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MELANESIAN JOURNAL OF THEOLOGY

Journal of the Melanesian Association of Theological Schools

The *Melanesian Journal of Theology* aims to stimulate the writing of theology 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 Yugari asks penetrating questions of the church in Melanesia. Too often, the traditional big-man model, as opposed to the biblical servant-leader model, determines church leadership. James focuses on his own Helahuli tribe of the Southern Highlands Province of Papua New Guinea. He draws relevant comparisons between the two models, and makes specific recommendations to Helahuli churches. The article offers excellent insight for those interested in church leadership in Melanesian contexts.

In the second article, Daniel Johnson takes a critical look at the reincarnation beliefs of the Butonese people of Indonesia. The Butonese have an almost unique belief in reincarnation among Muslims. Daniel argues that this belief came from Hinduism, but focuses more on identifying ancestors. He concludes that, to effectively share the gospel with Butonese, one must understand this "complex of beliefs", and clearly teach the reality of resurrection faith. Only then will Butonese truly understand eternal life.

Next, Alexander Henning argues for equality between men and women in Melanesia. Through a careful exegesis of Gen 2:18-25, he concludes that the order of creation does not establish a hierarchical order between man and woman. Rather, the focus of the passage is that man and woman share the same nature. Alexander shows how this misunderstanding exhibits itself in Melanesian culture, and he challenges Melanesians to move towards more gender equality in their lives and customs.

David Thiele comments on an article about the Antichrist, published in volume 19-1 of this journal. He applauds the author, Hane Kila, for her clear presentation, but counter-argues her on two points. First, he says that the Antichrist should be understood as a movement, rather than a person. Second, the 42 months should be taken qualitatively rather than quantitatively. He rightfully concludes that all should study eschatology, because it forces one to ask questions such as, "How then should I live?", "Who shall I worship?", and "What will be my God?"

Francis Poye, from the Dinga tribe in Chimbu Province of Papua New Guinea, explores his people's historical worship of the sun god *Yanigelwa*, and the factors that led to syncretism in Dinga churches today. After giving detailed examples of how the Dinga people worshipped the sun god, he critically examines the introduction of the gospel, and its resultant syncretism, and concludes with specific recommendations for the Dinga church. The article shows how difficult it can be to avoid syncretism in some cultures.

Finally, in "Articles and Books Relevant to Melanesia", Daniel Stollenwerk writes a thorough review of *Culture and Progress: The Melanesian Philosophy of Land and Development in Papua New Guinea*, Nancy Sullivan, ed., Madang PNG: Divine Word University Press, 2002. I'll let Daniel's concluding words speak for themselves: "*Culture and Progress* remains a highly-impressive – even daring – gathering of contemporary PNG thinkers, confronting perhaps the most crucial and contentious issue in Papua New Guinea today."

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.

A BIBLICAL CRITIQUE OF HELAHULI CHURCH LEADERSHIP

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INTRODUCTION

Churches in Melanesia need biblical leadership. Today, our church leaders copy traditional cultural models of leadership. They use the idea of a big-man rather than that of a servant leader, thus becoming like the world. This article discusses how a specific traditional cultural leadership model, with its associated worldview, can transition to a biblical leadership model. In doing so, there are questions that we must ask. How does one become a leader in the traditional model? How does one become a leader in the biblical model? In order to address these questions, we will first look at the traditional model of leadership in the Helahuli tribe, and then look at the biblical model of leadership.

THE HELAHULI TRIBE OF PAPUA NEW GUINEA

GEOGRAPHICAL LOCATION

The Helahuli tribe lives in the three electorates of Tari/Pori, Komo/Margarima, and Koroba, in the Southern Highlands Province of Papua New Guinea. The country lies, as Glasse puts it, "on the southern flank of the central cordillera in the great basin formed by the Tagali River and its tributaries".[1] It is about 4,500 to 6,000 feet above sea level, and there are "few ridges in the settled area more than 8,000 feet high. The

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[1] R. M. Glasse, "The Huli of the Southern Highlands", in *Gods, Ghosts, and Men in Melanesia*, Peter Lawrence, and M. J. Meggitt, eds, London UK: Oxford University Press, 1972, p. 27.

land is mostly flat or 'gently undulating', with dense rainforest."[2] The climate is temperate, with little variation. It rains almost every month, with irregular patterns. Day temperatures are around 20°C, and, at night, it is around 15°C, all throughout the year. The population is 161,838,[3] and occupies "an area of about 2,000 square miles".[4] Apart from Nipa, it is one of the most-populated areas in the Southern Highlands. It has a settlement pattern "of dispersed homesteads, rather than tightly-clustered villages, and the family is not a residential unit".[5] The economy is based on subsistence farming.

ORIGIN

The Helahuli believe that the "first inhabitants of the land were *Honabe*, a female deity, who cooked her food by the heat of her own genitals, and *Timbu*, a male deity, who seduced *Honabe*, and later gave birth to five male deities: *Korimogo*, *Helabe*, *Piandela*, *Ni*, and *Helahuli*, and one female deity, *Hana*".[6] Helahuli later married an unknown woman, who bore him four sons: *Huli*, *Obena*, *Duguba*, and *Duna*. They were the first human beings, and each founded the culture groups known to the Huli by these names. The four sons of *Helahuli* became tribal groups, and they established trading links with the Heladuna to the east, the Helaobena to the north, and the Heladuguba to the south. Today, the area, these four tribal groups settled, is divided into electorates: Tari/Pori, Koroba/Kobiago, Komo/Margarima, and Enga.[7] The Helahuli speak the Huli language, and share an area of the first three electorates. The Helahuli are "one of Papua New Guinea's best-known and colourful tribes, and are sturdy, warlike

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[2] Ibid., pp. 27-28.
[3] Ibid., p. 28.
[4] Ibid.
[5] Ibid.
[6] Ibid., p. 33.
[7] Enga is now its own province, but Helahulis believe that Engas are their brothers.

people".[8] The Helahuli are known as *wigmen*, for their fashion of weaving elaborate human hair wigs[9] that men wear for special occasions.

FAMILY CUSTOMS

Helahuli custom has been that men lived apart from their wives and young children, because they believed that contact with women impaired their health, and led to premature aging. Young children resided with their mothers. However, after initiation, the older boys joined their father's household.[10] The man looked after his pigs, while the wife looked after her pigs. When the time came for killing pigs, both the man and the woman brought the pigs together to share the meat among the family.

The man made gardens for himself and his sons. The woman did likewise for herself, the girls, and the young children. Men cooked and prepared their own food (showing that women's influence was limited), because of their belief in the supernatural order.[11] However, a married man would not have to work so hard if he had "no qualms about eating food grown by women".[12]

Life for the women was strict, and quite hard. They were not free to roam. The women's jobs were to care for the children, make gardens, and care for the pigs. Men provided protection for the family against tribal enemies, and against spiritual attacks. Men had the excitement of war, and most of the dancing (using their decorated wigs).[13]

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[8] Steven Mago, "The Magic of Ambua Lodge – Travel", in *Post-Courier*, November 22, 2001, p. 22.

[9] Kingsley Ridgway, *Feet Upon the Mountain*, PNG: Wesleyan Church, 1976, p. 21. Yellow and red everlasting daisies, snakeskins, bird-of-paradise plumes, and anything else that is bright, decorate the wigs.

[10] Glasse, "The Huli", pp. 28-29.

[11] Ibid.

[12] Eva Twyman, *The Battle for the Bigwigs*, Melbourne Vic: Unevangelized Fields Mission, 1961, p. 58.

[13] Ibid., p. 59.

TRADITIONAL MODEL OF HELAHULI TRIBAL LEADERSHIP

Leadership is a diverse topic. There are different leadership styles used around the world. In Melanesia, tribal groupings, clans, villages, and communities have their own traditional cultural models. In these traditional models of leadership, there are three key aspects: the means of becoming a leader, the methods used in leadership, and the marks shown by a leader.

MEANS OF BECOMING A TRADITIONAL LEADER

In order to understand the Helahuli tribal model of leadership, we need to examine leadership in the context of social structure. In all parts of Melanesia, the system of social and political organisations has similar features. As Chao says, "In such societies, status and power are closely related to kinship descent, kin group membership, and seniority."[14] Just as Melanesians are kinship based, so is Helahuli tribal leadership. In order to become a leader in Helahuli tribe, one needs the correct kinship, training, and discipline.

Kinship

The Helahuli tribe is a patriarchal society. Leadership is only by men, with two or more paternal lines combining to form what is known, indigenously, as *tene* (patrician of a clan). Leadership normally comes from the *tene*, who, because of the communal ownership of land, are the ones who have the power and authority over the clan. However, if the patriarchal clan does not provide a leader, then someone from the matrilineal clan can lead.[15] Chao correctly states, "the most common form of political leadership is the so called 'big-man' system".[16] The leaders emerge, largely through their personal success in gathering a body of followers. In Helahuli society, this is done by achievement.

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[14] Sr M. John Paul, Chao, "Leadership", in Darrell L. Whiteman, ed., *Introduction to Melanesian Cultures Point* 5 (1984), p. 127.

[15] Minwas More, "Justification for Churches Involvement in Politics with Special Reference to the Nipa Society in the Southern Highlands", unpublished thesis: Rabaul PNG: Rarongo Theological College.

[16] Chao, "Leadership", pp. 133-134.

Training

Historically, a Helahuli young boy left his mother at the age of six, and joined his other brothers and father in the *palamanda* (men's house). Each clan had their own *palamanda*. In the *palamanda*, the old men told stories about their brave warriors, great hunters, dancers, and rich men. During this time, the boys grew under the teaching and discipline of the older men. When the older boys left their house at four o'clock in the morning, the young boys went with them. However, if the young boys woke up late, they stayed, and made toy bows and arrows, learned to fight among themselves, and looked for wild fruits, insects, mushrooms, and birds' eggs. They also collected firewood, and fetched water for the men. Daimoi refers to this as "the discipline (and training) at the junior level. There are different ways of training the initiates in their junior stages: informal training, the art of self-defence, and the stories of the *tumbuna* (ancestors)."[17]

Informal Training. The training process was informal. "There were no systematic methods and theories developed and institutionalised."[18] The young boys would live with the men in the *palamanda*, and learn by watching. If the men were building a house, fence, or garden, the boys watched. Later, the men got the young boys involved in the work. Piddington emphasises that, "Participation, imitation, and correction help a young boy to be a skilful craftsman."[19] Until the young boys became confident, they were supervised. Less and less supervision was done, until they could actually do the job themselves. Some jobs were short-term, taking only a few weeks, or a month, to be completed, while other jobs were long-term, taking months to complete. For instance, building houses, fencing, or digging ditches were long-term jobs. The short-term jobs were cooking, making costumes, and gardening. They mastered these jobs quickly. Since it was an apprentice-type of training, they first had to

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[17] Joshua Daimoi, "Spiritual Formation in Bible and Theological Colleges", in Christopher Garland, ed., *Melanesian Journal of Theology* 5-2 (1989), p. 38.
[18] Robin Bazzynu, "A Biblical Analysis of Education in Papua New Guinea", in Doug Hanson, ed., *Melanesian Journal of Theology* 17-1 (2001), p. 46.
[19] Ralph Piddington, *An Introduction to Social Anthropology* vol 1, Edinburgh UK: Oliver & Boyd, 1952, pp. 180-181.

observe, then participate, under the watchful eye of the older men, and finally perform, without supervision.

The girls' training was similar, in many ways, to the boys. The older mothers looked after the young girls, who looked after the children, pigs, and gardens. The older women also taught them about their own bodies.

The Art of Self-Defence. The boys were taught to make bows and arrows. Bows and arrows were important tools, and had to be used properly. They would be used in fighting, to protect one's family and clan from enemies, and for hunting. The young boys were taught to make small bows and arrows to attack each other, and defend themselves, as a kind of a military exercise.

The Stories of the Tumbuna *(Ancestors).* The boys sat in front of the old men, who talked to them for hours about the secrets of their clan. Daimoi says, "They hear stories of *tumbuna*, 'the surface secret' – the history of their people, their tribal origins, and the names of their forefathers. They were introduced to the names of their gods and ancestral spirits, whom they will encounter in the final stage of their initiation."[20] These were the surface secrets, later, they learned the deep secrets. However, it was an important part of their training, and the men tested them by asking them to repeat what was told. The old men told them to be brave, work hard, protect and defend their clan.

Having completed the junior stage, they went into the final stage of training. Other societies had three stages, but the Helahuli had only two stages. "They are mainly on the ethical and religious life of the society."[21]

The initiates were introduced to the "secret men's village, where the elders kept young men in seclusion for up to two years, as they allowed their hair to grow Afro-style (*manda hare*), the final highlight of the training".[22] During these two years, they learned laws associated with food taboos,

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[20] Daimoi, "Spiritual Formation", p. 38.
[21] Ibid., p. 39.
[22] Steven Mago, "The Magic of Ambua Lodge", in *Post-Courier* – Travel, November 22, p. 5.

designs to be used on spears, and fully learned and memorised the laws and designs that belonged to their community. This was important for their well-being, and for future generations. At the end of this process, they were recognised as men. From that moment on, life was not the same.

With their special wig *(manda hare)* status, they graduated, and became full members of their society, and male adults. They had the privilege and responsibility of sharing in all the activities of the community, as they were recognised as leaders.

Discipline

How did young boys become disciplined? "The tests for discipline and physical endurance for a young man of Helahuli were to observe how strong, aggressive, and brave they were. It was a test for leadership, whether they gave up and ran away, or kept going, when things got tough."[23] They ran a long way up and down the hills, and were not allowed to stop for a drink of water, or to chew sugar cane. They had to uproot young trees with their bare hands, and to split logs with axes. At night, the old men threw the boys into cold water. The stinging leaves of the *hebane*[24] plant were rubbed on their faces, and all over their bodies. A big fire was made, and the boys ran around until they could not run any more. When they fell down, the old men would hit the boys, to make them stand up and run again. The bodies of the boys were covered with sweat, and they shone in the bright light of the fire. Later at night, wet or green leaves were put on the fire, which made an enormous cloud of thick smoke, but the boys went on running. Their noses and mouth were full of smoke, and tears came from their red eyes. At one o'clock in the morning, they stopped running. The old men gave them bamboos, used for carrying water, but there was not any water in them, so the boys had to pretend that they enjoyed a good drink!

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[23] Interview with Pastor John Mapa, Erepo village, Tari, Southern Highlands Province, Papua New Guinea, 28/12/2001.

[24] *Hebane* is a type of poisonous wild plant, which, when rubbed on the body, brings swelling and pain to the body.

After this, they went into the final stage of initiation, in which the elders swore at the young men for no reason. If a young man responded, "they belted him with lime sticks, and burned him with glowing tobacco".[25] The boys were made to walk to the other side of a creek on one small log. In the creek were sharp sticks and stones, thorns, and leaves with sharp edges. On the other side, the place was filled with bees, red ants, beetles, and anything that bit. If the young man cried when bitten, the elders would beat him up. If he endured through that discipline, he successfully passed. He then went back to the community, and they counted him as one of their leaders.

METHODS USED BY A TRADITIONAL LEADER

Though Helahuli traditional leadership is kinship based, heredity is not a determining factor for leadership. As Chao affirms, "regardless of how much support a big-man's son may receive, if he lacks leadership qualities, he cannot succeed as a big-man."[26] Therefore, leadership may not necessarily be passed on from the big-man to his son. There were others in the clan, who went through the training and discipline, who could take the leadership. The older men in the *palamanda* evaluated a younger man according to how the he spoke, how much wealth he had accumulated, and his aggressiveness.

Talker or Spokesman

One of the methods for determining a leader was how he talked, *agali bi laga* (talker). This went along with the status of a big-man (*agali haguane)*. He had to be a person, who knew the genealogies of the lineage. When land disputes arose, he was to identify the correct location of their landmarks. When there were disputes in the clan, he became the peacemaker, to bring both parties to an understanding and agreement. Disputes occurred about land, pigs, and women – hard-core elements for a Helahuli. Once they touched these important elements, they went forward to put their bodies on the line, even if it meant death. If the big-man was able to sort out the disputes, peace prevailed. In his talking, he had the

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[25] Michael Somare, *Sana*, Port Moresby PNG: Niugini Press, 1975, p. 26.
[26] Chao, "Leadership", p. 139.

power to bring forth peace, or to make war. The leader who talked well was a key man.

Wealth

"Men deemed wealth in terms of their ability to produce or marshal resources such as pigs. This stresses the role of pigs in the status of wealth (*homogo*), including the pig owner (*nogo hini*), the pig killer (*nogo baga*), and rich in pigs (*nogo homogo*). This is referred to in contemporary contexts as 'big-man'."[27] Wealth, to the Helahuli, was a lot of pigs, shell money, gardens, and many wives. Once you had those things, they called you a big-man. "An aspiring leader is typically an ambitious and energetic individual, who is able to accumulate wealth, and organise large-scale activities."[28] He built up his wealth by working hard, raising pigs, making many gardens, and through successful exchanges. Successful exchanges means distributing his wealth generously to his clansmen, kinsmen, and other neighbouring groups. In doing so, he attracted many followers and supporters, by putting them in his debt. Practices, such as paying bride-price for a young man, and paying compensation for other neighbouring groups, caused the young man to become his follower, and caused them to become his dependents and supporters.

In order to maintain his leadership, he had to continue to be economically successful. Therefore, the practice of polygamy helped in many ways. The wives made gardens, and looked after pigs, which made his economic base bigger. The wives also brought additional kin groups, alliances in warfare, and economic cooperation, because it was almost as if he was married to the other clans.

Aggressiveness

Since the big-man had gone through training and discipline in his earlier years, he now utilised what he had gone through, by practising his

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[27] Chris Ballard, *The Fire for Next Time: British Petroleum: The Book of Revelation and Huli Rituals*, a paper presented at the First-European Collegium on Pacific Studies, December,1994, p. 21.
[28] Chao, "Leadership", p. 134.

leadership. Aggressiveness, one of the practices of leadership, was shown in at least three ways: physical, mental, and decisiveness.

Physical. "In the Highlands, where population density is generally higher, and tribal fighting more intense, a leader's ability in warfare, and skills in war, is important."[29] A Helahuli big-man had to be an *agali wai biaga* (a war leader), who planned for attack, and gave directions and commands. The concept of big-men was men with a reputation of initiating, and thus being able to coordinate compensation for wars. They were distinguished by the terms *pari wayali* (the ability to stay free from wounds), *bogaga* (killer), *wai taya biaga* (fight maker), and *agali bolenego* (man killer).[30] He maintained his aggressiveness through his emotions, and never showed his sorrow. If other clansmen saw his tears, they went wild, or committed suicide, by attacking the other clan, because they had seen the tears of their leader. To avoid this, the leader kept to himself. If he suffered pain and wounds, he couldn't show it to others. He had to be aggressive, by physically fighting through his pain, and still keep leading.

Mental. One of the aggressive marks of a Helahuli leader was his mindset. When his mind was set, he went forward in his talking, fighting, and decisions. He controlled his emotions. He determined to accomplish his purposes, in negotiations for peace, compensation, and warfare. Another factor was fear. The leader never showed fear. When everyone was fearful, he was courageous. He fought fear within himself. If the leader was mentally fearful, then he was already defeated. The power to win in warfare was based on his mental aggressiveness.

Decisiveness. Finally, he showed aggressiveness, by his decisiveness. When the leader made a decision to go to war, he could not change his decision, unless there was a vital reason for him to change. Normally, his decision was final, whether the decision was good or bad, beneficial or not, he could not compromise. If his decision was for peace after war, it meant peace; his clansmen could not go on fighting. His aggressiveness in his

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[29] Chao, "Leadership", p. 134.
[30] Ballard, *Fire for Next Time*, p. 21.

decision-making could not be softhearted. His speeches were realistic, achievable, and aggressive.

MARKS SHOWN BY A TRADITIONAL LEADER

After graduating, with his red wig (*manda har*)*,* the young man lived with the older men in the men's house. He eventually got married, and was considered a fully-matured man. He became involved with community life. Older men allowed him to talk, and tackle issues for the clan. After some time, the older men observed, evaluated, and assessed his life. They asked questions among themselves. "Does he have the maturity to be the leader?" "Does he have respect and influence?"

Maturity

What were signs of maturity? There were signs the elders looked for in a leader of their clan. Firstly, he came to the community with his *manda hare,* a sign of maturity, showing he had gone through the initiations. It was proof that he knew the genealogies of the clan, the laws and secrets of spiritual well-being. Secondly, the elders looked at his actions, how he reacted to situations, his honesty, his volume of work, and his time and efforts. They looked at how he killed pigs, made gardens, and his distributions of wealth. Thirdly, they observed how he communicated with his immediate family members, the young boys, the women, and children. This involved solving their problems, trying to get to know their needs, longings, and aspirations. Once he met these requirements, the elders recommended him as a potential leader.

Respect

One of the features that showed a mark of leadership was respect. The elders always looked for respect in a young leader (whether he had the respect of everyone in the community). The community respected him for who he was, what he said, and what he could do. Foremost, he needed the respect of his own family members. They followed and obeyed what he said. They followed his orders, obeyed commands and directions, and acted carefully, and accordingly, in such activities as payment of bride price, compensation, or pig killing.

Respect in the clan for their leader was very high when he led them by example, and lived by his word. How did he gain respect? He was a rich man, in terms of wealth, a war leader, and the clan's spokesman. He was their key-man. Once he received that honour as their big-man, he was given special treatment and respect. He was respected for his worth.[31] His experience in war was another factor. He had to be a person, who fought many wars, planned many wars, had been the commander of many wars, and was a *pari wayali* (one who had not had any wounds). His experience in killing many pigs, and distributing the meat among many other *palamandas* (other clans and neighbouring communities) proved a sign of respect, and a mark of a leader in distribution of wealth.

Influence

"It needs to be reemphasised that one's ability to plan and manage economic production and exchange is significant in rising to be a big-man, everywhere in Melanesia."[32] In Helahuli traditional leadership, influence played an important role. When the leader had the ability to organise and manage his wealth, this led to much influence. When he gave his pigs for a young man's marriage, the young man became indebted to the leader. This also went with killing pigs at the time of grieving (*duguanda*), where the relatives of the deceased became indebted to the leader. The leader's contribution of compensation payments to a neighbouring clan, made the neighbouring clan indebted to him. In these cases, the leader became an influential man in and around the community, and the surrounding clans. In doing so, he had many followers and supporters. When he had such influence, he led by coercion, by control, and drove them by dominion.

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[31] Interview with Pastor Egari Paiago, Walumali Station, Tari, Southern Highlands Province, Papua New Guinea, 28/12/2001.
[32] Chao, "Leadership", p. 135.

SUMMARY

The church leaders of Helahuli have been brought up in such a pattern. Their way of understanding leadership is quite different from the biblical pattern of leadership. Their view of leadership is the big-man view, marked by aggressiveness, wealth, and being talkative.

Being a Christian, however, and having responsibilities as leaders (pastors, deacons, elders, and other responsibilities in the church), one has to have the qualities of a biblical leader. In the next section, will look at how a traditionally-trained Helahuli church leader can become a biblical leader.

BIBLICAL MODEL OF LEADERSHIP

Having seen the traditional model of Helahuli leadership, we will now look at the biblical model of leadership. It is important to understand that there are big differences between traditional leadership and biblical leadership. Barna correctly says, "A Christian leader is someone, who is called by God to lead; leads with and through Christlike character; and demonstrates the functional competencies that permit effective leadership to take place."[33] From this definition, let's look at the characteristics of a biblical leader.

Firstly, God calls a biblical leader to lead. It is a divine call from above, on someone whom God has appointed to lead His people (1 Sam 16:1-3; 13:14; Ps 89:20). In Acts 20:28, Paul reminded the Ephesian elders that it was the Holy Spirit who had appointed them to their ministry. As Jesus said to His disciples "You did not choose Me, but I chose you and appointed you" (John 15:16). Sanders says, "Spiritual leadership is a thing of the Spirit, and is conferred by God alone. When His searching eye alights on a man who has qualified, He anoints him with His Spirit, and separates him to his distinctive ministry (Acts 9:17; 22:21)."[34]

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[33] George Barna, *Leaders on Leadership*, Ventura CA: Regal Books, 1997, p. 25.

