



Vol 21, No 2

2005

MELANESIAN JOURNAL OF THEOLOGY

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SUBSCRIPTION (2 copies per year)

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

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

All Bible quotations are from the New International Version (NIV)
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ISSN 0256-856X Volume 21, Number 2 2005.

This periodical is indexed in the *ATLA Religion Database*, published by the American Theological Library Association, 250 S. Wacker Drive, 16th Flr, Chicago IL 60606 USA, Email: atla@atla.com, Internet: www.atla.com.

This journal is abstracted in *Religious and Theological Abstracts*,
121 South College Street (PO Box 215), Myerstown PA 17067 USA.

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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

The articles in this journal address a number of cultural and theological issues facing Papua New Guinea and the Melanesian church today.

Peter Hinawai looks at the national elections, as a test case for Papua New Guineans to show their allegiance to God and His kingdom. Is God interested in politics of a country? He certainly is. However, unlike us, He is not for any person, clan, or party. What He requires from us is love for His truth, peace, and harmony to rule in the land. Against the background of bribery and multiple voting, Peter encourages the people of Papua New Guinea to turn to God. He encourages them to use their God-given right of freedom of choice, and live responsibly, in order to cultivate a mature faith that gives room to peace and holiness in the development of the nation.

Francis Kairiru, in his article on the Papua New Guinea forest, portrays the stark reality of a few elite exploiting the forest, through logging. According to Francis, logging itself is not bad; rather, human sinfulness makes it bad. The government has a part to play when logging companies do not correctly share the profits with the rightful owners. Francis appeals to the pastoral work of the church to defend the just and right in environmental matters as they affect lives of many people in the country.

Markus Muntwiler examines the differences between the values and the culture of The Salvation Army and those of Papua New Guineans. He suggests that, for The Salvation Army to be effective, it should find new ways of communicating ownership of property. Markus believes that the real issue is not that of property and property rights, but of attitudes towards values and ministry. According to Markus, we should see the sharing of material things as an opportunity for relationships, and sharing of the gospel.

David Thiele examines the question of the millennium in the light of pre-, post-, and a-millennial schools of belief. He believes that, though the millennium is a question of contention, we should not ignore it. We should

study the millennium in its literal setting, as portrayed in Rev 20, in the denouement of the drama of the struggle between the church and Satan. The uniqueness of Rev 20 should inspire us to look toward the Christian hope, and the resurrection of those who die in Christ.

Wayne Kendi focuses on the doctrine of justification, and its central place in the life of the church. He argues that the Melanesian church, and its individual Christians, need a proper understanding of the doctrine of justification, in order to grow into maturity. Wayne highlights the role that fear can play in Melanesian life: the fear of spiritual beings, and the fear of life after death. He emphasises that a correct “understanding of justification impacts these fears, and dispels much of the confusion and mystery that fuels these fears, through the knowledge it brings concerning God’s sovereignty, His eschatological plans, and eternal security”.

Not everyone will agree with the conclusions reached by the authors. However, we hope that, as you grapple with the issues, the thoughts of the authors will help you grow in your understanding of what God’s word says to your life and culture.

Doug Hanson.

GOD IN PAPUA NEW GUINEAN POLITICS

Peter Hinawai

Peter Hinawai is a diocesan seminarian, studying theology at the Catholic Theological Institute in Port Moresby. He is originally from Homaria village in Margarima Parish in the Diocese of Mendi, Southern Highlands Province PNG.

How do people see, decide, and react to a national general election in Papua New Guinea? From my observation and experience, many people think that an election is a game. There is a saying, “One has to win and one has to lose – why not try?” However, if politics is a game, why are people spending so much money giving free handouts of money and materials? Hence, politics is not merely a game.

Some people think politics is a business, because it involves millions of kina. People are beginning to realise that politics is the quickest way to make money. Hence, many candidates enter into politics to contest either for open or regional seats, because politics means power and money.

However, a few people realise and think that an election is a serious business, and not a mere game, or a way of making money. They know that the brief moment of electing a candidate to parliament will determine the future of our country for the following five years. So, an election is going to determine the life and future of our country.

To God, politics is not a mere game and business. Politics is a serious concern, affecting people’s lives. God is in politics, because He loves all humankind, and desires to restore human dignity and life. God does not love the “love of power”, God loves the “power of love”. This means that God wishes to restore justice, the value of human dignity, truth, and life, which are the political platforms of God. Adam and Eve loved the “love of power”, wanting to be like God. This resulted in greed, lies, injustice, and wanting power, which are political platforms of the serpent (evil). Where are we, PNG? What is our response, PNG? Do we want changes

in our lives? Who will make the changes in our lives – God alone, or people alone, or leaders alone? Are we walking Jesus’ way, telling His truth, and living His life?

TERMINOLOGY OF “ELECTION” AND “POLITICS”?

What is election? Election is the time to allow individual people to exercise their right to freely choose a leader to enter parliament. Election, by definition, is an act of choice. Politically, election connotes “democracy”; an ideology that enjoys favourable opinion, as it is one based on freedom, liberty, rights, and human dignity.¹

What is politics? It is a way of forming government, and of delivering goods and services to the people in the country. However, at the present time, people see and act as if politics is “an eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth” (Matt 5:38). They fight for power and money, and, consequently, innocent people are suffering from a leadership crisis, and a breakdown in accessibility to goods and services in the country. Where are we going, PNG?

WHERE ARE WE, PNG?

In PNG, we are facing a leadership crisis. People find it difficult to find a person whom they can trust to lead with honesty, accountability, and transparency. The country is facing instability, in terms of economics, politics, social structure, culture, and religion. The poor condition of infrastructure development is a problem. There is no sense of respect for law and order. There is rape, violence, and tribal fighting, causing people to live in fear. There is poor management of health services, and very low literacy rates. If it continues like this, there is little hope for the country. The present situation is the result of people electing selfish leaders to parliament. Leaders think that their work is to attend only the parliament sessions, but not to educate people about their rights, and freedom of choice, or of the common people’s role of leadership in the country. We are facing an attitude problem, caused by all kinds of influences, including

¹ Bill Mathias Kuglame, “Election: Profanation of the Human Power of Choice”, in *Melanesian Journal of Theology* 12-2 (1996), p. 55.

modern life styles, adapting politics to cultural ways, and the breakdown of good leadership authority.

Is it the fault of God? No. God is not the author of the political crisis. Our God has shown how to make right decisions and choices, by creating heaven, earth, and human beings. The serpent tempted Adam and Eve to eat the fruit. Our first parents have shown us how to make the wrong decisions and choices by disobeying God's will. They lost God's free gift of grace (Gen 3:1-5). Today, we are suffering, because we, too, have made wrong decisions. We choose leaders who disobey God's will, with the result seen in our present state of chaos.

God gave authority to our first parents (Gen 1:28b). Authority is "life giving life" through relationship with God. Adam and Eve accepted God's authority to give life, and, in their relationship with God, they were to rule over other creatures in a life-giving way. Likewise, political leaders have been given authority to give life to people. This authority is "life giving life" under God, the author of life. The serpent is the author of death. The serpent gave the curse of death to Adam and Eve – a curse that would bring suffering and death to our world.

After they ate the fruit, our first parents' eyes were opened (Gen 3:6-7). In their suffering and pain, they realised that they were naked, and that they needed God again. In PNG, we realise that we need God to restore and uphold our lost human dignity, so that we can live authentic lives.

The serpent's arrival was the moment of the birth of politics in the Garden of Eden. It played politics with God, and manipulated Eve and Adam, so that they ate the forbidden fruit of the tree belonging to God (Gen 3:1-8). Since then, people have suffered from the power of evil, which has ruled the children of Adam and Eve.

However, God's love can be seen in His dealings with humanity. Under Moses, God freed the people of Israel from slavery in Egypt. God is still involved in politics, because God continues to love His people. Thus, God sent His only Son, Jesus Christ – a political hero – sent to suffer and die

so as to redeem the whole humanity on earth. Jesus put everything in order again, and that is how the God of truth has fought and won over the politics of evil. God will not stop until the whole of humanity changes its heart of stone, and comes back to Him. God's politics will not end until God defeats evil in the world.

Jesus obeyed the Father, and chose the "tree of life" – the "holy cross" – an expression of the "power of love". But Adam and Eve chose the "tree of death". They had a "love of power", and wanted to be like God. We must choose and elect good leaders, whose work can bear much fruit – leaders who uphold the truth of life.

Our land is blessed, and is like a paradise, full of natural resources, minerals and food, fresh water, beautiful landscapes, and mountains. We must be proud of our linguistic and cultural diversity. God has given us all that we need, so why do we misuse it?

PEOPLE AND COUNTRY

A country does not develop itself. People make a country. Do we love our country? Both the people and politicians have been showing how to destroy Papua New Guinea, and bring it into chaos. If we, the people and politicians, really loved our country, there would not be the same political interference, and everybody would cooperate to develop PNG. The present political crisis pulls PNG a step backward every day, bringing us almost into the slavery of the land of Egypt. We are politically handicapped – misled by our leaders, and living in a world of violence, corruption, and despair.

Are we showing signs of being a Christian country? How deeply are gospel values rooted in our lives in PNG? The problems we experience indicate that we do not recognise Jesus' sufferings, death, and resurrection. Christ is the new Adam, and the second Moses, who redeemed us from sinfulness. Christ shows us how to make the choice for love, which is His new Law. Jesus chose to be a suffering servant. Why not we? Jesus invites us to follow His example, and to be ready to serve others, for the life and prosperity of PNG.

PEOPLE AND POLITICAL PARTIES

Political parties contribute to forming a government to run the nation, and to assist in delivering goods and services to the people. They have their own political aims, directives, and guidelines, to enable them to function. A party policy should be in the best interest of the people. We have seen many political parties forming under the new Integrity of Political Parties Act.

Were there political parties in the Garden of Eden? Bearing in mind that politics was born at the moment the serpent entered the Garden of Eden (Gen 3:1-17), we could say that there were two political parties. One political party was for God. And another political party was for the serpent. Both parties aimed at ruling Adam and Eve in the Garden of Eden.

Did God have a political party platform and policies? God's Ten Commandments are His platform and policies, which were given to Moses as a political leader, who would liberate his people to enter the Promised Land (Ex 20:1-17). Did Jesus give His party policies to people? Jesus' party policy and platform is love. Jesus said, "Love your enemy, and do good to those who hate you" (Luke 6:29). This is the best summary of God's Ten Commandments. God gives His law for the dignity and solidarity of humanity, with one purpose, which is holiness of life.

How can we know and differentiate between the parties of God and the serpent, now in PNG? A political party should be founded on honesty, truth, justice, integrity, transparency, and accountability of all political party leaders and members. These principles and goals, if put into practice, will allow Papua New Guinea to go forward with a stable and good government. Surely, God wants this to happen in our country. God's party must fight against the serpent's (evil's) parties that are full of injustice, greed, self-centredness, bribery, dishonesty, and disrespect for human rights, and freedom of choice – which is what we are experiencing now in PNG.

PEOPLE AND LEADERS

Leaders, who have not been going to church before, suddenly become active in church affairs in the months before the election. Becoming a converted Christian for a short time is a ploy to get votes. This is in addition to giving out material things, such as, money and pigs, or giving people a lift in the candidate's car. So often, village people are not aware of the candidate's hidden agenda. Without knowing fully what they are doing, people simply elect a six-month-old converted Christian to the parliament. Once many elected members have money and power, they hide themselves in Port Moresby, and do not show their face again in the village. We hear rumours that, once in parliament, they live lives of luxury, growing big stomachs, and marrying many wives. That is how Papua New Guinea is failing, due to corruption in many of our leaders.

We Christians are called to act as people made in the image of God. Rather than racing among ourselves to be the campaign managers of just any candidate, why not race to become the true prophets (campaign managers) of Jesus Christ, and lead people back to God's kingdom? Who will be the prophets? We Christians are the ones who should become the prophets, to speak out against corruption, and restore human dignity. Our leaders should be the servants of people. Jesus showed us how to be a person of true service, by washing the feet of His disciples (John 13:2-5). We do not want hypocrites and blind leaders to mislead the people (Mark 7:6-8).

PEOPLE'S FREEDOM OF CHOICE AND CULTURE

Culture and politics are tangled together, and this is one reason why PNG is facing a political and cultural crisis. Politics should be free from false culture, for the benefit of the country as a whole. In some parts of PNG, when one member of a clan is elected as a Member of Parliament, people seem to think that every clan member is also a member of Parliament, and that they have power over the rest of society. Even though a person might be a corrupt leader, who has faced the leadership tribunal for misconduct in public office, people still vote for their clan member, not counting quality. They know that, if they do not vote for their clan member, others

will get to know, and relationships will be broken. So, they feel they have to vote for a particular candidate, because of cultural ties.

How did Adam see the relationship with God and Eve? Adam accepted the fruit of the forbidden tree, given by Eve in the Garden of Eden (Gen 3:6-7). He ate it, because, to him, the human relationship with Eve was more important than his relationship with God. This story reminds us of what is happening culturally in PNG. In our culture, “relationship” is an important cultural value. So, for example, if a father makes a decision for a family to vote for a candidate, who is corrupt, his family members feel they have no choice. They have to vote for that person. To disregard the father’s decision, and vote for another candidate, would mean being out of the family.

Western culture emphasises individualism, and each person votes according to his or her individual principles. Melanesian culture is more community centred. The sense of relationship is very strong. Jesus said that, if we keep His commandments, we will have relationship with Him. From a Christian point of view, relationship is the will of God. Yet, our Papua New Guinean way of understanding relationship needs to be unveiled, purified, and transformed to allow gospel values to throw light onto our culture. Jesus came to fulfil the law, but not to destroy it (Matt 5:17). We must find ways to live our culture, so that gospel values and cultural identity can work in harmony.

BRIBERY AND EMPTY PROMISES

Many candidates bribe people with money and handouts, and make empty promises about bringing goods and services to people in the community. Why? Because they want to get power and money. Did God create us blind? Can we blame God for not creating intellectual power to think and reason? God warned our first parents not to eat the fruit of the tree. God said, “If you eat, you shall die” (Gen 1:28; 3:1-3). The serpent entered the Garden of Eden, and played politics with God, because Adam and Eve belonged to God. The serpent told Eve to eat the fruit of the tree, and promised her that she would not die, and that she would be like God, and know good and evil. Later, Adam and Eve realised they had done wrong,

and saw that they were naked. They realised that they needed God. The same thing applies to us now in PNG. When we are suffering, in the midst of a leadership crisis, now we cry out to God for help.

Campaign promises can be almost blasphemous. Candidates use the name of God, and pretend to be humble, and make sweet talk, but, when they get elected to parliament, they show their true colours. These people or parties are like wolves in sheepskins.² If, through bribery, people sell their votes to candidates, it amounts to selling the country to wild dogs. We must not be like Judas Iscariot, who was tempted by a few pieces of silver.

Adam and Eve accepted the empty promises from the serpent. Satan tempted Jesus, and promised to give Him “all the kingdoms of the world and their splendour” (Matt 4:8-11), but Jesus rejected the temptation. This example reminds us to act in faith, and to make choices for the truth. Why don’t we reject bribery, and disbelieve empty promises, like Jesus did to Satan’s promises?

CASTING VOTES

In many parts of PNG, especially in places like the Southern Highlands Province, there is no secrecy in casting votes for certain candidates. Everybody knows a person for whom you vote. Moreover, people are forced to vote at the point of a gun. Supporters of some candidates held up polling officials, made them sign all the ballot papers, and put them in the ballot boxes. Election polling officials were forced to seal the ballot boxes and mark tally sheets. People also cast multiple votes until the supposedly secret ballot papers finished. Why do we claim PNG is a Christian country? The country itself is not Christian. People are Christians. If we people cannot respect the country’s constitution, we cannot follow God’s law either. We are cheating God and ourselves.

Ballot papers, themselves, are not secret and sacred, but become so when a person marks “X” on them. When a person marks “X”, or calls the name

² K. Siloi, “Don’t Let Sweet Talk Fool You”, in *Post-Courier*, Monday, June 3, 2002, p. 10.

of a candidate, he or she is expressing his or her God-given freedom. The ballot boxes should contain the trust, hope, and life of the people voting; hence their sacred character. Ballot papers should be respected. They are not merely papers and boxes, but represent human life and the future of our country. Voting is giving life for life. Those counting the votes are counting human lives, not mere ballot papers. We need to educate people to realise that the ballot boxes are like a signed contract between people and their leaders.

PEOPLE'S ATTITUDES

There are various groups of people with different attitudes. Some are sensitive to the problems, and are optimistic about making changes, and electing good Christian leaders. Such people speak with faith and concern. Others feel the problems, but they are pessimistic about our ability to respond. Some say that, if they were to speak out, and reveal the truth, then they might as well prepare their coffin. People fear to die, and so keep quiet.

Whom shall we blame? When we face hardships, economic instability, violence, and injustice, we are tempted to blame each other. Politicians blame people, and people blame politicians, just as Adam and Eve blamed each other. In fact, if there is blame, then we must blame ourselves for having made the wrong choices, by electing corrupt leaders, and as a consequence, we are suffering.

Some people ask, "Why is God punishing us?" The answer is that God is not punishing us. We must not be like Adam and Eve. Adam blamed Eve, and she blamed the serpent (Gen 3:6-7). We can only blame ourselves. We punish ourselves by not listening, and not living according to God's will. We must blame ourselves that we do not make proper choices and elect good-quality leaders. Hence, the leadership crisis we face is not God's fault, or God's punishment. God enters into politics against evil powers only because of us, because God loves us, and wants to restore life.

ARE WE HERE – PNG?

God's "love" was, is, and will be, forever. God must be "crazy" with His love, or as expressed in Tok Pisin, "*God mas i go longlong wantaim tru, tru laik bilong em.*" The Triune God is a model for us to be in communion and solidarity with God, and with each other, through the authentic bonds of love. We get a glimpse of the invisible eternal Trinitarian community in human love and solidarity in community, here and now. Papua New Guinea cannot develop by itself. We, the people of Papua New Guinea, should be "crazy" (*longlong*) with our God-given love of our country. We should be showing how to love our country, by being prepared to serve our country.

God has given His authority to make God's kingdom visible on earth, through the bond of love, and through peace, justice, and harmony that witnesses to the will of God. Adam and Eve were in the presence of God, in the absence of politics, before the fall. Human beings were created perfect, in God's own image and likeness. Are we made perfect and holy, too? The political hero, Jesus Christ defeated evil in His suffering and death. He restored the Garden of Eden to us, liberating us, and making us holy. Jesus calls us not to accept the "fruit of the tree" – death – but to accept the "tree of life" – the cross – and to develop a mature faith that will make truth and holiness part of the development of our country.

