 (2002), pp. 7-20. "As far as possible, theological discourse, in any given culture, must move into the depths of peoples' experience, and, from there, answer God's call, made through Jesus Christ. Contextual theology believes that theology and theological work can only be credible when it speaks from the depths of one's being "Out of the depths I cry to you O Lord" (Ps 130:1). There is no such thing as gospel, which is not embodied in a culture."

"How Do We Do Contextual Theology", by Revd Dr Javili Meo, in *The Pacific Journal of Theology* 27 (2002), pp. 41-60. "For genuinely contextual theologies, theological process begins with the opening of culture, carefully listening to culture to discover its principal values, needs, interests, directions, and systems."

"Builsa Proverbs and the Gospel", by W. Jay Moon, in *Missiology: An International Review* XXX-2 (April 2002), pp. 171-186. "The purpose of this paper is to demonstrate how the study of Builsa proverbs opens a window of understanding into the traditional Builsa culture, thought, and theology, which then provides a forum for the Buli scriptures to interpret their values, preoccupations, and thought."

"Living Together with the Ancestors", by Johannes Triebel, in *Missiology: An International Review* XXX-2 (April 2002), pp. 187-197. "The ancestors are incorporated into a very sensitive network of relationships. My family (and I, myself, as part of it) and my ancestors, another family and their ancestors, my clan and another clan, together with their ancestors, are part of that network that is, under ideal conditions, in balance. But, if at one point, something is moved, the whole network is affected."

"Christian Syncretism: A Study from the Southern Madang District of PNG", by Theodor Aherns, in *Point* 26 (2002), pp. 31-63.

"The Bogadjim and Amele cases demonstrate that the Melanesian listener could not but conceive the new message within his own traditional concept of worldview, in which religion ensures socio-economic well-being of the community, and helps men to maintain their place in the total cosmic order. People assumed that Christianity, and the new foreign culture, were related to each other, in the same way as were religion and the empirical realm in Melanesia."

"Concepts of Power in a Melanesian and Biblical Perspective", by Theodor Aherns, in *Point* 26 (2002), pp. 79-115. "A young man, who died suddenly in an accident, was buried in the village graveyard. The following night, a group of villagers saw a quiet flame about his grave. This sensation supported their suspicion that there was something mysterious about his death that needed further investigation. Some kind of power had appeared to convey a message."

"The Incarnational Model: Perception of Deception?", by Ken Baker, in *Evangelical Missions Quarterly* 38-1 (January, 2002), pp. 16-24. "The 'incarnational' model is an attempt to cultivate a particular and, perhaps, artificial social image. Furthermore, this approach implies that true relationship only develops where there is equality. In other words, for there to be 'connectedness' between members of two cultures, there must be economic parity. However, this fixation with material status overlooks an entire spectrum of realities, which impact intercultural relationships."

"Clashing Views of Cultural Sin", by Aaron Dean, in *Evangelical Missions Quarterly* 38-1 (January, 2002), pp. 48-53. "Americans rate sins, starting with murder, sexual sins, stealing, lying, and end up with the minor sins of anger, jealousy, and covetousness. African Christians would also start with murder, closely followed by anger, jealousy, and covetousness – and then end with minor sins, such as stealing (they'd call it borrowing), lying (saving face), and sexual sins (which they see as normal human activity)."

"FAITH COMES BY HEARING . . ."

If you had to learn a foreign language to become a Christian, would you be a Christian today? What hope would you have if you lived in a culture that had no written language? Furthermore, how would you exist if you couldn't read? These questions have become the driving force behind LANGUAGE RECORDINGS PNG, part of Global Recordings Network. Their aim is to make the gospel message available worldwide, in a form other than the written word.

DID YOU KNOW?

Amazingly, recent statistics tell us that there are still over 1.1 billion illiterate people in the world. That means that nearly one-third of the world's population cannot read.

DID YOU KNOW?

There are over 8,000 languages and dialects spoken in the world, and over 5,200 languages and dialects have not yet been reduced to a written form. In order to reach these various and different groups of people, Language Recordings produce cassettes of carefully-selected evangelistic messages and basic Christian teaching. In addition to being in local languages, they are often also prepared with a special cultural slant for the particular cultural group to be reached.

To make the initial recordings of the new languages, field recordists usually go to wherever the target language is actually spoken. The latest professional, portable recording equipment is used, and the process can take from one to ten hours for a four- to five-minute message, depending on the

ability of the language helper. Master cassettes are then produced, and the cassettes copied and distributed.

Distribution: Although Language Recordings distribute cassettes themselves, most of their main outlets are through other missionary and evangelistic organisations, churches, Christian support groups, and individuals. Bible translators, working in all parts of the world use them as a first means of contact with unreached tribes. Several literature-distributing missions equip their teams with evangelism cassettes, to meet the needs of the many non-literate people they encounter. Medical ministries in developing countries can play cassettes by the bedsides, or in the waiting rooms, of their clinics. Other ways of distributing the cassettes are through port ministries, relief agencies, and through all types of evangelistic outreaches.

Origin of the Mission: Over the years, Language Recordings has grown dramatically from its miraculous conception back in 1938, when an American missionary, Joy Ridderhof, home from Honduras, suffering from malaria, had the vision to bring the gospel on gramophone record to the people she worked with in Honduras, in their own language. These were enthusiastically received, and it was not long before missionaries from other parts were requesting records. She recorded languages, and distributed many thousands of these records throughout the world. As Gospel Recordings grew and developed, audiocassettes were introduced, and soon the organisation was sending out hundreds of thousands of these. Today, there are 25 centres and bases situated throughout the world, all supporting the work that this lady had started from her own home all those years ago.

Language Recordings PNG has its office and recording studio based at CLTC, near Mt Hagen, and is used as a recording and distribution centre for the many cassettes that are sent out each year.

What are we doing? To date, Language Recordings has over 5,400 languages recorded, and a target has been set to record another 1,000 languages over the next five years. Last year saw a record number of 26 field recordists trained worldwide, and from our own PNG office here in at CLTC, another staff member has been trained recently as a field recordist. This will enable the PNG office to record languages of the many different language groups living in this country. They will also travel to other countries to assist in recording new languages.

Materials available: We can learn a lot from the communicating style that Jesus used, by using word pictures for His listeners that spoke clearly to the needs of their hearts. Language Recordings has employed this simple story-telling technique in its 120 scripts. The recorded languages are accompanied by colourful, illustrated picture booklets and flip charts to help the people to hear and see the message.

The Messenger Tape Player: To ensure that people can hear the messages on cassette, Language Recordings has developed an intriguing hand-crank cassette player that can be used in places without electricity or batteries. These players are portable, yet robust, and are used extensively by local pastors, evangelists, missionaries, and outreach groups

to proclaim the **Good News** to those people who have never heard.

YOUR HELP IS REQUIRED

A recent report from one of our bases in Liberia stated that over 300 people in a village had given their lives to the Lord following a distribution of our cassettes. One man in the village asked, "When did you receive this good news?" Our distributor answered, "In 1995." The man who had asked the question was so angry and irate as he had just recently buried two of his relatives. He cried, "Why did it take you so long to come?" **Time is short, and we feel there is an urgency to reach the lost**. We at Language Recordings PNG are committed to bringing this **Good News** to those who are waiting to hear. If you would like further information about the mission, or if you would like us to share about the work at your church, house group, or prayer meeting, please contact us at:

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