[34] J. Oswald Sanders, *Spiritual Leadership*, London UK: Lakeland Books, 1967, pp. 17-18. He quotes from Samuel Logan Brengle's book, *The Soul-Winner's Secret*, "It is not won by promotion, but by many prayers and tears. It is attained by confessions of sin, and much heart-searching and humbling before God; by self-surrender, a courageous sacrifice of every idol, a bold, deathless, uncompromising, and uncomplaining embracing of the cross, and by an eternal, unfaltering looking unto Jesus crucified. It is not gained

Secondly, a biblical leader must be a person of Christlike character. The greatest leader in the Bible is Jesus, whose leadership style was very different from most other leaders. His emphasis was service (Matt 20:28) to poor and hurting people (Luke 4:18-19), and, through this, He defined His leadership. His example was servanthood (Matt 20:26; Mark 10:43), and his way was humility (Phil 2:5-8). Jesus' way of leadership took people completely by surprise. Even the disciples found it difficult to come to terms with Jesus' example, and teachings about leadership. Jesus showed an outstanding example of servanthood at the end of His ministry. At the Last Supper, Jesus wrapped Himself with a towel, took a basin of water, and proceeded to wash the disciples' feet (John 13:4-5). Jesus launched and concluded His ministry as a servant.

Thirdly, a biblical leader is one who possesses the functional competencies that allow him to perform tasks and guide people toward accomplishing the God-given tasks. Biblical leaders are given great responsibility (Col 1:25; Eph 3:2). The biblical leader will give an account to God for his work, done according to the responsibilities given him (Rom 14:12; 2 Cor 5:10; Heb 13:17). Having looked at a definition of a biblical leader, we will look at the means of becoming a biblical leader, and the methods biblical leaders use.

MEANS OF BECOMING A BIBLICAL LEADER

The means of becoming a leader, in the Helahuli traditional leadership model, was based on kinship, training, and discipline. However, in the biblical model of leadership, it is spiritual leadership, and, therefore, requires a spiritual means of leadership. As Sanders says, "Christian leadership comes – often unsought – to those who, in earlier life, have proven themselves worthy of it, by spirituality, discipline, ability, and diligence . . . have sought first the kingdom of God."[35] There are many

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by seeking great things for ourselves, but rather, like Paul, by counting those things that is gain to us as loss for Christ. That is a great price, but it must be unflinchingly paid by him who would be not merely a nominal, but a real, spiritual leader of men, a leader whose power is recognised, and felt in heaven, on earth, and in hell."

[35] Sanders, *Spiritual Leadership*, p. 17.

aspects of biblical leadership, including being born again, having training, and discipline.

Born Again

The Helahuli tribal leadership was based on kinship, with emphasis on acquisition, rather than the inherited status. The biblical pattern of leadership is inherited through being born again. " 'Born again', which, in Greek is γεννάω (*gennaō*), is used, in the writings of the Apostle John, of the gracious act of God, in conferring upon those who believe, the nature and disposition of children, and imparting to them spiritual life."[36] It is a total work of God.[37]

A requirement of biblical leadership is to be born again. Jesus emphatically said to Nicodemus, "no one can see the kingdom of God unless he is born again" (John 3:3). It has nothing to do with patriarchal or matrilineal kinship; it is only through being born again.[38] Through the Holy Spirit, we can say, "Jesus is Lord" (1 Cor 12:3). Being born again "makes us tremble in His presence, and be submissive to His commands, because of the lordship of Jesus Christ in our lives."[39] Nicodemus was a big-man, in the standard of the Jews and the world. However, that title could not help him, for he had to be born again, to be recognised in the kingdom of God.

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[36] W. E. Vine, et al, *Vine's Expository Dictionary of Old and New Testament Words*, Nashville TN: Thomas Nelson, 1985, p. 101. John 3:3; 5:7; 1 John 2:29; 3:9; 4:7; 5:1, 4, 18.

[37] We see that in John 1:12-13, "Yet to all who received Him, to those who believed in His name, He gave the right to become children of God – children born, not of natural descent, nor of human decision of a husband's will, but born of God." James 1:18; 1 Peter 1:3; John 3:3-8.

[38] Gottfried Osei-Mensah, in his book, *Wanted Servant Leaders*, Achimota Ghana: African Christian Press, 1990, p. 24, states, "There is nothing territorial in the expression 'the kingdom of God'! Jesus meant the kingship reign of God is in a person's life. Nicodemus was told that a person cannot understand or appreciate what the kingly reign of God is all about, nor his own need to submit personally to the King, until the Holy Spirit brings that person to conversion."

[39] Ibid.

Many leaders in Helahuli and Melanesian churches need to be born again. They have lived a life of a skin-Christian,[40] but have never experienced the saving power of Jesus Christ. They have the form of religion, but lack the power thereof (2 Tim 3:5). There is no Christ in them. There is no Holy Spirit in them. They have not been born again.[41] They are like what Jesus said, "These people honour me with their lips, but their hearts are far from Me. They worship Me in vain; their teachings are but rules, taught by men" (Matt 9:8-9). They are directed and controlled by the titles of leadership, the big-man understanding of the world, and do not know what submission to the kingship of Jesus Christ is all about.

There are certain signs of a leader in church, who is not born again: self-promoting, feeling threatened, critical in denominational leadership, and denominational empire-builders. [42]

Firstly, self-promoting leaders in the churches seem to promote themselves, instead of promoting the Lord. They talk about their achievements during their leadership. When many new churches are planted around the area under their leadership, when new converts flood into the church, when new young leaders emerge, when the church finances are at their best, the leaders seem to exalt themselves in meetings and conferences in the church.

Secondly, unconverted leaders feel threatened by other leaders, who are more spiritual. The leaders will try their best to put the spiritual leaders down, by their talking, discussions, and actions. The unconverted leaders feel insecure in their position, because they lack what a converted spiritual leader has. This is also true for trained and upcoming young leaders. The older unconverted leaders try to depress, look down upon, and even ignore these young leaders, because they feel threatened. They do not have humbleness, in coming to the Lord to find what they lack, but, instead, criticise others, in order to hold onto power, and to lift themselves up. One example was in the year 2000, when Bible College graduates organised a Helahuli church leaders' meeting, and some church leaders went against the

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[40] They live like a Christian, externally.
[41] Osei-Mensah, *Wanted Servant Leaders*, p. 24.
[42] Ibid., pp. 24-25.

idea. However, when they realised their mistake, they joined in without apology.

Thirdly, the unconverted leaders are critical of changes. They are critical of new ideas, for the betterment of the church, that are introduced by other spiritual leaders. They also put much emphasis on the ways of the older pioneer white missionaries. For instance, church laws are so strongly enforced that, if someone breaks the church laws, the leaders reprimand them, and do not allow them to receive Holy Communion. When asked why they are doing this, they call upon the name of the old missionary and say – this was what he told us, so we must follow. They also put emphasis on the ceremonial aspects, laws, and traditions of the church, rather than putting emphasis on prayer, Bible study, evangelism, and pastoral care that strengthens the body of Christ – the church.

Fourthly, the unconverted leaders tend to focus on themselves, perhaps building their own empires. They are against cooperation with other Christian churches and denominations, and want to be on their own. They need to understand that the church has different parts, including different denominations, which make up the body of Christ. Osei-Mensah says, "Cooperation threatens their power-base. If they agree on any collaboration, it is because, somewhere in their minds, they see it as an opportunity to extend their influence."[43]

The most important requirement to be a biblical leader in Helahuli churches is to be born again. We need to pray for leaders in our churches, who need to be born again. We need to pray that they will come to a realisation that it is Christ's church, and not theirs, because it was Christ who loved the church, and gave Himself for the church (Gal 2:20).

Training

Another requirement for biblical leadership is training. In Greek, "training" is παιδεύω (*paideuō*), which means, "to teach, instruct,

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[43] Ibid., p. 25.

train".[44] Just as Helahuli young boys leave their mothers at the age of six, to go to the men's house, young Christians need to go into training. Daimoi says, "Christians' spiritual formation is the work of the Holy Spirit . . . dependent on the partnership between God and man".[45] Through the work of the Holy Spirit, the people develop in their spiritual life. They need to read and feed on the Word of God (2 Pet 2:2; Matt 4:4; Col 3:16; 1 Thess 1:8). Young Christians need to make prayer their priority, so that they will depend on God (Rom 8:26; Eph 6:18; Phil 4:16; Col 4:2; 1 Thess 5:17; 1 Tim 4:4; Heb 4:16; James 5:16; Jude 20). They need to spend time in fellowship with others (Ps 55:13-14; 133:1; Heb 10:25; John 13:34; John 15:12; Rom 12:15; Gal 6:2; Phil 2:1; 1 Thess 4:18; 1 John 1:3).

Like the older men in the men's house in Helahuli traditional leadership, older Christians, need to do what Sanders says, "to discipline, to instruct, and enlighten, to nurture and train one that is younger".[46] We see this in the life of our Lord Jesus Christ, when he called his 12 disciples.[47] The great apostle Paul discipled younger men, and brought them up for the service of God. He trained young men like Timothy, and called him "my true son in the faith" (1 Tim 1:2). He also called Titus "my true son in our common faith" (Titus 1:4).

When young Christians go under the watchful eyes of older Christians, they learn to live Christian lives, as they attend discipleship classes, lead small fellowship groups, and participate in the activities in the church. This is considered informal training. In informal training, the younger Christians will watch the older Christians (including pastors, elders, and

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[44] Vine, *Expository Dictionary*, p. 594. It is translated as "instructed" in Acts 7:22, "learned" in 1 Tim 2:25, and "correcting" in Titus 2:12.

[45] Daimoi, "Spiritual Formation", p. 42.

[46] Sanders, *Spiritual Leadership*, p.141.

[47] Jesus selected a few men, and devoted Himself primarily to those men, who would be competent enough so that, through their word or ministry, others will believe in Him (John 17:20). Their skills and abilities, which were hidden and undeveloped, were put to good use. For three years, He gave Himself to training and developing their potential. Toward the end of His life, He said, "I have revealed You to those whom You gave me out of the world. . . . Now they know that everything You have given Me comes from You. For I gave them the words You gave Me, and they accepted them. They knew with certainty that I came from You, and they believed that You sent Me" (John 17:6-8).

other older Christians) preaching, teaching, counselling, and performing other leadership roles in the church. As Paul said to Timothy, "And the things you have heard me say, in the presence of many witnesses, entrust to reliable men, who will also be qualified to teach others" (2 Tim 2:2).

The formal training starts once the older Christian recommends that the younger Christian enters the second stage of learning. This second stage can be attending a Bible school, or attending courses offered at colleges like CLTC.[48] In this way, the young leaders are taught to handle the Word of God in the activities of preaching, teaching, counselling, and many other activities done in the church. This would be similar to the Helahuli young boys learning to make bow and arrows, as an act of self-defence. In addition, in a sense, learning the Bible, the Word of God, would be like learning the stories of the *tumbuna* (ancestors).

Once they successfully complete this formal training stage, they go into the final stage. This would be attending a Bible college, such as CLTC, that offers full-time diploma or degree program in theology. However, these training programs are not confined to classroom activities; they include daily work duties, and sporting activities. Once they graduate from the formal training stage, young men and women should have the privilege of sharing in the ministry, and other activities, of the church.

One of the problems we have in the Helahuli churches is that we don't have men in the Bible colleges. Very few men have been trained. Some graduated with certificates or diplomas, but not at degree level. What is the problem? Is it money? Are there not enough men with appropriate secondary-school training in the Helahuli area? I don't think so. The problem is that the church leaders are not training, nurturing, and recommending young men to go into training. The old church leaders want to hold on to their position in the church. They don't want anyone to disturb their security in that position, so they are not too keen in training young men. They want to die with the position.

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[48] CLTC stands for Christian Leaders' Training College. CLTC has a main campus in Banz, WHP, and extension campuses in Port Moresby and Lae.

Helahuli biblical leaders need to be trained informally and formally. In order to be a leader, one needs to go through informal training, by learning from others, and doing for themselves, until they become good at it. The older leaders should be available to help them. Those young leaders, who are literate, must be recommended for further training. Once in training, they must be equipped with the Word of God, so that, after graduating, they will come back to the church. The young leader would be thoroughly equipped to handle the Word of God, and take up a leadership role in the church. One of the requirements for biblical leadership must be leaders, who have gone through training.

Discipline

Discipline is one of the means of leadership, in both the traditional Helahuli and biblical patterns of leadership. It has the same purpose, in the sense of moulding and shaping of a leader, however, they are quite different in nature. For traditional leadership, it is physical, and is done by human beings. However, biblical leadership is spiritual, which God, alone, can make happen, through His power (Deut 8:5; 2 Sam 7:14; Prov 3:11; Heb 12:6-10).

"Discipline" comes from the Greek word σωφρονισμός (*sōphronismos*), "an admonishing or calling to soundness of mind, or to self-control" (2 Tim 1:7).[49] Another Greek word is παιδεύω (*paideuō*), which "is used of family discipline.[50] Discipline can be training, especially of the kind that produces self-control, orderliness, obedience, and the capacity for cooperation with others.[51] Jesus said, in Luke 9:23, "If anyone would come after Me, he must deny himself, and take up his cross daily, and follow Me."[52] Discipline is to be taken as a denial of self.

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[49] Vine, *Expository Dictionary*, p. 308.

[50] Vine, *Expository Dictionary*, p. 594. Heb 12:6, 7, 10; 1 Cor 11:32; 2 Cor 6:9; Rev. 3:19.

[51] A. E. Norrish, *Christian Leadership*, Manila: OMF Literature, 1986, p. 39.

[52] A. E. Norrish affirms that discipline "is pruning, strengthening, and enrichment of character, to bring mind and body under the control of the Holy Spirit and making the Spirit supreme" (Ibid., p. 39).

A form of discipline is self-control. It is not opposing the control of the Holy Spirit. On the contrary, it is one of the qualities that the Holy Spirit produces (Gal 5:22-23). Every Christian must be self-disciplined (1 Cor 9:25-27; 2 Pet 1:5-6). This must be in all the areas of our lives: thoughts (2 Cor 10:15), feelings (Lev 19:17-18; 1 Pet 2:11), speech (Ps 39:1; James 3:7-8), eating and drinking habits (Prov 23:2,20; Amos 6:4-6; Eph 5:18), and sexual behaviour (1 Cor 7:9; 1 Thess 4:4-5).[53] Sanders sums up the character of discipline by stating, "a young man, of leadership calibre, will work while others waste time, study while others sleep, pray while others play. There will be no place for loose or slovenly habits, in words, or thought, deeds, or dress."[54]

When God marks out a person for leadership, God disciplines him so that the person becomes effective (Deut 8:5; Heb 12:5-10; Job 5:17; 33:14-29; Ps 94:12; 119:67; Prov 3:11; 1 Cor 11:3). This discipline of God is similar to discipline in Helahuli traditional leadership. It is for the good of those young leaders.[55]

A Bible college like CLTC is a place of discipline. Getting up early in the morning for devotions, doing work duties (like working in the chicken houses, where it smells), working in the gardens (and finding your hands getting blisters), and cleaning toilet blocks in the student areas, is a discipline process. Many students have been disciplined in these areas.

Jesus' 40 days spent alone in the desert was a form of discipline (Luke 4:1-13). Jesus experienced true aloneness. This desert experience illustrates a testing, during which the leader stands alone before God. "Leadership can be a very lonely thing. In one sense, leaders are seldom alone, for people are always pressing in on them, as the crowds did on Jesus. But leaders have to be prepared for aloneness, for burdens they have to carry, for

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[53] Don Fleming, *Bridge Bible Dictionary*, Brisbane Qld: Bridgeway Publications, 1990, p. 398.

[54] Sanders, *Spiritual Leadership*, p. 45.

[55] Norrish says "if the man of sand is to become the man of rock, of established heart, settled faith, steadfast dependableness, he will need daily discipline . . . to be faithful, to strengthen his sense of duty, to be steadfast, unmovable, to have spiritual stickability, and grit" (Norrish, *Christian Leadership*, p. 39).

decisions they must make, and for issues they have to wrestle with that no one else can share."[56] The Son of God was able to fulfil His leadership, and to identify with ours, only by going through the same testing that all leaders face (Heb 5:8). This is what discipline is all about. When you endure discipline, it serves as a sign of a leader.

A requirement for a biblical leader is someone who has gone through discipline. How can someone lead without having gone through discipline? Every biblical leader is in the process of being disciplined by God, so that He can trust us with important responsibilities. The biblical leader needs to be moulded and shaped, so that he can be effective and responsible, and become a steady leader, in the tasks and responsibilities given in leadership.

METHODS USED BY A BIBLICAL LEADER

In the biblical pattern of leadership, the way of leadership is quite different from the way of Helahuli traditional leadership. In Helahuli traditional leadership, one has to be a talker, a person of wealth, and aggressive. However, in biblical leadership, one has to be a communicator, a person of wisdom and caring.

Communicator

Greek has two words for "communication": κοινωνέω (*koinōneō*) and λόγος (*logos*). κοινωνέω (*koinōneō*) is translated in Heb 13:16 as "to communicate", and λόγος (*logos*) as "a word, that which is spoken", λέγω (*legō*), "to speak"), is used in the plural, with reference to a conversation, "communication" (Luke 24:17). Elsewhere, with this significance, it is rendered as "speech".[57] As we have seen, in Helahuli traditional leadership, one of the methods, used to discern a leader, was a person who talks. When he talks, he talks with threat, with force, demanding, with aggressiveness, and with hidden truths. However, a biblical leader talks and communicates with love, care, concern, gentleness, and with truth. Although there are many ways of communicating, I have

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[56] Ford, Leighton, *Transforming Leadership*, Downers Grove IL: IVP, 1991, p. 43.
[57] Vine, *Expository Dictionary*, p. 61. Matt 5:37; Eph 4:29.

chosen two methods a biblical leader uses to communicate the Word of God: preaching and teaching.

Preaching. John Stott says, "Preaching is the communication of truth by man to men."[58]   In Greek, "preaching" is **κηρύσσω** (*kērussō*), which means "to be a herald, or to proclaim" (Matt 3:1; Mark 1:45).[59] Communication or preaching of the Word of God, in the power of God's Spirit, is to bring the Father and the Son down from heaven to dwell with man (Is 64:1; John 14:21-23). We see, in the life of apostle Paul, the great leader, who said that Christ had sent him to preach the gospel, not to baptise (1 Cor 1:17), that he felt a compulsion to preach (1 Cor 9:16). He said preaching was God's appointed way by which sinners were to hear of the Saviour, and call on Him for salvation, for "how are they to hear without a preacher?" (Rom 10:14-15). At the end of his life, he exhorted his coworker Timothy to continue this vital ministry, "Preach the Word" (2 Tim 4:2).

A biblical leader must be a communicator of the Word of God, so that sinners are brought to the saving grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, and grow in the Lord. We know God's people live and flourish only by believing and obeying His Word (Matt 4:4). We need to encourage every Helahuli church leader to communicate this by faithful, powerful, biblical preaching. We need to see leaders, who are fearlessly communicating the Word of God, where there is a breakdown of law and order, where there is killing in tribal fights, where there is satanic worship, and where there is violence. We can only change our communities, and the nation, with the Word of God, through our preaching. If the church is to have an impact on society, we must have good biblical preaching from every pulpit!

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[58] John Stott, *I Believe in Preaching*, London UK: Hodder & Stoughton, 1982, p. 266.

[59] Additional meanings include "to preach the gospel, as a herald" (Matt 24:14; Mark 13:10; Luke 8:1; Rom 10:14), and "to preach the Word" (2 Tim 4:2). **εὐαγγελίζω** (*evangelidzō*), "to bring good news," emphasises the quality of the message itself: the message proclaimed is the glad tidings of salvation. **κήρυγμα** (*kērugma*), "a proclamation by a herald denoting a message, a preaching" (Matt 12:41; Luke 11:32; Rom 16:25; 1 Cor 1:21; 2:4; 15:14; 2 Tim 4:17, Titus 1:3), generally denotes the preaching of the basic truth of the faith.

Teaching. Teaching is another way of communicating the Word of God. In Greek, "teaching" is διδάσκω (*didaskō*), "absolutely, to give instruction".[60] It is the "ability to explain scripture, and apply it to people's lives".[61] We see an example in Acts 15:35, where Paul, Barnabas, and many others are in Antioch, teaching the Word of God. To Timothy, Paul writes, "all scripture is profitable for teaching" (2 Tim 3:16), and encourages Timothy to commit to faithful men, who would be able to "teach others also" (2 Tim 2:2). This shows that teaching, in the New Testament, consisted of repeating and explaining the words of scripture, and applying them to hearers. In this way, we nurture those who are already believers, and build them up to maturity in the faith. That was the main goal for Paul, not simply to bring people to initial saving faith, but to "present every man mature in Christ" (Col 1:28), and to build up the body of Christ (Eph 4:12-13).

One of the qualifications of a biblical leader is to be able to teach (1 Tim 4:2) so one of the methods of leadership is to communicate to the people of God by teaching the Word of God. Just as a Helahuli traditional leader had to defend his people, the biblical leader has to defend his people from false doctrines, false cults, and other distractions from their faith. To defend them, we must teach and equip them thoroughly with the Word of God.

Jesus communicated with authority (Matt 7:21), and had an impact in the lives of His listeners. The gospels picture Jesus in a wide variety of situations, where He showed a striking ability to suit His words to the occasion and the audience (Mark 10:25; 12:17; Luke 9:24, 58-62). Later, John wrote about Jesus, the great communicator (1 John 1:1-3).

To be a biblical leader, one has to be a person who can preach and teach the Word of God. Yes, communication of information, in all levels of an organisation, is very important, however, biblical leaders need to be preachers of the Word of God, who preach without fear. Secondly, a biblical leader needs to communicate, by teaching the Word of God:

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[60] Vine, *Expository Dictionary*, pp. 323-324. Matt 4:23; 9:35; Rom 12:7; 1 Cor 4:17; 2 Tim 2:12; 4:11.
[61] Wayne Grudem, *Systematic Theology*, Grand Rapids MI: Zondervan, 1994, p. 1061.

accurately, effectively, and relevantly, and to stand firm against false teachers, cults, spirit worship, and tribal fights.

Wisdom

Another qualification of biblical leadership is being competent, which involves wisdom. "Competent", in the Longman dictionary, means, "having the ability or skill to do what is needed".[62] Just like the Helahuli traditional leader, who knows the lineage and genealogies of his clan, a biblical leader needs to be someone who knows his job well. To know his job well, he needs to depend on God. Paul affirms, "not that we are competent in ourselves to claim anything for ourselves, but our competence comes from God. He has made us competent as ministers of a new covenant – not of the letter, but of the Spirit; for the letter kills, but the Spirit gives life" (2 Cor 3:5-6). The leader's confidence is founded, not on human resources, such as leadership principles, qualifications, and experience (though helpful), but it must be from above – from God alone. God gives the wisdom to lead.

"Wisdom" in Greek is σοφία (*sophia*), which means "human wisdom, in spiritual things".[63] We can ask God confidently for wisdom when we need it, for He promises in his Word, "If any of you lacks wisdom, let him ask God, who gives to all men generously, and without reproaching, and it will be given him" (James 1:5). I believe this wisdom, or skill in living a life pleasing to God, comes primarily from reading and obeying His Word, "The testimony of the Lord is sure, making wise the simple" (Ps 19:7; cf. Deut 4:6-8).

Today's leaders must be competent and wise in their God-given job. For God wants competent leaders. In approaching this task, leaders will do well to follow Solomon's example.

> At Gibeon, the Lord appeared to Solomon during the night, in a dream, and God said, "Ask for whatever you want Me to give you."

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[62] Tremper Longman III, and Peter Enns, eds, *Dictionary of the Old Testament*, Downers Grove IL: IVP, 2008, p. 220.

[63] Vine, *Expository Dictionary*, p. 1233. Luke 21:15; Acts 6:3; 10:7; 1 Cor 2:6.

Solomon answered, "You have shown great kindness to your servant, my Father David, because he was faithful to your and righteous and upright in heart. You have continued this great kindness to him, and have given him a son to sit on his throne this very day. Now, O Lord my God, You have made Your servant king in place of my father David. But I am only a little child, and do not know how to carry out my duties. Your servant is here among the people you have chosen, a great people, too numerous to count or number. So give your servant a discerning heart to govern your people, and to distinguish between right and wrong. For who is able to govern this great people of yours?" The Lord was pleased that Solomon had asked for this (1 King 3:5-10).

Furthermore, competence does not mean that someone has all the knowledge and skills. Eims confirms, "Good leaders will continue to learn."[64] Some leaders today do not want to learn. They feel that, once they are leaders, there is no more learning. Eims correctly says, "good leaders are teachable, and eager to learn those things that will improve their performance of the task they have received from the Lord."[65] The understanding is that learning never stops until death. This means that one of the qualifications of biblical leadership is never to be satisfied, but always seeking every means to become more proficient and more knowledgable, for the betterment of the task of leadership.