CONCLUSION

We all believe that, "The Lord God formed man from the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and the man became a living being" (Gen 2:7). This text reminds Papua New Guineans that the "existence of people and the land is the expression of God's existence".³ Every Papua New Guinean has a heart for the land. The land is perceived as a mother, from whom a child gets its nourishment and existence. If our hearts and lives are rooted in the land, then why are we causing all kinds of crises in PNG? Are we fighting because our country is poor, with no natural resources – a desert? Is it because we are a people

³ Henry Paroi, "Decolonising Theology: Doing Theology in Melanesian Context", in *Catalyst* 33-1 (2001), p. 33.

with no political freedom from a coloniser? Surely not. Our political crises have their origin in our leaders forgetting God, and ignoring people's common interest.

We must never overlook the gift of life that God breathed into us. We should love our lives and country. We should give honour to God for the gift of life, and do so by building a better PNG. Jesus told us to be salt and light. If that is not the case, then the people should not blame the leaders, and leaders should not blame people. We must blame ourselves, and come back to God, with Christ at the centre of our lives. Only then, can we develop PNG with the truth of love, faith, and life.

There is a need for continuous education awareness, in order to change the wrong attitudes of people, and help them realise their rights, and their God-given human freedom of choice. We must allow people to write God's law in their hearts, and be ready to become true prophets (campaign mangers) of Christ. God is in the political arena, because evil first entered into the Garden of Eden. God is in politics to restore and uphold human dignity and life.

If God is powerful, why does God allow a leadership crisis in PNG, with corruption, injustice, violence, and disrespect for human dignity? Does not God want to continue to be in politics? God allows the crisis, because God wants people to recognise Him, and to turn to Him. If we want good leaders "because the country is in such bad state, and you are suffering, look for wisdom – there is no college or university for it. True wisdom comes from God."⁴

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ECHOES FROM THE PAPUA NEW GUINEAN FOREST

Francis Kairiru

Francis Kairiru graduated from the Catholic Theological Institute with a Bachelor of Theology in 2002. He comes from Kairiru Island, East Sepik Province PNG.

Political, social, and economic changes have shaken the foundation of what was previously a fairly stable way of life in Papua New Guinea. Some of these changes are associated with the cutting of our forests by multinational logging companies. Our beautiful “land of the unexpected”, or “land of paradise”, is slowly losing its identity and value through the dishonest manipulation of the loggers, assisted by the regime of an elite within the nation itself.

In this article, I want to address the issue of logging, from the perspective of moral and pastoral theology. It is vital to have a true picture of how much forest we have, and what impact logging has already had on our social and physical environment. I will analyse some statistics, and look at issues relevant to theological and moral questions.

THE FOREST RESOURCES

On a global scale, PNG is thought to have the world’s third largest rainforest, after the Amazon (South America), and the Congo basin (Africa). There is great diversity of life. The forests support about 200 species of mammals, more than 15,000 plant species, 1,500 tree species, and 750 different species of birds.¹ Despite the diversity of animal and plant species, our forests are not unlimited. Most of them are found along the coastal areas, rather than the Highlands. A comprehensive analysis of available literature, provided by the PNG Eco-Forestry Forum, has

¹ *Post-Courier*, February 25, 2002, p. 11.

revealed that PNG has some 26 million hectares of forest. Of this, 11 million hectares is suitable for possible commercial exploitation, and 7 million hectares has already been allocated for large-scale export logging.²

However, we must not settle for the official, statistical figures. There has been a history of illegal logging, and unreported log shipments, so that it is most likely that many more hectares of forest have been exploited. What is left is the more-inaccessible forest, with low stocking densities, and poor-quality timber.

THE VALUE OF LOGGING EXPORTS

It is hard to know the exact number of logs harvested and exported due to a history of unreported log shipments. What is presented by the log-exporting industry in the reports are the latest statistics. In the mid-1990s, log exports reached about 3 million cubic metres each year. Between 1994 and 2001, at least 18 million cubic metres of logs were exported from PNG, 99.5 per cent by foreign-owned and controlled companies. Moreover, it is difficult to find the real value of the logs that have been exported. Relying on the logging companies' data, it is known that, as a minimum, the value of logs exported from PNG between 1993 and 2001 was over \$US2.3 billion. We have to remember that this figure takes into account only the declared value of the export logs. "If those logs were sawn into rough timber, and processed further into finished products, that multiplication factor could be as much as 1,000."³

However, the export volumes have been decreasing steadily to 1.5 million cubic metres in 2002, which coincides with the decline of log value. It is due to the lower quality of logs being exported. "Analysis shows that, even if we give the loggers another 2 million hectares of new concessions, as recommended by the Independent Forestry Review, log export volumes will never rise above the current levels of about 1.2 million cubic metres."⁴

² *Post-Courier*, May 6, 2002, p. 11

³ *Ibid.*, p. 11

⁴ *Post-Courier*, May 20, 2002, p. 21.

ENVIRONMENTAL AND SOCIAL IMPACT

In PNG, logging companies, in collusion with the greediness of our country's elite, have been illegally exploiting and damaging forests. Scientific studies show that loggers in PNG destroy an average of 17 trees for every one that is felled and removed. It is estimated a further 60 are left to wither and die. Besides those areas heavily logged in this way (Western Province and West New Britain), there is another type of environmental destruction taking place: dispersion of wildlife (animals, birds, and insects), soil erosion, causing pollution to the available fresh water, and disappearance of fruit and nut trees, medicinal plants, and traditional building materials.⁵

Another issue, related to logging, is its social impact. In many instances, logging companies have promised to improve the livelihood of people living in affected areas. But, in many logging locations, one finds very poor infrastructure (roads, health services, education facilities, etc.). Sometimes people are left in a worse situation than before the arrival of the logging companies. Apart from that, the presence of loggers seems to be accompanied by moral problems, such as an increase in drunkenness among men, increased promiscuity, prostitution, and a very high level of sexually-transmitted diseases. Are we keeping silent before these affairs?

EMPLOYMENT AND CAPITAL: WHO BENEFITS THE MOST?

We hear, read, or see on media from the National Forest Authority, logging companies, and other sources, that logging is a vital means of reviving the country's economy, boosting infrastructure, and creating job opportunities. Often, such promises are merely an excuse for companies to gain access to peoples' forest resources. Foreign-owned and controlled companies do 99.5 per cent of log exporting. Moreover, those companies spend large amounts of money employing their own fellow citizens. Joe Meave states, "The 17 timber companies in PNG, with a combined log export value of \$US50 million, employed a total of 468 staff. Out of that, only 10 per cent are local employees, who are limited to the most menial

⁵ *Post-Courier*, March 25, 2002, p. 11.

and unskilled positions, such as cleaners, security guards, labourers, and so on.”⁶

Moreover, certain members of the elite community (politicians, departmental heads, businessmen, etc.) are directly or indirectly benefiting from the logging activities. Some could be big shareholders, or chairpersons of the landowner companies in logging concessions. Others could receive large sums of money, under the table, on the condition that they keep silent before this malpractice. For example, in the 2002 elections, some of the candidates, who were in the landowner company associations kept landowners’ royalty money in trust accounts, and then began to give out the funds to the landowners to gain votes.⁷ It would also be possible to bribe officials in Foreign Affairs and Labour Departments, so that they would be less strict in checking on foreigners entering the country. It is disgraceful to see the local people suffer from unjust labour, and unequal distribution of wealth. The local people are the rightful owners of their resources, and “just because they are illiterate, that does not mean they cannot benefit fully from these resources”.⁸ There is a danger of the rightful owners becoming spectators on their own land, living off the crumbs left behind by foreign companies.

MELANESIANS ARE NOT PART OF THE LOGGING ACTIVITIES

In PNG, 90 percent of the land is customarily-owned, and an increasing proportion of the remainder – which represents land marked by the government to provide for cities and towns, missions, and plantations – is being transferred from foreign to local control, albeit under lease tenure.⁹

For Melanesians, traditionally-owned land does not come under the concept of individualism, or proprietary, ownership. It may sound that way, but the basic understanding is that the land is for the benefit of the

⁶ *Post-Courier*, June 3, 2002, p. 11.

⁷ *Post-Courier*, May 29, 2002, p. 11.

⁸ *Post-Courier*, May 20, 2002, p. 11.

⁹ Rick Giddings, “Land Tenure”, in D. Whiteman, ed., *An Introduction to Melanesian Cultures, Point 5* (1984), Goroka PNG: Melanesian Institute, p. 149.

entire community, in terms of food, medicine, and building materials. According to traditional Melanesian understanding, supernatural beings are the source of land. Out of fear or reverence, the land, with its resources, is nurtured constantly to maintain good relationships with the spirits. In return, the spirits would protect people from disasters, and make the land fertile, resulting in a good life within the community (*gutpela sindaun*).

The legal and illegal operation of overseas companies that feed the paper and plywood mills of the Pacific Rim are no exception to Melanesians. Since forests provide the basis for their livelihood and cultural life, they see logging as a danger to their rural existence. That is why, sometimes, you hear indigenous people say that a logging company is destroying their life, and tearing them apart. Such statements express the way that the land and the forest embrace the total life of Melanesians. That is why Melanesians sometimes react violently to the logging companies. An example may be seen in Western Province, where the Wawoi landowners have threatened the logging project in their area.¹⁰

QUESTIONS

Having provided the factual data, above, I now want to pose some questions, seeking theological answers, from a moral and pastoral perspective. For example: What church teachings speak to the problem of large-scale logging? Where is God in this situation? What is the role of committed Christians?

THEOLOGICAL RESPONSE: WHAT IS THE CHURCH'S TEACHING?

Scripture has recorded, and apostolic and church tradition has passed on, the faith experiences of our ancestors in faith. Consequently, the church can draw upon that tradition, in taking a stance, with regard to modern-day issues, such as, injustice done by the large-scale logging companies and the PNG elites, environmental damage, unequal distribution of wealth, poor labour conditions, and the right of ownership.

¹⁰ *Post-Courier*, April 4, 2002, p. 7.

Any foreign company (logging, mining, fishing, etc.) operating in a less-developed nation should resist the temptation of domination and avarice towards the resources of that nation. If they give in to this temptation, they are trying to be masters rather than stewards of the created world. The master exploits creation for his advantage, and undermines the natural integrity of the country. In doing so, the master offends the divinely-established moral order, and threatens human life at its very source. No one, under any circumstances, can claim the right to destroy creation, and dehumanise people (cf. Gen 1:26-28). God alone is the Lord of life, from its beginning until its end.¹¹

Justice demands that industrialised nations should contribute effectively to support the need of economic development and social progress in developing countries struggling against poverty and economic disabilities. They should nurture the gift of creation, through their scientific and technical facilities, so as to help the less-developed nations to achieve their own economic and social growth. Besides, industrialised nations should respect the national integrity of the less-developed countries, which often preserve, in their traditions, an acute and vital awareness of the more important values, on which their moral order rests. In other words, as far as possible, national integrity must be developed and maintained, for the temporal and spiritual good of the people.

In any commercial sector (private or public), an important obligation is to create equal job opportunities. People have the right to work, to support themselves and their families, and to be able to acquire goods for their use. The church also teaches about the importance of the common good.

God intended the earth, with all it contains, for the use of every human being and people. . . . Whatever the forms of ownership may be, as adapted to the legitimate institutions of the people, according to the diverse and unchangeable circumstances, attention must be paid to the universal purpose for which created goods are meant. In using them, therefore, a man should regard his lawful possessions,

¹¹ Dietrich Bonhoeffer, *Creation and Fall*, New York NY: Macmillan, 1966, pp. 72-73.

not merely as his own, but also as common property, in the sense that they are accrued to the benefit of not only himself, but of others.¹²

Besides, there must be a right relationship between the employers and employees, in terms of wages. It is morally wrong “to pay less than a just minimum wage, to exploit the poverty and misery of the humble, and rob them of a fair return of their labour”.¹³ Also, companies must see to it that social benefits contribute to the well-being of the workers, including the entire community. In this way, workers can contribute to their families, their society, and country, and, at the same time, be “sharers in building the future of those, who will come after them, in the succession of history”.¹⁴

Often, ordinary people are groaning for salvation, because of oppression and injustice coming from the socioeconomic sector. When the State dithers, and does not address moral issues, while its citizens suffer, the church must speak out, in order to “to protect the rights and interests of its people, assuring just wages, safeguarding property, both of owner and workers”.¹⁵ Since, ultimately, the power to rule comes from God, it should be exercised, as the power of God is exercised – “with a fatherly solicitude, which not only guides the whole, but reaches also individuals”.¹⁶ Consequently, respect, justice, peace, and equality would prosper in the “relative rights and mutual duties of the rich, and of the poor, of capital, and of labour, resulting in a much better and happier life among all individuals”.¹⁷

¹² Vatican II, “Pastoral Constitution on the Church in the Modern World”, # 69.

¹³ Pope Leo XIII, *Rerum Novarum*, 1891.

¹⁴ Pope John Paul II, *Laborem Exercens*, 1981.

¹⁵ Pope Leo XIII, *Rerum Novarum*, 1891.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*

¹⁷ *Ibid.*

WHERE IS GOD IN THIS SITUATION?

We read in Gen 3:14-24, that God expelled our foreparents from the garden of paradise, because they disobeyed God, by consuming the fruit of wisdom. They wanted wisdom, which does not come from God. By wisdom, we must understand also: money, success, happiness, and long life (1 Kings 3:11). However, God does not want to expel Melanesians, who are suffering from depression and oppression, due to the destruction of their livelihood and cultural heritage by the logging companies. “Can a woman forget the baby at her breast, and have no compassion on the child of her womb? Though she may forget, I will not forget you” (Is 49:15). God’s love is unconditional (Luke 15:11-32), and He is constantly caring for His children, in times of misery and misfortune.

God intervenes, through people of good faith (Greenpeace, PNG Forest Watch, churches, etc.), in promoting awareness of the evil brought about by the logging companies, the elite regime, and the autocratic system of the government. How often, we Melanesians are spiritually blind, not recognising God’s salvific acts in creation! Still, we ask – where is God?

We must accept our human fragility and limitations, and zealously express support for what is just and right, with a heart of faith and trust in God, who is the source of all life. “The Israelites groaned under their slavery, and cried out to God. . . . God heard their pleading, and He remembered His covenant with Abraham . . . and took notice of them” (Ex 2:23b-25). Likewise, God will certainly come to rescue us from our plight. We must remember that the logging situation cannot be, in itself, bad. Human sinfulness makes it bad. The real responsibility lays with us Melanesians to do our part, for justice to prevail. God will complete what we cannot do, and bring it to perfection. Nothing is impossible for God.

WHAT IS THE ROLE OF CHRISTIANS?

As Christians, members of Christ’s body, the church, we are obliged to comply with the pastoral strategies of the church. One such strategy is to defend what is right and just in environmental, economic, and social matters, when basic human rights require it. Committed Christians should seek to understand the struggles of the logging victims, and they should

come to their aid, without hesitation. “Christ, undergoing death itself for all of us sinners, taught us by His example that we, too, must shoulder that cross, which the world and the flesh inflict upon those who pursue peace and justice.”¹⁸ We exist, because God loves us; and, to the extent that we live with God’s life and Christ’s love with us, we are able to strive for what is right and just. If not, we violate not only our loving human nature, but also God’s mandate to be stewards of God’s creation.

Man, thus created, is man as the image of God. He is the image of God, not in spite of, but just because of, his bodiliness. For in his bodiliness, he is related to the earth, and to other bodies, he is there for others, he is dependent upon others. In his bodiliness, he finds his brother, and the earth. As such, a creature, man of earth and spirit, is in the likeness of his Creator, God.¹⁹

God created human beings, body and soul, and He wills that Christians should minister to the people, in all aspects of life. This should be done in the spirit of humility, because we know that we have limitations, and cannot solve this problem overnight. In addition, we have to do it in the light of faith that God will bring it to fulfilment.

CONCLUSION

Every Melanesian, whether a “grass roots” or “elite”, should accept the fact that the ills of the logging industry are already affecting Papua New Guinea, and its citizens. We must take a mature and human approach to eradicate them. The problem touches every one of us here and now, because land is of such great importance to us. Land and forest is part of our tribal soul, identity, and unity. Without that, we would not function as whole persons, and would not be recognised by outsiders as uniquely Melanesian. Regardless of differences, we have to put our heads together, in faith and love, to bring to an end the suffering that the logging industry inflicts upon us, before it is too late.

¹⁸ Pope John Paul II, *Laborem Exercens*, 1981.

¹⁹ Bonhoeffer, *Creation and Fall*, p. 48.

The government has the bigger part in the issue. For the common good, it should protect its forests and citizens, through tough, stringent, clear-cut legislation to deal with, and punish, those who breach the forestry guidelines, rather than giving in to the timber tycoons, for the sake of extra revenue. Today, due to unsustainable management of their country's forest resources, most countries in the world do not have valuable forests like PNG. We, in PNG, are heading in the same direction, which is a way to poverty and human suffering. Moreover, the effect on the socio-economic and political structures of the country will be very damaging. If we do nothing about the evils of today associated with logging companies, along with the greedy assistance of elites within the country, then tomorrow's generation will suffer much, due to our ignorance, denial, and silence.

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CROSS-CULTURAL LEADERSHIP WITHIN THE SALVATION ARMY PNG

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PART I: GENERAL DESCRIPTION OF THE ORGANISATION

The Salvation Army is an integral part of the Christian church, although distinctive in government and practice. The movement, founded in 1865, by William Booth, has spread from London to many parts of the world. The rapid deployment of the first Salvationists was aided by the adoption of a quasi-military command structure in 1878, when the title, “The Salvation Army”, was brought into use. Members of The Salvation Army are called “soldiers”. Full-time officers are usually engaged as pastors, social workers, and administrators. Leadership in The Army is provided by commissioned officers, who are recognised ministers of religion. The Salvation Army is under the authority of the General, based in England. Countries with a strong Salvation Army movement are referred to as Territories, under the authority of a Territorial Commander.

Evangelistic and social enterprises are maintained. Raised to evangelise, The Army spontaneously embarked on schemes for the social betterment of the poor. Such concerns have since developed, wherever they operate (Sutherland).

THE SALVATION ARMY PNG

The Salvation Army officially commenced in Papua New Guinea on August 31, 1956. The work was started by missionaries, and was heavily

supported (financially and by human resources) in the past by the overseas department of the International Headquarters in London, and The Salvation Army Australia. On July 4, 1994, after 38 years as part of The Salvation Army Australia, Papua New Guinea became an independent organisation. In 2000, The Salvation Army PNG changed from a Command to a Territory. Today there are over 130 active officers (husband and wife included) within the organisation, with 18 cadets in the officers' training college. In addition, about 300 employees are working in 31 institutions, such as motels, schools, health centres, community development programs, and counselling centres. The organisation runs 47 churches and 31 outposts, maintaining two training centres for future officers.

The structure of The Salvation Army PNG is army-like. According to Mintzberg, the structure is most likely identical with the machine bureaucracy (Mintzberg, 1979). Important decisions are made at the strategic apex; managers and standardised procedure control day-to-day operations. Authorities block, as well as initiate, change, punish, as well as reward. At the beginning of 2004, The Salvation Army PNG is supported by the following expatriates:

Status	Civil Status	Position	Location
Officer (Rank of Colonel)	Couple	Territorial Commander Territorial President of Women's Ministry	Port Moresby
Officer (Rank of Major)	Couple	Secretary for Social Program (Executive Level) Social Service Coordinator South	Port Moresby
Officer (Rank of Major)	Couple	Secretary for Personnel (Executive Level) <i>War Cry</i> editor	Port Moresby
Officer (Rank of Major)	Couple	Secretary for Business Administration (Executive Level) Assistant Secretary for Personnel	Port Moresby
Officer (Rank of Captain)	Couple with 3 children	Training Principal at the Officers' College	Port Moresby
Officer (Rank of Lieutenant)	Single female	Health and Development Adviser	Port Moresby
Lay worker	Couple with 4 children	Education Adviser Administration Manager Boroko Primary School	Port Moresby
Lay worker	Couple with 3 children	Agricultural Adviser	Kainantu

The Organisation

The executive level includes a Territorial Commander (expatriate), a Territorial President for Women's Ministry (expatriate), a Chief Secretary (PNG national), a Secretary for Corps Program (expatriate), a Secretary for Social Program (expatriate), a Secretary for Business and Administration (expatriate), a Secretary for Personnel (expatriate). Expatriates, called reinforcement officers, are usually representatives of the Western culture, and certainly support the organisation in their efforts to comply with the structures, procedures, and administrative, and operational aspects within the organisation. Higher-ranking national officers and staff

are usually exposed to training courses held overseas (ICO, university-degree courses, other administrative courses). In this way, The Salvation Army ensures that Papua New Guinean officers are able to understand the Western worldview, and organisational procedures, and apply it within their position.

PART II: ORGANISATIONAL REVIEW

PURPOSE OF THE REVIEW

The purpose of the review is to analyse The Salvation Army leadership values and culture and compare it with Melanesian or PNG culture. The review shall highlight organisational problems related, in some way, to cultural differences. The review shall also identify key value differences in economic and social relationships, and address the tension occurring between PNG values and culture and The Salvation Army values and culture, which represents a mainly Western-based value and belief system. It shall focus on specific value characteristics for each social environment assessed. From this diagnosis of the social environment and value differences, The Salvation Army leadership shall be able to determine how best to develop the existing ministries to obtain maximum effectiveness, in relationship with Papua New Guineans.

METHOD OF ASSESSMENT

For the purpose of this article, I made a division between The Salvation Army PNG culture and values (The Salvation Army, as an institution, is mainly based on Western culture) and the Papua New Guinea culture and value system. The differences that occur between the two categories are not always a result of a division, but I believe that most of the problems and tensions highlighted in this article have their roots in the different values and belief systems. As a means to analyse the differences, I make use of the grid/group model suggested by Sherwood Lingenfelter (1992, 1996).

Concept of Grid

The concept of grid examines and compares the degree of autonomy given to individuals in diverse social settings. Lingenfelter (1992) says that the grid focuses on how the social system sorts and constrains individuals, by

distinctive role categories. The larger the number of role categories, the greater the number of social distinctions will be, and the more constrained will be the autonomy of individuals in social relations. In other words, the larger the number of rules, the more social relationships are structured, and less autonomy is given to individuals. At the low end of the grid, society has few social distinctions among its members, such as male-female or child-parent. In a low grid social environment, the skills and position of leadership are generally open to the ambitious, and the individuals, who occupy them, are considered best among equals (common among Papua New Guinean tribes). The high grid social environments consist of multiple social distinctions. Such environments generally are hierarchical, with a few role distinctions at the top, and many role distinctions at the middle and bottom areas. Roles at the top have uniquely-defined value and power, and these roles are limited to a small number of individuals within the total social environments (private universities, hospitals, The Salvation Army).

Concept of Group

The second variable in Douglas' model is the concept of group. The group concept is well known from the social literature. Societies that place a high value on group survival are collectivist, while societies that place a low value on group survival are individualist in orientation. Papua New Guinea has a society that is strongly collectivist in orientation. The author would consider The Salvation Army as an organisation with moderate group-focused activities. Most Western societies and organisations would be considered as low-group in orientation.

Social Environments

The model developed by Mary Douglas, 1982, identifies four distinctive types of social environment: A-Individualist, B-Bureaucratic systemic, C-Corporate systemic, and D-Collectivist. At the same time, the model distinguishes between low and high grid and low and high group. Low grid refers to the unique value of an individual, with an open competitive environment. High grid means that individuals are judged on the basis of their role performance, and are rewarded for achieving role expectations. Low group social environment results in little pressure for group-focused

activity, and individuals cooperate with one another, primarily for instrumental goals. High group social environment considers high pressure for group-related activities and individuals must continually evaluate collective, as well as personal, interests.

Personal observation and involvement, as well as informal interviews and conversations, provided the data for measuring each of the six social environment grid/group variables.

High grid	B Bureaucratic systemic	C Corporate systemic
Low grid	Individualist A	Collectivist D
	Low group	High group

Figure 1: Types of Social Environment, Lingenfelter (1992), p. 32

THE AUTHOR’S INVOLVEMENT IN THE SALVATION ARMY

From 1997 to 2004, the author worked for The Salvation Army PNG (SAPNG). From 1988 to 1990, the author worked for The Salvation Army Sri Lanka. Much of the information for this review was acquired through personal observation, and informal conversations with Salvation Army leadership personnel (national staff and expatriates), mainly in Papua New Guinea. Information was also gathered through analysing board minutes, Salvation Army statements and strategy papers, as well as other documents of the organisation.

In personal interviews with personnel at executive level (Secretary for Personnel and Territorial Commander), the author was able to learn about organisational culture, and the human resource situation, within SAPNG.

The author was involved in middle management of SAPNG for six years. In his position as Agricultural Adviser and Project Manager, he was responsible for eight employees. He was affected directly by management decisions done at executive level, and by his national coordinator. For

three years, his direct supervisor was firstly a national officer, and then a national employee. He experienced the influence of national leadership directly, but he also experienced the impact of his own management/leadership decisions on the human resources available to him.

PART III: SUMMARY OF ASSESSMENT FOR SIX SOCIAL ENVIRONMENTS

SOCIAL ENVIRONMENT 1: PROPERTY INTEREST AND CULTURAL BIAS

Narrative Summary of Findings

The SAPNG holds a variety of properties. Officers and staff, with higher positions, are provided with housing. Executive level staff have access to a personal vehicle. The Salvation Army Social Services North (SSN) uses an office with computers, desks, furnishings, copy machines, and other office equipment, six vehicles, and several store rooms.

Access to the available resources (housing, vehicles, computers, telephones), maintenance of the property (housing, office, vehicles), and “misappropriation” are major issues of conflicts between the officers and the administration. A lot of time is spent in meetings, at the administrative level, to solve property-related issues. Regular complaints by staff and officers are the daily business of people at the management level, and the frustration level of the administrative personnel is high. Property often confers personal prestige, and, to keep it, becomes a high value. The Salvation Army operates in a bureaucratic, social environment, in which there is a strong emphasis on hierarchy. Property goes along with a certain position or section of the organisation, and it is expected that each person or section preserves their holdings, and maintains them carefully, as they represent a significant dimension for the organisation. Traditionally, PNG people give priority to people over property, and their primary concern is to maintain the group interests. They spend little effort and time on preservation and maintenance of houses, vehicles, and other equipment, which are primarily utilitarian in value. However, men and women spend considerable effort in preparation of fields, and the cultivation of food resources that support the extended family. PNG society puts a strong emphasis on group ownership of economic resources.

The Grid and Group Dimension

The Salvation Army holds a moderate grid perspective (+1) on property. The appearance and maintenance of the facilities suggests identity. Property is mainly functional, but needs to be properly maintained and used, to preserve resources. However, property-related decisions, such as the purchase or sale of land or housing, needs approval of the International Headquarters. PNG people hold a moderate grid perspective on property as well (-1.5). Property has a strong symbolic value for them, and officers usually emphasise the right for appropriate housing and reward of their role. Property is linked to the allocation of status, and not so much on the efficient use of it.

Property variables: The Salvation Army PNG (SAPNG) versus Papua New Guineans (PNGs)					
High grid			Low grid		
Property held for symbolic value		Estate held for value transaction		SAPNG	PNGs
+1	Reward for right behaviour	-1	Outcome of individual effort	1/-0.5	0/-1
+1	Attributed with symbolic value	-1	Utilitarian value only	0.5/-0.5	1/-0.5
+1	Secured for protection in crisis	-1	Invested at risk	0.5/0	0/-1
+1	Right of occupation/class identity	-1	Right of labour/resources invested	1/-0.5	0/-0.5
+1	Self-esteem = possession/preservation	-1	Self-esteem = management/exploitation	0.5/-0.5	0.5/0
Sum of grid variables				1	-1.5

Strong group		Weak group			
Corporate interests emphasised		Individual interests emphasised		SAPNG	PNGs
+1	Corporate title of ownership	-1	Individual title of ownership	0/-1	1/0
+1	Group dispersed use rights	-1	Owner allocated use rights	0/-0.5	1/0
+1	Corporate rights to produce	-1	Individual rights to produce	0/-0.5	1/0
+1	Collective obligation – maintenance, security	-1	Individual maintenance, security	0/-0.5	0.5/0
+1	Collective control of disposal	-1	Individual decision to dispose	0/-0.5	1/0
Sum of grid variables				-3	4.5

Table 1: Grid and group dimension of property and assets values/interests

Concerning the group dimension, I would like to mention that The Salvation Army and the PNG people understand property as shared ownership. However, The Salvation Army considers property as an asset owned by The Salvation Army, while the Papua New Guineans would

consider this asset as part of The Salvation Army, but also would feel obligated to share it with their extended family/clan. The Salvation Army has strict rules about the use of property/assets, and is more concerned about maintenance, loaning of vehicles or homes, shared with other extended family members. Papua New Guineans feel less obligated to maintain corporate property, and would often loan vehicles and homes to extended family members, risking their resources.

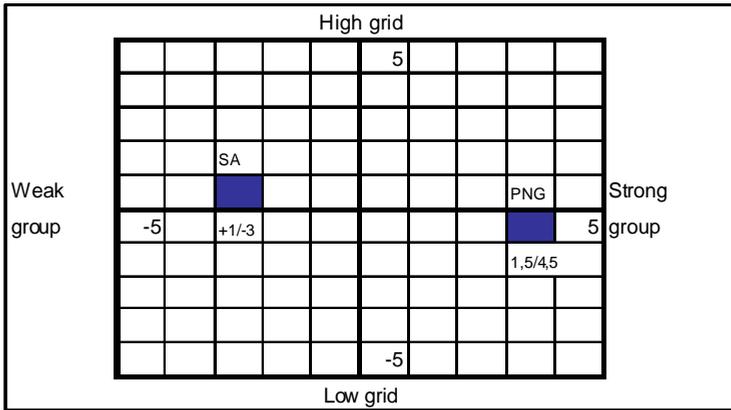


Figure 2: Chart indicating grid and group dimension for property values/interests for The Salvation Army and Papua New Guineans. The first number stands for the grid dimension, the second number represents the group dimension.

Effectiveness Scale

The Salvation Army PNG struggles with making sure that organisational assets are used according to their purposes, and are maintained. The allocation of resources (property, vehicle, office space), the use of these resources, and their maintenance, are a permanent challenge for the administrative levels and board meetings. Papua New Guineans feel obligated to share the resources belonging to The Salvation Army with their extended families and clan members. Resources/assets are seen as highly utilitarian, and personal ownership is an alien concept for Papua New Guineans. The management of property and assets within The Salvation Army PNG is moderately effective.

Recommendations to Increase Effectiveness

1. Seek and implement new ways of communicating ownership of property and assets within The Salvation Army. Tribe and clan ownership of church property and buildings should be encouraged and emphasised. This is, maybe, a long and painful exercise, but, finally, the only sustainable way to make sure that property is maintained by church members.
2. The less property/assets The Salvation Army owns the less energy is needed to prevent disorder, misappropriation, and maintenance.
3. The Salvation Army must become more dependent on the Papua New Guineans. The provision of property and assets leads to high expectations among the officers and staff, believing that, only with the appropriate allocation of resources, can the gospel be shared with the people on the streets, and in the villages.
4. There will always be tension and conflicting values about property in PNG. The Salvation Army owns several business-oriented institutions, such as motels, schools, and a printing press. The main purpose of these institutions is to make money to support the church work. These institutions depend on property and assets, and run most effectively under a Western-based business system.
5. “The biblical message is that we are freed from the bondage of property, regardless of the social environment we find ourselves in” (S. Lingenfelter, 1992, p.55). The issue is not having wealth or property, but, rather, the values that are behind our attitudes toward property and ministry. In other words, property/assets shall not become the centre of our personal lives, or the centre for organisations like The Salvation Army.

SOCIAL ENVIRONMENT 2: LABOR, PRODUCTIVITY, AND CULTURAL BIAS

Narrative Summary of Findings

“The simplest types of goals found in society are the goals of subsistence” (Lingenfelter, 1992, p.64). Quite a few Papua New Guinean tribes are motivated primarily by goals of subsistence. In most societies of the world, people are engaged in activities that go beyond subsistence for their daily lives. Many people seek to obtain surplus. Most Papua New Guineans can be described as collectivists: scheduled by goals and group interests, they work according to their individual and group interests, they work together in small groups. People may work on personal projects as long as the demands of the group do not interfere. Leadership is identified on the basis of group service, and submission to the group leadership. Papua New Guineans believe that maintaining good relationship (with people, spirits, and the environment), and doing the right things for their relatives and friends, is much more important than having the reputation as a hard worker.

The Salvation Army is a fairly typical example of a bureaucratic, social environment. Each position has its job description, and specific assignments. Work is always by role assignments, and follows specific rules. Productivity in this work environment is defined in relationship to time and product. To do hard work has a high value within the organisation, and there is a strong belief that hard work will be rewarded. In The Salvation Army, officers and staff are expected to be at their work from 8 am to 5 pm. Labor is regulated, and rewarded with wages.

The Grid and Group Dimension

The Salvation Army PNG represents, in general, a high-grid social environment. The division of labor is increasingly specialised. The system has clear outlines of positions, rules, and procedures. The organisation has a clear hierarchy of who regulates the workers’/officers’ schedules, productivity (activity), and relationships, and compensates for the labor process. On the other hand, SAPNG has a moderate, low-group dimension. This is certainly influenced by the PNG culture. But there are also many procedures in place that make it hard for The Salvation Army

officers or workers to act independently. Most activities need to be conducted as a team, and are corporately organised, and they are interdependent. However, it is possible for individuals to become very powerful, so that they are able to manipulate resources independently, regardless of the constraints of others in the organisation.

I would consider the Papua New Guineans as low-grid and strong group-oriented. Individuals are measured in terms of commitment to serve the group. Senior men are rewarded with leadership roles, in recognition for their group contribution. The people focus on goals and activities that are defined by the group interests. I heard a few times that people were referring to working in the office, or even general working, according to set rules, as *kalabus*, which means “prison”.

Labour interest variables: The Salvation Army PNG (SAPNG) versus Papua New Guineans (PNGs)					
High grid		Low grid			
Labour by rule and role		Labour by goal, task		SAPNG	PNGs
+1	Organised by rule, role assignment	-1	Organised by task/goal	1/0	0/-1
+1	Scheduled by standard and routine	-1	Schedule by goal consideration	1-0.5	0/-1
+1	Productivity = time and product rule	-1	Productivity = effort and goals achieved	1/-0.5	0/-1
+1	Motivation = role and reward	-1	Motivation = self-defined interest	1/-0.5	0.5/-1
+1	Objectives are authority directed	-1	Objectives are self-directed	1/0	0.5/-1
Sum of grid variables				3.5	-4

Strong group		Weak group			
Corporately directed		Individual directed		SAPNG	PNGs
+1	Group initiated, planned work projects	-1	Individual-initiated planned work projects	0/-1	1/0
+1	Corporately organised cooperation	-1	Activity-focused cooperation	0.5/-0.5	1/-0.5
+1	Interaction/work comingled	-1	Interaction/work separated	0.5/-0.5	1/0
+1	Integration of labour by symbol (food/ritual)	-1	Integration of labour by functional utility	0.5/-0.5	0-5/0
+1	Group-focused celebration and reward	-1	Individual-focused reward payment	0.5/-0.5	1/0
Sum of grid variables				-1	4

Table 2: Grid and group dimension of labor values/interests

Recommendations to Increase Effectiveness

1. The Salvation Army must be careful not to give production a higher priority than relationships. Papua New Guineans are relationship-centred, and there should always be the time and the willingness to be interrupted. Especially for Western missionaries (officers), who are usually high achievers, this priority will not be easy to set, and it may be necessary for such people to make sure that they do not overload their work schedule so that there is always enough time for people.
2. The Salvation Army could plan event-oriented, rather than by scheduled activities, organised by time, rules, and procedures. It is amazing how motivated PNG people and The Salvation Army staff can get if they can plan and organise an event.
3. The Salvation Army tends to equate time with money. To waste time as an employee of The Salvation Army is to waste money of The Salvation Army. People in PNG live the kind of relax-and-enjoy-it mentality, and take life as it comes. This may require The Salvation Army to review the way it employs people. Some of the staff may be better off with 50 percent-60 percent employment, which would give them enough time for keeping up social obligations and interaction with their group environment.
4. I believe it would be helpful for The Salvation Army to review its rules and procedures. The Salvation Army has been working now for almost 40 years in PNG, and each leadership has added some additional rules and procedures. Many rules and procedures may be outdated, or not really relevant. In a review, the rules would need to stand up to questions like: "Does this rule help or prevent the institution from running effectively, in the PNG context?" and "Does it contribute to saving souls?"

SOCIAL ENVIRONMENT 3: GENEROSITY AND EXCHANGE

Narrative Summary of Findings

Generosity and exchange are important concepts in a society dealing with reciprocity, redistribution, and market exchange. In the Western world, independence is quite an important value, and people feel reluctant to share and exchange with another. To ask for tools to borrow, for example, is somehow embarrassing. Among Papua New Guineans, borrowing is an ordinary part of everyday life. This is especially true among the same kin group. People in Papua New Guinea are generally willing to share what they have with others. One is not under obligation to return a borrowed object until the person, who needs it, calls for it. For example, I was asked by one of my staff to lend him K100 for his wife's airfare from Port Moresby to Lae. He said he would pay it back. He paid me back K50 the next month, but he never paid the left-over K50. Unless I ask him to return the money, he will not feel obligated to do so.

The Grid and Group Dimension

In a high-grid society, asking is humiliating. The one who asks is always lower than the one who gives. Repayment restores the equality between the people involved. Unless there is a proper contract or agreement in place about the borrowed object, and the agreement is followed up, people would feel uneasy, and would avoid contact, if possible.

In a low-grid social environment, asking is permitted, and even encouraged. Each one is struggling to gain advantage, as individual autonomy is highly valued. Asking and giving is part of a negotiating process, with the aim to make long-term individual gain.