Caring

One of the requirements of Helahuli traditional leadership we saw was aggressiveness. This is shown through physical aggressiveness, mental aggressiveness, and decisiveness. However, biblical leadership it is quite different. In an analogy of a shepherd, as Hodgens says, "a shepherd provided leadership, and, providing leadership, requires a certain degree of authority. The rod, which the shepherd carried in the gentlest of all Psalms, Ps 23, was used to discipline the sheep, and to guide, when necessary. Authority by itself, however, was useless. The shepherd also

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[64] Leroy Eims, *Be a Motivational Leader*, Colorado Springs CO: Chariot Victor, 1984, p. 105.
[65] Ibid., p. 105.

had to provide care and protection for the sheep. By themselves, sheep are defenceless, and easy prey for a hungry bear or lion."[66] Jesus identified Himself as the "Good Shepherd" (John 10:14). He is called the "Great Shepherd" (Heb 13:20), and "the Chief Shepherd" (1 Peter 5:4). The responsibility of the shepherd was given to Peter, as Jesus said, "take care of my sheep" (John 21:16). In this case, Peter represents the leaders, while the sheep represent God's people.

What a biblical leader needs is a shepherd's heart, and a servant's spirit. The leaders must feed, guide, lead, and restore, as a shepherd. A leader must serve others, rather than be served by others. Eims says, "When people know someone is taking care of them, they will normally respond. Leaders, who look out for the welfare of their people, will have a group of followers, who are motivated, and eager to follow."[67] Solomon said, "Be sure you know the condition of your flocks, give careful attention to your herds" (Prov 27:23).

Servants of God lead out of relationships, not by coercion. Biblical leaders don't demand obedience or submission, they meet their followers at the point of need. Biblical leaders give from themselves, rather than take for themselves. They love and lift others, rather than manipulating.

The biblical leader must have a caring heart, pastoral concern, and ever be conscious that people matter most. He must not be a person who chases the sheep away. "When Jesus saw the crowds, He had compassion on them, because they were harassed and helpless, like sheep without a shepherd" (Matt 9:36). For the biblical leader, this love for people must fill his heart. The mark of a biblical leader must be a person who has a tender compassionate heart, and a love to serve others.

MARKS SHOWING A BIBLICAL LEADER

In biblical leadership, certain traits should be seen as young leaders emerge from their training and discipline. After finishing his training, the young leader must get involved with the church and the community. While he is

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[66] Hodgens, David, *Pastoral Theology Class Notes*, Banz PNG: CLTC, 2002, p. 13.

[67] Eims, *Be a Motivational Leader*, p. 67.

in ministry, the pastor, elder, and older Christians, must try to observe, evaluate, and assess the young leader. They must look for characteristics, such as his love for God, and love for others, his influence in the church and community, and humility.

Love for God

The most important mark of biblical leadership is love for God. You need to love God in order to serve Him and His church. "Love" comes from the Greek word φιλέω (*phileō*), which means "tender affection".[68] As Jesus says, "Whoever has my commands and obeys them, he is the one who loves Me. He who loves Me will be loved by My Father, and I, too, will love him, and show Myself to him" (John 14:21).

Love for God, with the whole person (Deut 6:5) is what God demands. Jesus said, "Love the Lord your God with all your soul, and with all your strength, and with all your mind" (Luke 10:27). It is a summons to a relationship of personal devotion, created and sustained by the work of God in the human heart (Deut 30:6). One has to be devoted to God, and obedient to Him (Deut 10:12; 22:37). Because of such devoted obedience, one will learn more of the meaning of God's love, and so, will increasingly experience joyful fellowship with God (John 14:21-23; Ps 116:1-4; 1 Cor 2:9; 8:3; 1 Peter 1:8; 1 John 4:7, 12, 19).

As a leader, love for God will, at times, create difficulties, as conflicts arise, as one puts loyalty to God before other loyalties, desires, interests, and ambitions (Matt 6:24; 10:37-39; John 3:19; 1 John 2:15-17). Genuine love involves self-sacrifice (Eph 5:25; cf. Rom 14:15; 1 Cor 13:4-7). Faith and obedience are just as basic to a relationship with God as is love. If someone claims to love God, but does not trust in Him, or obey Him, he is deceiving himself (John 14:15, 24; Gal 5:6; James 2:25). Though he may be pressured by his tribe, clan, and family members for his loyalty, a leader's love for God must be his number-one priority. Love for God must be a biblical leader's passion (2 Cor 5:14-15). One thing that the leader needs to take to heart is Jesus' words to the church at Ephesus. "Yet I hold this against you: You have forsaken your first love. Remember the height

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[68] Vine, *Expository Dictionary*, p. 693. John 14:21; 16:27.

from which you have fallen! Repent, and do the things you did at first. If you do not repent, I will come to you, and remove your lampstand from its place" (Rev 2:4-5). A crucial danger for a spiritual leader is to lack a passion for God.

Love for Others

Another mark of biblical leadership is love for others. "God showed His love for us in that while we were yet sinners Christ died for us" (Rom 5:8). As God loved us, we ought to love others. Our imitation of God's love is seen in our love for others. John makes this clear, "Beloved, if God so loved us, we also ought to love one another" (1 John 4:11). In fact, our love for others, within the fellowship of believers, is so evidently an imitation of Christ that, by it, the world will recognises us as His: "By this all men will know that you are My disciples, if you have love for one another" (John 13:35). God, Himself, gives us His love to enable us to love each other (John 17:26; Rom 5:5).

Love for others needs to be seen in our lives. As we act upon certain things, our relationship with others, our reactions to certain things, and our speech, should show we love others. Paul said "Love is patient, love is kind, it does not envy, it does not boast, it is not proud, it is not rude, it is not self-seeking, it is not easily angered, and it keeps no record of wrongs. Love does not delight in evil, but rejoices with the truth. It always protects, always trusts, always hopes, and always perseveres" (1 Cor 13:4-7). One of the marks to see whether a biblical leader has love for others is to take off the word "love" and replace it with his name. Example, John is patient, John is kind, John does not envy, John does not boast, John is not proud, . . . etc. If the leader can say, with confidence, that he does those things, then he has one of the marks of being a biblical leader.

Where there is so much tribal fighting, loving one's enemies is quite difficult, and a demanding process. However, one's love for their enemies especially reflects God's love (Matt 5:43-48). As Paul says, "On the contrary, if your enemy is hungry, feed him, if he is thirsty, give him

something to drink. In doing this, you will heap burning coals on his head" (Rom 12:20).[69]

This is the pattern of our Master, the Lord Jesus, in His suffering at the cross. "When they hurled their insults at Him he did not retaliate, when He suffered, He made no threats. Instead, He entrusted Himself to Him who judged justly" (1 Peter 2:23). A biblical leader has to forgive. While Jesus was hanging on the cross, He said "Father forgive them for they do not know what they are doing" (Luke 23:34). Forgiveness for enemies will lead to kindness by enemies. This is what we need in Papua New Guinea, especially in the Highlands, where there are many paybacks in tribal fighting. Our enemies might have killed our father, or brother, or a relative, but we must forgive, and do good deeds, and be kind, allowing God's justice to prevail, which will have an impact in our communities.

To love God is vertical, and to love others is horizontal. A biblical leader cannot say he loves God and hates his brothers and sisters (1 John 2:9). Love for God must be demonstrated by loving others. Love must not be just feelings, or talking, but love in action, just as God loved us, and gave His son (John 3:16). Loving others means also forgiving those, by whom you have been wronged. Biblical leaders must forgive totally.

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[69] "The pain inflicted by the burning coals is a symbol of the shame and remorse experienced by an enemy who is rebuked by kindness" (John Stott, *The Message of Romans*, Leicester UK: IVP, 1994, p. 336). As humans, when we have an enemy, we want to retaliate or pay back. However, Paul says, "Do not repay anyone for evil" (Rom 12:17a). When we do good things, like feeding and giving a drink to our enemies, this will bring "burning coals", that is, shame and remorse. The enemy thinks you'll retaliate, but, in return, you give kindness. This is not a symbol of judgment, because to give judgment, you leave it to the Lord (1 Peter 2:23; Ps 35:5-6). God's justice will prevail, but, for you, as a Christian, it is your duty to love, forgive, and be kind to your enemy. As John Stott puts it, "the coals of fire, this may heap on him, are intended to heal, not to hurt, to win, not to alienate, in fact, to shame him into repentance" (Stott, *Message of Romans*, pp. 336-337). However, you might be doing those good things, but the enemy might be hostile to you, or he might not repent. In this situation, Paul says that we must "overcome evil with good" (Rom 12:21b). We must continue to do good deeds to overcome the evil.

Influence

Both in traditional and biblical leadership, one of the marks is influence. Sanders says, "Leadership is influence, the ability of one person to influence others. One man can lead others, only to the extent that he can influence them."[70] In biblical leadership, influence cannot be done by force, might, power, or with our own strength, but by the Holy Spirit. As Sanders affirms, "The spiritual leader, however, influences others, not by the power of his own personality alone, but by that personality irradiated, and interpenetrated, and empowered by the Holy Spirit. Because he permits the Holy Spirit undisputed control of his life, the Spirit's power can flow through him to others unhindered."[71] As Paul said "When I came to you . . . my message and my preaching were not with wise and persuasive words, but with a demonstration of the Spirit's power" (1 Cor 2:1, 4).[72] To influence people, biblical leaders need to be empowered by the Holy Spirit.

Maxwell says, "Leadership is the ability to obtain followers."[73] A bigger test for a leader is to find out whether anyone is following him. Jesus had many followers, like the 12 disciples, the sick, the blind, the crippled, the demon-possessed, the crowd, and many others because He had an influence in their lives. Some were healed of their diseases and sicknesses, demons were cast out, and powers and miracles were performed, so Jesus had influence in their lives (Matt 12:22; 15:22; 17:18; Mark 3:14; Luke 4:36; 11:14). There are three components, as John Maxwell says, "communication, recognition, and influence. When someone starts to

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[70] Sanders, *Spiritual Leadership*, p. 19.

[71] Ibid., p. 20.

[72] We also see this in the Old Testament, the Holy Spirit frequently empowered people for special service. He empowered Joshua with leadership skills and wisdom (Num 27:18; Deut 34:9), and empowered the judges to deliver Israel from their oppressors (Judg 3:10). When David was anointed as king, "the Spirit of the Lord came mightily upon David from that day forward" (1 Sam 16:13), equipping David to fulfil the task of kingship, to which God had called him (Judg 6:34; 11:29; 13:25; 14:6, 19; 15:14). In the New Testament, we see Jesus fulfilling the prophecy of Isaiah: "the Spirit of the Lord is upon Me, because He has anointed Me" (Luke 4:18).

[73] John Maxwell, *Developing the Leader Within You*, Nashville TN: Thomas Nelson, 1993, p. 1.

communicate effectively, it leads to recognition, and recognition, in turn, leads to influence."[74] Jesus knew how to influence His disciples. This led the disciples to recognise their gifts and abilities, and to strengthening of their faith. Once that was done, Jesus had influence over them. Paul planted many churches in Asia Minor, and trained many young leaders, like Timothy and Titus, because he communicated with them, through his letters, and as a person. The churches and the people recognised his care and concern, so this led to his influence, in the churches and the people (Acts 9:22; 17:17; 18:4; 19:8; 1 Cor 5:11).

A biblical leader must have influence, not by force, nor by issuing threats, but by example. The famous saying, "Actions speak louder than words" is true. To have influence, the biblical leader must be honest in his dealings, trusted, reliable, a person of integrity and respect. When people see these qualities, they follow the leader. Followers are those one has trained, discipled, counselled, visited, and supported. This is how a biblical leader will have influence.

Humility

In Greek, "humility" is ταπεινόω (*tapeinoō*), which means, "signifies to make low".[75] Another word is ταπεινοφροσύνη (*tapeinophrosunē*), which means "lowliness of mind".[76] One of the marks of a biblical leader is humility. In Helahuli traditional leadership, humility is a quality not required or wanted. There the leader needs prominence and publicity. However, in God's scale of value, humility stands very high. To put oneself down, and to put others up was Christ's definition of leadership. In training His disciples for their coming position of authority, He told them that they must not "lord it over" and "exercise authority over them", but be humble and lowly like their master (Matt 20:25-27). The biblical leader will choose the hidden pathway of sacrificial service, and the approval of the Lord, but not *mi tasol* (me only). The mind of the biblical leader must be the same as John Baptist, "He must increase, and I must decrease" (John 3:30). The glory, honour, and praise of achievements and success must be

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[74] Ibid., p. 5.
[75] Vine, *Expository Dictionary*, pp. 568-569.
[76] Ibid., p. 569. Acts 20:19; Eph 4:2; Phil 2:3; Col 2:18, 23; 1 Peter 5:5.

given back to God. Paul acknowledged in 1 Cor 15:9, "For I am the least of the apostles, and do not deserve to be called an apostle." In his early ministry, he said of himself, "I am less than the least of all God's people" (Eph 3:8). At the end of his ministry, he said, "of whom I am the worst" (1 Tim 1:15). The humility of the leader should be an ever-growing quality. In today's world, as a biblical leader, we must "express humility, by working gladly and faithfully in the second place."[77]

Biblical leaders have a responsibility to develop humility in their lives. It is part of the life, to which God has called them (Eph 4:1-2; Col 3:12). It is a characteristic of life in God's kingdom (Matt 20:25-27), and it is the product of the Spirit's work in the life of the individual (Gal 5:23). If they are to learn humility, they must be willing to take the lowest place and serve others (Luke 22:24-27; John 13:3-17). Such humility will produce the best servant leaders in the Helahuli churches, and in all the churches in Melanesia (Mark 9:33-37; Rom 12:16; 2 Cor 10:12; Gal 6:3; Eph 4:2; Phil 2:3). The example Jesus set for biblical leaders is to follow His humility (Phil 2:5-8).

Those who look for status, power, and praise may gain what they seek, but their reward will be short-lived (Matt 6:1-5, 16). One thing we must know is that God exalts those who humble themselves, but humbles those who exalt themselves (Prov 3:34; 1 Peter 5:6; Prov 15:33; 18:12; Is 2:11; 5:15; Matt 23:12; Luke 1:48-53; James 4:10).

CONCLUSION

Most Helahuli church leaders today have been trained through the traditional tribal process. However, Helahuli church leaders need to apply biblical leadership principles, instead of traditional leadership principles, in the church. To apply traditional leadership principles in the church leads to a hindrance of church growth, lack of maturity of the members, ineffective teaching and preaching in the pulpits, and little influence in the community.

What Helahuli churches need today are biblical leaders who are born again, have biblical training and discipline, can effectively communicate the Word

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[77] Sanders, *Spiritual Leadership*, p. 58.

of God, with all wisdom and competence, care for the people, as a shepherd, by showing his love for God, and for others, and serve with humility.

The only way to provide this kind of leadership is by following the example of Jesus – who serves, is humble, and loves others. When Helahuli church leaders show these qualities, people will be shepherded, people will grow into maturity, and people will influence their communities for Christ. The law and order problems, the disunity, the troubles and killings in communities, will be a thing of the past when traditional-trained Helahuli church leaders apply the biblical pattern of leadership in the churches.

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REINCARNATION IN AN ISLAMIC SOCIETY: BUTON, INDONESIA

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**Not the author's real name.*

INTRODUCTION

Reincarnation is a belief that the soul, or some power, passes into another body after death. It is accepted by more than a billion people worldwide – Hindus, Buddhists, many New-Agers, and 27 percent of Australians.[1] Surprisingly, it has also been documented among the Butonese, an

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[1] Cf. D. Burnett, *The Spirit of Hinduism: A Christian Perspective on Hindu Thought*, Tunbridge Wells UK: Monarch Publications, 1992; K. K. S. Ch'en, "The Teachings of the Buddha", in L. Smith, and W. Bodin, eds, *The Buddhist Tradition*, Niles IL: Argus Communications, 1978; P. Corney, *Change and the Church: How to initiate and manage constructive change in the local church*, Sydney South NSW: Aquila Press, 2000, pp. 14-15; H. Haring, and J. B. Metz, "Editorial: Reincarnation or Resurrection?: A Discussion Reopened", in *Concilium: Reincarnation or Resurrection?* 5 (October, 1993); V. Mangalwadi, "The Reincarnation of the Soul", in *Evangelical Review of Theology* 15-2 (April, 1991); G. Parrinder, *Dictionary of Non-Christian Religions*, Amersham UK: Hulton Educational, 1971; D. B. Schneider, "The End of Life: Nirvana", in L. Smith, and W. Bodin, eds, *The Buddhist Tradition*, Niles IL: Argus Communications, 1978; D. S. Toolan, "Reincarnation and Modern Gnosis", in *Concilium: Reincarnation or Resurrection?* 5 (October, 1993); R. C. Zaehner, *Hinduism*, Oxford UK: Oxford University Press, 1966.

unreached Muslim group in Indonesia[2] (Schoorl, 1985). Buton formally converted to Islam, following the conversion of Murham, Buton's sixth king, and first Sultan, in 1542 (Zahari, 1980). A Folk Islam developed that has assimilated Islamic beliefs and worship, with various forms of magic and superstition, shamanism, respect for ancestral spirits, and (according to Schoorl) reincarnation (cf. Berg, 1989; Donohue, 1995, p. 5; Johnson, 2003). If Butonese do have beliefs in reincarnation, this is not only unique, compared to other cultures, but also informative about the origins and nature of the Butonese religious mix. This paper will focus on reincarnation beliefs in Buton, drawing on Schoorl's findings, comparing them with traditional Hindu beliefs (which have had a historical influence in the area), and suggesting some implications for planting the gospel among the Butonese.

BUTONESE RELIGION: A COMPARISON WITH HINDUISM

The Hindu doctrine of reincarnation teaches that, after death, a person's soul, or life force (called *atman*), is reborn in another being, according to the law of *karma*. *Karma* is the thoughts, words, and actions that affect later lives. By following one's duty (*dharma*), one can accumulate good karmic effects, and return in a higher caste. Death and rebirth (*samsara*) is a repetitive, ongoing cycle; "To him that is born, death is sure. And for him who has died, birth is certain. This cannot be changed" (The *Bhagavad-gita* 2:27, in Johnson and Johnson, 1978). Salvation, for the Hindu, is release (*moksha*) from this, otherwise endless, cycle; "From the highest plant in the material world down to the lowest, all are places of misery, where repeated birth and death take place. But one who attains to My abode never takes birth again" (The *Bhagavad-gita* 8:16, in Prabhupada, 1983, p. 130). 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, special knowledge, or people with special power over when and where spirits will return.

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[2] Reincarnation is as foreign to Islam as to Judaism and Christianity, although transmigration (Arabic *tanasukh*) did become popular among some Shi'a Muslims, especially in India, and the Isma'ilis believed souls could not be reborn until released by their *Iman* (priest) (Parrinder, *Dictionary of Non-Christian Religions*, p. 273).

Reincarnation ritual experts (*motaurakea* or *pasucu*) place the deceased in the grave in the correct way, and utter appropriate prayers. They stay with the body and the next of kin, after the mosque officials have left, and pray for the deceased's salvation: "O Lord, lend forgiveness to us and to him. Exalt his position among those who have received the right guidance, and replace him among his relatives. And give him light in there (his grave)." They also are expected to ensure the spirit, especially of those who died young, does not come back and annoy the living (Schoorl, 1985, pp. 108-109).

Besides the role of the *pasucu*, the special knowledge (*ilmu*) of the dying person is believed to be a strong determiner of reincarnation. People with *ilmu*, and who approach God closely, can determine when they die, and where their spirits go, and are known as saints (*wali ullah*). *Ilmu* can be learned, and is not restricted to the Butonese. For example, Governor-General Cornelis Speelman, who relieved Buton in 1667 from a 10,000-troop Makassarese siege, was initiated into the secret knowledge of how to make one's spirit return, by Sapati Baluwu. They agreed to return together to Buton, and reportedly fought together in the 1828-1829 war with Diponegoro[3] (Schoorl, 1985, pp. 107-108).

It is said a good life, or good works (*amal*), may be rewarded with a better subsequent life. The Butonese system of estates function like Indian castes, with their own tasks. The *kaomu* are the nobility, *Walaka* are the middle level, and *Papara* are the commoners (and *Batua* are slaves or criminals) (cf. Bergink, 1987; Rudyansjah, 1997; Yamaguchi, 1999). If they are good, a *Papara* may be reborn as a child of a *Walaka, La Ode,* or even a *Sultan*. Spirits can also be punished for bad deeds, by being reborn in a lower estate, or as a woman. Schoorl did not hear any stories of returning as an animal, in the cultural centre for the Butonese people of Wolio (Baubau), but, in the village of Rongi, Schoorl's informants said a bad life

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[3] Speelman was reputed to be reincarnated later as Haji Abdul Ganiyu, or Kenepulu Bulu Sabandara, who assisted Sultan Muhammed Idrus (1824-1851) to persuade his subjects to give up superstitious practices, including ancestor worship. Yet Idrus' tract, *Ajonga Inda Malusa* outlines a philosophy of life and death, in which reincarnation has a place (J. W. Schoorl, "Belief in reincarnation on Buton, SE Sulawesi, Indonesia", in *Bijdragen tot de taal-, land- en volkenkunde* 141-1 (1985), p. 107).

could cause a person to return as an animal, even a pig. Some villages have beliefs that spirits go to heaven, where they have to give an account to the Lord. If they have been good, they can return immediately. When they have sinned greatly, they may have to wait up to seven years, and then they may be born handicapped, or die early (Schoorl, 1985, pp. 106-111).

The Butonese concept of reincarnation does not dwell on *karma, amal*, or an endless cycle, 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.[4] A woman's dying father-in-law told her: "When I die, I shall come back to you. . . . Keep a piece of cotton-wool with moisture from my navel, as medicine for the child that will be born to you." When her next child was born, her husband held his child, and whispered the call to prayer. The child murmured "yes, yes", and urinated on him, and so the family believed the father-in-law had returned.[5] 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. His mother could use

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[4] What, in India, is serious and painful, a cycle that never wants to end, is, in Buton, an opportunity for communicating with, and remembering, dead relatives (cf. Haring and Metz, "Editorial: Reincarnation", p. ix). Keijke found reincarnation, in Africa, is believed to occur within families, and never in a perfect stranger (J. Keijke, "Belief in Reincarnation in Africa", in *Concilium: Reincarnation or Resurrection?* 5 (October, 1993), p. 49). Okorocha maintains Mali and Igbo reincarnation beliefs, in Africa, emphasise continuity within families, through the ancestral cult. The Mali morning prayer is "make me a gift of children [so] that *your name* may not be obliterated". The perpetuity, they pray for, is not an endless life in a blissful heaven, but an extension of their being into the ancestral *sheol*, and so an ongoing relationship with the living. Similarly, the Igbo emphasise this desire, in the names they give their children. For example, *Ahamefula*, "May my name never be obliterated", and *Nnamd*, "My father is still alive" (i.e., the lineage name lives on in *this* male offspring; because this male child has been born, we now affirm that our lineage will never become extinct) (C. Okorocha, "The Meaning of Salvation: An African Perspective", in W. Dyrness, ed., *Emerging Voices in Global Christian Theology*, Grand Rapids MI: Zondervan, 1994, p. 84).
[5] Another mother knew which relative returned in three of her four children, because of similar appearance and certain signs. In Hendeya, bodies are given marks, to be found on children later (Schoorl, "Belief in reincarnation on Buton", pp. 105, 117).

the jewels, he offered, but had to look after them. Children are not told about whom has returned in them, for fear the spirit may be embarrassed (Schoorl, 1985, pp. 104-117).

ORIGINS OF BUTONESE REINCARNATION BELIEFS

Reincarnation beliefs may have derived from one or more of three sources: traditional Butonese beliefs, Sufism, or Javanese Hinduism. Reincarnation beliefs could have been present in traditional pre-Islamic and pre-Hindu Buton, as in a few other Indonesian groups, like the Kayang Makassarese, in neighbouring South Sulawesi (Schoorl, 1985, pp. 120-122). Even in these groups, though, the belief may be attributable to a Hindu influence, though, perhaps, predating Javanese Hindu influence. This would be consistent with reincarnation beliefs that are not consonant with classical Hinduism, with little reference to *karma* and ultimate redemption, though Buton (and these other groups) may have adopted or assimilated only those parts of reincarnation that fitted their existing cultural system (Schoorl, 1985, pp. 120-122).