In a high-group social environment, asking is seen as putting the group at risk. Within the group, asking is no problem, and is even encouraged, to strengthen group interdependence. However, it is risky to ask assistance from outside of the group, as the request could be denied, and leaders and the group could be exposed to shame. In a low-group social environment, the person asking is only risking a specific relationship. Therefore, asking is advantageous.

Exchange variables: The Salvation Army PNG (SAPNG) versus Papua New Guineans (PNGs)					
High grid			Low grid		
Superior/inferior, prescribed			Instrumental, negotiated	SAPNG	PNGs
+1	Superior/inferior relationships	-1	Instrumental relationship	1/-1	1/-1
+1	Asking is humiliating	-1	Asking is negotiating	1/0	1/0
+1	Giving is structured by duty and role	-1	Giving is structured for profit/honour	1/-0.5	0/-0.5
+1	Repaying includes service, respect, kind	-1	Repaying in kind, with interest	1/-1	1/-0.5
+1	Exchange value is prescribed	-1	Exchange value is negotiated	0.5/-1	0/-1
Sum of grid variables				1	0

Strong group		Weak group			
Corporate regulated		Individually regulated		SAPNG	PNGs
+1	Calculate social gain/debt	-1	Calculated economic gain/cost	0.5/-0.5	1/0
+1	Minimise group debt	-1	Maximise personal debt	0.5/-0.5	1/0.5
+1	Exchange is public, symbolic	-1	Exchange is private, material	0.5/-0.5	1/0
+1	Negotiate privately for parity	-1	Negotiated openly for profit	0.5/-0.5	1/0
+1	Sharing/generosity highly valued	-1	Self-interest is expected	1/0	1/0
Sum of grid variables				1	4.5

Table 3: Grid and group dimension of exchange values/interests

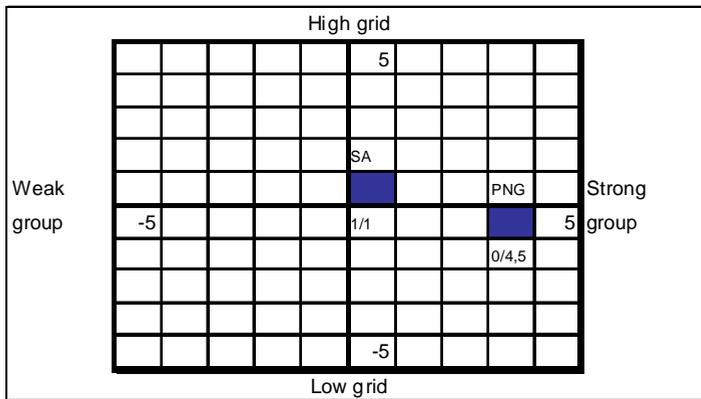


Figure 4: Chart indicating grid and group dimensions for exchange interests/values for The Salvation Army and Papua New Guineans. The first number stands for the grid dimension, the second number represents the group dimension.

For The Salvation Army PNG, and Papua New Guineans, sharing and exchange are very important values. While some differences do exist, they are largely due to the fact that, for Papua New Guineans, giving has a lot to do with social prestige, honour, and political power, or the risk of loss of social status, if they do not share within their clan. Therefore, they show a high-group/clan pressure to give, for the good of the group/clan.

Effectiveness Scale

The Salvation Army is in a difficult position. Christian ethics puts high emphasis on sharing and giving. Part of The Salvation Army core values and strengths is serving the poor. Papua New Guineans understand sharing, mainly within their own group. The *wantok* system is very strong, and obligates national Salvation Army leaders to give special attention to their own clan or tribe. As most of the Papua New Guineans fear that someone out of their group will get ahead of them in the competition of resources and wealth, individuals are pressed to give for the good of the clan or tribe. In conversation with the present Territorial Commander, I learned that most Salvation Army churches in PNG show very poor tithing (giving the “tenth”). This could be founded in the fear of the Papua New Guineans that no return is assured. Giving to outsiders is risky, as one could be exposed to economic loss. The same is true for probably most missionaries in PNG. Economic resources are seen as something that is short, and should be conserved, and well used. The Salvation Army believes that God entrusted resources to them, and, therefore, these need to be carefully managed. What they will give away must be used wisely, and the person asking The Salvation Army is expected not to exploit them, or their resources.

Recommendations to Increase Effectiveness

1. Sherwood Lingenfelter writes: “Because the social systems are designed to protect public values of good, and to control deviating behaviour of individuals within the social environment, the standard within the culture usually addresses human fear of loss and exploitation (Lingenfelter, 1992, p. 100). To increase effectiveness, we need to address our fears.

Many people knock at The Salvation Army door and ask for cargo, money, and other material help. Instead of seeing him or her as an annoyance, we should view every person who comes as an opportunity for relationship, and for sharing the gospel. Sharing money or cargo should never be a brief transaction (Lingenfelter, 1992, p. 104).

2. The Salvation Army needs to learn to ask for things they do. The welfare or handout mentality leads to a relationship that becomes one of a dominant and subordinates. If we ask for reciprocal giving, we honour PNG culture, and the dignity of the people.
3. Papua New Guineans need to address their fear that someone will get ahead of them in the competition for resources and wealth.
4. The Salvation Army soldiers in Papua New Guinea also will need to learn to give without expecting that anything will come back. Especially with giving the tenth to the church, there is no visible return assured.

SOCIAL ENVIRONMENT 5: AUTHORITY AND COMMUNITY

Narrative Summary of Findings

To understand authority, we need to look at the issue of power, and how power is allocated to individuals. In every society, the question of where power is allocated illustrates the authority dimension of relationships between individuals and groups (Lingenfelter, 1992, p. 140). Richard Adams (1975) identified four ways in which power can be distributed: independent power (one person holds control), granted power (one person is giving decision-making power to another), allocated power (majority support from members of a group), and delegated power (authority delegated to subordinates). The Salvation Army is probably a typical example of collective allocation of power. Soldiers allocate power to the officers (contributions and attendance). At the same time, power is delegated back to certain people. In a high-grid social environment – like

The Salvation Army, as an organisation – centralisation of power is a critical issue of power relationship. In a low-grid social environment, like PNG, there is a greater presence of independent power, and only limited power is granted and allocated to others within the group or community. Power relationships are decentralised, and maintaining independence is more important than the motivation to share power.

The Grid and Group Dimension

Assessing the grid dimension:

- The Salvation Army power is organised in a hierarchy. In PNG, men form temporary alliances. Alliances may shift and change quickly, as other issues become important, such as, conflicts, cargo, competition, and political aspirations.
- The Salvation Army makes their decisions through a central authority. In PNG, decision-making is a very complex, public process, involving, usually, the whole village in the discussion. The process may take days of debate and negotiations.
- The Salvation Army leadership delegates power, because a single leader at the top is unable to coordinate all the power decisions. In PNG, the “big man” gains allies through the distribution of his own wealth, to create reciprocal obligations from the receiver. The power of a leader is built and sustained by generosity, and by the number of people who are indebted to him.
- In The Salvation Army, leaders exercise power, mainly independently. In PNG, the members retain independent power. People in PNG usually build alliances to several “big men”, to keep social independence.

- In The Salvation Army, the soldiers allocate power to those over them. In PNG, people prefer to manage power through reciprocal exchange.

Assessing the group dimension:

- The Salvation Army puts great emphasis on her heritage, and the organisation gains a lot of strength from her affirmation of doctrines, and belief systems. The same is true for Papua New Guineans. They share a strong emphasis on “*tumbuna*” (ancestor) stories, and belief systems, that are passed on from one generation to another.
- Powerful rituals and symbols reaffirm the unity and strength of a group. This is true for both The Salvation Army, as an organisation, and for the tribes in PNG.
- In regard to the decision-making process The Salvation Army tends towards a weak-group social environment that allows individuals in hierarchical positions to seize power. Papua New Guineans, rather, use consensus decision-making as an ideal for strong group situations. Majority rule is less desirable.
- Papua New Guineans and The Salvation Army generally put a strong group value on members to support leaders and decisions. They form a consensus power bloc to support one another, in opposition to outsiders, or to members who fail to conform.

Community authority variables: The Salvation Army PNG (SAPNG) versus Papua New Guineans (PNGs)					
High grid			Low grid		
Centralisation			Aggregation		
			SAPNG	PNGs	
+1	Hierarchy of power units	-1	Aggregate interest cluster	1/0	0/-1
+1	Central unit decisions	-1	Decisions negotiated situationally	1/0	0/-1
+1	Leader delegates power	-1	Leader's power is aggregate	1/0	0/-1
+1	Leader exercises power independently	-1	Members retain independent power	1/-0.5	0.5/-1
+1	Members allocate power centrally	-1	Power granted only reciprocally	1/0	0/-1
Sum of grid variables				4.5	-4.5

Strong group			Weak group		
Coordination			Fragmentation		
			SAPNG	PNGs	
+1	Heritage of common faith/beliefs	-1	Variant faith/belief	1/0	1/0
+1	Affirmation of unity by ritual/symbol	-1	Brittle, isolating structure, identify relations	1/0	1/0
+1	Group decision by majority/consensus	-1	Segmented personal power decisions	0/-1	1/-0.5
+1	Obligation of reciprocity among members	-1	Support conditional upon interest	0.5/-0.5	1/0
+1	Social links reinforce authority (kin/class)	-1	Social links are means to ends	0.5/-0.5	1/0
Sum of grid variables				1	4.5

Table 4: Grid and group dimension of community authority/values

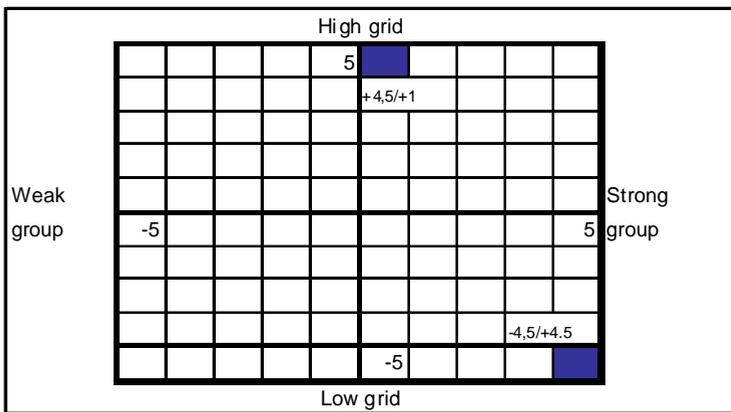


Figure 5: Chart indicating grid and group dimension for community authority/values for The Salvation Army and Papua New Guineans. The first number stands for the grid dimension, the second number represents the group dimension.

Effectiveness Scale

The Salvation Army is moderately effective in using her values and patterns of authority in Papua New Guinea. There is a strong discrepancy in the grid dimension between The Salvation Army and Papua New Guineans. However, they match generally well in the group dimension. Both place a high value on group heritage, rituals, and symbols.

Recommendations to Increase Effectiveness

Recommendations are difficult as there is no “correct” structure of authority taught in the Bible. No single organisational model is mandated or taught in the Bible. On the contrary, the organisational structure of the early church adapted to changing social needs. Therefore, it may be worthwhile to think about how The Salvation Army can adjust its structure of authority to match the social environment of Papua New Guinea. Sherwood Lingenfelter writes: “Obviously church leaders must exercise authority in the church. However there are many different forms, in which authority may be exercised. The critical issue regarding authority in the church is not the form that that authority takes, but, rather, the manner and the motivation, by which the leader exercises that responsibility” (Lingenfelter, 1992, p. 155).

SOCIAL ENVIRONMENT 6: DISPUTES, CONFLICTS, AND COMMUNICATION

Narrative Summary of Findings

The book, *Conflict Mediation Across Cultures* (Augsburger, 1992), provided me with new insights of how high-context cultures, like PNG, are dealing with conflicts. The experience and reflection of my own culture, mirrored in PNG culture over the last five years, was a very enriching process.

Today, I am aware of the highly-individual culture I come from, and how it affects my thinking, my behaviour, and my values. From 1993 until 1996, I did my bachelor degree in social work in Switzerland. The studies focused on being skilled to confront people, and to be able to manage conflicts on a one-to-one basis. We were taught to use a direct mode,

looking for a solution-oriented strategy, and to verbalise emotions directly. In the background, is the emphasis of the “I-identity”, of self-face concern, autonomy, and self-reliance.

Confronted with PNG culture, I had to rethink my conflict skills completely. I felt insecure, and experienced frustration in dealing with people and disagreements. Communication is highly indirect, hidden, other-concerned with obliging, or avoiding confrontation style. Confrontation never happens directly – even asking a simple question is usually relayed by a third person. Also, emotions are usually expressed indirectly.

In The Salvation Army, I hold the position of a project manager. Early in 2001, The Salvation Army appointed a national superior as Director for Development Services, based in Port Moresby. My projects in Kainantu (one- hour flight from the capital) came under his portfolio. At our yearly planning meeting, we decided to use a certain strategy to approach the involved communities. However, the Director for Development Services must have changed his mind, and started to communicate and advise my staff about the project activities and project implementation. After a while, I started to lose control about the movements of my staff, and I sent a fax, questioning his approach. This made the situation worse, and communication with the Director came almost to a standstill. Now, I realise that the confrontation nearly two years ago had produced an enemy, and stimulated significant animosity and hostility towards me. Even though I felt that I was 100 percent right, my behaviour, in the PNG setting, had not been appropriate, and had generated strong negative feelings towards me. Only now, after reading some books about conflict management, I begin to understand the inappropriateness of my behaviour. The manner, in which Papua New Guineans settle disputes, and the manner, in which they conduct themselves in conflict with one another, are extremely different from that of my own social environment. My behaviour on that occasion, no matter how justified in my own eyes, was completely inappropriate and unacceptable to the Director for Development Services.

The Grid and Group Dimension

The Salvation Army is typical, for a high-grid organisation. The hierarchy is conceptualised as a “chain of command”. Soldiers and officers are expected to “follow”, and to be highly loyal. Formal confrontation, and an authority that has to arbitrate conflicts, is frequently the case in high-grid organisations. Usually a win/lose decision is the result of conflicts in hierarchical conflict settings.

The characteristics of low-grid dispute settlement are its informality, and its lack of social structure. Lingenfelter argues that the informality, and the lack of institutional support, accompanied by the autonomy of individuals, produce a very different kind of dispute management (Lingenfelter, 1996, p. 150).

In a high-group social environment, a lot of indirect discussions and communication is used to settle conflicts. People will not confront directly. Instead, they will talk to relatives, or to a friend, that they have been injured.

In a low-group context, individuals gain support for personal goals and interest through the relationship with others. Regular social and economic exchange leads to support of one another during situations of conflict.

Conflict and cultural bias: The Salvation Army PNG (SAPNG) versus Papua New Guineans (PNGs)					
High grid			Low grid		
Going through channels			Working the network		
			SAPNG	PNGs	
+1	Formal, institutional channels	-1	Informal channels	1/0	0/-1
+1	Powering the outcome		-1	Finessing the outcome	0.5/0
+1	Legitimising dominance		-1	Equalising power	1/0
+1	Institutional process		-1	Personally direct process	1/-0.5
+1	Institutional time/agenda		-1	Personal time/agenda	1/0
Sum of grid variables				4	-4

Strong group			Weak group		
Preserving the relationship			Preserving resources		
			SAPNG	PNGs	
+1	Multiplex network of relations	-1	Aggregate factions	0.5/-0.5	1/-0.5
+1	Consensus decision-making		-1	Independent decision-making	0.5/-1
+1	Protecting vulnerability		-1	Exposing vulnerability	1/0
+1	Broker/mediation		-1	Display of personal power	0.5/-0.5
+1	Confrontation avoidance		-1	Open confrontation with equals	0.5/-0.5
Sum of grid variables				0.5	4.5

Table 5: Grid and group dimension of conflict and cultural values

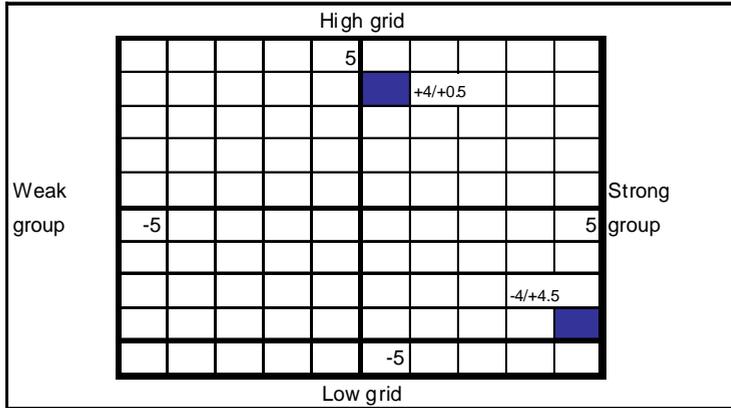


Figure 6: Chart indicating grid and group dimension for conflict values for The Salvation Army PNG and Papua New Guineans. The first number stands for the grid dimension, the second number represents the group dimension.

Effectiveness Scale

The Salvation Army is moderately effective, preferring to use authoritarian and hierarchical ways to settle disputes. Western missionaries within SAPNG probably also prefer private face-to-face negotiations. Papua New Guineans are very careful to avoid offending others, or saying anything that leads to facing loss or shame. Conflicts within the group are avoided as much as possible, and, when they occur, recognised and skilled mediators deal with it. The person, who feels hurt or shamed, approaches the mediator, and he or she is asked to assist in the dispute, and to help in the negotiations. The mediator then has to make sure that there is no winner and loser in the dispute. David Augsburg (1992, p. 99) calls it the “neither-nor approach” that sees both claims as mixed, with both truth and falsehood. Life is a mystery, appearances are always deceiving, and harmony, unity, and balance are essential things, not truth, perfection, and absoluteness. Unity and good relationships must be restored. The Western worldview, predominant in The Salvation Army, uses an either-or approach that assumes that both claims cannot be equally true. One must be true, the other false. “Objective” criteria are used to choose the one most true. Augsburg writes: “The decision is not seen as THE TRUTH, but is measured by it, and must conform to it.”

Recommendations to Increase Effectiveness

1. The Salvation Army PNG should embark on a mediator concept of conflict solution. Officers and staff would be able to tell the leadership which people have the best mediator skills and experience within the organisation. These people could be officially selected, nominated, and empowered by the organisation to assist in conflict situations. Officers and staff could directly require assistance by the mediator in a specific situation.
2. Mediators could be specifically trained in settling disputes within PNG culture. Their skills could be officially recognised. They would serve the organisation at first, but, on request, they could also be sent to families, villages,

communities, squatters, tribes, and other organisations, to help with conflict resolution. I, personally, believe that such a ministry is urgently needed within the *wantok*, and strong tribal system, of PNG.

3. Forgiveness and reconciliation are at the heart of the gospel. This needs to be encouraged and practised as much as possible, and, especially, at leadership level. The importance of the role model cannot be emphasised enough in the PNG context, as people learn mainly by copying from others.

PART IV: INTERVENTION PLAN

CROSS-CULTURAL TRAINING

Becoming aware of the worldview, value system, cultural distinctiveness, and leadership styles of Papua New Guineans enables Westerners to have a more effective cross-cultural role in PNG (Loving, 1994, p. 30). The Salvation Army officers and lay-workers from Western countries need to understand PNG culture to better function in this culture, and to make culturally-sensitive decisions. Western missionaries usually assume that the Bible confirms their leadership approach, and they do not realise how strongly they are culturally conditioned to feel that way.

The Salvation Army, as a worldwide organisation, is tempted to use similar, and mainly Western-oriented, leadership styles and values to manage its organisation and activities. Western officers and lay workers, in leadership positions, are usually asked to resume office, make decisions, and run their department, the day after they have arrived here from their home countries.

The author, therefore, recommends that all overseas personnel, who form the rank and positions within the organisation, be asked to take part in a cultural-integration course, at the beginning of their ministry in PNG. It would also be helpful for the person/family arriving from overseas to have a “watch-family” assigned to them, to help them get familiar with the culture. A “watch-family” would also help them to establish relationships with other nationals. Relationships are at the heart of PNG culture and

value system, and Westerners should make it a priority to learn, and to establish, satisfying and reciprocal relationships with the nationals they serve, and among whom they live. Production should not have a higher priority than relationships. Overseas personnel must be willing to be interrupted in their work by nationals. For many of The Salvation Army officers and lay workers from overseas this will not be easy. The author considers himself an achiever type of person, and, for some time, he had to set time aside, when we, as a family, visited neighbours or national staff members at their home. Especially with the children growing older, they often found it boring, and difficult to play, and sit around with the national counterparts.

TIME FOR STUDIES

Learning and using the language that Papua New Guineans are most comfortable with is important. The Salvation Army officers and lay workers from overseas live, work, and travel around Port Moresby, and in small towns around the country. In the majority of these places, most people would speak or understand Pidgin English. Learning a language is always connected with interaction, and learning more about a culture (Nida, 1986). But language studies are not enough. The author believes that reading anthropological notes, such as the *Point* series, published by the Melanesian Institute, are excellent eye-openers for Westerners to understand the culture of Papua New Guinea, and should be part of the missionary's regular reading. Again, discipline is needed, and time has to be set apart for it.

REFLECTION ON CULTURAL BIAS

Reflection on cultural bias is important. We should become aware of them. To identify our bias and fear is the first step. The second step would be to start to practise surrendering them to the Lord Jesus Christ (Lingenfelter, 1996, p. 242). Spiritual disciplines, such as fasting, solitude, sacrifice, study, service, confession, etc., are useful practices to surrender our fears, such as material resources, property, exchange, authority, power, rights, security, individualism, etc. Lingenfelter argues that, if we sustain or promote our own Western values, we will certainly be agents of social

cultural change in the community in which we live. If we plan and promote projects, whose primary objective is better health, more material goods, and higher standard of living, our message of mercy is no different from any other secular relief and development organisation. He urges missionaries to become agents of transformation. If God is able to transform missionaries into His likeness, they will be able to promote kingdom values for the transformation of human life.

The author, therefore, recommends that The Salvation Army organise yearly retreats for overseas personnel in PNG, with the goal of reflecting on their ministry, leadership, cultural bias, and transformation. The author believes that such a time of deep sharing, member care, and exchange would set a new dimension in the work and ministry of The Salvation Army PNG, and would embark upon a new venture in the relationship to national officers and staff.

CONCLUSION

The Salvation Army, as an organisation, is based on Western values and leadership principles. The relationship of the organisation towards property, labor, exchange, generosity, authority, and conflict is sometimes in strong contrast to the values of PNG cultures. The values and principles of The Salvation Army, as an organisation, lead to moderate effectiveness of her ministry in Papua New Guinea. The author, therefore, suggests that The Salvation Army leadership should:

- Ensure that all overseas personnel take part in a cultural integration training course.
- Request overseas personnel to set time aside for cultural studies.
- Organise retreats on a yearly basis for missionaries to reflect cultural bias.

- Nominate a group of people to look at the organisational conflicts, related to cultural bias, and formulate recommendations to the executive board to increase ministry effectiveness.

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THE MILLENNIUM: “A PREPOSTEROUS”?

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INTRODUCTION

A story – probably apocryphal – is told of the great Dutch Christian, Corrie ten Boon, being asked if she was a-, pre-, or, post-millennial. According to the story she responded dismissively, “I am a pre-post-erous”.¹ The cleverly punned answer relegated such distinctions to irrelevance. However, Rev 20 remains part of the canon, and the question of its meaning cannot be ignored, especially given the fascination many find with that entire book. We must tread cautiously, and pay due attention to G. B. Caird’s warning: “[Rev 20] is a passage, which, more than any other in the book [of Revelation], has been the paradise of cranks and fanatics, on the one hand, and literalists, on the other. It bristles with questions.”²

THE INTERPRETIVE MODELS

Christians have understood the millennium in four major ways. Historic premillennialism sees the millennium as a literal 1,000-year period

¹ I was told this story nearly 25 years ago by an Australian Baptist pastor. I have no idea as to his source.

² G. B. Caird, *The Revelation of St John the Divine*, New York NY: Harper & Row, 1966, p. 249.

preceded by the second coming of Christ.³ During this period, the saints are generally regarded as reigning on the earth, although some premillennialists envisage a heavenly reign.⁴

The second approach to Rev 20 is dispensationalist premillennialism.⁵ The essential features of the outline are the same as historic premillennialism, except for the fact that those understood to be reigning on the earth during the millennium are Jews saved from the great tribulation after the rapture of the church.⁶ Dispensationalist interpreters of Revelation see the bulk of the book of Revelation (from Rev 4:1 to 19:21) as occurring in the period between the “rapture” (Rev 4:1) and the “appearing” of Christ (Rev 19:10-21). However, such a viewpoint is unsupported.⁷ There is no basis for seeing a reference to the rapture in Rev 4:1.⁸

³ Representatives of this viewpoint include G. E. Ladd, *A Commentary on the Revelation of John*, Grand Rapids MI: William B. Eerdmans, 1972, p. 261; and M. J. Erickson, *Introducing Christian Doctrine*, Grand Rapids MI: Baker Books, 1992, p. 389.

⁴ Robert Mounce notes that Rev 20 “contains no specific indication that their [the redeemed] reign with Christ takes place on the earth”, see *The Book of Revelation*, Grand Rapids MI: William B. Eerdmans, 1977, p. 351. For a defence of a heavenly locale for the saints during the millennium, see J. Badina, “The Millennium”, in *Symposium on Revelation*, F. B. Holbrook, ed., Silver Springs MD: Biblical Research Institute, 1992, pp. 2:225-242.

⁵ Representatives of this view include H. A. Hoyt, “Dispensational Premillennialism”, in *The Meaning of the Millennium: Four Views*, R. G. Clouse, ed., Downers Grove IL: IVP, 1977, pp. 63-92; and H. Lindsey, *The Late Great Planet Earth*, Grand Rapids MI: Zondervan, 1970, pp. 164-165.

⁶ There are many variations within the broad schema of dispensational eschatology, but this is not the place to develop them. For our purposes, the key point is the abiding role of Israel in God’s purposes, culminating in the millennial reign of Jewish believers over the earth.

⁷ This is not the place for a full-scale discussion of the rapture. That may, however, be found in G. E. Ladd, *The Blessed Hope*, Grand Rapids MI: William B. Eerdmans, 1956.

⁸ A. Johnson, “Revelation”, in *Expositor’s Bible Commentary*, F. Gaebelein ed., Grand Rapids MI: Zondervan, 1982, p. 12:461. There are, in fact, considerable parallels between the introduction to the first (seven churches) and second (seven seals) series of visionary scenes, which may be more of an indication that John is going over the same ground a second time from a different perspective. In both, we are told that John has

Postmillennialism, by contrast, envisages a 1,000-year kingdom of God over the earth, preceding the return of Christ.⁹ This view was popular between the Napoleonic wars and the outbreak of World War I, when many imagined they were witnessing the dawning of the millennium. The horrors of 20th-century warfare saw the virtual demise of this system.¹⁰ However, the rise of the Moral Majority in the United States in the 1980s has been paralleled by a revival of postmillennialism – perhaps due to the failure of popular premillennial prophetic speculations to materialise.¹¹

Amillennialism regards the millennium as a symbol for the entire Christian era.¹² The first resurrection is generally seen as the new birth – although it is alternatively sometimes seen as a special privilege granted to martyrs – and the second is the resurrection, which occurs at the time of Christ’s return. During the Christian era, Satan is bound, in that he can neither destroy the church nor prevent it from completing its mission. In Christ, the saints live and reign in heaven – a theme developed elsewhere in the New Testament, especially in Ephesians.

From this brief survey of the way the millennium has been understood, it can be readily seen that the central issue of debate is whether the millennium represents the Christian era (in whole or in part) or a period

been taken into vision (“in the spirit” – Rev 1:10, 4:2); in both he is shown what the future holds (“what must soon take place” – Rev 1:1; “what must take place after this” – Rev 4:1); in both, he hears a voice like a trumpet commanding him (Rev 1:10; 4:1); in both, he is initially given a vision of the glorified Lord (Rev 1:12-16; 5:5-13). There is, thus, significantly more contextual evidence for seeing a recapitulation here than there is for seeing one in Rev 20 (see further, below).

⁹ Representative of this position is L. Boettner, “Postmillennialism”, in *The Meaning of the Millennium: Four Views*, R. G. Clouse, ed., Downers Grove IL: IVP, 1977, pp. 117-141.

¹⁰ Erickson, *Christian Doctrine*, p. 388.

¹¹ D. Hunt, *Whatever Happened to Heaven?*, Eugene OR: Harvest House, 1988, pp. 57-78; cf. D. Ford, *Crisis!: a Commentary on the Book of Revelation*, Newcastle CA: Desmond Ford, 1982, p. 711.

¹² Representatives of this view include L. Morris, *Revelation*, London UK: Tyndale Press, 1969, pp. 233-239.

following the second coming of Christ. The purpose of this article is to argue for a (non-dispensational) premillennial understanding of Rev 20.¹³

LITERARY AND STRUCTURAL CONSIDERATION

One thing is generally agreed upon: from a *literary* point of view, the millennium follows the return of Christ in Revelation. Broad consensus exists that Rev 19 is a highly pictorial representation of the second coming.¹⁴ The next scene presented in Revelation is the millennium (Rev 20). However, this fact is not as helpful for interpretation as it would initially appear. It is also generally recognised that the literary structure of Revelation involves frequent recapitulations and repetitions. In many cases, a series of seven scenes leads up to the second coming of Christ, only to be followed by another series covering the same ground from a different perspective. Amillennialists and postmillennialists argue that just such a recapitulation begins with Rev 20. Is such an interpretation correct?¹⁵ A number of factors suggest that it is not.

Kenneth Strand argues that Revelation is characterised, not only by recapitulation, but also by progression.¹⁶ Structurally, he understands Revelation to be a chiasm with the second half of the book giving an eschatological mirror to the more-historical first half.¹⁷ This approach has

¹³ The discussion in this article will revolve around two alternatives: premillennialism and amillennialism. In terms of the issues separating these alternatives, the distinctions between historic and dispensational premillennialism are irrelevant. Further, many of the arguments for and against amillennialism are also applicable to postmillennialism. Since amillennialism is much more common today, postmillennialism can conveniently be subsumed under that heading also.

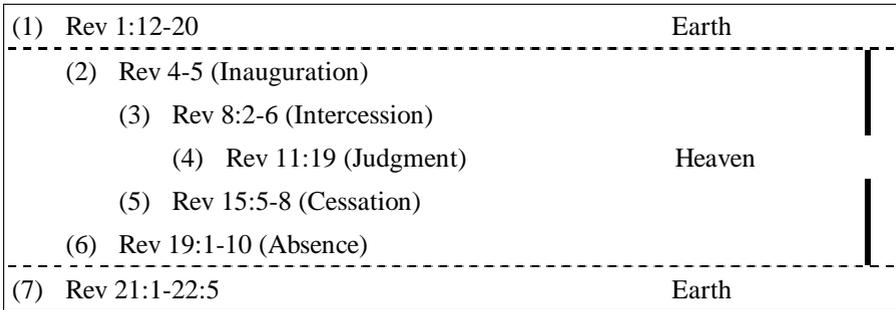
¹⁴ Ladd, *Revelation*, pp. 252-258; G. R. Beasley-Murray, *Revelation*, Grand Rapids MI: William B. Eerdmans, 1974, pp. 277-287; Mounce, *Revelation*, pp. 338-350.

¹⁵ Ladd calls this a “key issue in our understanding of the millennium” (*Revelation*, p. 261).

¹⁶ K. A. Strand, *Interpreting the Book of Revelation*, Worthington OH: Ann Arbor Publishers, 1976; *Idem*, “The Eight Basic Visions”, in *Symposium on Revelation*, F. B. Holbrook, ed., Silver Springs MD: Biblical Research Institute, 1992, pp. 1:35-50.

¹⁷ An illustration of Strand’s approach can be seen in a comparison of the trumpets (Rev 8:6-11:19) and the plagues (Rev 16:1-21). That there is a relationship between these two visionary sequences can readily be seen by the repetition of words and themes. The

been further explored by Jon Paulien.¹⁸ He draws attention to the way the sanctuary imagery of Revelation supports Strand’s supposed chiasmic structure. He notes, for example, the transition from the imagery of Israel’s spring feasts, in the first half of the book, to that of the autumn feasts, in the second half.¹⁹ He also notes the transition from imagery, drawn from the daily temple liturgy, in the first half of the book, to that drawn from the annual (Day of Atonement) liturgy in the second half.²⁰ In his analysis of the seven introductory sanctuary scenes, Paulien discerns further patterns that he summarises in the following diagram.²¹



All of this strongly suggests that Rev 20 is not a recapitulation of church history. It does not come in the historical section of the book, but in the eschatological section. Furthermore, it makes perfect sense, in its context, when understood eschatologically. Rev 19 climaxes with the defeat of

element of progression can be seen in the fact that the trumpet punishments are typically inflicted on “one-third” of the earth (Rev 8:7-9, 11-12); whereas the plagues afflict all (Rev 16:3). Furthermore the possibility of repentance is implied in the trumpet sequence – even though the opportunity is not taken (Rev 9:20-21), whereas the plagues are unmixed with mercy (Rev 14:10; cf. 15:1; 16:1-2). Strand concludes that the trumpets are a series of preliminary judgments throughout the history of the church culminating in the eschatological plagues immediately preceding Christ’s return.

¹⁸ J. Paulien, “Seals and Trumpets: Some Current Discussions”, in *Symposium on Revelation*, F. B. Holbrook, ed., Silver Springs MD: Biblical Research Institute, 1992, pp. 1:183-198.

¹⁹ Paulien, “Seals and Trumpets”, pp. 190-191.

²⁰ *Ibid.*, pp. 189-190.

²¹ *Ibid.*, p. 188.

God's enemies, and the destruction of the beast and the false prophet. Of the destruction of the greatest enemy, Satan himself, that chapter says nothing. But Rev 20 moves directly to his fate, thus completing the picture being drawn in Rev 19.²²

THE BINDING OF SATAN

When Rev 20 is studied carefully, the meaning of the millennium becomes clearer. Satan is bound, and thrown into the abyss. In the amillennial view, this refers to his inability to destroy the church, and has support from outside Revelation (e.g., Matt 16:18), but none from within the book itself. In John's vision, Satan appears to have two roles: deception of those who dwell on the earth, that is, the unsaved (Rev 13:8, 14; cf., 17:2; 18:3), and persecution of the church (Rev 12:13; 13:7; cf., 17:14). The destruction of the wicked, in Rev 19, means his first role is ended. The introduction of Rev 19 suggests that the righteous have been snatched away from the devil's attacks as well (Rev 19:1-7). It may be significant that their rejoicing is located in heaven. With the two objects of his labours removed from him, Satan is bound by chains of inactivity. It is enlightening to notice the circumstances under which Satan is unbound: the wicked are raised to life (Rev 20:5a, 7) providing him with targets for deception. In addition, the "camp of the saints" is presented as being on the earth, and it is immediately attacked (Rev 20:9).²³

Far from Rev 20 providing a recapitulation of events already described in the book, the thematic contacts of Rev 20, compared with the rest of the book, can be seen as contrasted, rather than parallel. Twice before, in

²² Ladd, *Revelation*, p. 261.

²³ It is significant that the picture of the second coming in Revelation emphasises the resultant devastation of the world (Rev 6:14; cf. 16:17-21). The cumulative effect is to suggest that the earth is uninhabitable during the millennium, and that the saints of God are in heaven during this time. If this is so, the presence of the "camp of the saints" in Rev 20:9 must be understood in light of the descent of the holy city from heaven in Rev 21:2-3. Such a proleptic mention of a feature developed in greater detail latter is characteristic of Revelation. It is also important to notice that Rev 20 is primarily concerned with Satan and the wicked. The saints are only introduced, as necessary to fulfil that primary purpose.

Revelation, an angel is described as descending from heaven to earth (Rev 10:1; 18:1). Both of these occurrences are set prior to the second coming of Christ, and, on both occasions, the angel makes a loud proclamation (Rev 10:22; 18:2, 4). By contrast, the angel in Rev 20:1 says nothing. Similarly, the abyss is mentioned elsewhere in Revelation. It is the source of Satanic attacks on God's people (Rev 9:1-12; 11:7; 17:18). By contrast, in Rev 20, Satan is confined to the pit. Before the return of Christ, the people of God bear witness, and suffer the hostility of Satan, which billows from the pit. After the second coming, the saints enjoy their rest and rewards, and the pit has become Satan's prison.

Rev 20 has numerous points of contact with Rev 12, but, again, the contrasts between the two chapters are crucial for correctly understanding their significance. In both chapters, Satan suffers a defeat. In chapter 12, he is cast from heaven, but is able to immediately begin his attack on the church (Rev 12:13). By contrast, in chapter 20, he is cast into the abyss "so that he would deceive the nations no more" (Rev 20:2). The summary comment by William H. Shea is very apt:

In general, Rev 12 portrays the devil on the offensive, and the church on the defensive, with this general picture interrupted in the central section to describe an initial defeat of the devil – the one that took place in heaven during his confrontation with Michael. In Rev 20, on the other hand, the picture is reverse. The chapter begins with a picture of an initial defeat of the devil, and it ends with a picture of his final defeat, but, between these two poles, we encounter the victorious members of the church, especially the martyrs, whom the dragon had previously defeated in a limited physical way.²⁴

The setting of Rev 12 is prior to the second coming, and the devil's hostility looms large. The change of tone in Rev 20 strongly suggests the setting is after the second coming.

²⁴ W. H. Shea, "The Parallel Literary Structure of Revelation 12 and 20", in *Andrews University Seminary Studies*, 23 (1985), p. 46.