Sufism could have tolerated divergent ideas like reincarnation, but there is no mention of reincarnation in the literature on Indonesian Sufism (Schoorl, 1985, pp. 123-124, 131). Perhaps reincarnation was accepted in Buton, partly because of the mystical influence of Sufism, and its relative detachment from orthodoxy. (I am unsure of the historical influence and importance of Sufism in the area, or whether there are Butonese people, who practice Sufism, and how widespread it is, but it could be fruitful to investigate.) Kenneth Cragg suggests mystics "are well known for their relative detachment from canons of orthodoxy, and for the way in which they are apt to become, doctrinally, a law unto themselves" (Cragg, 1959, fn. 416, p. 80, in Parshall, 1983, p. 25).

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.[6] Furthermore, oral traditions

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[6] Buton's first ruler (*raja*) was Queen Wa-Kaa-Kaa, reputedly the daughter of Kubilai Khan, who married Mojopahit prince Sibatara. The third and fourth *rajas* Bataraguru

indicate early Hindu presence in the region.[7]   More precisely, there are resemblances between the Butonese understanding of reincarnation and the notion of reincarnation in (Central) Java, as described by Geertz:

> Often, but not always, reincarnation occurs within the same family, although the relationship may be rather distant, and the individual, in whom the soul is reincarnated, need not necessarily be of the same sex as the deceased. It may be heralded by a dream, on the part of the mother, or established by a similarity of features in the child and the recently deceased, or by a similar birthmark. It is not wise to tell a child when it is still young of whom it is a reincarnation, for this might make the soul within the child ashamed, and he would fall sick (Geertz, 1960, pp. 75-76; in Schoorl, 1985, p. 123).

Java, also, has people who claim secret knowledge for determining in which family they will return (Wilken, 1912, pp. 64-71; in Schoorl, 1985, p. 123).   There is no important place for traditional Hindu concepts of *karma*, or ultimate redemption and eternal peace, in either beliefs.   There are differences of opinion about how reincarnation occurs (as there are within Buton).   Nevertheless, the clear correspondence of Javanese (according to Geertz) and Butonese (according to Schoorl) notions of reincarnation, together with the evidence of Mojopahit influence on early Buton, makes for a good case for Mojopahit borrowing (Schoorl, 1985, p. 125).   The

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and Tuarade, visited Mojopahit's court.   Their names further suggest their Hindu-Javanese connections.   Sibatara Batara Guru is the name of the supreme deity, while Batara was also used as a *raja's* title.   Tuarade is probably a combination of *tuan* (lord = Indonesian) and *raden* a Javanese title for a noble (Schoorl, "Belief in reincarnation on Buton", p. 103, 122, 130; Yamaguchi, *Cultural representations of the historical past*, p. 10; Zahari, *Sejarah dan adat fiy darul Butuni*, pp. 38-40).   Some locals deny Hindu Mojopahit influence in early Buton, though this may say more about their desires for orthodoxy (or the appearance of orthodoxy) than historical accuracy (Yamaguchi, *Cultural representations of the historical past*).

[7] After Sultan Murhum's conversion, all Buton was obliged to formally convert to Islam. A group of Javanese Hindus, who had left Mojopahit after its Islamisation, refused.   They preferred voluntary death, and dug their own mass grave on Buton's south coast.   A village ruler also converted to Islam, and, when he died, was buried.   His subjects were upset, as they were still mostly Hindu, and wanted his body cremated (Schoorl, "Belief in reincarnation on Buton", pp. 103-104).

majority of available evidence is that the belief was derived from, or, at least, was reshaped by, Hindu, and, in particular, Hindu-Javanese Mojopahit influence.

A CASE OF SYNCRETISM?

If reincarnation is a leftover from Javanese Hindu influence, Buton's conversion to Islam has not eradicated the belief. In fact, Schoorl reports the village Rongi learned of reincarnation from the cultural/religious centre (Baubau) as a component of Islam.[8] Schoorl's informants held a belief, both in reincarnation and the orthodox Islamic view, that all the spirits of the dead wait for the last day, *hari kiamat*, where they are judged, based on their works, despite the fact that these two beliefs appear to be mutually incompatible. They find their beliefs in reincarnation affirmed by Al Qu'ran 3:27; "Thou makest the night to enter into the day, and Thou makest the day to enter into the night. Thou bringest forth the living from the dead, and Thou bringest forth the dead from the living, and Thou providest whomsoever Thou wilt without reckoning."[9] For spirits of those who have been dead for a long time, these words may be prayed; "Thou hast power to arrange everything. We do not know if the spirit is still in the grave, or has migrated to another body, but Thou hast the power to arrange everything" (Schoorl, 1985, pp. 118, 129).

Among the Butonese, Islam seems to coexist with a belief in reincarnation and some animistic beliefs, like shamanism, offerings, and guardian spirits. Children still sprinkle water and pray over ancestors' graves, even though

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[8] The royalty in Baubau kept the core of religion in the centre of political power (i.e., Baubau), to ensure the dependence and loyalty of the villagers. Further, different *kadies* (define) were given not only different tasks, but different religious information (Schoorl, "Belief in reincarnation on Buton", p. 124; 1994, pp. 50-54).

[9] The Sultanate legislation *Murtabat Tujuh* also specifies that spirits migrate using the Arabic word *roh* "going":

> *orohi yitu akalipa-lipa, rohi yitu ooni arabu, maanana olipa* (Wolio).
>
> *Dalam arti bahasa Arab nyawa itu disebut roh, karena selalu pergi; atau berpindah dan sebab itu arti roh dalam bahasa Wolio dikatakan lipa artinya pergi* (translated and explained in Indonesian).
>
> The Spirit is in (a process of continuous) going (literally in English) (Schoorl, "Belief in reincarnation on Buton", p. 118).

they believe their ancestors have been reincarnated.[10]   Schoorl suggests Butonese hold different complexes of ideas that coexist (almost independently of one another), and, among which, they do not feel the need to establish logical relations (1985, p. 124).   Butonese believe in magic, ancestral spirits, reincarnation, and Islamic notions, ideas probably all derived from different historical periods, which have remained in Buton's unique religious mix, for use in different contexts.[11]

MISSIOLOGICAL IMPLICATIONS OF BUTONESE REINCARNATION BELIEFS

THE NEED FOR FURTHER RESEARCH

This section has been based on a literature comparison of Butonese reincarnation (relying on Schoorl) and classical Hindu beliefs.   This methodology is deficient in two main ways.   Firstly, it is based on literature (and only one old article), rather than personal and contemporary ethnographic research.   Future research could verify Schoorl's findings, and show whether belief in reincarnation among the Butonese people has changed.   Recent efforts of orthodox Muslim groups may have relegated the belief in reincarnation to a minority of Butonese.   A further possibility is that Indonesian Sufism may have given such beliefs more room in Butonese religious identity (Schoorl, 1985, p. 125).   Secondly, this paper

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[10] Some believe there is still a link with the spirit of the deceased person in the grave, or that it is not the entire *arwah* (spirit) that returns (Schoorl, "Belief in reincarnation on Buton", p. 124).

[11] This is not untypical in the world of Islam.   Although practices often contradict formal Islam, those who practice Folk Islam rarely see themselves as syncretistic.   For Butonese, there is no inconsistency in beliefs and practices (R. D. Love, "Church Planting among Folk Muslims", in *International Journal of Frontier Missions* 11-2 (April, 1994), p. 86; cf. J. M. Atkinson, "Religions in dialogue: the construction of an Indonesian minority religion", in *American Ethnologist* 10 (1983), p. 694; S. Cederroth, "Perceptions of Sasak Identity", in M. Hitchcock, and V. T. King, eds, *Images of Malay-Indonesian Identity*, Kuala Lumpur Malaysia: Oxford University Press, 1997, pp. 165-167; K. Cragg, *Sandals at the Mosque*, London UK: SCM Press, 1959, p. 32; P. G. Gowing, *Muslim Filipinos: Heritage and Horizon*, Quezon City Phil: New Day Publishers, 1979, pp. 68-69; C. Kiem, "Re-Islamisation among Muslim Youth in Ternate Town, Eastern Indonesia", in *Sojourn: Social Issues in Southeast Asia* 92-127; P. Parshall, *Bridges to Islam: A Christian Perspective on Islam*, Grand Rapids MI: Baker Book House, 1983, p. 17).

used Hindu categories as a springboard to analyse Butonese reincarnation. This may be helpful in evaluating possible Hindu origins of the belief, but may force foreign categories onto the Butonese worldview. Through interaction and dialogue, further understanding is needed about Butonese culture and reincarnation beliefs, according to their categories. Research is needed to explore what felt needs are answered by stories of, and belief in, reincarnation, and how the gospel could connect with Butonese beliefs.[12]

The Need to Respond to Felt Needs

Butonese, like other folk Muslims, want their felt needs met. Hiebert maintains Muslim resistance to the gospel exists, not only because of differences in belief and historical confrontations, but also because of "our failure to deal with the common people's felt needs . . . [overlooking] the fact that most Muslims turn to a mixture of Muslim and animistic practices for answers to everyday problems" (1989, p. 45). Schreiter argues popular, or folk, religion addresses basic human needs that have to be addressed to win the adherence of a culture:

> To develop local theologies, then, one must listen to popular religion, in order to find out what is moving in people's lives. Only then can local theologies be developed, and the liberating power of the gospel come to its full flower (1985, p. 143).

Further research will hopefully clarify Butonese felt needs. Speculatively, 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. (It could be fruitful to compare Christian and

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[12] (Cf. P. Hiebert, "Form and Meaning in Contextualisation of the Gospel", in D. S. Gilliland, ed., *The Word Among Us: Contextualising Theology for Mission Today*, Dallas TX: Word Publications, 1989; S. J. Samartha, "Indian Realities and the Wholeness of Christ", in *Missiology: An International Review* X-3 (1982)). An anonymous comment to an earlier draft of this paper suggested that Schoorl's references to the existence of syncretistic and mutually-incompatible beliefs also raise questions for the introduction of teaching about Jesus and Christian doctrine. Further research could also investigate how syncretism can be minimised, or avoided, among future believers in Jesus. Is the current syncretism a result of the manner in which Islam was introduced to the Butonese people – via force or decree "from the centre", rather than via personal acceptance, and a change of heart?

Islamic teachings about hope, certainty concerning the afterlife, and continuity of existence, to see what is, and what is not, provided in the two religions.) 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).

THE NEED TO TEACH RESURRECTION FAITH

Just as we need to be diligent in understanding beliefs, and the felt needs they express, it will be appropriate to be patient with inquirers, and new believers, as they grapple with how the gospel challenges, or fulfils, those beliefs (Parshall, 1983, p. 19). Nevertheless, the goal will be to teach the belief that, through the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ, all people (including Butonese) can have hope in the resurrection (John 11:20-44; 1 Cor 15:12-21). This is not earned by *amal*, or manipulated by *ilmu,* but received by grace through faith. It is not something that follows any number of rebirths, but one unrepeatable life, and it involves the whole person, not just an immortal soul (Loning, 1993; Sachs, 1993; Tracy, 1993). *Pasucu* cannot help anyone's final destiny, because eternal life depends on people's own response. It was beyond this study to explore how the Christian faith in resurrection differs from the Islamic concept, but Mangalwadi contends the Christian hope is qualitatively different from both reincarnation and Islamic resurrection:

> Neither a crass, materialistic resurrection, as in Islam, nor a spiritualised reincarnation, as in Hinduism, can satisfy the human longing for peace and justice, now and eternally. The resurrection of Jesus Christ holds the key to our understanding of the solution to the present political, economic, and ecological crises, and the meaning of death, and life beyond death (1991).

In the light of Butonese understandings about the spirit-world, the incarnation, resurrection, and ascension of Christ may assume great importance in a Butonese ethnotheology (as Bediako argues for his African context) (Bediako, 1994; Kraft, 1979). Butonese ancestors are honoured, but Christ is our greatest ancestor. Our natural ancestors did not choose to

be born as our ancestors, but Jesus did choose to be our ancestor, out of love and commitment to us. He lived for a while among us (John 1:14), and is not ashamed to call us His siblings (Heb 2). He has returned to the Spirit realm, and to a place of supreme power and Lordship over everything (Phil 2:9-11), and offers to prepare a place for us there (John 14:1-4). This is a part of Butonese life, to which the gospel can relate.

CONCLUSION

Buton has an almost unique belief in reincarnation. The belief differs from classical Hindu doctrine, which focuses on *karma* and redemption. Butonese reincarnation focuses more on identifying ancestors. It depends on the powers of ritual experts, the deceased's special knowledge, and good works. The evidence suggests the belief was derived from the Hindu-Javanese Mojopahit kingdom. It has not been supplanted, but has been reconciled, in a complex of beliefs with Islam. This complex of beliefs, or "Butonese religion", needs to be understood on its own terms, for the gospel to be addressed to the felt needs that reincarnation stories meet. Resurrection faith (rather than *amal, ilmu,* or *pasucu*) offers hope for life forever with God, and with His family.

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MALES AND FEMALES AS EQUALS IN MELANESIA (AN EXEGESIS OF GENESIS 2:18-25)

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INTRODUCTION

While many Western societies strongly emphasise gender equality, often shooting past the mark, in that biological sex differences, such as physical strength, patterns of thought, particular abilities, etc.,[1] are neglected, in Melanesian thought, the idea of female subordination under man is still deeply rooted. Biblical texts, like Eph 5:22-24 and Gen 2:18-25 are taken to support this view. Although men, according to their own understanding, practice the kind of love called for in Eph 5:25-33, or, perhaps, just because of that, they demand the submission of their wives, i.e., the acknowledgment of their superiority. Women, too, often willingly submit to this, with reference to the same texts, thus cementing their own inferiority.

Gen 2:18-25, the text in question here, is claimed to support this view in two ways. Firstly, יְהוָה (*YHWH*) decides to make a "helper" for the man, so that he may not be alone (v. 18). A helper or assistant, it is quickly perceived, is clearly subordinate to the one, who is offered that help.

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[1] Specifically on cognitive, intellectual, and psychological differences, cf. Anne Moir, and David Jessel, *Brainsex: the Real Difference Between Men and Women*, London UK: Arrow Books, 1998, which, in a very readable way, presents the findings of modern gender and brain research.

Secondly, the call for submission is based on the fact that man was created first, woman second (if not third, i.e., after the animals), which is taken to naturally establish a hierarchy.[2] According to the biblical account, this order is an undeniable fact, and its interpretation may be culturally appropriate in Melanesia. However, are both these arguments really warranted by the text, as a whole, as well as in particular?

The author believes they are not. They are, rather, based on an inaccurate exegesis that misses a major part of the actual thrust of the narrative. Thus, the biblical challenge is avoided, consciously or unconsciously; it certainly does not have any significant effect on gender relationships. This essay, therefore, aims at bringing out the full intention of Gen 2:18-25, through a proper exegesis that includes both the obvious and the more-concealed ideas. In this way, it intends to contribute to a deeper understanding of gender roles and relationships in God's creation.

A note must be added here about the author himself. Because he is a Westerner, from Germany, and naturally has been influenced by the ideas of gender equality in his own culture, he may be accused of being culturally biased. It is certainly true that, exactly because of this background, he recognises the above-described problem more clearly, and is probably more concerned, too. Nevertheless, he believes to have left most cultural bias out of the exegesis, since every exegete should aim at letting the biblical text, itself, speak. In this case, he was even more cautious to do so. The reflections on the application of the findings, however, will bear a Western cultural stamp, although they have been carefully considered. They, therefore, have to be taken *cum grano salis*: not as a final statement, but as a preliminary and imperfect contribution to a wider theological and social discourse, which is yet to take place among Melanesians.

THE CONTEXT AND OUTLINE OF GEN 2:18-25

Gen 2:18-25 forms part of the so-called Yahwistic creation narrative. In contrast to Gen 1:1-2:4a it not only makes use of the name of God, יְהוָה

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[2] This argument was brought forward even by a female (!) participant in a course on "Marriage and Family Life" at Martin Luther Seminary, Lae, in 2002, which shows how deeply it is embossed on the Melanesian perception.

(*YHWH*), and is a much less structured account, but it is also less interested in the creation of the universe as a whole. Instead, it focuses on decisive points in the act of creation "at the time when God יְהוָה (*YHWH*) made the earth and the heavens" (Gen 2:4b): moisture from the earth makes it possible that אָדָם (*ādām*)[3] is formed, who then becomes a living being, through the breath of God; a garden is planted (Where do the plants come from?!), which is thoroughly described (vv. 8-14); אָדָם (*ādām*) is put in the garden with a task and a commandment (vv. 15-17); the animals are created and named (vv. 18-20); the woman is created out of אָדָם (*ādām*) (!) and both discover that they belong together as male and female (vv. 21-25); finally, the breaking of the divine commandment of vv. 16f leads to catastrophe (ch. 3).

It becomes clear from this brief overview that the focus is clearly on human existence, not on creation, as an act of God, as such. Who is אָדָם (*ādām*)? What is his task? How is he different from animals? Why are male and female attracted to each other? These, and similar, are the questions addressed. It is only logical that, in this context, there are far more detailed statements on the relationship of the sexes than in Gen 1, where it is merely stated that both male and female represent the image of God (Gen 1:27).[4] They are concentrated in vv. 18-25, which, in themselves, again follow a clear outline.

Firstly, there is the word of God that אָדָם (*ādām*) is not made for being alone; there is need for a companion. A first attempt at finding such a companion for אָדָם (*ādām*) is made (vv. 19f), but it turns out to be unsuccessful (v. 20b). Another approach is then taken, and the woman is formed from a rib of אָדָם (*ādām*). This time, the man immediately

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[3] Since the English word "man" does not differentiate between human (as independent of gender) and man (as opposite to woman), the author prefers to use the Hebrew אָדָם (*ādām*), or English "human" to describe the species.

[4] Thorough exegesis would show that there is far more in Gen 1:27f than stated here; cf. Christl Ruth Vonholdt, "Ehe – Die Ikone Gottes in der Welt", in *OJC-Salzkorn. Anstiftung zum gemeinsamen Christenleben* 194 (5/2001), Reichelsheim: Christen in der Offensive e.V., 2001, pp. 208-214.

recognises the new being as his companion, and acknowledges her effusively (vv. 21-24). The final statement in v.25 again emphasises the total unity, and the innocence, of man and woman, preparing the stage for Gen 3.

EXEGESIS

After this look at the context and outline of Gen 2:18-25, it is now time to go through the text, verse by verse.

GEN 2:18

It begins with the words of God יְהוָה (*YHWH*), regarding the solitariness of אָדָם (*ādām*), apparently spoken to Himself, as a verbalised thought. The "not good" stands in sharp contrast to the frequent "good" in Gen 1, despite these being two entirely different streams of tradition. While, only once, in both creation narratives something is described as "not good" (2:18), it is stated seven times that something God created was "good",[5] once, among these, even "very good".[6] Bearing in mind that, in Hebrew understanding, the attribute of "good"-ness is not only a relative assessment, in the sense of "better than . . .", but an absolute statement about the quality of the creation, it becomes all the clearer that solitariness of אָדָם (*ādām*) misses the goal. There is only "good" and "not good", as absolute opposites, and it is "*not good* for the man to be alone".

This is not a statement about אָדָם (*ādām*), as such, but only about a certain given situation, which prevents him from living up to his full destiny. From the beginning, it is said, אָדָם (*ādām*) is created for companionship, as a relational being. His solitariness is understood, not as emotional loneliness, but, quite practically, as helplessness, which reveals a rather unromantic view on male-female relationships.[7] On the other hand, the loneliness of אָדָם (*ādām*) is not the expression of a general desire for a helper or company; it rather calls for a **corresponding** partner, who is able

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[5] Gen 1:4, 10, 12, 18, 21, 25.

[6] Gen 1:31.

[7] Cf. Gerhard Von Rad, "Das erste Buch Mose: Genesis", in *ATD* 2-4, Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Rupprecht, 1981p. 57.

to fill the gap in his existence, and to whom he could be a companion of the same kind.

This is expressed by the Hebrew words עֵזֶר כְּנֶגְדּוֹ (*ēzer k^enege^dō*), which are worth a closer look. The first, עֵזֶר (*ēzer*), in the Old Testament, is generally used with reference to God, with few exceptions.[8] It is rarely personified to mean "helper, assistant",[9] but, more often in an abstract way, designates "help, assistance, internal and external support", as such[10], although, even then, it is "frequently used in a concrete sense to designate the assistant".[11] Thus, any notion of hierarchical subordination is excluded from the outset, because the function is in view, not the personal relationship. This is further supported, considering that any thought of God, Israel's, or the faithful's עֵזֶר (*ēzer*), being subordinate to a human being, would undoubtedly be identified as nonsense. On the contrary, the conclusion could be drawn that the one requiring assistance is inferior to the one offering it, but this may be stretching it too far. In any case, it is obvious that the use of עֵזֶר (*ēzer*) quite soberly indicates a lack, or need, in life or existence of אָדָם (*ādām*), while there is no idea, whatsoever, of subordination, or hierarchical relationship, between persons.

The addition of כְּנֶגְדּוֹ (*k^enege^dō*) emphasises, and further elaborates, this fact. Only used here, in the Old Testament, it contains the aspects of both similarity and complementarity.[12] Literally, it means "as in front of",[13] with a strong "connotation of prominence (being conspicuous)", due to the specific meaning of its root נָגַד (*nāgad*), "to place a matter high,

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[8] Vonholdt, "Ehe – Die Ikone Gottes in der Welt", p. 216; and עֵזֶר (*ēzer*) in R. Laird Harris, et al, eds, *Theological Wordbook of the Old Testament*, Chicago IL: Moody Press, 1980, no 1598a, p. 660.

[9] E.g., Ex 18:4; Deut 33:29; Ezek 12:14; Hos 13:9; and others.

[10] E.g., Deut 33:7, 26; Ps 20:3; 33:20; 70:6; 115:9-11; 121:1f; 124:8; 146:5; Is 30:5; Dan 11:34; and others. Cf. Von Rad, p. 57.

[11] עֵזֶר (*ēzer*) in *Theological Wordbook*, no 1598a, p. 660.

[12] Ibid.

[13] John Skinner, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on Genesis*, International Critical Commentary, Edinburgh UK: T. & T. Clark, 1930 (reprint 1963)p. 67.

conspicuous, before a person".[14]   Thus, it should be understood as "corresponding".   It particularly stresses the equality of the two counterparts, while their distinction is well preserved. In conjunction with עֵזֶר (*ēzer*), it becomes obvious that any being is not suited as a companion for אָדָם (*ādām*), in order to fill the need in his life, particularly no one who is subordinate to him, but it must correspond to him, it must be an adequate opposite partner. This is the most important criterion by which the stage is set for the following verses.

GEN 2:19-20

In order to fulfil his task, God creates the beasts and the birds – those creatures that share with אָדָם (*ādām*) the same environment: earth and air. For various reasons, it has been suggested that vv. 19-20(a) are secondary to the original tradition of the narrative.[15] Their omission, together with that of vv. 5 and 9, would make Gen 2f "an account, not of the creation of the world as a whole, but simply of the making of man, and of his life in the garden",[16] thus eliminating some of the inconsistencies in the text. Practically, none of the reasons given, however, can stand a closer examination.

Firstly, the animals' formation "out of the ground" does not affect what Simpson describes as "the force of one of the main points (cf. 3:19, 23b) of the original narrative",[17] i.e., that אָדָם (*ādām*) is taken out of the ground, too, and, therefore, is bound to return to it. The focus in ch. 3 is entirely on the human-divine relationship, and the human fate, while the non-human world, there, is not in view at all. In addition, there is a decisive difference between the animals and אָדָם (*ādām*): the animals do not receive the "breath of life", as אָדָם (*ādām*) does (v. 7b). While they share with him (and the trees, v. 9) the same bodily substance, they are, in no way,

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[14] נֶגֶד (*neged*) in *Theological Wordbook*, no 1289a, p. 549.

[15] A list of the arguments in Cuthbert A. Simpson, *The Book of Genesis. Introduction and Exegesis*, The Interpreter's Bible, vol 1, New York NY: Abingdon Press, 1952, pp. 497ff.

[16] Loc.cit., pp. 498f.

[17] Loc.cit., p. 494.

equivalent to him. This explains, among other things, why, later, no companion for אָדָם (*ādām*) is found among them, and, at the same time, emphasises common status of אָדָם (*ādām*) and the animals, as created beings.