The same conclusions are readily drawn from the other passage in Revelation, with many points of contact with Rev 20 – the fifth seal (Rev 6:9-11). Rev 6 is clearly set prior to the second coming. God’s witnesses on earth are suffering martyrdom, praying for vindication (κρίνεις) and being told to wait a little longer.²⁵ In Rev 19, there is rejoicing, because this prayer for vindication (κρίσεις) has been answered. In Rev 20, the souls of the martyrs appear again – no longer under the altar, but sitting on thrones, engaged in judgment (Rev 20:4). They are described as “souls”, not to indicate their disembodied state, but to highlight the contrast with their forlorn condition in Rev 6:9-11. Mounce is certainly correct when he says, “This judgment appears to be connected in some way with the vindication of the martyrs.”²⁶

LINGUISTIC CONSIDERATIONS

Amillennialism regards the two resurrections of Rev 20:4-5 as two different *types* of events. The first resurrection is seen as being either conversion or entrance of the martyrs into the intermediate state. However, the second resurrection is regarded as the physical resurrection, which occurs at the second coming of Christ. There are serious difficulties with this approach.

Certainly, the Bible refers to spiritual and physical realities in close connection, and in similar phraseology (e.g., John 5:25-29; 11:25-26; Luke 9:60). However, in these cases, the passages are nonsensical unless

²⁵ It is important to remember the symbolic nature of this scene. The imagery is that of the altar of sacrifice in the courtyard of the sanctuary. In the Old Testament cultus, the blood of sacrifice was poured out at the base of the altar. The blood of the martyrs is here said to be analogous to this, and to cry out to God for vindication, even as the blood of the first martyr, Abel, did (Gen 10:10). The imagery should not be over-literalised. It gives us no information about the prayer life of martyred Christians, nor about the nature of death itself. Ladd rightly observes “The fact that John saw the souls of the martyrs *under the altar* has nothing to do with the state of the dead, or their situation in the intermediate state; it is merely a vivid way of picturing the fact that they had been martyred in the name of their God” (*Revelation*, p. 103).

²⁶ Mounce, *Revelation*, p. 345.

understood in this way. This is not the case in Rev 20:4-5, which makes perfect sense if both resurrections are regarded as being physical.

In Rev 20:4, the saints come to life (ἐζήσαν, an aorist indicative active of ζάω – literally “lived”) in the “first resurrection” (ἀνάστασις). While it is true that ζάω, and the corresponding noun ζωή, can refer to spiritual rather than physical life, the same ambiguity does not apply with ἀνάστασις, which is used over 40 times in the New Testament, and, with the possible exception of one pre-Christian usage (Luke 2:34), always refers to physical resurrection from the dead.²⁷ It is belief in the ἀνάστασις which separates the Pharisees from the Sadducees (Matt 22:23; Mark 12:18; Luke 20:27; Acts 23:8). It is the ἀνάστασις of Christ which lies at the foundation of early Christian proclamation (Acts 1:22; 2:31; 4:2, 23; 17:18; Rom 1:4; etc.). And it is the eschatological ἀνάστασις of believers, which is fundamental to Christian hope (1 Cor 15:12-13, 21, 42). Significantly, it is John who distinguishes between the “ἀνάστασις of life” and the “ἀνάστασις of judgment” (John 5:29).²⁸ Here John mentions two physical resurrections, although without mentioning any time gap between them. The word ἀνάστασις is never used in the New Testament for conversion, or for entry into the intermediate state. There are no compelling reasons for seeing Rev 20:4 as an exception.

²⁷ J. Kremer, “ἐξελάνιστημι”, in *Exegetical Dictionary of the New Testament*, H. Balz, and G. Schneider, eds, Edinburgh UK: T. & T. Clark, 1990-1993, pp. 1, 88. The word has a broader meaning in non-biblical Greek, and the verbal form, although often used with the technical meaning of resurrection from the dead, is also used in non-technical ways, even in the New Testament. The Lukan exception may not be an exception. I. H. Marshall argues that Luke has resurrection in mind in this verse (*The Gospel of Luke*, Exeter UK: Paternoster Press, 1978, p. 122).

²⁸ Common authorship of the fourth gospel and the book of Revelation is often denied. However, the Johannine “flavour” of Revelation is none-the-less widely recognised. Caird’s comments are quite typical: “There are striking similarities between the five Johannine writings, as well as striking differences, and it is certain that they all came from the same geographical, cultural, and theological setting, if not from the one hand.” (*Revelation*, p. 4).

THE MILLENNIUM AND CHRISTIAN HOPE

The strongest amillennialist objection to premillennialism is that Rev 20 is the only passage in scripture that teaches it. Sound hermeneutics interprets obscure passages in the light of clear ones, but premillennialism forces the many clear eschatological presentations, which do not mention the millennium, into a schema based on one obscure passage in a highly-controverted book.

As plausible as this objection sounds, it has certain flaws. Firstly, an objection could be made of many of the features of Revelation. Are the seven last plagues presented elsewhere in biblical eschatology? Or the mark of the beast? Does this mean that they are to be deleted from Christian eschatology?

The presentation of eschatology in Rev 20 is distinctive. One reason for this is the concentration in the chapter on the fate of the wicked, which has already been noted. Most presentations of eschatology climax with the return of Christ because that is point at which decisions for or against God are irrevocably made (Matt 25:31-46). Whatever Rev 20 means, it is not teaching a “second chance” for the wicked, after Christ’s return.

It must also be observed that nothing in the other biblical presentations of eschatology excludes the possibility of a millennium.²⁹ We have already noted John 5:25-29, with its mention of two physical resurrections, which harmonises well with the idea of a millennium. Ladd suggests that 1 Cor 15:22-26 actually implies a millennial reign.³⁰ These verses read:

²⁹ Erickson, *Doctrine*, p. 389.

³⁰ G. E. Ladd, “Historical Premillennialism”, in *The Meaning of the Millennium: Four Views*, R. G. Clouse, ed., Downers Grove IL: IVP, 1977, pp. 38-39. Significantly, Hans Conzelmann observes that this part of 1 Cor shows Paul’s indebtedness to traditional Jewish apocalyptic eschatology, specifically the idea of the messianic kingdom, see *1 Corinthians*, Philadelphia PA: Fortress Press, 1975, pp. 269-274. The idea of 1,000 years in Rev 20 is widely thought to originate in exactly the same background. See D. Aune, *Revelation 17-22*, in *Word Biblical Commentary 52c*, Nashville TN: Thomas Nelson, 1998, pp. 1078-1081; cf. J. M. Ford, “Millennium”, in *Anchor Bible Dictionary*, D. N. Freedman, ed., New York NY: Doubleday, 1992, pp. 4:832-834.

For as in Adam all die, so in Christ all will be made alive. But each in his own turn: Christ, the first fruits; then, when He comes, those who belong to Him. Then the end will come, when He hands over the kingdom to God the Father, after He has destroyed all dominion, authority, and power. For He must reign until He has put all His enemies under His feet. The last enemy to be destroyed is death.

Hoyt supports Ladd's exegesis of this passage:

there is a progressive triumph of Christ's kingdom, as set forth in 1 Cor 15:23-26, in which Christ completes the subjection of His enemies. The first state is marked by the resurrection of Christ Himself. This is followed by an undefined period of time, the church age. Then comes the *parousia*, and resurrection of the saved. This is followed by another period, undefined in 1 Cor 15, which is defined in Rev 20 as the millennial kingdom. The third stage is the end, when Christ will raise the wicked dead, and judge them, and then turn the kingdom over to the Father for eternity.³¹

The argument, based on the uniqueness of Rev 20, can be turned back on opponents of premillennialism. If amillennialists are correct, the "first resurrection" does not refer to the physical resurrection of the redeemed. In which case, where does that event appear in the chapter? It is not found in verses 11-15. Attention is focused there on the judgment of the wicked. The term "second resurrection" is not used. Instead, John refers to the "second death".³² (Significantly, John never used the phraseology "first death".) It is certainly startling to find an eschatological picture that does not mention the resurrection or reward of the redeemed.³³

³¹ H. A. Hoyt, "A Dispensational Response [to Historic Premillennialism]", in *The Meaning of the Millennium: Four Views*, R. C. Clouse, ed., Downers Grove IL: IVP, 1979, p. 45.

³² M. G. Kline, "The First Resurrection", in *Westminster Theological Journal* 37 (1974-1975), pp. 366-375.

³³ On an amillennial understanding, verse 4 refers to the intermediate state and not to the final eschatological reward of the saints.

CONCLUSION

Eschatology has divided Christians, almost since the beginning of the church – and it continues to do so today. Rev 20, and the topic of the millennium, present a flashpoint for discussion. This article has presented an argument for seeing the 1,000-year period of Rev 20 as a literal millennium, occurring after the return of Christ. If this is so, the period is bounded by two resurrections – that of the righteous at the return of Christ, and that of the wicked, at the end of the millennium. However, only the former is a resurrection of life, and, it alone, is worthy of the title “resurrection”.

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THE DOCTRINE OF JUSTIFICATION: THE REMEDY TO THE ILLS OF THE MELANESIAN CHURCH

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INTRODUCTION

Over 100 years have passed since the arrival of the first missionaries on Melanesian shores. Over this period of time, the Melanesian church has grown, and advanced into what it is today. The church has progressed spiritually, and is still progressing. However, the presence of various issues within the church have occasionally hindered growth toward spiritual maturity, on the part of many believers.

This article will investigate the misunderstanding of one doctrine that may be partly responsible for the lack of spiritual maturity within the Melanesian church: the doctrine of justification.

To achieve this aim, this article will show that the misunderstanding of this crucial doctrine links to a number of issues responsible for stunting the spiritual maturity of the Melanesian church. Firstly, the doctrine of justification is defined from a biblical perspective, as the foundation, on which this paper is based. This is followed by a discussion of various issues within the church today, which can be identified as factors that stunt spiritual maturity, with the aim of highlighting possible causes behind them. The paper closes with a discussion on how a corrected understanding of justification will influence, and potentially correct, these issues.

JUSTIFICATION DEFINED

JUSTIFICATION IN THE OLD TESTAMENT

a. *The Root of the Term*

In Old Testament literature, the Hebrew term $\text{קָדַשׁ} = tsādaq$ ($\delta\iota\kappa\alpha\iota\acute{o}\omega = dikaioō$) can be translated as either “to be righteous” or “to justify”, depending on the context of the passage in which the term appears (see White, 2001, p. 75). Both terms come from the same word family,¹ thus, carry the same meaning. The Hebrew word ($\text{קָדַשׁ} = tsādaq$) is usually translated as “to justify”. “If the true meaning of the root is lost, scholars generally agree that the basic idea [of $\text{קָדַשׁ} = tsādaq$] is conformity to a norm.” (Ladd, 1976, p. 6)

b. *The Use of the Term*

In secular² use, the term ($\text{קָדַשׁ} = tsādaq$) was ascribed to one who was virtuous. A righteous person was one who conformed to the accepted norms or behaviours of society. In the Old Testament, the term “righteous” takes on a legal meaning. Righteousness primarily found its basis in a legal declaration that was based on law-keeping, and not on an inherent human moral quality. Righteousness, in the Old Testament, can be approached from two main perspectives, the righteousness of God, and the righteousness of man. In both perspectives, the defining factor is that God’s divine standards are the accepted norm, on which righteousness has its basis.

An important aspect of righteousness, of which we should take note, is that of relationship. According to the Old Testament, righteousness finds its form in relationships. “A man is righteous when he meets certain claims,

¹ “There is only one term, or, perhaps better, one family of terms, $\delta\iota\kappa\alpha\iota\acute{o}\varsigma = dikaios$ (the adjective), $\delta\iota\kappa\alpha\iota\sigma\acute{\upsilon}\nu\eta = dikaiosunē$ (the noun), $\delta\iota\kappa\alpha\iota\acute{o}\omega = dikaioō$ (the verb), (White, 2001, p. 75).

² In secular and general use, this term was generally used to refer to the virtue of observance of law, and fulfilment of duty, on the part of man. In the legal sense, it generally bore the same meaning in that righteousness or right legal standing was pronounced on the basis of the individual’s conduct. (See Kittel, 1964, pp. 192-193.)

which another has on him in virtue of relationship. Even the righteousness of God is primarily His covenantal rule, in fellowship with His people” (Kittel, 1964, p. 195).

The implication here, in relation to God’s righteousness, is not that God is made righteous in relationship, but that His righteousness is revealed to us through relationship.³ The righteousness of God demands justice, justice demands judgment, and judgment equates to condemnation for us, because of our sin and inability to reach the standards that God sets for us. In terms of His covenantal rule, the demand for justice was met through adherence to the decrees of the covenant, as prescribed by Moses. God’s righteousness was thus revealed through His faithfulness to the covenant, likewise, adherence to the covenantal conditions became the standard of measure for human righteousness.

In the light of this definition, we see that, in Old Testament Jewish thought, righteousness was viewed as conformity to the divine will or standard.⁴ “The righteousness of man is the observance of the will of God, which is well pleasing to Him” (Kittel, 1964, p. 196).⁵

The New Testament authors understood that there was a relationship between faith and righteousness. For example, Paul says that Abraham was justified by faith (Rom 4:3; 4:20-24; Gal 3:6; et al). The basis for righteousness in the Old Testament, according to these references, is faith. It was Abraham’s faith that made him righteous before God. “And when

³ “Righteousness is the execution of covenant faithfulness, and the covenant promises. God’s righteousness, as His judicial reign, means that, in covenant faithfulness to His people, He vindicates and saves them” (Kittel, 1964, p. 195).

⁴ “In Judaism, righteousness came to be defined largely in terms of conformation to the Torah – to the Law of Moses, as it was expounded in the oral scribal tradition. The Rabbis recognised two impulses in a person, an impulse towards good (יֵצֶר הַטוֹב = *yētzet hātōv*) and impulse towards evil (יֵצֶר הָרָע = *yētzet hārā’*). The righteous man was he who nurtured the good impulses and restrained the evil impulses, so that, in the end, his good deeds outweighed his evil deeds” (Ladd, 1964, p. 7). Justification is achieved at the Day of Judgment, based on one’s own merit.

⁵ See, for example, Is 5:7.

He [God] heard Abraham say, ‘I believe’, God, in grace credited perfect righteousness to the man’s account” (Swindoll, 1990, p. 240). Through faith, Abraham was brought into right standing and relationship with God. This clearly shows us that, even in the Old Testament, the basis for righteousness was a faith relationship to God.

JUSTIFICATION IN THE NEW TESTAMENT

The legal aspect of the term *δικαίωσις* = *dikaioō* (ἁγιάζω = *tsādaq*) becomes clearer when approached with the understanding that, “The righteous man is He, who, in God’s judgment, meets the divine standard, and, thus, is declared to stand in right relationship with God” (Ladd, 1976, p. 6).

In the New Testament, the term “justify” is used in different ways. In one sense, it is used to imply the exercise of righteousness (Rev 2:11). It is also used when referring to divine vindication (Luke 7:29; Matt 11:19). It is also used in this sense by Paul in Rom 3:4 and 1 Tim 3:16, but in a more legal sense than in the previously-mentioned verses. In these verses, God is represented as one of the parties in a dispute, who has authenticated His claims through His actions (Kittel, 1964, p. 215). It is also used in terms of self-justification (Luke 10:29; 16:15), and, finally, it is used in terms of saving righteousness, which is the focus of this article.

a. Justification and Salvation

So far, we have seen, from a biblical perspective, that the term *δικαίωσις* = *dikaioō* is a “legal declaration of righteousness”, on the basis of one’s conformity to the divine norm or expectation. The question that we must now ask is: how does one achieve conformity to the divine expectation? To answer the question, we must first understand the contrast that exists between the nature of God and that of man.

To start with, the Bible declares that God is a righteous and holy God, who detests sin so much that He will not hesitate to deal severely and swiftly to eradicate it. Biblical history clearly portrays this truth to us, from the point of creation up to the eschatological teachings on the culmination of the ages. The Bible brings us face to face with a God, who will not tolerate sin. God is perfect, and so, only those who are perfect,

can stand in His presence. Anything less than perfect will cease to exist in His presence, because His perfection demands it.

God's perfection places all of humanity in a serious predicament, simply because the Bible declares that all have sinned and fallen short of God's standards. Therefore, there is none righteous before God (Rom 3:23, 6:23). All humanity stands guilty before God. Ever since the fall in the garden (Gen 3), humanity has inherited a fallen status,⁶ and has been unable to remedy the situation. "Having fallen short of the divine standard, man stands convicted and guilty before God. As such, he is liable to be condemned, and punished, by a righteous and holy God" (Tano, 1992, p. 63). Having drawn these comparisons, we will now focus on the means, the ground and the source of justification, as it is laid out in the New Testament.

b. How is Man Justified Before a Holy God?

Before defining the different elements of justification, we must note two important aspects, concerning the legal nature of justification. As has been highlighted, an aspect of justification is justification as a legal declaration by God. Grudem defines it like this, "Justification is an instantaneous legal act of God in which He: (1) thinks of our sins as forgiven, and Christ's righteousness as belonging to us; and (2) declares us to be righteous in His sight" (1994, p. 723). This definition highlights the second important aspect for us – imputation. The forensic nature of justification carries with it the idea of imputation. "In justification, righteousness is not infused; rather, it is imputed, or credited, to the believer (Tano, 1992, p. 67). It is important to understand here that it is a "declaration of righteousness", and not an "infusion of righteousness" (see footnote 8). Ladd highlights two important claims made by Paul that verify this truth:

⁶ The first book of the Old Testament reveals how human beings were created by God without sin, but chose to act contrary to His revealed will, thereby causing sin to become a characteristic feature of human existence (Gen 3; Ps 51:4-6) (Toon, 1987, p. 946).

The first is that righteousness – justification is used interchangeably with imputation. “Abraham believed God, and it was credited to him as righteousness” (Rom 4:3). Justification stands in contrast to good works. “And to one who does not work, but trusts Him who justifies the ungodly, his faith is reckoned as righteousness” (Rom 4:5). It was when they were “ungodly”, in deed and character, that they were acquitted of guilt, declared by the heavenly judge to be righteous. “God reckons righteousness, apart from works (Rom 4:6). Abraham believed God; that is why his faith was reckoned to him as righteousness (Rom 4:22)” (1976, p. 9).

Ladd clearly shows here that Abraham’s righteousness was not credited to him, based on a righteous character, or on righteous deeds, but on his belief and trust in God.

The second claim by Paul, which Ladd uses to highlight this truth, is the way in which Paul contrasts justification and condemnation in certain verses (Rom 5:16, 8:33).⁷ The scenario Paul uses is that of legal proceedings, in which the accused is declared to be righteous, not because of personal righteousness, but solely on the judge’s decision or declaration.⁸ It is the judge, who deemed the accused not guilty, and, thus, declared the guilty to be righteous. The basis for this legal declaration of righteousness will be discussed below.

This again raises the question for us, how is sinful man justified before a Holy God?

⁷ “Condemnation is not sinfulness of character or of deeds; it is the decree of the judge that a man is guilty, and, therefore, stands under the divine condemnation” (Ladd, 1964, p. 9). See also, Grudem, 1994, p. 724.

⁸ Some have approached the forensic element in justification as a fiction (a person remains ungodly/a sinner, but is accounted, or treated, as righteous, by virtue of faith). This has led to some scholars adopting the erroneous view that, in justification, there is some element of infused righteousness. Such a view contradicts the teaching of scripture that salvation, from beginning to end, is dependent on God alone (see Ladd, p. 9).

The source of our salvation is divine grace. God's grace simply means His unmerited favour. Paul explained this in the following statements, "and are justified freely by His grace" (Rom 3:24), "it is by grace you have been saved" (Eph 2:5). Each passage clearly shows that justification originates in grace. "Because we are completely unable to earn favour with God, the only way we could be declared righteous is if God freely provides salvation for us by grace, totally apart from our works" (Grudem, 1994, p. 729).

The ground of our justification is the redemptive work of Christ.⁹ "If justification originates in God's free and abundant grace, its objective ground is the atoning sacrifice of Christ on the cross" (Tano, 1992, p. 69). Christ has paid the price for us (John 3:16; 1 Cor 15:3; Rom 5:6, 9), by the work He accomplished through the shedding of His blood. "The shedding of Christ's blood, i.e., His sacrificial death, provides the means of propitiation, on the ground of which, acquittal or justification can be bestowed upon man, as a free gift" (Ladd, 1976, p. 13). Our justification is availed to us through the work of Christ alone. There are no other grounds of justification, apart from the atoning work of Christ.¹⁰

How is justification appropriated to us? We have seen that justification has its source in the divine grace of God, and that it is availed to us, based on Christ's atoning work. According to scripture, justification can only be appropriated through saving faith. In Gal 2:16; Rom 5:1; and Eph 2:8-9, Paul highlights that faith precedes justification. Faith, in the biblical context, is considered a gift in itself (Eph 2:8-9); furthermore it is only a means, and not the grounds, of our justification.

⁹ The redemptive work of Christ involves His incarnation, ministry, death, and resurrection, for it is in all that He is, and in all that He accomplished, that salvation has become ours.

¹⁰ It is essential to the heart of the gospel to insist that God declares us to be just or righteous, not on the basis of our actual condition of righteousness or holiness, but, rather, on the basis of Christ's perfect righteousness, which God thinks of as belonging to us (Grudem, 1994, p. 727).

“Scripture never says that we are justified, because of the inherent goodness of our faith, as if our faith has merit before God. It never allows us to think that our faith, in itself, earns favour with God. Rather, scripture says that we are justified by ‘means of’ our faith, understanding faith to be the instrument, through which justification is given to us, but not at all an activity that earns us merit or favour with God. Rather, we are justified, solely because of the merits of Christ’s work (Rom 5:17-19)” (Grudem, 1994, p. 730).

Faith is only an open, empty hand with nothing to offer, but the need to receive that which is offered. “Faith, in itself, is nothing. It is self-abandonment. By faith, we entrust ourselves to the keeping of Christ. We rely exclusively on Him, and eschew all dependence on ourselves” (Letham, 1990, p. 183).

THE IMPACT OF JUSTIFICATION

Justification means that we are considered righteous before God, in terms of the past, the present, and the future (Rom 5:1; 8:24-25). Through Christ, our sins are atoned for (past, present, and future). It is a one-time act, which occurs at the point of conversion, thus, several important points can be highlighted.

a. Justification Means We are Righteous Before God

Justification brings a number of significant and permanent changes, in terms of our relationship to God, one of the most significant being that it gives us righteous standing before God. As we have already seen, above, in justification, Christ’s righteousness is imputed to us. Through faith, God considers Christ’s righteousness as ours. This, therefore, gives us a new status before God, in that we are no longer considered unrighteous sinners. Instead, we now take on the status of righteous believers.¹¹

¹¹ “Thus, whereas we were, by nature, guilty before God, and deserving of condemnation and death, Christ’s obedience secures for us acquittal of our guilt, and, additionally, gives us a right status in the sight of God” (Letham, 1990, p. 180).

b. Justification Means We Have Peace With God and are No Longer Under Condemnation

Justification also brings us into a relationship of permanent peace with God (Rom 5:1). Formerly, we were enemies of God, because of sin, which brought us under God's judgment and wrath (Rom 1:18). Through justification, we are placed in new standing with God, thus we are transferred from being the objects of His wrath into the position of being recipients of His grace and blessings. There is no longer any enmity between God and us, for, through justification, God makes everlasting peace with us.

Because we are now at peace with God, the Apostle Paul can write, "Therefore, there is now no condemnation for those, who are in Christ Jesus". This statement signifies, for us, an important aspect of justification. "No condemnation means this: no rejection at the day of judgment, no having to answer for our sins [past, present, and future], no hell, and no outer darkness. It means God will not take issue with us then, for Christ has made peace, by the blood of His cross" (Horne, 1976, p. 54). We are completely freed from condemnation by Him, who alone has the power to judge and condemn (Luke 12:5).

c. Justification Means We are Free From the Burden of Guilt

Because our sins are atoned for through the saving work of Christ, we no longer carry the burden of guilt for the sins of the past, present, and future. Yes, we feel the remorse involved in straying from God's standards, but it does not, and should not, move us away from God. Instead, it moves us towards Him, in genuine repentance. There is no space for guilt, because there is no need for it. Christ has atoned for us, completely and thoroughly, and, therefore, guilt no longer has a hold on us. Guilt has its roots in condemnation, and, because justification delivers us from condemnation (Rom 8:1), we no longer need to feel guilty.

A believer no longer feels condemned or inferior, because of shortcomings, and, although there exists a sense of guilt and remorse, when the believer falls short, it is not the guilt of condemnation that drives the believer away from God. It is, instead, the guilt of conviction from the Holy Spirit that

drives the believer towards God, in repentance and confidence of restoration (Padrick, 1996, p. 37).

d. Justification Frees Us From the Bondage of Law-keeping, and Motivates Us Towards Spiritual Growth

According to the Old Testament covenant, the only way to be right with God was to keep the law perfectly. Failure to comply with the covenant standards, on any point, equalled unrighteousness. This placed the Jews in a serious predicament, because, due to the inherent sinful nature of man, no one could keep the law perfectly, a fact the Jews understood very clearly. This is a fact that God also understood, that is why He provided the means of justification for us. Justification accounts for our inability to keep God's law perfectly. Right standing before God is no longer established on our ability to keep the law, but on Christ's perfect submission and obedience to the law. This does not mean that we do not live according to the standards set by God. Our obedience to the law is no longer out of obligation, but out of love, we obey, because we love God, it is an expression of gratitude for what God has done for us, through Christ. Justification brings with it freedom from the law.

The law is no longer seen as a means to gain right standing with God, instead, it becomes a means, through which devotion and love for God can be expressed. The appropriation of grace, in the life of the believer, accounts for the shortcomings of human nature, and, thus, motivates the believer onward, in spiritual growth. The believer recognises that his/her standing before God does not hinge on human actions, and, as a result, develops a confidence to strive on, in faith, despite weaknesses that may be evident. A believer no longer feels condemned, or inferior, because of shortcomings, though there may exist a sense of guilt and remorse, when the believer falls short. Grace becomes the motivational factor behind spiritual growth, and, through the ministry of the Holy Spirit, the believer is urged on towards the ultimate goal of salvation.

e. Justification Means There is No Longer Separation Between God and Us, For We Have Become His Children

Another wonderful aspect of justification is that of our relationship to God. Through justification, we are brought into a permanent union with God (Rom 8:35), a union that can never be severed. God holds us firmly in His hands, and neither “trouble, or hardship, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or danger, or sword . . . neither death nor life, neither angels nor demons, neither the present nor the future, nor any powers, neither height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord” (Rom 8:35, 38, 39). Nothing we do, or nothing, anyone or anything does, can ever separate us from our union with God. We are totally and permanently secure.

Through justification, we become members of God’s universal family of believers. Because we are joined to God, through Christ, we become part of God’s family¹² (adoption). We become children, not born of natural descent, but of faith, we become partakers in the inheritance of Christ, recipients of the promises of God. Our place in the family of God is secure and permanent, and nothing can ever change this fact.

f. Justification Frees Us From the Fear of Satan and Death

Justification frees us from the fear of death, and of the fear of the devil. Because of the assurance that is ours, through justification, death loses its sting and hold over us. There is a consciousness that our lives are in God’s hands, in the present, as well as in the future. The uncertainty of life beyond death is removed, thus the fear, which is generated by this uncertainty, no longer has any hold on our lives. There is confidence to face the moment of death, and there is confidence to face the devil. Justification places us in the hands and in the care of the Almighty. This understanding impacts our worldview, and challenges us to break out of the system of bondage that the devil has implanted in us, through our

¹² Though adoption stands apart from justification in the process of salvation, it is activated at the point of justification. “Justification sets up the basis for this marvellous Father-child relationship” (Horne, 1976, p. 58).

culture. We are motivated to trust in God, and not in cultural elements (charms, rituals, fetishes, etc.) for protection, healing, etc. In our newfound freedom, we have freedom from guilt and fear, we are released from the snare of the enemy.

g. Justification Corrects Our View of God

Justification brings us face to face with a holy and perfect God, who chooses to love instead of hate, who chooses to show mercy and grace, instead of judgment and punishment. We are brought face to face with the different aspects of God's nature, and, through this encounter; our view of God is impacted and righted. Our theology of God is impacted, and we see Him as a just God, whose holiness demands that sin be punished and destroyed. We see a God, who, out of grace, personally pays the price for our sin, in return for our total allegiance to Him. Through justification, the different aspects of God's nature are revealed to us. As a result, we gain a fuller and more-complete understanding of God, which impacts our view of Him. Justification fully reveals the depth of God's love for us, for while His justice demanded condemnation, His grace provided the solution.

JUSTIFICATION AND THE THEOLOGY OF GOD IN THE MELANESIAN CHURCH

ISSUES FACING THE MELANESIAN CHURCH TODAY

a. Nominalism

Nominalism is a major problem in the Melanesian church. Many Christians in PNG fall into this category.¹³ A nominal Christian is one, who professes faith and membership to a particular denomination, but fails to live according to his/her profession of faith. The defining mark of a nominal Christian is the absence of genuine Christian living and growth in

¹³ Defining nominalism is easier than quantifying it, because identifying a nominal Christian is a very subjective judgment. Some authors claim that 96 percent of Christians in the Melanesian church are nominal (see Kero, 1986, p. 57). Kero makes this claim, citing Douglas (Douglas, 1986, pp. 111-117), however Kero's citation of Douglas is inaccurate, and falsely supports Kero's thesis. The highly subjective nature of measuring nominalism ought to caution all authors from being too bold in making claims about its prevalence in the church, as Kero has.

everyday life.¹⁴ For the nominal, Christianity tends to be restricted to church schedules and programs; beyond these, Christianity largely ceases to exist, or be practised. Though there is an appearance of Christianity, evidenced by involvement in various church activities (mainly Sunday services), it is, in essence, only an outward show of religion.

Daimoi cites the following factors, as causes of the problem: “the lack of conversion experience at the worldview level, ineffective follow-up teaching, an unclear understanding process, a lack of dynamic equivalence in church life, an unclear understanding of Christian discipleship, and a lack of preparation to face new influences” (Daimoi, 1987, p. 8). Others see the influence of traditional culture and religion¹⁵ as another factor contributing to this issue, as well as modernisation, and the influence of Western culture. This issue has, and is having, a significant impact on the church, particularly in relation to the Christian witness of the church, and the spiritual vitality of the church.

b. Syncretism

Another common issue existing in the church today is the problem of divided allegiances. Many Christians (not only nominals) struggle with the problem of syncretism in their lives. Syncretism involves the dividing of one’s allegiance between God and some other entity (money, cultural spirits/expectations, person/s, etc.). Syncretism exists in various forms. For example, it can be seen in the adherence to cultural standards, at the cost of God’s will or standards. In Melanesia, it is most often the result of the believer’s failure to sever ties with some of the cultural elements of animism.

Syncretism is the union of opposite beliefs and systems, so that differences are either reconciled, or held in tension, creating a new religious form. The syncretistic worldview places God alongside other entities, common in the Melanesian worldview. God is seen as another spirit being, who can

¹⁴ Everyday life here extends to every aspect (mental, emotional, spiritual, social, etc.) and moment of one’s personal life.

¹⁵ See Kero, 1986, pp. 57-87.

be manipulated, through the means of animistic religious practices, to achieve a desired end. This erroneous view of God, which is thus fostered, is probably the biggest impact that this problem has had on the church in Melanesia.

Various factors contribute to this issue, one of the most significant being that, for many professing Christians, “the inclusion into the church, as members, is only through adaptation, and not genuine faith” (Edoni, 2000, p. 14).¹⁶ In other words, for many Melanesians, church membership is not necessarily the result of genuine conversion. Many are simply drafted into membership, through family or community influence, or out of a sense of obligation to their family or society, etc. Fear can also be seen as another major cause for syncretism. The fear maybe of rejection and persecution from one’s people, due to a refusal to adhere to various cultural expectations, which conflict with Christian beliefs and principles. There may also be a fear of retaliation from the cultural spirits or gods, because allegiance is no longer given to them, but to God. In essence, it is a fear of missing out on the good life, or salvation.

c. Legalism

Laws play a big part in many churches in Melanesia, today. They play an important role, in terms of guiding the operation and conduct of the church body. Unfortunately, their purpose in the church can often be misunderstood, and, instead of being viewed as guides, showing us the right way to walk with God, they become means, by which people try to gain merit and right standing with God.

All Christians are required to live by the law, or by the standards that God has set. Through faith, a Christian willingly submits to these standards. Christianity cannot be practised, or experienced, outside of these divinely-set boundaries, any divergence from them is false Christianity. Adherence to God’s standards or laws is supposed to be a response of gratitude and love, on the part of the believer for the salvation that God has made

¹⁶ See notes and diagrams in “Syncretism in the Milne Bay Province of Papua New Guinea”, in *Melanesian Journal of Theology* 16-2 (2000), p. 15.

available to them. It is at this point that legalists falter, for, instead of adhering to divine standards, through appreciation of salvation, adherence is, instead, borne out of a desire to seek merit, or right standing, with God. Legalism is a futile attempt to acquire a right standing, which is freely available through divine grace.

Various factors contribute to this issue. Most significant would be a lack of conversion at the worldview level, and a misunderstanding of biblical truth. An individual's upbringing would also be a significant cause.¹⁷ Experience could also play a significant role in building a works-oriented mentality.

The most significant impact that this issue has had on the church has been on the aspect of service. The misconception of the role of the law leads people to undertake acts of service, out of obligation, instead of undertaking these activities with a deep desire to give the best one can offer back to God, as worship pleasing to Him. The focus of Christianity becomes oneself, instead of God. A subsequent misunderstanding of the nature of God develops, in which God is seen as an implacable ogre, who is never satisfied with what the believer has to offer. The Christian is drawn into a vortex of feelings of inadequacy, in which one's conscience is plagued by ever-increasing feelings of guilt and inferiority, which drives the believer further into a works-based theology.

d. Oscillating Spirituality

Yo-yo Christianity is probably a term that best describes this problem: known in Christian circles as seasonal Christianity. In other words, Christianity that is experienced seasonally. In some sense, these seasonal Christians can also be classified as nominals, in that, like nominals, there appears, on the surface, to be no real commitment to God. This issue is addressed separately, because, in the life of these so-called Christians, various traits and trends exist, which distinguishes them from the "average" nominal.

¹⁷ The experience of growing up under harsh and demanding parents will obviously build a works-oriented mentality in an individual.

Unlike the nominal, who maintains regular attendance at church activities, the seasonal Christian seems to be genuinely committed, and active in church activities for a time, but falls away, perhaps to return again later. A seasonal Christian gets involved in various aspects of church ministry, and serves in various ministries, very actively and faithfully, but, unfortunately, it is only for a season. After a season, and often quite suddenly, the particular person is literally gone, and is not seen again in the church for some time.¹⁸

Various reasons can be cited as causes for this issue. One obvious factor would be the absence of a genuine conversion experience. In such instances, conversion is experienced more at an emotional and mental level only. Through various interviews, conducted at the Christian Leaders' Training College (CLTC) among various members of the community, the following factors were suggested as causes for this issue.¹⁹

- An inadequate understanding of the gospel, due to a lack of sound teaching.
- The absence of discipleship training.
- An unconverted worldview.
- Negative peer pressure.
- Marital and family pressures.

This issue has greatly influenced the Christian witness and testimony of the church, and it is partly responsible for oscillation in church attendance and membership. This issue is becoming increasingly evident in many churches today.

¹⁸ In some instances, this particular person goes back into drinking, drugs, etc., in other instances, this particular person just stays away from church activity for some reason or another.

¹⁹ It must be mentioned that the various members mentioned here represent various regions within PNG, and other areas within the Pacific. Many have had plenty of ministry experience within and outside of their respective regions and countries, and have witnessed the issue in concern.

e. Nepotism

Nepotism is an issue that is present within the church today. Nepotism involves the extension of partiality, or favouritism, to a person, based on status (wealth, leadership, nationality, qualifications, etc.), or on common relational bonds (blood-ties, village, regional, or national ties, etc.). Within the church, it is most commonly practised in terms of leadership selection. It is also evident, in subtle ways, in the allocation of certain responsibilities (preaching, service leading, jobs, ministry responsibilities, etc.).

The practice of nepotism in the church is responsible for weak leadership, which has impacted the health and testimony of the church. It has also had a significant impact on the unity of the church, in that members tend to view each other in relation to cultural, regional, and national identities. Instead of seeing each other as one body, the church is segregated into regions, nationalities, denominations, etc. Instead of experiencing unity in diversity, as should be the case, diversity and disunity exists.

WHAT ISSUES ARE THE ROOT CAUSES FOR THE PROBLEMS DESCRIBED ABOVE?

a. Lack of Assurance

Due to the strong impact and influence that the Melanesian worldview has on each individual, many Melanesian Christians possess a strong works-based mentality. This mentality conditions the individual to view every outcome as the result of a process, in which works play a big part. It is at this point that the works-based mentality clashes with the Christian doctrine of salvation by faith. This clash between the Melanesian worldview and Christianity leaves the individual in a dilemma, which causes confusion and uncertainty, and can result in a lack of assurance, in terms of salvation.

Christianity demands that a standard, in terms of ethics, morality, and behaviour, be met. At the same, there is grace, which accounts for failure. Because of the absence of the concept of grace in the Melanesian worldview, the individual, who strives to meet the demands of Christianity,

and fails, develops a sense of failure over a period. Coupled with an improper understanding of gospel truth, the individual develops a sense of inferiority, which causes him/her to become unproductive, and uncommitted, in terms of Christian life and service. Thus, the individual becomes nominal, and, although maintaining membership with the church, there is a lack of real commitment and zeal in the person's life.²⁰

Lack of assurance also opens the door for legalism. The individual develops a Christian lifestyle, directed at securing merit, through the zealous adherence to works of service. The whole Christian experience is fallaciously understood to be based upon works and merit. Underlying this understanding is the principle that strict adherence to the law affects the believer's standing before God in a positive way, thus, the legalist seeks a sense of assurance, by keeping the law. Syncretism also develops out of the lack of assurance. The Melanesian worldview promotes works, as a means to achieve the good life. When the individual experiences uncomfortable circumstances, the conclusion drawn is that such an outcome is the result of error, or failure to strictly adhere to the law. The individual feels threatened, and steps are taken to remedy the situation. If the circumstance continues, the individual's sense of assurance is threatened. Trust in God declines, and other proven means (animistic religious practices) are sought as solutions.