Secondly, while the naming of the animals may not be aetiological, it is not "without significance"[18] either. It is obvious, from other biblical texts, and also known in many cultures, that knowing somebody by name, and, even more so, giving a name to somebody, means to have certain powers over him or her. So, in naming the animals, אָדָם (*ādām*) already exercises his dominion over the creation.[19] Skinner puts it that "the name – that by which the thing is summoned into the field of thought – belongs to the full existence of the thing itself".[20] It certainly makes the thing available for manipulation; the thing becomes the object of rational thought and action. Because this act of naming, then, is an expression of the dominion of אָדָם (*ādām*) over the animals, thus, of their essential difference, the search for a suitable companion, naturally, must be unsuccessful. The names given to the animals do not match with the name of אָדָם (*ādām*), in the same way as אִישׁ (*īš*) and אִשָּׁה (*iššah*) (v. 23), which rather emphasises the close similarity, and mutual attraction, of man and woman, and, at the same time, explains – though, allegedly, etymologically wrong[21] – the similarity of the Hebrew words.

The weightiest argument for vv. 19-20(a) being secondary is that they appear not only to take a deviation from the main direction of events, i.e., finding names for the animals instead of finding a companion for אָדָם (*ādām*), but this undertaking rather bears the character of an unsuccessful

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[18] Loc.cit., p. 498.
[19] Cf. Gen 2:15; 1:28.
[20] Skinner, *Genesis*, p. 20. According to Walter Russell Bowie, *The Book of Genesis: Exposition*, The Interpreter's Bible, vol 1, New York NY: Abingdon Press, 1952, p. 498, the name determines the behaviour and existence of the animals.
[21] Simpson, *Genesis*, p. 498. Simpson just states this without giving any reasons; so this would need to be verified.

experiment – as if God did not really know what to do.[22] A look through the whole account of Gen 2f, however, reveals quite strong anthropomorphic tendencies in the description of God and His acts: He forms אָדָם (*aādām*) from dust, like a potter (2:7); He plants a garden (2:8); He develops plans (2:18); He walks in the garden "in the cool of the day" (3:8). The method of trial and error, then, does not entirely seem out of line; although it may push the anthropomorphism to an extreme, it still can be seen as consistent with the other parts of the narrative. As concerns the "detour" taken, it has already been shown that the naming of the animals, while accomplishing a task of its own, precisely through the failure of this attempt, leads on to the next stage. So, these verses, nevertheless, play a vital part in the whole of the account, in that they show that the animal world does not provide an equivalent companion for אָדָם (*ādām*). Their role is, although a deviation, an advance through negation.

GEN 2:21

Because the first attempt in finding a suitable companion for אָדָם (*ādām*) failed, as it seems, a second attempt is undertaken. It is described in almost accurate medical detail: God brings a narcotic sleep on אָדָם (*ādām*), performs a surgical operation to remove a rib bone, sutures the wound (closes it with flesh), and then forms a female from the material won (vv. 21f). Many scholars assume that this part of the account originally was an aetiological legend, which explained why the human rib cage does not extend further down over the stomach.[23] This suggestion, however interesting as it may be, in terms of tradition-history, can be neglected here, because the aetiological aspect has become secondary in the current context of vv. 18-25. Although it is still contained, it was of no interest to the author of the narrative, as we read it now.

Of much greater interest, is the fact itself that a rib is taken, not any other bone, or even a piece of flesh. The rib, particularly the one that is now

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[22] Skinner, *Genesis*, p. 67, therefore, speaks of the "[extraordinary] naïveté of the conception. . . . Not only did man exist before the beasts, but the whole animal creation is the result of an unsuccessful experiment to find a mate for him".

[23] Von Rad, "Das erste Buch Mose: Genesis", p. 59. It does not explain, however, why the same is the case in animals!

"missing" above the human stomach, is the bone closest to both the kidneys and the heart. These are, to some extent, synonymous in the Old Testament. Nevertheless, the kidneys are rather perceived as the biological and, especially, the emotional and moral centre of a human, while the heart is seen as the centre of intellectual and conscious life.[24] The matter, from which the companion of אָדָם (*ādām*) is formed, is taken, not from the periphery of human nature, but right from the centre, as close as can be to the centres of his existence. Yet, it provides for difference, because had it been taken from the heart and the kidneys, themselves, it would have become nothing more than a copy of the original.

GEN 2:22

From the matter taken, God "makes" the woman, much like a craftsman. This is much different from God's creation, through the word in Gen 1, but is not at all surprising, in the context of Gen 2, with its "hands-on" creational activity (cf. vv. 4b, 7, 8, 19). The result of this act of craftsmanship is woman. For the first time in Gen 2, a specific gender-related term is used. Previously, human was always referred to as אָדָם (*ādām*), which indicates "his" relationship to אֲדָמָה (*ᵃdamāh*), the earth from which "he" was made. There is no gender aspect in that. The use of אִשָּׁה (*iššāh*) introduces exactly that aspect, perhaps, in order to show the difference to the first human: although taken from the matter of אָדָם (*ādām*), woman is not just another אָדָם (*ādām*), but a being different in some way, and independent from him. This confirms the above findings, regarding v. 21, and is further developed in v. 23.

The woman now is "brought" to אָדָם (*ādām*), just as, previously, the animals were "brought" to him (v. 19) in order that he name them. Then the search for a companion was unsuccessful. How much different now!

GEN 2:23

אָדָם (*ādām*) bursts out in a poetic acclamation:

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[24] Cf. Barker, Kenneth, et al, eds, *The NIV Study Bible*, Grand Rapids MI: Zondervan, 1995, pp. 785 and 924 (study notes, respectively, on Ps 7:9 and 139:13).

> "Bone from my bone,
> Flesh from my flesh:
> She shall be called wo-man,
> Because she is taken from man."

What had been prepared in vv. 21f is now plainly acknowledged: the equality in matter and the difference in personality. *Iššāh* is not *īš*, but both are אָדָם (*ādām*). This newly-created being is truly a companion for אָדָם (*ādām*), as asked for in v. 18. Now, only gender-related terminology is fully introduced and applied: אִישׁ (*īš*) and אִשָּׁה (*iššah*). It is only in the encounter with his companion that the – initially gender-less – אָדָם (*ādām*) discovers that he is a man (אִישׁ (*īš*)).[25] Thus, humanity is neither exclusively male nor female, nor is it something above the genders, which is common to both, nor is it a kind of androgyny, but human only exists as **both** male and female, אָדָם (*ādām*) is synonymous with both אִישׁ (*īš*) and אִשָּׁה (*iššah*) **together**.[26]

GEN 2:24

This is further strengthened by the following verse, which, rather prosaically, states that, for this reason, a man will leave his parents, in order to live with his companion. That both man and woman equally are אָדָם (*ādām*), serves as an aetiological explanation for the strong attraction between the sexes. In becoming "one flesh", the original unity of אָדָם (*ādām*) will be restored.

It seems unlikely that these words are still spoken by the man; they, rather, appear like an aetiological comment, which was inserted by the author, or even a later redactor. Anyway, while they are said from the perspective of the man, the same would be true, in the perspective of the woman. The relationship between the companions is stronger than the strongest relationship imaginable besides it: that to the parents. Thus, the narrative

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[25] Vonholdt, "Ehe – Die Ikone Gottes in der Welt", p. 218.

[26] Ibid.

circle is closed; the companion, who was looked for in v. 18, is found. There is no doubt that she corresponds to the man, in every respect.

GEN 2:25

Following this, v. 25 seems to be added on, like an afterthought. Stating that both man and woman were naked, though not ashamed, the verse prepares the stage for the account of the fall in Gen 3. At this point, the companionship between the two was perfect, and unaffected yet by sin (cf. Gen 3:7). Because of its position and function in the fabric of Gen 2 and 3, it may well be assumed that v. 25 is a redactional link between those two chapters, which, according to Von Rad, are, thematically and tradition-historically different, traditions.[27]

SUMMARY

As the exegesis has shown, quite a number of issues are raised and addressed in the account of the creation of woman. Disregarding the minor points, like the aetiology regarding human physiology, only the major points shall be recounted here.

Firstly, אָדָם (*ādām*) is a relational being; it is not good that he is alone, but there is existential need for a companion, who is equal to, yet different from, him, in short: who corresponds to him. Then, there is the essential difference between human and animal, despite their sharing the same bodily substance; their relationship is not one of equality, but of dominion and subordination, which is both established and exercised at the same time, in the naming of the animals. Thirdly, woman is not an entirely new creation, but, being taken from the אָדָם (*ādām*) already in existence – particularly from close to his personal centres – she fully shares in his nature, yet is a person of her own, not only a copy. Finally, the mutual attraction of the genders is grounded in the fact that, by way of their creation, they truly correspond to each other.

Gen 2f is usually, and rightly so, taken as a complete unit, telling "of how man was expelled from the garden, in which he had lived a carefree life,

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[27] Von Rad, "Das erste Buch Mose: Genesis", p. 60.

. . . of his subsequent reduction, following the crime of Cain, to the cultureless life of 'a fugitive and wanderer on earth' ".[28] The danger in this is that it may lead to a tendency to overlook the smaller details in the various sections of the narrative, and their particular meaning. That these are of great value, in themselves, has become evident through the above summary. Yet, while they may, to some extent, sidetrack one from the main topic, adding other ideas, they still serve their purpose, in the whole, and support the central message, which is: the only suitable companion for אָדָם (*ādām*) is the one who shares with him the same nature, and complements אִישׁ (*īš*) as אִשָּׁה (*iššah*). The failure of the attempt to find one among the animals supports this, because it shows that a relationship of dominion cannot provide that companion; the relationship must be one of equality.

Attention must be drawn to the fact that the order of creation, although taken for granted in the account, plays no role whatsoever. It is neither the object of reflection at all, nor does it serve to establish any hierarchical order between man and woman. The focus is, entirely and exclusively, on the fact that both man and woman share in the same nature, thus being equivalent companions in their mutual relationship. This becomes particularly obvious in the contrast with the unequal relationship to the animals. Though different in their genders, both are – without any reservations – אָדָם (*ādām*). Only in their equal, mutually-complementary relationship, אָדָם (*ādām*) comes to his fullest being. This is the central message of Gen 2:18-25.

PROSPECTS FOR AN APPLICATION IN MELANESIA

Obviously, it is the Creator's original intention that male and female should be equals, without any reservation. But it only takes one more chapter to overthrow this completely. In God's punishment on the woman, after her and her companion's disobedience, he tells her that "[her] desire will be for [her] husband, and he will rule over [her]" (Gen 3:16). This is the

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[28] Simpson, *Genesis*, p. 441, who includes ch. 4 in this unit. Similar Von Rad, "Das erste Buch Mose: Genesis", p. 51, who wants to see Gen 2f understood "as a whole, with unified train of thought" (translation by the author).

situation, which all other biblical writers are confronted with, and to which they respond. Thus Paul, in Eph 5:22-33, takes it for granted that wives should be submitting to their husbands, although he urges men to love their wives "just as Christ loved the church" (v. 25), which, ultimately, means an even greater degree of submission. In giving this advice, he, naturally, was caught up in the cultural values and ethics he was familiar with: those of the Jewish-Hellenistic world, in which male dominance and female submission were the norm. But he advances from there, and applies the principles that he has learned from his personal encounter with Christ, and his subsequent theological reflection. In doing so, while he feels obliged to the contemporary culture, he deeply criticises it, by challenging its gender-relationship values. Nevertheless, he remains far behind the ideal of creation, pictured in Gen 2:18-25.

What is the situation in Melanesia? The fact is that, in all Melanesian societies (like probably all over the world), women have to submit to male dominance, to a greater or lesser extent. In matrilineal cultures, a female surely has considerably more rights and powers, particularly because she owns the land, showing to the unprejudiced observer, in quite self-confident behaviour, yet it usually is a man, often the elder brother, who makes the important decisions for her. This being one end of the continuum, male superiority over females, then, is practised in varying degrees in different local cultures, up to the point, where women not only have to submit to their male counterparts, in practice, but are thought to be of different, yes, even poorer, if not evil, substance.[29] Such a view, of course, has to be rejected with all determination, based on the total equality in substance expressed in the account of the woman's creation.

The perception of female inferiority becomes most evident in its social consequences. Particularly, rape and domestic violence have to be named here[30], which are both not uncommon; in other words: must, to some extent, be tolerated by society – why?! The present campaigns to create an

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[29] The reason for this extreme view has been suggested to be men's fear of the special, life-giving, or attractive, powers of the other sex.

[30] Not to speak of the practices of torturing and murdering perceived "witches", which have recently become public!

awareness of these abuses, and to provide for appropriate legal protection of the concerned women, indicate the underlying misconception. As long as women are seen to be worth less than men are, these acts will not be seen as serious crimes against the dignity, not only of women, but also of the human race, altogether. The exploitation of women in the entertainment industry must be seen along the same line. The newspaper advertisements for "beach babes", "mud wrestling", "body decoration", "wet T-shirt competitions", etc., speak of the view that is taken here: that the (only?) purpose of women is to please men's desires, and that, apart from this, they are worth little. It is a contorted image of the mutual attraction between the sexes that Gen 2:24 speaks of.

Another, less-conspicuous and less physically-damaging consequence is the change in the practice of bride wealth exchange. While, traditionally, it primarily served the purpose of sealing the relationship between the two parties involved, there is a tendency, nowadays, that women are degraded to a mere commodity, which is traded according, to the principles of supply and demand. This development, at least in part, may be due to the transition from barter to a money economy. The author recalls reading an article, written by a woman, who was strongly in favour of bride price, because it made the young ladies feel worthy, and it built up their self-esteem. He has no objection to that, but, if that is the only source of worth for young women, then something is seriously wrong!

Gender roles in Melanesian society are deliberately not included with the other negative consequences of the idea of female inferiority. Traditionally, there was a clear and useful division of labour in the community, with the women basically responsible for the regular food supply from the garden, and the raising of the children, and the men, representing the nuclear family in public, defending it against threats from the outside, providing shelter, and every now and then, contributing to the menu through hunting game. With that, the gender roles not only served the community, but also provided "a sense of identity".[31] Thus, they had a definitely positive value. When Mantovani states that "because roles are actually used to oppress,

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[31] Mantovani, "The Challenge of Christ to Traditional Marriage", p. 137.

one cannot say that the ideal of roles is oppressive",[32] this is true in every respect. Yet, it is a proven fact that the ideal of gender roles is misused for oppression, and, in this regard, they would have to be listed here together with other abuses.

To be sure, Gen 2:18-25 presents the ideal, i.e., how originally the relationship of male and female was intended to be; we, who live in Melanesia today, live after the fall, which seriously disturbed this relationship. But this is no excuse to hold on to cultural practices – neither here, nor anywhere overseas – which disregard the fundamental equality of the genders. On the contrary, Christ, as the new אָדָם (*ādām*), existentially challenges our value systems towards (!) the – though, in this world, never complete – restoration of the original image.[33] This He does, in particular, when He responds to the Pharisees' question regarding divorce, with the reference to the Mosaic law, only in order to immediately qualify it as given "because your hearts were hard", i.e., because the situation is that, after the fall, and, therefore, as far less than ideal.[34] He does it fundamentally, in His absolute submission to the will of the Father, even to His death on the cross, by which He restores – in faith, though not yet in full – the original relationship between God and His creatures.

Thus, the challenge, in the case of gender relationship, would be to examine the existing practices in Melanesian cultures, and their underlying concepts and ideas, in the light of Gen 2:18-25. Some practices may be continued, with little or no adjustment at all, while others may need to be abolished completely, and, if necessary, be replaced by new customs, developed on the basis of God's original intention for His creation. In this way, may the image of Christ, the new אָדָם (*ādām*), with the Spirit's guidance, become more clearly reflected in Melanesian cultures!

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[32] Ibid.
[33] Cf. Ibid., p. 124.
[34] Mark 10:2-9.

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THE ANTICHRIST: FURTHER REFLECTIONS

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INTRODUCTION

Eschatology is often a divisive topic among Christians. Too often, discussions about the end times have produced more heat than light! Indeed, some Christians seem to think that no profit can be gained by paying attention to the topic, seeing only unnecessary and destructive divisions occurring as a result. A cartoon in a church bulletin reflected this position, when it portrayed Christians on the road to heaven. As they neared the walls of the heavenly city, the road divided and various Christians followed their respective roads to doors in the wall marked "pre-millennial", "post-millennial", "amillennial", and so on. On the other side of the wall, the roads converged into one again!

However, eschatology is a prominent theme in the New Testament, and Christians cannot be loyal to their apostolic heritage without taking eschatology seriously. As a biblical theme, it deserves attention. Its prominence in the Bible, indeed, demands urgency. Thus, Hane Kila's article on the Antichrist in volume 19-1 of the *Melanesian Journal of Theology* was a very welcome sight indeed.[1] Its irenic spirit provided a textbook-like example of how eschatological issues should be discussed among Christians. I would like to suggest some area of agreement, and some of disagreement, with Mrs Kila's presentation, before drawing

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[1] Hane Kila, "The Antichrist", in *Melanesian Journal of Theology* 19-1 (2003), pp. 118-123.

attention to an overlooked theme that adds considerable richness to the whole discussion.

APPRECIATION

There is much of value in Mrs Kila's article. She is certainly correct in tracing the concept back through the various symbolisms and designations of scripture: the "little horn", the beast, the man of sin, the abomination of desolation, etc.[2] In a similar way, Mrs Kila is quite correct in her description of the extent of the antichrist's power. It is instructive to notice that Christ's eschatological sermon (Mark 13, Matt 24; Luke 21) reaches something of a crescendo in the worldwide proclamation of the gospel. This is immediately followed by reference to the "abomination of desolation" (or the antichrist), which Revelation identifies as having similar worldwide influence. Again, Mrs Kila accurately describes the defeat of the antichrist. She draws exclusively on the book Revelation at this point. However, the scenario, derived from Revelation, is easily confirmed by an examination of the earlier descriptions of the career of the antichrist. For example, Dan 7 associates the demise of the little horn with the coming of the "one like a human being" (Dan 7:13, NRSV) and Paul describes the "man of sin" as being one "whom the Lord Jesus will destroy with the breath of his mouth, annihilating him by the manifestation of his coming" (2 Thess 2:8).

RESERVATION

There are two specific issues on which I would differ from Mrs Kila in my own interpretation. Firstly, in response to the question of whether the antichrist is a person or a movement/power, Mrs Kila argues for the personal interpretation.[3] Such a position has certainly been held by many Christians throughout history, but it is not as dominant as Mrs Kila suggests.[4] In pre-reformation times, an identification of Islam with the

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[2] On the relationship of these symbols and designations, see D. Ford, *The Abomination of Desolation in Biblical Eschatology*, Washington DC: University Press of America, 1979.

[3] Kila, "Antichrist", pp. 117-118.

[4] L. E. Froom, *The Prophetic Faith of Our Fathers*, Washington DC: Review & Herald, 1946-1954.

antichrist was common. The Protestant reformers were unanimous in applying the designation to the papacy, as were the Puritan divines.[5]

The personal character of the description of the man of sin in 2 Thess 2 is easy to exaggerate. After all, Paul says that "the mystery of lawless is *already* at work [in his day]" (2 Thess 2:7), and would be fully revealed when the "restrainer" was removed (2 Thess 2:6-7). Certainly no human *individual* was active in Paul's day, and yet still awaits eschatological revelation. The "mystery of lawlessness" and the "lawless one"– or "man of sin" – appear to be directly-parallel expressions. In the light of these observations, it may be best to say that the antichrist represents a spirit of on-going rebellion against God, which simmers throughout the Christian age (and even in pre-Christian times), coming to the boil when the circumstances are right, immediately preceding the second coming of Christ.[6] (Of course, that climax may not be focused directly on one individual either).

A similar point may be made, with regard to John's comments. John is not distinguishing between one future eschatological antichrist and the many antichrists of the past, as Mrs Kila suggests. Rather, he acknowledges the belief in the coming of an eschatological antichrist, held by the recipients of his letter (1 John 2:18). He regards this as *fulfilled* in the existence, in his day, of "many antichrists". These are not precursors of the eschatological

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[5] B. W. Ball, *The English Connection*, Cambridge UK: James Clarke, 1981, pp. 193-212. The Puritan position is illustrated in the preface to the King James Version of the Bible (which is still published in some KJVs: "And this, their contentment, doth not diminish or decay, but every day increaseth and taketh strength, when they observe, that the zeal of Your Majesty toward the house of God doth not slack or go backward, but is more and more kindled, manifesting itself abroad in the farthest parts of *Christendom,* by writing in defence of the truth, (*which hath given such a blow unto that man of sin, as will not be healed*), and every day at home, by religious and learned discourse, by frequenting the house of God, by hearing the Word preached, by cherishing the Teachers thereof, by caring for the church, as a most tender and loving nursing Father" [Italics added].

[6] A close reading of Mrs Kila's article shows that the difference between us on this point is one of emphasis. She acknowledges, explicitly, the working of sin and rebellion throughout earth's history, and I certainly agree with her that such rebellion will reach an eschatological climax.

antichrist; they *are* the eschatological antichrist! Thus, he stresses that it is "the last hour".[7]

The second area of Mrs Kila's argument that I am troubled by is the question of how literally the symbolism of Revelation is to be taken. This comes to clearest focus in the confident affirmation that the antichrist will exercise absolute power for 42 months or three-and-one-half years.[8] This is explicitly tied to a pre-tribulational understanding of eschatology in general.[9] However, a discussion of issues relating to the interpretation of Dan 9 – the so-called "dismal swamp of OT criticism"[10] – and the rapture would take us too far afield here.[11]

But the question remains: should the 42 months of Rev 13:5 be taken literally or symbolically? Revelation is a highly-symbolic book. John introduces his book by saying that "he [God][12] made it known by sending His angel to His servant John" (Rev 1:1 NRSV). The Greek word here

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[7] R. E. Brown, *The Epistles of John*, in Anchor Bible 30, New York NY: Doubleday, 1982, p. 330. Numerous attempts have been made to wrestle with the fact that 2,000 years of subsequent history demonstrate that it was manifestly *not* the last hour. Brown is content with simply admitting John was in error (p. 330). C. H. Dodd, *The Johannine Epistles*, London UK: Hodder & Stoughton, 1946, p. 51, falls back on his understanding of "realised eschatology". I. H. Marshall, *The Epistles of John*, Grand Rapids MI: William B. Eerdmans, 1978, pp. 148-151 suggests that John shares a viewpoint, which sees the time between the Cross and the second coming as being "the last hour". Ford, *Abomination of Desolation*, pp. 68-76, relies on a hermeneutic of conditionalism making John mean in effect, "it is *potentially* the last hour". However, the fact that the solution to this problem is not readily evident should not prevent us from acknowledging what John is actually saying in this verse.

[8] Kila, "Antichrist", p. 120.

[9] Ibid., p. 120.

[10] J. A. Montgomery, *The Book of Daniel*, in International Critical Commentary, Edinburgh UK: T. & T. Clark, 1927, p. 400.

[11] On the interpretation of Dan 9, I would recommend G. F. Hasel, "Interpretations of the Chronology of the Seventy Weeks", in *70 Weeks, Leviticus, Nature of Prophecy*, F. B. Holbrook, ed., Washington DC: Biblical Research Institute, 1986, 3, p. 63; and on the rapture question, G. E. Ladd, *The Blessed Hope*, Grand Rapids MI: William B. Eerdmans, 1956.

[12] Some have argued that the referent of the pronoun is actually the Son rather than the Father. See, for example, R. H. Charles, *The Revelation of St John*, in International Critical Commentary, Edinburgh UK: T. & T. Clark, 1920, p. 6.

translated "made it known" is σημαίνω *sēmainō*, which is derived from the word σημεῖον (*sēmeion*), "sign", and has the root meaning, "show by a sign, indicate, point out".[13] The use of this word here is deliberate. It provides a hermeneutical key – a reminder in advance – to take the symbolic nature of the book seriously.[14]

There are further reasons for suspecting that the 42 months are not to be taken literally in Rev 13:5. Context suggests a literal reading is unlikely. Is the "beast" a literal animal? Clearly not. It is clearly an amalgam of the beasts of Dan 7. The same beast appears again in Rev 17,[15] where the seven heads are later identified as seven mountains and seven kings (Rev 17:9-10); the ten horns are likewise identified as ten kings (Rev 17:12). The beast emerges from the waters of sea – latter identified as "peoples and multitudes and nations and languages", rather than literal waters (Rev 17:15). The beast's utterings or blasphemies, and, indeed, its 42-month duration, derive from the imagery of the little horn in Dan 7.[16] But, again, the horn is not a literal horn, but is identified as a "king" (Dan 7:24). If the beast, the heads, the horns, and the sea are all symbolic, what is the basis for taking the time period as being literal?[17] The most natural way of expressing such a time period would, in fact, be "three-and-one-half years", and even though the period is referred to in three different ways, this most natural and literal of designations is avoided![18]

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[13] H. G. Liddel, and R. Scott, *Greek-English Lexicon: with a Revised Supplement*, 9th edn, Oxford UK: Clarendon Press, 1996, p. 1592.

[14] G. R. Beasley-Murray, *The Book of Revelation*, in New Century Bible Commentary, Grand Rapids MI: William B. Eerdmans, 1974, p. 51; P. E. Hughes, *The Book of Revelation*, Leicester UK: IVP, 1990, p. 16.

[15] G. E. Ladd, *A Commentary on the Revelation of John*, Grand Rapids MI: William B. Eerdmans, 1972, p. 223.

[16] That the "forty-two months" is derived from Daniel's "time, two times, and half a time" (Dan 7:25) is made clear by the parallels between Rev 12:15 ("a time, and times, and half a time"), Rev 12:6 ("one thousand two hundred sixty days"), Rev 11:3 ("one thousand two hundred and sixty days"), and Rev 11:2 ("forty-two months").

[17] The question of literalness can be asked at several other important points in Revelation as well. Are literal Jews referred to (as Mrs Kila suggests)? Literal Babylon? Literal Jerusalem? Literal Meggido? These are matters too vast to go into here.

[18] D. Ford, *Daniel*, Nashville TN: Southern Publishing Association, 1978, pp. 301-302.

The 42 months is better taken as referring to a *quality* of time, rather than a *length* of time. The Old Testament narrative of Elijah provides one key to understanding this. At the heart of this narrative, is a drought of three-and-one-half years' duration.[19] During this time, Elijah, representing the people of God, is in the wilderness. His life is sought by a wicked queen. This section of the narrative ends with a contest at Mt Carmel, which is located at the end of the Meggido Valley, over the worship of the true God, which involves fire falling from heaven. The parallels with Revelation are obvious. There, the people of God, represented by a pure woman, flee into the wilderness (Rev 12:6). During their time in the wilderness, there is a drought (Rev 11:3, 6). Their deadly foe is a wicked woman, a queen, who rules over the nations (Rev 17:18).[20] The conflict reaches a climax at Armageddon, the mountain of Meggido, which (if a literal mountain is meant), can only be Mt Carmel.[21] Again, fire falls from heaven, or, at least, appears to, but this time it falls onto the wrong altar.[22]

FURTHER INSIGHT

Beyond the details outlined by Mrs Kila, lies an important motif that she has not developed. An appreciation of this motif, however, adds a depth and richness to our understanding of the antichrist. Therefore, I offer the following comments, as a supplement to Mrs Kila's description, rather than a correction.

A key word in Rev 13 is the word "worship", occurring, as it does, five times (Rev 13:4 [twice], 8, 12, 15). This is crucial in understanding the nature of the antichrist. Revelation draws heavily – but allusively – on the

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[19] The length of the drought is not given in the Old Testament, but is found in James 5:17.

[20] There are a number of parallels that can be drawn between this woman and the false prophetess at Smyrna, who is explicitly named Jezebel (Rev 2:20-23).

[21] H. K. LaRondelle, "The Etymology of *Har-Margedon* (Rev 16:16)", in *Andrews University Seminary Studies* 27 (1989), pp. 69-73.

[22] The matter hinges on the unanswerable question of whether "in the sight of all [literally: "men"]" (Rev 13:13) means people really saw fire fall from heaven, or a misguided human perception and interpretation thought fire came down from heaven. The issue is not fundamentally important. In either case, the effect is to mislead and to deceive.

Old Testament.[23] The theme of worship, associated with the threat of death for true worship, is found in the Old Testament. In the Elijah narrative, the issue is indisputably worship: "Elijah then came near to all the people, and said, 'How long will you go limping with two different opinions? If the LORD is God, follow him; but if Baal, then follow him' " (1 Kings 18:21 NRSV).

However, conflict over worship goes back even further in the Old Testament, first coming into explicit focus in Gen 4. Cain and Abel worship differently – they bring different sacrifices (Gen 4:3-4), only one of which God accepts (Gen 4:4-5). The false worshipper then attacks and kills the true (Gen 4:8). Revelation contains at least one clear allusion to this story. The fifth seal symbolises the souls of the martyrs as being under the altar, where the *blood* of sacrifice was poured out in the Old Testament sanctuary (Lev 4:7, 18, 25, 30, 34; 5:9; 8:15).[24] They are crying out for vindication, even as the blood of Abel cried out in Gen 4:10. The martyrs are thus linked back to Abel. The antichrist threatens the lives of God's people, and actually kills some. The woman on the beast in Rev 17 is drunk on the martyr's blood (Rev 17:6).

Another Old Testament story of great relevance to this theme is that of the three worthies in Dan 3. Here, again, worship is a central theme. The word occurs 11 times (Dan 3:5-7, 10-12, 14, 15 [twice], 18, 28). As in Rev 13, an image is built, and the command is given that it be worshipped, on the pain of death (Dan 3:3-6). However, the worshippers of the true God are delivered, and their enemies confounded.

Such stories indicate that the essential issue, with regard to the antichrist, is not politics, economics, or any such thing. It is worship. In Revelation, the redeemed worship the Lamb, who died to save them (Rev 7:9-10), but the unrepentant cry out "Who is like the beast?" (Rev 13:4). The issue, in the final climax of earth's history, will not be novel. Rather, it will be an amplification of the same issue that has been at the heart of human

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[23] J. Paulien, *Decoding Revelation's Trumpets*, Berrien Springs MI: Andrews University Press, 1987, pp. 49-70.

[24] It is significant, in this regard, that the Old Testament states explicitly that the "life" or "soul" is in the blood (Gen 9:4; Deut 12:23).

existence since the Garden of Eden: worship. This was a live issue in Old Testament times (as shown above); but, equally so, in the time of Antiochus Epiphanes (see especially 1 Macc 1:10-14)[25]; the days of the apostles, when a pinch of incense on the altar of Caesar could mean the difference between life and death[26]; in the middle ages[27]; in Islamic countries today; in the godless regimes of communism; in the increasingly repaganised modern Western world; in the final eschatological drama, and *in all other times and places.*

CONCLUSION

The study of eschatology is not a diversion for Christians. Such study is wasted if it becomes the pretext for unChristian behaviour or attitudes. However, the study of eschatology has a real practical benefit for the Christian life, because the issues of the great eschatological crisis of the future are not different in *kind* – only in *intensity* – to the issues faced today. Thus, when understood correctly, eschatology is not primarily about the future. It teaches us, in a fundamental way, about today. It challenges the student with the most urgent questions of the ages: "How then should I live?", "Who shall I worship?", "What will be my God?"

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[25] J. E. Goldingay, *Daniel*, in Word Biblical Commentary 30, Dallas TX: Word Publishing, 1989, pp. 188, 267-268.

[26] F. F. Bruce, *New Testament History*, Garden City NY: Doubleday, 1971, pp. 421-428.

[27] H. K. LaRondelle, "The Middle Ages within the Scope of Apocalyptic Prophecy", in *Journal of the Evangelical Theological Society* 32-3 (1989), pp. 345-354.

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A Biblical Critique of the Worship of the Sun God *Yanigelwa* by the Dinga People of Papua New Guinea

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INTRODUCTION

The sun's natural brightness and warmth has attracted worshippers since the creation of the world. James Orr writes, "The splendour of the sun makes it a natural object of adoration, once the purer idea of the one true God (Rom 1:20-21) is parted with, and, in most ancient nations, the worship of the sun was an outstanding feature".[1] The Dinga people[2] of Papua New Guinea are no exception. They saw the natural brightness of the sun, felt its warmth, and assumed it was a god. Therefore, they gave allegiance, venerated, and worshipped the sun.

This article evaluates sun-god worship, from a biblical perspective. What worldview do sun worshippers have? Does sun worship result in a preChristian understanding of God? Does sun worship help or hinder the understanding of the gospel? This article explores these questions, within the context of the Dinga people. However, to begin our study, we will look at sun worship, from a historical perspective.

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[1] James Orr, "Sun-Worship", in *The International Standard Bible Encyclopedia*, James Orr, ed., Wilmington DE: Associated Publishers & Authors, 1915, p. 2870.

[2] Dinga people are of the Sinasina District in the southern part of Chimbu Province of Papua New Guinea. The Dinga people are made up of two big clans: Nineku and Kreku. Total population is 4,000 people. Other people of Chimbu regard the Dinga people as unique, and in the forefront of the development of Chimbu.

SUN-GOD WORSHIP

SUN-GOD WORSHIP IN ANCIENT NATIONS

Sun worship was important in the cultures of ancient Egypt, Babylonia, Persia, and Northern India. The people of these hot countries revered the sun as a deity. The people viewed the sun as both a beneficial god and a destructive god.

> In ancient Egypt, the sun god Rah was represented by a man bearing a sun disc on his head, which was surmounted by the Uraesus-snake. The reptile, symbolising the withering effect of the sun, had often been used in the Near East.[3]

The Egyptian Pharaoh, Amenophis IV (1375-1358 BC), tried to introduce a monotheistic, or one-god religion, by declaring the sun god *Aten* the only god, while he renamed himself *Akhenaten* (glory of the sun disc).

> Persian influence on the thought and language of Malachi can be seen in the prophet's references to "a scroll of remembrance" and "the sun of righteousness". . . . The unique expression "sun of righteousness" is reminiscent of the winged solar disk that represents the sun god in Mesopotamian and Egyptian iconography, and symbolises protection for the king, and assures victory in battle.[4]

Sun worship was part of the religion of the Northern Bronze Age, the culture destroyed by natural catastrophes around 1220 BC. Later, in the Indo-Germanic religion, people celebrated the feasts of the summer and winter solstices, and used a number of symbols, such as the wheel cross, and the swastika. It may be that the Christian mode of praying with closed eyes is also a relic of the religion of our forebears, as it is impossible to look at the sun with your eyes fully open.

Quite different was the situation in Central and Northern Europe, where a abundant amount of sunshine was available for the ripening of crops.

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[3] M. G. Easton, *Illustrated Bible Dictionary*, 3rd edn, Nashville TN: Thomas Nelson, pp. 995-1000.

[4] Ibid., pp. 995-1001.

Here, the people worshipped the sun as a beneficial power, as soon as agriculture became the principal means of support during the Neolithic period (4000-2000 BC).

SUN-GOD WORSHIP IN PAPUA NEW GUINEA

Other people groups in Papua New Guinea, besides the Dinga, adored the sun. The Siane religion of the Eastern Highlands Province believed that there was a sun god, "*Oma Rumufa* (black way), who existed before man did. *Oma Rumufa* symbolised the sun, and as a ruler over the land of the dead, he takes the form of a circle of white light".[5]

The Kuman people, in Chimbu Province, believed the sun was their "grandfather". This is reflected in their prayers, "Grandfather sun! Before your eyes, I plant my garden. I planted it, but it has not grown well so far. Shine, therefore, nicely, and when you have brought it for harvesting, then I can eat from it." This was a request for a good harvest. [6]

The Dengglagu and Vandeke people of Gembolge, in Chimbu Province, speak of the sun as their "big father". They pray to the sun, "If you make the vegetables and sweet potatoes grow well; I shall eat them. I have killed the rats, and have cooked *wamugl*-plants (as a sacrifice)."[7]

The important men in the Maprik area prayed, "*Nyamben mbampo* (sun and moon)! Come down, and help me! I wish to harvest large yams. For a long time, I have 'eaten hungry'! Now help me!"[8]

The Nauru people, in the Highlands, considered the sun as their "big father", and they prayed to it like this, "Watch, Oh Sun! We have planted

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[5] P. Lawrence, and M. J. Meggitt, eds, *Gods, Ghosts, and Men in Melanesia*, London UK: Oxford University Press, 1965, p. 55.

[6] Theo Aerts, "Prayers of the Past", in *Melanesian Journal of Theology* 4-1 (1988), p. 48.

[7] Ibid., quoting Heinrich Aufenanger, "The sun in the life of the natives in the New Guinea highlands", in *Anthropos* 57, 1962, pp. 6 and 2.

[8] Aerts, "Prayers of the Past", p. 47, quoting Heinrich Aufenanger, *The passing scene in North-East New Guinea: a documentation*, St Augustin: Anthropos Institute, 1972, pp. 289-299.

sugar cane, and provided it with sticks to support it. We shall cut and eat it. May it grow well. Oh Sun! Our Father! Keep watching!"[9]

The Kuma people, in the Western Highlands, and in the Wahgi Valley, also pray to the sun, "Oh Sun! Our big father! Someone has stolen the vegetables that we had planted. We do not know who it is. You saw it; you reveal it! You are our big father."[10]

From the Schouten Islands, this is a prayer of thanksgiving for good crops, "Sun! The bananas are good. Sun! The mamis are good. The sun is good. The sun and the moon are good."[11]

The people of Komkane and Tsiambugla, in Chimbu Province, believed the sun was their "Father sun", and chanted, "Oh Sun! Do not go down! Watch over us! If you go down now, it will get dark. You may go down when we have gone to our house."[12]

This is a prayer, used among the Numa people, of New Guinea Highlands, during initiation, "Oh Sun! Look at these children! I gave them bows and axes. You help them."[13]

A mother, from among the Kondulche people, prayed with confidence, "Oh Sun! You see I 'found' (=gave birth to) a baby. Will it live, or will it die?"[14]

The Kulchkane people prayed for healing, the binding of the wind, which was believed to be a cause of sickness, "Oh Sun! The wind (or: the cold) acted fraudulently, so the little girl fell ill. Take this ratan-rope, and bind the wind. It will try to come again; keep it tied up."[15]

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[9] Aerts, "Prayers of the Past", p. 49, quoting Aufenanger, "The sun", p. 19.

[10] Aerts, "Prayers of the Past", p. 50, quoting Aufenanger, "The sun", pp. 20-21.

[11] Aerts, "Prayers of the Past", p. 57, quoting Aufenanger, *The passing scene*, p. 302.

[12] Aerts, "Prayers of the Past", p. 61, quoting Aufenanger, "The sun", pp. 6, 13.

[13] Aerts, "Prayers of the Past", p. 62, quoting Aufenanger, "The sun", p. 32.

[14] Aerts, "Prayers of the Past", p. 41, quoting Aufenanger, "The sun", p. 33.

[15] Aerts, "Prayers of the Past", p. 41, quoting Aufenanger, "The sun", p. 63.

DINGA PEOPLE'S WORSHIP OF THE SUN GOD *YANIGELWA*

In writing this article, the author interviewed 11 people[16] from eight sub-clans of Dinga. Categorically, they said that their ancestors instinctively knew, through natural revelation (creation), that there was a God. From these ancestors, came the laws, customs, and rituals of sacrifice and worship of *Yanigelwa* that originally formed, and then held, the societies together.

Dinga People's Principal Spirit

The Dinga people knew and believed that *Yanigelwa* was all-powerful, and gave them power to win battles. *Yanigelwa* saw what they did in secret, and knew everything they did, good or bad. *Yanigelwa* was everywhere, and watched over them at all times. He was eternal: living forever. He was the creator of the heavens and the earth (including human beings), and blessed them with material prosperity (e.g., many pigs). *Yanigelwa* protected them from the charms and spells of the sorcerers and witches, which belonged to the devil. Therefore, they gave themselves to *Yanigelwa*, and served him. The Dinga people's religious beliefs developed, as they worshipped the sun, with a variety of rituals and cultural practices.

The question is whether they directed their pagan sacrifices and prayers to an impersonal power or to a Supreme Being, to a minor deity, or to an ancestor, to a localised spirit, or to a different spirit. Based on the author's research, it is impossible to know, confidently, who was at the back of *Yanigelwa*. The most likely answer is that *Yanigelwa* was a principal spirit of the area.

Practically, Dinga people believed that the sun could harm them if they faced it. Therefore, they went out to work in their gardens early in the morning, before the sun rose. Then, from 10 am to 4 pm, people came home and hid themselves in their houses, so that they would not face the

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[16] Primary research interviewers names: Dom Poye, William Poima, Pastor Kepe, Pastor Bere, Wel Anton Baule, Kiage Bal, Kambole Awi, Binabe Millima, Kosmas Kapenowa, John Kaupa Poye, Awi Millima. At June semester break, and September study break, 2003.

sun. They believed that, if they faced the sun, they would die, or something bad would happen to them.

Dinga People's Worldview

The Dinga people's awareness and interaction with this particular sun god (*Yanigelwa*) were part of their pre-Christian culture. It was the result of the people's perception of the universe, in their worldview. "A worldview carves out appropriate and meaningful belief systems, norms, and values that are activated in an acceptable behaviour of a culture."[17]

The Dinga people viewed the globe as a living blend of two worlds, the physical and the supernatural. The physical world was the earth, which included the environment, geography, plants, creeks, rivers, lands, and people, with their communities and structures. The physical world was managed by cultural norms, value systems, and regulations, produced from the people's understanding of reality. This universe owed its origin to the spirit world. In this regard, much of the Dinga people's lives were spent maintaining and promoting that spiritual order.

Dinga people believed that these spirits lived in bodily forms. They facilitated this view, through prayer and sacrifice to *Yanigelwa*, to protect them, to bless them, and to give them victory over their enemies. For instance, they would pray, "*Yanigelwa*! I am hiding in my house. Other people do not know about it. You always used to help me greatly."[18] This is an example of the practical interaction the people had with *Yanigelwa*. Hence, through *Yanigelwa*, people found meaning and substance in their world. When the Dinga people were about to bury their dead, they offered the deceased person directly to *Yanigelwa*, "Oh Sun! We want to bury this man NN. Oh watch! His soul is going up to you. You watch. He used to stay with us, but now he is going up to you."[19]

They believed in the survival of a man's spirit after natural death, however, such a belief stressed continuity, rather than eternity. This shows us that

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[17] Namumu, *Spirits in Melanesian Tradition*, p. 110.
[18] Aerts, "Prayers of the Past", p. 41, quoting Aufenanger, "The sun", p. 33.
[19] Aerts, "Prayers of the Past", p. 47, quoting Aufenanger, "The sun", p. 32.

the physical world of the people had its meaning and existence in the spirit world, and in the sun god they worshipped. In addition, Dinga people realised, in their worldview, that, whatever happened in the physical world, would affect the spiritual world. So, they were committed to *Yanigelwa*. This affected their religious practice, as well as cultural orientation.

Dinga People's Ways of Salvation

Kanimine puayale (a person who knows the sacred words of prayers and rituals) had to make sure his own life, and the lives of all others in his society, conformed to appropriate patterns of behaviour. Taboos were strictly observed, laws were carefully obeyed, and good order was established and maintained. Above all, proper relationships had to be preserved between man and man, and between man and *Yanigelwa*.

Salvation was always related to the group, and its well-being. It was not something one person could experience, apart from the community, and the world in which he lived. Identity came from contribution to the group. Wholeness, feasting, dancing, celebrating, and worshipping their god, and relationships, were significant to Dinga people. Laws regulated all aspects of life, including relationships. It included the important concept of give and take, for it involved obligations. Thus, it was essential to establish, maintain, and fulfil, law relationships and obligations in every sphere of life in order to achieve salvation.

For special events, and festivities of social importance, pigs were killed in honour of *Yanigelwa*. This was to maintain their relationship with *Yanigelwa*, and to make sure, at all times, that salvation or well being was secured.

Dinga People's Religious Experience

The Dinga people believed they were born into a spiritual and religious order. Much of life was devoted towards the maintenance and promotion of cultural practices and rituals (sacrifices and prayers). Religious experience was the foundation of the Dinga people, and they cherished it as part of their livelihood. No one could take it away from them.

They believed that, when *kanimine puayale* performed the rituals, their sun god, *Yanigelwa*, was actually present, and would bless them with material prosperity, protect them from charms and spells, give them power to win the battle, and furnish women to marry. People believed that *Yanigelwa* knew what the people needed, and, therefore, *Yanigelwa* would grant *kanimine puayale* the petition of the people.

Moreover, Dinga people believed that life was something that survived death. It was the opportunity to shed the old skin and put on the new one, like the snake. My mother used to tell me that, when a black man or woman died, the spirits in the grave burned him or her with fire, in order to take off the skin, like a snake. The person would then be transformed into a European, and continue in life. I believed this, until I received the gospel, and learned that Christians will be changed from mortal to immortal (1 Cor 15:51-54), and that white people are just human beings, too. The life-after-death concept prepared the Dinga people for the reception of the gospel.

Dinga People's Form of Worship

The *Erehari hike mokime* (literally the "tree leaves round house", but interpreted as the "sacred round house") was a house built from special wood *Dinkoparim* (smells like ginger). It stood in the centre of the main village (common ground), where the Dinga people gathered round for pig feasting, dancing, making sacrifices, worshipping *Yanigelwa*, and any social gatherings. (See No 1 in "Figure 1. Layout of the village and sacred round house", below.)

The sacred place (No 2), the Holy of Holies, was where *kanimine puayale* put his sacred items for sacrificial rituals and worship. Sacred items included a string bag, hung in this place, filled with traditional salt, a special stone, as fossil with human dolly face, and some sacred special tree leaves. This was to enable him to do certain rituals in his worship of *Yanigelwa*.
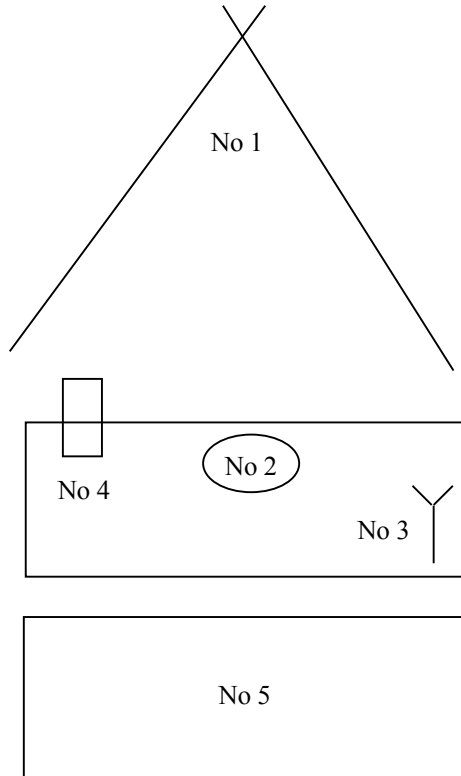
Figure 1. Layout of the village and sacred round house

The two-fork stand (No 3) was the place where *kanimine puayale* took a sacrificial pig and slaughtered it. He took the blood, and internal parts of pork, heated the stone with the fire in the fork, and, when it was hot, *kanimine puayale* steamed the pork as a sacrifice to *Yanigelwa*. When the steamed pork was cooked, he took it out to the common ground, where the people were assembled. He cut the pork into pieces, and spread blood over them, as well as spreading blood over the offerings, and the seeds of food crops, brought and laid there to be blessed. He laid hands over the offerings, and said, "*Yanigelwa* watch on you, you awake, sleep, and do, and *Yanigelwa* will bless you to be fruitful." The people outside, at the common ground, cooked pigs, chickens, and food crops, by steaming them

with heated stones in a native pressure-cooking pit. These were distributed among the people.

One door (No 4) led into the sacred holy house. Only the sacred person (*kanimine puayale*) could enter in, and only with the pig's blood and internal parts of pork, to do his sacrifices and rituals on behalf of the people. No other person was allowed in. People regarded it as a holy place of *Yanigelwa*.

The common ground (No 5) was where people assembled for special events, and festivities of social importance. Concerning worship, people took pigs, chickens, and food crops, to give as sacrifices to *Yanigelwa*, waiting patiently for *kanimine puayale* to accomplish all his sacrificial duties before leaving.

Dinga People's Prayers

Prayer is such a basic human exercise. The Dinga sacred man's prayer went like this, "*Yanigelwa, en neyalkanma ne kanmolo* (Oh sun, you watch over us, or look on us)." There were some sacred words, unknown to the people, which were secretly spoken or prayed. The sacred man would only pray and do rituals when the blood and internal parts of pork were available. Therefore, to catch *Yanigelwa's* attention, pigs had to be slaughtered for every invocation and ritual.

When Dinga people wanted to give sacrifices, and invoke prayers, to *Yanigelwa* to satisfy their needs, they would shed blood from a pig. The sacred man then went, with the blood and internal parts of pork, to the sacred holy place to do certain prayers and rituals. Without blood, there was no power, or impact, in the ritual, and no blessings.

Dinga People's Rituals

The initiation ceremony for boys to manhood. A boy was initiated into his father's group at the mini pig feast that occurred when he was between 12 and 18 years of age. The men seized him, as well as other eligible boys, and took them all to the men's house to dress them in new clothes or traditional dress, and arm them with bows and arrows. At the beginning of the initiation, the parents of the novice took pigs, and slaughtered them at

the common ground. Then the sacred man took parts of the pork into the sacred house and steamed it. When the pork was cooked, they told the novices to go into the house, the steamed pork was given to the novices, and they ate it. The sacred man then laid hands on them and blessed them.

Then the sacred man taught them about a holistic approach to life in the local society. This teaching included how to live morally upright, be a good leader, have good family relationships, look after domesticated animals, plant food crops, distribute food to the people, help others work, and how to fight.

After doing all these rituals, the sacred man gave advice and blessings, and went to the men's house. The generation of the grandfathers sat on one side of the fire, cradling in their arms two lengths of bamboo, decorated with cassowary plumes. They revealed to the boys the secret of the bamboo flute (*nebare kanua*). They blew the bamboo flute, and announced that they are now men.

Kanimine puayale was the only person who could take the initiative to initiate the boys. In everything that he did in rituals, he needed the pig's blood, to go into the holy place. The format of ritual prayers was, "Sun god, you watch over me and give me strength and power to initiate the boys to their fathers' group."

The initiation ceremony for girls to womanhood. Girls' initiation was different from the boys. A girl's first menstruation was treated as a form of pregnancy, heralded similarly by her swelling breasts, but giving birth to blood alone. She "gave birth", while lying in her mother's house, secluded for a month behind a partition of aromatic branches (*ere garapara*) erected by her eldest brother. Small groups of older men and women from other villages were invited for each night to sing *kuria mam* (traditional lovemaking songs) songs in the outer room of the girl's house.

On the third week of the month, the partition and aromatic branches were removed. The girl came forward to the fire, and senior wives of the clan instructed her in her duties as a woman. Then, the youths of her clan entered, singing *kuria mam* songs, led by the girl's lineage head. Using

techniques similar to male initiation, the girl was taught to submit to men, and to cook for them. This involved tricking her into trying to drink water from an empty container, and by tossing a bundle of sugar cane to her to eat.

The next afternoon, the girl and her attendants emerged from seclusion. The girl then symbolically cooked a previously-prepared meal, which included cut-up pork, and an opossum, or rat, killed by her eldest brother. She ate the small animal, and the brains of the pork, and gave the rest to her attendants, her "mothers", and the other villages singers. For the next two months, she could not leave the village; but, from then, she was a privileged person, told by her mother not to work. She slept every night with other nubile girls in a woman's house *gai hike* (girls' clubhouse), and was known as a woman, sexually mature, and ready for marriage.

Crop Planting and Harvest Rituals

Crop planting rituals. The sacred man killed a pig, by clubbing it over the head, at the entrance gate of the garden. As he sprinkled the blood there, he called, "*Yanigelwa*, watch over us, our garden crops will grow healthier, and produce abundantly, so we can harvest and eat them."[20]

The sacred man set taboos for people to follow, so that expected blessings would fall in line. Husband and wife were not to have sex before entering the garden. Prior to entering the garden, people could not eat a carcass, could not attend a funeral, could not eat pork, and could not eat salty foods.

All these rituals of prayers, sprinkling of pig's blood, and taboos were designed to produce crop fertility. When the people, who tilled and planted the gardens, observed the appropriate taboos, then *Yanigelwa,* who controlled crop fertility, had to reciprocate, by ensuring a bountiful harvest. If, on the other hand, taboos were ignored, then misfortune, failure of harvest, and the loss of power and security were expected.

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[20] The receiving will be part of that reciprocity, which is a central concept in its life. It will be a returning of what it gave out of its own abundance.

Harvesting rituals. When a garden bore a crop, the sacred man took a pig, and killed it, by clubbing it over the head, at the entrance gate of the garden. He sprinkled the blood on the gate fence, and prayed, "*Yanigelwa*, watch on us; we are taking the taboos out from the garden, and we want to harvest the food crops, and eat." This rite was the sign of giving thanks to *Yanigelwa* for producing abundantly. At the end of this ritual, the people were free to harvest their food crops, and eat them.

Pig Feast Rituals

The pig feast ritual had five phases. The first was the announcement of the feast, by blowing a bamboo flute. The second was the building of long and short houses. The third was dancing with *gerua* boards. The fourth was g*erua kapekiwa* (pig feast) for the localised spirit (*kewakwipeyal*), who looked after the pigs. The fifth was the main feast. In each step of the pig feast, *kanimine puayale* took the lead. He called on the people to assemble at the common ground. He killed the pig, by clubbing it over the head, taking the blood, and the inside parts of the pig, and going into the holy place, saying, "*Yanigelwa*, you look upon us now. We want to kill the pigs that we have looked after, and eat".

The rest of the pigs were slaughtered, and steamed with heated stones in a native pressure-cooking pit, outside, at the common ground. When everything was cooked and prepared, the sacred man took the pork, steamed inside the sacred house, and cut it into pieces, and spread blood over it, and laid hands on the people, and blessed them saying, "*Yanigelwa* is looking upon you, you kill pigs, and do anything, here now, you will be blessed."

After the main feast was over, the people cooked the pieces of pork, which were left in the house, and ate them. The sacred man laid hands on the people, and blessed them, by saying, "*Yanigelwa*, help these people, so that the piglets they are intending to raise up will grow fast."

Tribal Fighting Rituals

The sacred man called on the warriors to assemble at the common ground before entering into a tribal fight. The sacred man killed a pig, and prayed,

"*Yanigelwa*, you watch over us, we are giving this pig as our sacrifice to you, and help us to win the battle."

The sacred man ate the pork. As the people walked to the battlefield, the sacred man took the initiative to shoot the first arrow at the biggest shield, carried by their enemy. He tested to see if the arrow could penetrate the shield. If it did, they knew that *Yanigelwa* was with them, and they would win the battle. If they won the battle, they went home singing victorious songs. If they were unsuccessful, the sacred man called on the people to confess their sins. Any grudges among them were ironed out. They had to redo the sacrifice, because *Yanigelwa* was not on their side, and did not help them in the battle.

Positive Aspects of Dinga Practices

Every situation needed *Yanigelwa's* attention, and *kanimine puayale* knew appropriate rituals and prayers for every situation. Taboos, laws, and vows had to be faithfully followed. If they carefully observed the terms and conditions required in the taboos, laws, and their solemn promises, they reaped positive blessings. For example, their garden crops grew healthier, and gave abundant produce, children grew wholesome, domesticated animals grew fast, and they won in their tribal warfare over their tribal enemies.

Therefore, in everything they did, they had to please *Yanigelwa*. They had to comply with everything that was required of them by *kanimine puayale*. It was essential to establish, maintain, and fulfil law relationships and obligations in every sphere of life, in order to achieve salvation, or well-being.

Negative Aspects of Dinga Practices

When the people did not practice the taboos, laws, and solemn promises that they made, or they neglected their relationships, then misfortune, loss of blessings, loss of power, and loss of security were expected. They were in an unfortunate situation. Their garden crops might yield unhealthy and sparse produce. Consequently, their children and domesticated animals might become malnourished, or their tribal enemies might defeat them in

tribal warfare. If these things happened, the people had to go back to *kanimine puayale* and confess their sins, kill their pigs, and make sacrifices to *Yanigelwa*. They were to comply with the taboos and laws that were required of them, as the means of their salvation.

BIBLICAL CRITIQUE

The Bible begins with the words, "in the beginning, God created the heavens and the earth" (Gen 1:1). The phrase "heaven and earth" means everything. The first thing the Bible tells us about God is that he is the Creator of the universe. "All things were made through Him, and, without Him, was not anything made that was made" (John 1:3).[21]

God made all the things of nature (Gen 1:1; Rom 1:20), and made two great lights – the greater light to govern the day, and the lesser light to govern the night (Gen 1:16).[22] The purpose of God's creation is that God made all things for Himself (1 Cor 8:6; Col 1:16). God made all things to show His greatness and glory (Ps 19:1; 97:6; Is 43:7). God made all things to do His will, and to give praise and worship to Himself (Ps 139:14; 145:10-12; Rom 11:36).

Since God made all things, He is the owner of the universe. This world, and everything in it, belongs to God, because He made it. The world does not belong to men and women, and it does not belong to the spirits, it is God's universe (Ps 50:10-12). God has given man dominion over the natural world, but we are to look after the world, on behalf of God, who still is the owner and the ruler of the world.

God is the Sovereign Ruler of the universe: because God made the world, and owns the world, He is the only one who can rule and control the world (Is 6:5; 43:15; 44:6; 1 Tim 1:17). God, in Christ, is King over all other kings in this universe, and Lord over all other lords (1 Tim 6:15; Ps 95:3).

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[21] See also 1 Cor 8:6; Eph 3:9; Col 1:16; Rev 4:11.

[22] Pagan contemporaries of Genesis regarded these bodies as gods in their own right. To avoid any suspicion that the sun and moon were anything but created by God, Genesis calls them just lights (D. A. Carson, R. T. France, J. A. Motyer, and G. J. Wenham, eds, *New Bible Commentary*, 21st-century edn, Leicester UK: IVP, 1994, p. 60).

He rules and controls every part of creation (Ps 10:16; 24:8; 29:10; 47). The creation does not rule Him. This shows us that no other created things are to be substituted as the Supreme God. He alone is to be worshipped. If people worship the created elements, they exchange the truth of God for Satan's lie (Rom 1:25). This is idolatry, and God forbids it in His second commandment (Ex 20:3-5). Further, God says, "I will destroy your high places, cut down your incense altars, and pile your dead bodies on the lifeless forms of your idols, and I will abhor you" (Lev 26:30).

THE BIBLE SPEAKS TO SUN WORSHIP

> "On the day the LORD gave the Amorites over to Israel, Joshua said to the LORD, in the presence of Israel: O sun, stand still over Gibeon, O moon, over the valley of Aijalon. So the sun stood still, and the moon stopped, till the nation avenged itself on its enemies" (Josh 10:12-13).

In this passage, the sovereign LORD considered Joshua's word, and extended the hours of daylight to allow the Israelites to defeat their enemies. The passage shows that Joshua had commanded the sun to stand still, and it stood still. We have seen that the natural revelation of God does not have power to rule over the creator (God) and His servant. Thus, the passage reveals that God is sovereign over the universe, the created elements, including the sun. The general revelation (creation), revealing God, follows the commands of the creator, and His servant, who stood for Him. In this regard, the sun is one part of God's creation, and, in its natural brightness and mild heat, should not be an attraction for people to worship it as god.

The Bible plainly teaches us that Christ has defeated all the spiritual powers, through the cross (Col 2:15). This has set the path for the Dinga people to shift their allegiance from their sun-god worship to God, alone, in Christ.

THE SUN OF RIGHTEOUSNESS

"The sun of righteousness will rise with healing in its wings. And you will go out and leap like calves released from the stall" (Mal 4:2). God and His glory are compared with the sun:

> "Arise, shine, for your light has come, and the glory of the LORD rises upon you. See, darkness overs the earth, and thick darkness is over the people, but the LORD rises upon you, and His glory appears over you" (Is 60:1-2).

God's glory is probably an allusion to the pillar of cloud, but announcing a new manifestation of God's redeeming glory, in the face of Christ. Christ is the "rising sun" from heaven, to shine on those living in darkness (Luke 1:78-79; Is 9:2). The great light, Jesus and His salvation, would be a "light for the gentiles" (Is 9:2; 42:6; 49:6).

Christ intends salvation and renewal for his people (Is 45:8; 46:13; 53:5; Jer 30:17). Jesus Christ is that sun that rises upon the people, and guides and holds them fast (Ps 139:9-10). Victory over condemnation for sin, death, and the grave is obtained through our Lord Jesus Christ (1 Cor 15:54-57; Rom 4:25). Jesus Christ is the Root and the offspring of David, and the bright Morning Star (Rev 22:16). Jesus promises the Morning Star to those who do His will, and do not follow Satan (Rev 2:24-28), so they can shine like Christ.

Jesus Christ is the Sun of Righteousness. Jesus came in the flesh, to seek and save those who were lost (Luke 19:10). Christ is the light of the world (John 8:12), and the light of men (John 1:4). He is to men's souls, as the sun is to the visible world, which, without the sun, would be a dungeon. Humankind would be in darkness without the light of the glory of God, shining in the face of Christ. He is the Sun of Righteousness, for He is a righteous Saviour.

INDIGENISATION AND CONTEXTUALISATION

These two terms have the same meaning, to incarnate, meaningfully, the Word of God into a given culture, to bring about growth, to address each cultural issue, and to reach spiritual heights in all spheres of life, under the guidance of the Holy Spirit. The terms coexist in this frame of reference.

Indigenisation means, "a national church has been produced, which shares the life of the country, in which it is planted, and finds, within itself, the ability to govern itself, support itself, and reproduce itself".[23] Contextualisation "seeks for no less than the recovery and effective communication of the biblical message" and endeavours "to extricate the biblical message from its 'Greek' trappings",[24] and Western scientific-cultural context.

The pioneer missionaries aimed at saving Dinga people, not by regeneration from within, but by restrictions from without. The missionaries sought to abolish *Yanigelwa* worship by physical force, and not by the redeeming grace of God to bring salvation through the cross of Jesus Christ, so that heart transformation could be achieved.

Down through the generations, faithful pastors and Christians have taught the gospel, and lived a godly life. The matter of concern is for those who have not made a clear break from past *Yanigelwa* worship. They profess to be Christians, and, at the same time, show harmony with the old religion. Hence, those who are ministering God's Word are never successful. It is a polluted exercise, with compromising interpretations of the Bible, and syncretistic faith.

How can the Dinga church address these issues? If contextualisation and indigenisation are aimed at addressing the old religious issues of the people, then the church is in a right position to be prophetic, to call people back to the Word of God, and to challenge and change the situations it is in now. If

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[23] Melvin L. Hodges, *Readings in Dynamic Indigeneity*, Charles Kraft, and Tom Wisley, eds, Pasadena CA: William Carey Library, 1979, p. 7.
[24] Simon Chan, "Second Thoughts on Contextualisation", in *Evangelical Review of Theology* 9-2 (1985), p. 50.

the Dinga churches ignore the gospel, they will be ineffective, compromising, and syncretistic.

HISTORY OF THE DINGA CHURCH

This section discusses the interaction and impact between the gospel and the Dinga people's worship of *Yanigelwa*. The author did research with leaders of three churches: Catholic, Lutheran, and Evangelical Brotherhood.[25] The research showed that missionaries encountered the Dinga people, by communicating the gospel in alien, cultural forms. When missionaries bring with them foreign ways of thinking and behaviours, attitudes of racial superiority, paternalism, or preoccupation with material things, effective communication will be precluded.[26]

This difficulty is not limited to the pioneer carriers of the gospel, but it is promulgated by Dinga churches, which, from a feeling of insecurity, seek to preserve culture and *Yanigelwa* worship, and, therefore, maintain cultural barriers. The people then regard Christianity as a foreign religion, a Western religion, or a white-man's religion. This is one of the more serious handicaps to effective evangelism in Dinga society. Christians in Dinga have sought to foster this image of Christianity, and to present its own image, as a Dinga religion of *Yanigelwa* worship. This is where serious syncretism creeps into the churches.

CATHOLIC CHURCH

Dom Poye, who is over 60 years of age, said that many members in the Koge parish, including Dinga people, were brought into the Catholic church, through their adaptation and catechism programs. The adaptation period was when missionaries, through their evangelism attempts, with

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[25] Catholic: Dom Poye; Lutheran: William Poima; and EBC: Retired Senior Pastor Kepe, and Bindai-area Pastor Bere.

[26] " 'One of the first duties of a missionary (regardless of nationality) is to try to understand the people, among whom he works.' . . . Understanding the people is a very taxing exercise, and demands the very best of a man or a woman, especially one involved in cross-cultural missionary enterprise" (Joshua Daimoi, "Understanding Melanesians", in *Melanesian Journal of Theology* 17-2 (2001), p. 6).

their Christian religion, and their Western benefits,[27] introduced the receptor culture to Christianity. Both the Western, Christian culture and the receptor culture (Dinga people) had to establish a dialogue for acculturation.[28] In accommodating the Western, Christian culture, the primitive Dinga people maintained their cultural goals, while trying to benefit from the counterpart. Through these benefits, the people of Dinga were drawn into accepting the missionaries, and adapting their religion. The catechism programs of the church taught the people, through standard prayers,[29] Ten Commandments (Ex 20:1-17), and seven sacraments.[30] They did not have a meaningful conversion experience.

The Dinga people were drawn into accepting the missionaries, and adapting their religion, by combining *Yanigelwa* worship with these Western benefits, and the enforced rule of the colonial government. The late Fr Glen, in the 1940s or 1950s, made radical campaigns to eradicate *Yanigelwa* worship, by burning out the sacred houses and holy shrines at the old Peramara church ground. Conversion to the Catholic church was by physical force, and external reform, but not by an internal, or a heart conversion, thereby shifting their allegiance to Christ. As a result, the Catholic church was full of nominal, syncretistic, and unconverted members.

LUTHERAN CHURCH

William Poima (church evangelist during the 1960s) said that Revd Towadon planted the Lutheran church in the 1950s. Revd Towadon was a missionary from Finschaffen, in Morobe province. The missionary brought

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[27] Western benefits: metal axe, spade, clothing, medicine, bush knife, salt, education. Church schools still exist at Koge, and have a great influence in the Dinga community.

[28] Acculturation is a process of accommodation by any one culture, when in confrontation with another culture. Effective acculturation will allow the people of the receptor culture, and the incoming culture, to maintain their own principles, values, norms, beliefs, and allegiances, while coping with the challenges and opportunities of the incoming culture, with minimum strain (Stephen Grunlan, and Marvin Mayers, *Cultural Anthropology*, Grand Rapids MI: Zondervan, 1979, p. 85).

[29] Prayers: Hail Mary, Lord's Prayer (Matt 6: 9-13), prayer of faith, prayer of contrition.

[30] Sacraments: 1. Communion; 2. Baptism; 3. Anointment of oil; 4. Matrimony; 5. Confirmation; 6. Confession; 7. Penance.

people into the church with the help of the colonial government,[31] sacramental teachings,[32] and adaptation programs.[33]

The late Revd Towadon took a bold stand in introducing the gospel of Jesus Christ. With the help of the colonial government, he told the people, from different clans of Dinga, to tear down the sacred houses and sacred shrines, used for worshipping *Yanigelwa*. The missionary, with the help of newly-converted Christians, burnt them down at the Kiane church ground. Again, it was just an outward reform. There was nothing of an inward impact of genuine conversion. Thus, the church consisted of nominal, syncretistic, and unconverted members. As a result, many deserted the church.

EVANGELICAL BROTHERHOOD CHURCH

Retired senior pastor Kepe, and Bindai-area pastor Bere, said that the Evangelical Brotherhood church (EBC) church was planted in the Western Highlands Province in 1954[34]. The church was brought to Yuri, Chimbu, in 1966,[35] and, in 1990, extended to Dinga,[36] at Giu village.

The pastors said that their primary goal was to preach the gospel of Jesus Christ, and only the Word of God could judge the desires and thoughts of the hearts (Heb 4:12) of the people, and cause genuine conversion in their lives. This was the only way that they could succeed in helping the people renounce their animistic practices and *Yanigelwa* worship. The EBC missionaries and pastors did not use physical force,[37] or adaptation

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[31] The colonial government forced people into the church to discourage them from engaging in tribal fighting, animistic practices, and worshipping the sun god, *Yanigelwa*.

[32] Sacraments: 1. Baptism; 2. Communion; 3. Confirmation; 4. Matrimony.

[33] Western benefits: education, clothing, medicine, salt, metal axes, spades, and bush knives.

[34] Missionaries: Ruthy, Ervin, and Arnold in Minj, Modumil in the Western Highlands.

[35] Yuri in South Chimbu (up in the icy mountain place).

[36] Christian brother, James Minga, brought the church to Giu village, and planted it there.

[37] Physical force: missionaries and pastors do not discriminate, and renounce the cultures and worldview of the people. They trusted only the Word of God could penetrate into the hearts of the people (Heb 4:12), and could cause genuine conversion (Rom 1:16).

programs.[38] The church radically stood on the Word of God, preached the Word of God, and the Word itself did the final work in the lives of the people. However, today the church members are growing fewer, and becoming stagnant.

THE PROBLEM

Because the Catholics and Lutherans used force and adaptation programs, the churches are full of unconverted members, and they face the consequences of losing their church members to different churches. The churches need radical reform, and sound biblical teaching, to enable the members to grow spiritually, and to lift the growth of the church from stagnancy. If this does not happen within a decade, their churches will diminish.

On the other hand, even though EBC evangelised the people with the Word of God, the church lacks discipleship programs.[39] The consequence is that the church grows spiritually stagnant, and loses members to the Pentecostals. The church needs reform.

SYNCRETISM IN THE DINGA CHURCH

"Syncretism is an attempt to reconcile two or more opposing elements of religion, in hope of creating a new one. It denies any unique revelation, thus blending traditional religion and Christianity as ways from and to God. It is adding of traditional elements, and watering down of the uniqueness of Christ."[40]

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[38] The church does not have any adaptation program (Western benefits), the missionaries and pastors' made a holistic approach in encouraging people to be self reliant in using their land, and any resources before them. This is the only church where their members are business-minded, self-reliant, and genuinely converted to follow Christ.

[39] Discipleship programs: Bible study, youth ministry, and women's ministry. TEE courses are not conducted in the churches, and there is a lack of men's fellowships and retreats, music ministries, etc., which causes stagnation in congregational growth.

[40] Ledimo Edonie, "Syncretism in the Milne Bay Province of Papua New Guinea", in *Melanesian Journal of Theology* 16-2 (2000), p. 20, quoting W. A. Visser 't Hooft, *No Other Name*, London UK: SCM Press, 1963, p. 10.

Most Dinga people are receptive to the gospel. They acknowledge God's work, supremacy, salvation, and even His Lordship, through Jesus Christ. Problems arise, however, when people embrace Christ, without making a decisive break with their preChristian involvements with sun-god beliefs and worship.

As we have already seen, sun-god worship is intimately interwoven into a Dinga's culture, history, religion, and relationships. Radical adjustments in their way of thinking (worldview) and practice are not usually immediate.

> A convert from sun-god worship, or animism, cannot suddenly divest himself of what a hundred generations has woven into every strand of his mental and moral nature. . . . The (gospel) seed sown may be of the very best quality, and the soil may be suited to the new crop; but old hopes, fears, ideas, and impulses bring up stray seeds of former crops that the field has carried.[41]

It is unrealistic, then, to expect new Dinga believers to separate themselves totally from all that they know, and hold dear. Indeed, they should not have to. "It should be possible for a tribal man from say, Africa or New Guinea, to be a Christian, without having to reject his tribe."[42] Dinga is a tribal group, and their custom is that they should live corporately in a tribe. Everything is in common in the tribal group. In this regard, Dinga culture and worldview is part of the survival of the society, and syncretism is obvious.

SYNCRETISM PRACTISED CONSCIOUSLY AND UNCONSCIOUSLY

Conscious Syncretism

The worst form of syncretism is when those who profess to follow Christ deliberately (consciously) entice new believers to blend sun-god beliefs and practices with the gospel. Fr Nilles, of Chimbu diocese, says:

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[41] Patrick Hall, "Cults Course Notes", Banz PNG: Christian Leaders' Training College, 2002, p. 15.

[42] Ibid., p. 18.

> During the ceremony, I also called on the spirits of the ancestors to be among us, with their strong intercession with God, the giver of all things. I noticed a happy smile on the faces of the men and women around me.[43]

Dinga people have syncretised with old beliefs – particularly as it relates to the place of God, Jesus, and Holy Spirit. There is an enormous transference from Dinga's old system of religion into Christian beliefs. The common use of *Yanigelwa's* name in rituals, magic, amulets, talisman, witchcraft, and sorcery reflects the earliest religions of sun-god belief and superstition. Most Dinga churches did not try to give new meaning to indigenous beliefs, but simply mixed two ways of thinking. One Catholic priest says:

> We aren't trying to get the people to stop their worship of the ancestors, and any traditional beliefs. We're just teaching them to add Mary and Jesus to their list.[44]

They profess to be Christians, and, at the same time, show compatibility with the old religion. Thus indigenisation, especially by those ministering God's Word, is never achieved. It is a polluted exercise, a compromised way of interpreting the Bible, and a syncretistic faith.[45] This is conscious syncretism at its ugliest.

Unconscious Syncretism

Even honest Dinga believers sometimes unconsciously mix biblical teachings with *Yanigelwa* beliefs. They cling to traditional religion, mistakenly believing this is the practical way to manage the immediate problems of life, such as illness, infertility, death, and drought. Consequently, Dinga churches are often filled with people, who raise their hands in praise to God on Sundays, but visit witch doctors through the

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[43] John Nilles, "Chimbu Ancestor and Christian Worship", in *Catalyst* 7-3 (1977), p. 178.
[44] Hall, "Cults Course Notes", p. 16.
[45] We should never teach the people that their former ways of worshipping the spirits of their ancestors, and *Yanigelwa* worship, were entirely wrong, or instigated by the devil, as *pasin bilong satan* (Nilles, "Chimbu Ancestor and Christian Worship", p. 183).

week to get their needs met. As Philip Steyne says, "Many converts hold the Bible in one hand, and their traditional religion in the other."[46]

Very few Dinga believers are completely delivered from the web of sun-god belief and worship, because they are ensnared in ways they don't even realise. Certainly, they are saved in a moment of God's grace, but total deliverance from the old ways happens over a long process of time.

We must take extreme care that Dinga converts fully understand the basics of Christianity. It is unrealistic to expect Dinga believers to latch on to Christian teaching in such a way as to completely replace their *Yanigelwa* beliefs. They consider it extra protection. One Catholic priest put it well when he said, "My religion is Catholicism, but my philosophy of life is spiritism."[47] Some professed church leaders in Dinga are such spiritistic people.

Following are examples, intended to illustrate how subtle syncretism can be in sun-god beliefs and animistic contexts. *Prayer* can become syncretistic if it can be used like a chant to *Yanigelwa*. Christians can attempt to manipulate God through prayer for their own selfish purposes, as they did to *Yanigelwa*. *Fasting* can also become syncretistic, if it is used as a manipulative ploy to get God to act on their behalf, as *Yanigelwa* acted on their behalf. *Baptism* may be viewed as being similar to tribal initiation rites. Initiation rites, in Dinga societies, are a systematic way of becoming demonised, so that the power of the evil spirit may be available to the individual, as they call on *Yanigelwa*. *Christian songs* may be used like Dinga chants to arouse God to bless them in some ways. *The Bible*, and its passages, can be used as though they were magical fetishes, just as the sacred men have sacred words to pray to *Yanigelwa* for protection. Clearly, it is not unusual for some Dinga believers to view Christianity as a new kind of magic, in which they seek to use formulas to manipulate God into doing their will.

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[46] Hall, "Cults Course Notes", p. 17.
[47] Ibid., p. 23.

These examples illustrate the fact that, too often, Dinga converts (unconsciously) develop a veneer of Christianity that overlays their real beliefs and values, which remain deeply fixed and submerged.

OVERCOMING SYNCRETISM

Syncretism prospers and succeeds on biblical illiteracy. The need is for strong, biblically-trained national pastors, who can provide the constant discipling of all believers in the things of Christ. The great commission mandate is not merely to convert the nations, but to disciple them (Matt 28:19). Dinga churches have emphasised evangelism, but have been weak in discipling their converts. The discipleship program is of utmost importance for the church of Dinga. That could, undoubtedly, do away with syncretism.

MAKING THE GOSPEL RELEVANT TO THE DINGA PEOPLE

To make the gospel message relevant to the Dinga people, one has to change old practices, by giving them new Christian meanings. These suggested forms can either be indigenous, or obtained from outside, but they must serve as driving forces to express Christianity, meaningfully, into the Dinga *Yanigelwa* worship, to the glory of God. However, the following steps should be taken, when carefully examining old beliefs and customs, through biblical perspectives, before rejecting or accepting them. Most importantly, everything must be from a biblical view.

SEE ALL RELIGIOUS PRACTICES FROM A BIBLICAL PERSPECTIVE

The church pastor should evaluate all religious practices, to see if they should be changed or replaced. The pastor should do this to give him good knowledge of how to answer people, when encountered, and reason with them, in their belief and worship of *Yanigelwa*. He must lead the people to make a clear break from the old worldview, and come to a new understanding of salvation. MacNutt wrote:

> Most people we meet, who need deliverance, seem to be good people, not evil people. Most of them are Christians, and go to church on Sunday, but, in some part of their lives, they are not free.[48]

The people have to lay their sins at the cross. They must confess that they have sacrificed to the sun, but have never lived sacrificially for Christ. They must acknowledge that they have believed Satan's lie (Rom 1:25). Then they must forsake all and turn to the Creator, Lord, and Saviour, Jesus Christ.

TRANSITION FROM *YANIGELWA* WORSHIP TO CHRISTIANITY (ACTS 2)

The first-century church set a pattern that can be adapted to the Dinga situation. On the day of Pentecost, God-fearing people were filled with the Holy Spirit, spoke in different tongues, and people were amazed, perplexed, and said they were drunk with wine. However, the Apostle Peter defended them by stating, "God has made this Jesus, whom you crucified, both Lord and Christ" (Acts 2:36). The words pierced the hearts of the people, and they asked, "Brothers what shall we do?" (Acts 2:37). "Peter replied, repent, and save yourself from this corrupt generation. And you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit" (Acts 2:37-39). They repented, were baptised, fellowshipped together, edified each other, worshipped, ministered, and shared the gospel (Acts 2:42-47), challenged them to "repent" (Acts 2:38), and urged they "save themselves from this corrupt generation" (Acts 2:40). As a result, Acts 2:47 says, "And the Lord added to their number daily, those who were being saved."

The Christians were devoted to the church, apostles' teaching, and fellowshipping with each other. This should be the model for the Dinga people. They should repent from their *Yanigelwa* worship, and accept Jesus into their lives, and become men and women of like mind.

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[48] Francis MacNutt, *Deliverance from Evil Spirits*, Grand Rapids MI: Baker Book House, 1995, p. 68.

THE ELDERS' ROLE OF DISCIPLESHIP AND TEACHING OF THE WORD OF GOD (ACTS 17)

The Apostle Paul's model of building bridges into the gospel is seen in Acts 17. "He reasoned with them from the scriptures" (Acts 17:2), delivering the message of the gospel of "Jesus' death and resurrection" (Acts 17:3, 32). Some Jews were persuaded, and believed, and became followers of Jesus (Acts 17:4, 12, 34). He bridged to the gospel, and gave new meaning to their beliefs and worship.

The elders and mature believers in the church need to lead the congregation in solemn Bible study to transpose their god-concepts of *Yanigelwa* worship into the truths of the true living God, as Peter and Paul did in Acts 2 and 17. Each elder, himself, must be fully convinced of the Word of God of its infallible authority. Only then, would he be able to guide the nominal, syncretistic, and unconverted members, as they explore the truths of the scriptures, and apply them to their situation. This exercise is significant, because the people will feel responsible for their own decisions in life, and it will sharpen their ability to discern the truth, and grow in the knowledge and grace of God.

FELLOWSHIPPING WITH EACH OTHER (GIVING NEW MEANING TO THE TRADITIONAL RITUALS AND SYMBOLS)

Associated with *Yanigelwa* worship, the Dinga people have rituals, taboos, and pig feasts. *Yanigelwa* worship was the time for people to come together to fellowship, and to celebrate their beliefs, and the wealth with which their god had blessed them.

Christians need to only change the direction, and put on new meaning to these practices. The foremost thing is to maintain intimacy with God. The goal in a Christian's life is to reflect God's glory. In the past, people manipulated their god, acquired wealth, and kept it for self-glory. However, God must receive the glory. The accumulation of food and pigs should be for God's glory, and should be shared among the people. Christians are called to become salt and light in such occasions (Matt 5:13-16). Bavinck says:

Christians ought not to be ready to refuse to take part in harvest feasts, and other sort of activities, which bring the all community together.[49]

Christians should not isolate such cultural practices, because, as a result, they could have less chance to witness to the people. Christians must view Jesus' earthly life as the model of ministry. Hesselgrave writes:

Within the framework of the non-Christian life, customs and practices serve idolatrous tendencies, and drive a person away from God. The Christian life takes them in hand, and turns them in an entirely different content. . . . He fills each thing, each word, and each practice with a new meaning, and gives it a new direction.[50]

Christians should be transformers of the culture. Wieley said:

The dynamic, equivalent church would take the indigenous forms, possess them for Christ, adapt and employ them, to serve Christian ends, by fulfilling indigenous functions, and conveying, into the society, Christian meaning.[51]

The rites and symbols, contextualised into Dinga *Yanigelwa* worship, would not be a new thing. The people are aware of the need to blend their activities, in order to acknowledge, venerate, and worship the true reality, God in Jesus Christ. The symbols, such as sacred houses, sacred shrines, prayers, rituals, and worship of *Yanigelwa*, must be transformed, and given new meaning in worshipping God.

The Old Testament is full of symbolism. The Israelites put up stones, as reminders or witnesses that God acted in their history, and will continue to do so in future (Gen 31:45-54; Josh 4). Therefore, Dinga Christians

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[49] J. H. Bavinck, *An Introduction to the Science of Missions*, Philadelphia PA: Presbyterian & Reformed, 1960, p. 175.

[50] David J. Hesselgrave, *Communicating Christ Cross-Culturally*, Grand Rapids MI: Zondervan, 1978, p. 229.

[51] Edonie, "Syncretism", , p. 39.

should be ready to modify rites and symbols,[52] to express new meaning in their love and faith in Jesus.

WORSHIP

Dinga people are very religious. They know about their cultural sacrifice and worship to *Yanigelwa*. This could enable them to transpose it into Jesus' true sacrifice, just as the Apostle Paul transposed the Athenians from being idolatrous to converts to Jesus. Paul reasoned with them the gospel of Jesus' death and resurrection, and urged them to cut away from the idols, and only serve the living God. Some were persuaded, believed, and became followers of Christ (Acts 17). Their culturally-idolatrous lives were transposed into new meanings of worshipping Jesus Christ.

Thus, Dinga people must change the direction from *Yanigelwa* worship to serve the true and living God, and worship Him in spirit and in truth (John 4:23-24). Christ's sacrifice is sufficient for the Dinga people's salvation.

MINISTERING TO EACH OTHER

Dinga people live in one big society. Activities, such as, worship, feasts, celebrations, and dances[53] are done corporately. The gospel encourages us not to give up meeting together and encouraging one another (Heb 10:25). We are to always pray for all the saints (Eph 6:18). There are many ways that Dinga Christians can share the good news of Jesus Christ, through corporate means.

The first place for Christians to minister the gospel is at home. Dinga people live in big families, including parents, children, and in-laws. Sometimes, an elder in the family is converted, and then the whole household follows his footsteps

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[52] It had been suggested that all the religious symbols of traditional religion in Papua New Guinea are to do with impersonal forces, and so, cannot act as preparation for a personal, theistic religion (Christopher Garland, "Is Traditional Religion in PNG Theistic", in *Catalyst* 16-2 (1986), pp. 127-134).

[53] James Knight, "Bona Gene: the Pig-kill Festival of Numai (Simbu Province)", in *Powers, Plumes, and Piglets: Phenomena of Melanesian Religion*, Habel, Norman C., ed., Bedford Park SA: Australian Association for the Study of Religions, 1979, pp. 173-193.

The second place is the men's house, where men live, and discuss important issues affecting the society. People from the society come together to fellowship with all religious activities. This is an excellent opportunity for Christians to minister to each other, and to the people.

The third way is through the extended family. The Dinga people have strong family ties to uncles and aunties on both parents' sides.

A final way is for Dinga people to continue to be loving and friendly to aliens. Their generosity and hospitality could enable the Christians to minister to these strangers to come to know the Lord.

CHURCH EVANGELISM (ACTS 1:8)

In the past, Dinga people have worshipped their own sun god, and influenced other tribes and clans to follow their god. Therefore, they have their own skilful strategies of evangelism. They now need to use these strategies for spreading the Good News, in obedience to Acts 1:8, "you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth".

Family Pig Feast

When Dinga people want to worship *Yanigelwa*, and do other activities involving *Yanigelwa* worship and rituals, they had to kill a pig, and shed blood for a sacrifice. They invited all bloodline relatives to the feast, and had family fellowship in worship, sacrifice, and food distribution. The families invited their relatives to participate in all the activities, and made sure that they were convinced and converted to their god.

Dinga Christians should adopt this strategy by inviting immediate family and bloodline relatives to come to fellowship with them in their homes. They could have a family meal together, and then disperse to their own homes. This is how Christians could make all these people come to know and accept Jesus Christ as their personal Saviour.

ALL-COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT OF THE PIG FEAST

The pig feast, involving *Yanigelwa* worship and rituals, must be given new meaning. The Dinga people performed the rituals to honour the sun, and, in doing so, engaged in idolatrous practice. Now, as believers, we reject all of that, and worship Jesus for God's glory. Christians should arrange conventions, and invite immediate family members, bloodline relatives, and friends from everywhere, to have a wonderful time at a Christian feast. Through this, the attendees would be introduced to God. This is an important evangelism strategy, for the church to convert people to Christ.

INITIATION OF BOYS AND GIRLS

Dinga people understand that a boy or girl is initiated into his or her father's and mother's group at a mini pig feast. The boy or girl is then changed from an unrecognised position in the society to a renowned position. The people highly regard them in the society.

Dinga Christians should be convinced that initiation is the baptism of the Holy Spirit, which happens to every child of God, when he is born-again. He becomes a member of the body of Christ, with all the rights and privileges of that community (Rom 8).

DISCIPLESHIP PROGRAMS

Discipleship programs in the church are vital for the spiritual growth of the individual members. Proper discipleship programs must be conducted in the church to challenge the church members, of a syncretistic and nominal type of faith, to make a clear break from their worldview, and serve and worship only Jesus Christ, the Lord and Saviour. Following are vital activities that the church could do in relation to discipleship programs: Bible study in the church, TEE study in the church, Christians coming together to fellowship with meals, worship, sports, and time for encouraging and edifying one another (Heb 10:25), men's fellowship, women's fellowship, youth fellowship, children ministry, and music ministry. These discipleship ministry programs will make a great difference in congregational and church growth.

CONCLUSION

I have exposed and argued that the Dinga people's worship of the sun god *Yanigelwa* is their old religious practice, in their preChristian culture. The missionaries encountered the people to Christianise them. They made a radical attempt to eradicate sun-god worship. However, they did not meet the people with the gospel, and proper contextualisation strategy, in approaching the people's worldview and culture. Thus, the gospel message did not penetrate the core of the people's worldview and culture. The use of physical force to change them caused damage to the people. Hence, churches in Dinga are full of syncretistic, nominal, and unconverted members. This is where the gospel is ineffective. I see that the churches in Dinga are in a worse form of animism than before. On Sundays, they go for worship, and, on the other days, they mingle around with witch doctors, sorceresses, and magicians, for answers to their needs. God says:

> You shall have no other gods before Me. You shall not make for yourself an idol, in the form of anything in heaven above, or in the earth beneath, or in the waters below. You shall not bow down to them, or worship them; for I, the LORD your God, am a jealous God, punishing the children for the sins of the fathers (Ex 20:2-5a).[54]

Dinga people will have to renounce and forsake their nominal and syncretistic type of faith. Because God regards it as committing idolatry against Him, they must repent, and accept Jesus Christ as their personal Saviour, for their salvation. This will bring reform to the church, and lift it from stagnancy to vitality.

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[54] See also Ex 34:14; Deut 4:24; 32:21; Josh 24:19; Nah 1:2.

DINGA LANGUAGE GLOSSARY

Aupile	Help
Auwakai	Doing good
Bona	Pig
Bona gakile	Small piglet
Bona gene	Pig-feast traditional dance
Dinga	Name of a people group
Dinkoparim	Special tree, smells like ginger
En	You
Ere	Tree
Ere-hari	Tree leaves
Gai	Teenage girls, sexually mature
Gai hike	Teenage girls, sexually mature, clubhouse
Garapara	Name of a special tree with a ginger smell
Gelwa	Son god
Gerua	Traditional dancing boards
Giu	Evangelical Brotherhood church ground
Hike	House
Kanimine	Sacred, secret prayer, spells, incantations, and magic words.
Kanimine puayale	A sacred person who knows secret prayers
Kanmolo	Watch on
Kapekiwa	Kill pig and cook
Kewakwipeyal	A male *masalai* (localised spirit) that looks after the pigs
Kiane	Name of a Lutheran church ground
Kuria-mam	Traditional love-making songs
Masalai	Localised spirit
Mokime	Round
Ne	Me
Nebare	Bamboo flute
Nebare Kanua	Blowing of a bamboo flute at the initiation rites
Peramara	The old Catholic church ground
Puayale	A person who knows all the sacred, secret words of prayer, spell, and charm
Tamberan	Ghost
Tole-kanmolo	Watch on or look on
Yalminayale	The great man
Yani	Father god
Yanigelwa	Sun god

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ARTICLES AND BOOKS
RELEVANT TO MELANESIA

Culture and Progress: The Melanesian Philosophy of Land and Development in Papua New Guinea, Nancy Sullivan, ed., Madang PNG: Divine Word University Press, 2002. Reviewed by Daniel J. Stollenwerk.

One cannot speak of world history in the last 500 years without addressing European expansion, colonialism characterised, not simply by the quest for trade and power, but also the spread of scientific, political, and religious ideas. Perhaps by coincidence or not, the children of the generation that saw Christopher Columbus sail west from the coast of Portugal, read Copernicus' theory of a sun-centred universe. And, as sea routes opened around the globe, the science of Galileo and Newton came to dominate the minds of European explorers and traders. Consequently, modern technology, that offspring of the scientific revolution, because of its complementary qualities of intoxicating attractiveness and brute force, assisted the colonials in their quest for power. Finally, triumphant Christianity sailed in the wake of European expansion, preaching a monotheistic revelation, and, unwittingly, or not, sanctifying the enlightenment ideals of liberty, equality, and fraternity.

Very few cultures have been able to ignore this Western onslaught of science, technology, and political and religious ideas. Some people and cultures have embraced it, going so far as to ridicule their so-called primitive past. Others have rejected it as imperialistic, ungodly, and primitive in its own right. Most, however, have looked to adopt and adapt – with varying degrees of success.

Papua New Guinea fits into the last category. As a people, it has accepted the very idea of a nation, and even the somewhat arbitrary borders set by its colonial past, but a nation, nonetheless, of disparate languages and cultures, which it does not want to lose. It seeks economic development, but not at the expense of its cultural heritage.

It is perhaps the land in PNG that best symbolises this dynamic tension between Western and traditional ideas of economy, technology, politics, relationships, philosophy, and religion. And so, in 2002, Divine Word University hosted a symposium of academics, lawyers, business people, politicians, and missionaries, which took the land as its starting point, and asked how PNG might best preserve its heritage, yet, at the same time, partake in a world economy, and create a higher standard of living. The result of that symposium was the publication of *Culture and Progress: The Melanesian Philosophy of Land and Development in Papua New Guinea*, a study very much Western in structure – complete with meticulous and numerous footnotes and references – but also very much a product of Melanesian traditional ideas, values, and beliefs.

After a comprehensive introduction to the text, the editor, Nancy Sullivan, divides *Culture and Progress*, into four areas. Under the first, "The Melanesian Philosophy of Land", the late Archbishop Hans Schwemmer speaks of the lack of attention for the common good. Next, in a particularly well-researched article, Michael Rynkiewich debunks a number of false assumptions concerning both Melanesian and Western ideas of land ownership, and lays much of the blame for current problems at the feet of the PNG government. Taking the Abu' Alifes of the central Sepik region as his starting point, Otto Nekitel then explores the cosmological, philosophical, and even linguistic conceptions of land. From his missionary experience in East Sepik, Fr Patrick Gesch further investigates the religious connotations of land, through the ritual of the pig exchange. Finally Mike Douse takes the reader outside the confines of PNG; offering his knowledge of land administration and reform in Bangladesh, in order to explore some implications for the same in PNG.

Charles Benjamin, the Minister for Lands and Physical Planning, opens the second section on "Mobilisation and Customary Land Tenure" by recounting some of the attempts at, and difficulties with, PNG land administration, whose goal is to allow for economic growth, while promoting equity, employment, stability, and participation. Eric Kwa continues with a very good history of land tenure law, both before and after independence, further establishing its implications for contemporary

forestry ownership. Dr Lawrence Kalinoe, executive dean and professor at the School of Law, UPNG, claims, in the next article, that, in effect, the cash economy and the cash crop have already introduced private property – even if it is not so labelled. He goes so far as to assert that the greatest enemies of the future of customary land tenure are not the World Bank, or the International Monetary Fund, but the well-educated, wealthy, politically, and economically "well connected" Papua New Guineans themselves. He calls on the state to take the lead role in reform. The next three submissions by Loani Henao, Francis Irara, and co-authors Ian Marru and David Manau, although admitting to problems, and the need for social mapping, all call for customary land registration. Each article, in its own way, asserts that such a system would secure loans for socio-economic development, and, at the same time, offer minimal risk of loss of rich Melanesian heritages, and no risk, at all, of loss of the land itself.

Sir Peter Barker opens the discussion on "Town Land", with strong criticism of both those students, who spread false rumours and violence, to thwart land reform, and weak government officials, who have filed the dilemma away in the "too hard" basket. Both he and, in the following article, Lady Carol Kidu claim that the land issue demands urgent attention, especially in growing urban areas, where there is nowhere for migrants to settle legally, little room for business to expand, and no space for government to extend health and education facilities. Co-authors, Lloyd Nolan and Joe Abani, relate how landowners, residents, and investors of Alotau, capital of Milne Bay Province, have benefited from urban development, which included the landowners, themselves, in the decision-making processes. Andrew Pai and Jacob Sinne, finally, point out that previous attempts at urban development have failed precisely because of a "top-down" approach, which has not involved the landowners as genuine partners in urban progress.

In the final, and perhaps most interesting section on "Further Strategies", Parliamentarian Bernard Narokobi appeared to best meld the religious with the political: the land is neither mine nor yours, but a gift from God to use and nurture; the state is the new social order, and those of other tribes, clans, or families are not strangers or aliens, but friends, in quest of the

common good. Culture, by its very nature, is open to change, Mel Togolo further insists. And land, as the cultural symbol of shared values, ideas, beliefs, and moral principles, must adapt to the demands of both tradition and development. Gaikovina Kula next points out the implications of land reform to marine management and conservation.   And Dominic Douse, from his experience of community and economic development in Aboriginal Australian communities – a development, which considered the needs, aspirations, talents, leadership, and internal divisions of each community – then looks to apply the same sort of dynamic model to the Disobai Naori traditional landowners of Vanapa West.

Michael Rynkiewich and Hartmut Holzknecht conclude this well-structured, well-documented record of a PNG symposium on land reform and philosophy. As a student of theology, I could not help but note, however, that one of the most-fundamental Christian aspects of development was missing. The mechanistic universe of the modern age – detached as it was from the *telos*/the goal of creation, divorced from objective morality, and having assigned God the solitary role of creating *ex nihilo*, but neither of sustaining nor guiding the universe – lies at the heart of Western science and development, and, thus naturally, clashes with any, like a Melanesian culture, which has not so drastically estranged the material from the spiritual. The Judeo-Christian heritage of Genesis, Deutero-Isaiah, Paul, and John, on the other hand, incessantly links creation to redemption, the origin cannot be understood without reference to the destiny, the incarnate reveals the transcendent, Jesus' miracles point to, and bring about, the kingdom of God. In other words, parallel to traditional Christology, in Christian belief, the material and the spiritual, although distinct, form a unity. At its foundational level, Catholic social teaching is an attempt to supersede a mechanistic understanding of the universe, to correct a modern, Western, dualistic understanding of reality, as applied to the economy, to politics; the goal of all material development, it insists, is faith in God.

In sum, the contemporary PNG tug-of-war between culture and progress is, at its roots, a metaphysical/theological question. In this highly articulate, broad-based publication, Togolo, Rynkiewich, and, especially, Narokobi,

came closest to confronting the theological dimensions of the dilemma, but further development of the theme could have helped clarify this most fundamental reason for tension in PNG between culture and progress.

At the legal, sociological, and philosophical levels, nevertheless, *Culture and Progress* remains a highly-impressive – even daring – gathering of contemporary PNG thinkers, confronting perhaps the most crucial and contentious issue in Papua New Guinea today. For better or worse, the understanding of, and the decisions concerning, land and development will most certainly play one of the largest roles in determining the future society of Papua New Guinea.

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