A person seeks the solutions that will remedy the situation, for it is in the continuity of the good life that he or she feels secure and assured. In essence, the process of securing the good life involves having right relationships, especially to one's immediate fellow man and environment. As the individual strives to seek assurance, through the maintaining of right relationships, he or she is, at times, placed in a position, in which biased decisions are made, for example, electing church leaders on the basis of favouritism, rather than on the basis of genuine leadership quality.

²⁰ The fear factor is probably the most significant reason for maintaining church membership: fear of rejection by kinsman and fellow Christians – broken relationships, fear of losing salvation completely, the fear of losing status and identity, etc.

The drive for a sense of assurance becomes an avenue, through which nepotism rears its head.

b. An Unconverted Worldview

The influence of an unconverted worldview can be seen as a major contributing factor to many issues faced by the church. The traditional Melanesian worldview dictates that individuals meet a particular standard of morality, ethics, and behaviour, in virtually every aspect of life. The standards are met by living according to a strict regime of cultural expectations – essentially, following the rules set down by the society, to which the individual belongs. Failure to adhere to these rules results in a failure to appropriate the blessings, sometimes spoken of as *gutpela sindaun* (the good life), or, in terms of cultural understanding, salvation.

The problem of nominalism, syncretism, nepotism, and legalism, and, to some extent, oscillating spirituality, can be partly attributed to the application of this worldview to the Christian experience. The scriptures teach that God's standard is perfection. The Melanesian worldview demands that a standard be met, by keeping regulations and laws. Underlying this demand is that the laws should be kept perfectly, for, any deviation from this, creates disharmony in the community. Christianity teaches there is nothing we can do to achieve righteousness. In contrast, the traditional Melanesian worldview teaches that we have to do everything to achieve righteousness. Failure to adhere to standards is viewed as unrighteousness.

Legalism develops, because individuals come into the church with a strong works-based mentality. Nominalism develops, because people recognise that they cannot live up to the standards that are set. People, who fail, feel inferior. The rest of the community condemns those who fail, because they, too, operate with a paradigm that demands perfection through works. Christians oscillate in their faith, because they hunger spiritually, seek satisfaction, by drawing near to God, fail to achieve what they believe are acceptable standards, draw back, but still have an unquenched spiritual thirst. Others, who appear to have a genuine conversion experience, and are zealous in their faith, are sometimes discouraged, because some in the

Christian community are threatened by their zeal, and oppose them, through negativity and criticism – perhaps because zealous behaviour exposes their own weaknesses or failures.

Syncretism develops when the cultural worldview, which teaches that strict adherence to rules brings blessing (*gutpela sindaun*), is challenged, when this formula fails to produce desired results. The individual naturally attributes the failure to a divergence of the law, and tries to remedy the situation. For the Christian, this will involve seeking counsel and prayer, intense self-reflection, with the purpose of identifying sin, an increase in pious conduct and activity (prayer, Bible reading, service, etc.). When there is still little or no improvement, despite the steps taken above, God is seen as incapable of remedying the situation, thus the individual turns to other proven means for help. In most cases, this involves one turning back to animistic religious practices for protection, healing, and blessing.

Nepotism is the outworking of the Melanesian worldview, which demands strict loyalty to one's fellow man (family, clan members, etc.). The principle underlying this aspect of the Melanesian worldview is that proper relationship with one's relatives contributes towards harmony, and the good life. Unfortunately, when imported into the church, it hinders unity in the body of Christ. Instead, it promotes segregation at the clan, regional, and racial levels.

c. Unbalanced Theological Emphasis

The problem here is not that of a failure on the part of the church to propagate the gospel, rather it has to do with a failure to propagate the gospel, in its totality. This imbalance in theological emphasis has created a deficit in theological understanding within the church, which has resulted in an incomplete understanding of foundational gospel truths.

From a survey conducted within CLTC, among individuals, who represent various regions and denominations within PNG, and other parts of the Pacific, it was shown that much of the church's theological focus today

has been anthropocentric in nature.²¹ The survey showed that doctrines, like holiness (Christian living), giving, Christian service, etc., are emphasised, while other crucial doctrines, like grace, the nature and character of God, salvation, etc., are given very little, or no, emphasis at all.

Two factors can be seen as the primary causes for this issue, the lack of theologically-trained pastors and laymen, and the unconverted worldview. The lack of adequate theological training among pastors and laymen results in an inadequate understanding of crucial biblical doctrines concerning salvation, the person and nature of God, etc. Coupled with an insufficient grasp of the English language, which restricts many Christians from grasping key biblical doctrines sufficiently, many lack the knowledge base to be able to communicate such foundational doctrines clearly and effectively, in either Tok Pisin, or the vernacular. Consequently, emphasis is placed on propagating that which is easily understood and communicable, while other crucial doctrines are neglected, resulting in an imbalance in theological emphasis.

The cultural worldview also plays a significant role in this issue. In fact, the anthropocentric theological emphasis in the church today can be traced back to it. The cultural worldview is, in essence, anthropocentric. When imported into Christianity, a works-based and focused understanding of Christianity develops. Doctrines, which comply with this works-based mentality (holiness, giving, service, etc.), become the primary focus of emphasis. Unintentionally, many pastors, laymen, lay preachers, etc., zealously propagate a gospel based on works. Likewise, many church members live a works-based Christianity.

²¹ There is an over emphasis on the role of man, in terms of Christianity, the primary focus has been on what man must do, or how man must live, etc. This is seen in the preaching and teaching that primarily focuses on holiness, in which the focus is on the “doing” aspect of holy living (Christian service, giving, ministry, etc.). Whilst such a focus is generally not unbiblical or wrong, the issue in question here is that the fullness of the gospel is not being propagated in the church.

The deficit in theological understanding, and the influence of an unconverted worldview, has resulted in an incomplete understanding of many important doctrines. One such doctrine concerns the person and nature of God. Many Christians possess an incomplete understanding of God, which fails to integrate the different aspects of His nature (holiness, love, justice, grace, etc.). Thus, God is seen, on one hand, as a harsh, unrelenting taskmaster, whilst, on the other hand, He is seen as a gracious, compliant Father, who only needs to be appeased, when there is a digression from His standards. This faulty view robs God of His sovereignty, and relegates Him to the level of other cultural spirits and deities.

HOW CAN A CORRECTED VIEW OF JUSTIFICATION ADDRESS THE ABOVE ISSUES?

a. Justification and the Theology of God

The doctrine of justification draws together distinctive aspects of God's nature, which are, otherwise, possibly misunderstood, or held in unnecessary opposition to other distinctives. For example, the doctrine of justification enables a tension to be held between the theology of justice, and a theology of love. Justification holds in balance the justice of God, which involves His wrath and judgment, and His love, which involves grace, mercy, and forgiveness. Holding these seemingly opposite theological realities in tension, one with the other, not only gives a biblically-balanced understanding of the character of God, but also enables one to more-fully explore other doctrines, such as eschatology, or eternal security, with greater confidence, because there will not be an unbalanced emphasis on love, at the expense of justice, or vice-versa.

b. Justification and the Misunderstanding of Sin

A proper understanding of justification allows a full recognition of the depth of human depravity, and the implications this depravity has in relation to man's standing before a holy and perfect God. With the corrected understanding, sin is no longer seen as a mere violation of cultural or ethical standards, but as an all-encompassing condition that thoroughly affects all humanity (body, soul, and spirit), regardless of one's

moral or ethical standing. Sin is seen as the conditional norm of all humanity, just as the senses and the emotions are a natural part of human nature (Eph 4:18; Jer 17:9; Gen 6:5; Titus 1:15; Rom 7:18; 3:23). The worldview that upholds cultural and ethical standards or laws as the primary gauge for that which is right or wrong, acceptable or unacceptable, is challenged, and completely reformed. Sin is no longer seen as a mere transgression, for which a remedy can be sought, through human means. It is now seen as a serious violation of divine standards, for which no human effort can remedy. The extent of human depravity, and the repulsiveness of our condition before a holy and sin-abhorring God, serve as a rude awakening to our true status and standing before God.

The understanding of God's nature, and attitude towards sin, awakens us to the hopelessness of our situation, and the stark reality that, no matter how stringently or piously we adhere to cultural, ethical, or religious rules, our position before God remains the same – that of sinners. With this, comes the understanding that sin is not, and cannot, be truly defined by a sinful and depraved humanity, but only by a perfect and holy God, who knows no sin. Consequently, one is awakened to the fact that the only remedy for our sinful condition can only come from God. Justification impacts our worldview, and brings home to us the futility of mere adherence to cultural, ethical, or religious standards, or, in more general terms, the futility of our human endeavours, as a means to secure a right standing before God. A renewed understanding of sin eliminates the belief that salvation is attainable through human effort. Salvation is solely an act of God's grace.

c. Justification and Works-based Mentality

Through justification, the believer is brought face to face with the stark reality of our human depravity. This understanding enables the believer to see that the appropriation of the good life or salvation is only achievable by divine means. Our humanity, or human effort, has no salvific effect, because the stain of sin renders our works ineffective. "Our best works remain tainted, or soiled, by the vestigial remnants of sin. Our hearts are never really perfectly pure, and this impurity adds dross to the 'gold' of our virtues" (Sproul, 1995, p. 128).

The realisation of this fact challenges the cultural worldview that propagates a works-based salvation, and enables a corrected understanding of the place of works in the Christian experience. A corrected understanding challenges the potent sense of obligation that drives the works-based mentality, consequently freeing the believer from the bondage to ritualism and law-keeping. No longer is Christianity seen and practised as mere ritual, instead, one is potentially brought into a more-intimate relationship of faith with God. Works are no longer viewed as a means to manipulate God, for the purpose of obtaining salvation, instead, they are seen as means, through which devotion and gratitude can be expressed to God, for the free gift of salvation.

d. Justification and Eschatology

A corrected view of justification also deals with the question of life after death, and the element of mystery and uncertainty that lies behind it. In practical terms, justification secures the future of the believer, and, because of this, the individual has a deep sense of assurance concerning the future, and life after death. With this assurance, comes the knowledge that the believer's salvation is secure, in terms of the present, and of the future. Fear, generated by the uncertainty and mystery concerning the future, is expelled with this newfound truth.

The cultural worldview is impacted and transformed at certain levels. For example, the belief that the deceased interact, and coexist, with the living, which originated from ignorance concerning life after death, loses its viability. The truth of God's word, and the understanding of justification, bring the knowledge that, at the point of death, one passes on to be with God, or to be separated from God. Death is a passing into a different dimension, or existence, in which there can be no contact with the world, from which one has departed. Despite the fact that an understanding of justification, or, in broader terms, salvation does not give all the details concerning the future, what it gives is more than sufficient to enable the believer to know that his or her salvation is secure, in terms of the present, and of the future.

As a result of a corrected understanding of justification, eschatological concerns no longer pose a big threat, because of the knowledge that, regardless of what happens, it is God who has the final say. The assurance that the life and future of the justified is in God's hands brings a comforting sense of assurance into the life of the believer. This truth is further enhanced by the fact that, at the point of justification, the indwelling work of the Holy Spirit is initiated in the life of the believer (Eph 1:13-14). Through the conviction and enlightenment of the Holy Spirit, the believer is enabled to grasp and believe that, regardless of what the future holds, one can be rest assured that God is in ultimate control.

e. Justification and Eternal Security

A proper understanding of justification brings with it a deep sense of security, concerning salvation. The word of God teaches that salvation is a permanent experience (John 3:16; 5:24; 6:37-39; 10:29; Rom 8:29-39; Heb 7:25; Jude 24), and, because of this, the recipient of salvation is assured that his/her salvation cannot be lost. This truth is further established, and verified, through the presence and ministry of the Holy Spirit, in the life of the believer. The knowledge that the Holy Spirit is a guarantee, signifying the permanency of the salvation experience, in the present, and the future (Eph 1:13-14), inspires confidence within the believer, who has been justified.

Justification rests, in grace, upon the work of Christ alone, and so, the believer is freed from having to fulfil the demands of the law (Rom 2:12-13), as a means of securing salvation. The understanding of what Christ has accomplished, on behalf of the believer, through His life, death, and resurrection, dispels the notion that man has a part to play in salvation. The realisation of the fact that salvation is totally dependent upon the divine initiative, and working alone, and not upon the believer's own efforts, impacts the works-based mentality, thus revealing the futility of human works, as a means to achieve salvation. The knowledge that, since the believer has been once justified, the believer also stands forever justified. This signifies the permanency of the salvation experience, and builds confidence and trust in the believer towards God. Coupled with a proper understanding of God's nature (justice, love, and sovereignty), and

the indwelling presence and work of the Holy Spirit within the believer, the permanency of salvation becomes an established fact, within the heart and mind of the believer.

f. Justification and Freedom From Fear

With justification, comes a sense of assurance and security concerning the present and the future, which affects the way the believer views, and relates, to his or her environment. One significant area, within the life of the believer that is impacted, relates to the potent sense of fear that Melanesians possess. The cultural worldview conditions, or builds, within the individual, a strong sense of fear towards certain factors, for example, the spirit world, the loss of the good life (salvation), sorcery, death, etc. The fears that the Melanesian holds can be classified under two main headings: the fear of spiritual beings, and the fear of life after death. Underlying these fears, is the fear of the loss of *gutpela sindaun*, in the here and now, and in life after death.²² An understanding of justification impacts these fears, and dispels much of the confusion and mystery that fuels these fears, through the knowledge it brings, concerning God's sovereignty, His eschatological plans, and eternal security.

We have seen, above, that justification brings into clearer perspective the nature and sovereignty of God over all things. The knowledge of God's omnipresence, omniscience, and omnipotence liberates the believer from bondage and fear to evil spirits (ancestral spirits, nature spirits, spirits of the dead, Satan, etc.). The knowledge of God's sovereignty enables the believer to know that, because his/her allegiance now lies with God, there is nothing that Satan or the spirits can and will do to harm the believer.²³ This, in turn, enables the believer to break free from animistic cultural beliefs and practices, and it also enables him/her to stand up under the

²² Melanesian worldview dictates that proper relationships be kept with both the spiritual and physical world if the experience of *gutpela sindaun* is to become a reality in the life of the individual and community.

²³ The spiritual realm, for the Melanesian, is an ever-present reality, with which there is daily interaction. Thus, the Melanesian's fear of the spirits is grounded in real life experiences of spiritual manifestations that have the primary purpose of keeping the person in bondage to his/her cultural and animistic beliefs.

rejection and opposition (spiritual and human) that will accompany such a move. An understanding of justification brings liberty from the fear of the spirits at the mental, emotional, and spiritual level. At the same time, it strengthens the believer's allegiance to God.

An understanding of justification also affects the fear of failure, and the consequences that result from failure. In the cultural context, this would relate more to divergence from cultural standards and regulations and the repercussions (human and spiritual) that would normally follow such action. In Christianity, the truth that the believer's right standing (or salvation) is achieved through the divine initiative, independent of human effort, dispels the fear of failure. The permanency of the salvation experience, for the justified, highlights, for the believer, that salvation rests solely in what God has done, and not on what the believer does, or has done. Because of this, the believer is freed from the works-based mentality that, in essence, is responsible for the sense of fear within the individual. Works are no longer seen as a means to achieve salvation, but as a means to express gratitude and love for God. The sense of fear and obligation, which drove the works-based mentality, is dispelled, with the knowledge that the believer has nothing to prove in terms of salvation, because of grace, and Christ. The knowledge that one is secure also dispels the fear of life after death. The confusion and mystery that surrounded death is lifted, when the believer understands that, because of justification, life is now lived in God's presence, and life after death is in God's hands. The believer no longer feels compelled to adhere to works, because of the fear of the loss of salvation after death, instead, he or she is liberated, and enabled to move from fear into trust.

g. Justification and the Theology of the Church

An understanding of justification brings with it the knowledge that one is a part of a bigger community of believers, who, together, form the family of God. This knowledge influences the way the believer perceives his/her relationship to fellow believers within the church.

Racial, cultural, and denominational barriers are torn away, when one truly understands that all who belong to the family of God have one

common unifying principle – all are sinners, saved by grace – which unites them together as one body. Along with this understanding, comes the knowledge that, regardless of the external differences, every member of the church works towards a common goal – the salvation of mankind, the exaltation of Christ, and the glorification of God.

A new attitude is born within the individual, which transforms the believer's relationships. Faulkner says, "The new attitude toward God, constituted by justification, impels to an unending movement towards God and man" (1996, p. 4). The movement towards God and man impacts the relationships of the believer towards fellow believers. No longer are fellow believers viewed in terms of cultural, regional, or national identities, rather, the believer is enabled to look beyond these differences, to view them as part of the body of Christ, as members of God's international family. Borne out of this understanding, is a sense of unity, and common purpose, the experience of unity amidst diversity becomes a reality, as believers strive to fulfil their God-given mandate. Contention over leadership positions, and the exercise of spiritual gifts in service, should no longer fuel division, competition, and infighting, because of the unity that exists in diversity. Through the presence and the work of the Holy Spirit within the church, the body is built up in unity, and is enabled to fulfil the work that God has ordained.

h. Justification and Sanctification

Although justification stands apart from sanctification, in terms of the salvation experience, it does, to a certain degree, have some impact on sanctification, at the point of conversion, and throughout the life of the believer.

At the point of justification, a status of righteousness is conferred upon the believer that is otherwise known as *positional sanctification*. The legal declaration of righteousness, which is imputed to the believer, at the point of justification, gives the believer a new status, in terms of his/her standing before God. The believer is no longer considered an unrighteous sinner, because of the imputed righteousness of Christ, which now becomes the

believer's righteousness, thus, in terms of sanctification, the believer is now considered holy or sanctified.

Justification also plays an important role, in terms of progressive sanctification. Firstly, it acts as a motivator for the sanctified. The understanding that justification has achieved permanent right standing with God brings with it assurance concerning the permanency of salvation. This knowledge motivates the believer to move forward in the Christian life, with confidence, especially when the believer is faced with opposition and failure.²⁴

The second important role that justification plays, in relation to sanctification, concerns the indwelling work and presence of the Holy Spirit. At the point of justification, the Holy Spirit indwells the believer. Through the enabling of the Holy Spirit, the believer is able to move forward in sanctification, towards spiritual maturity.

CONCLUSION

The purpose of this article was to investigate the potential misunderstanding of justification within the Melanesian church. This article has examined a number of factors that have historically led to spiritual immaturity in the Melanesian church. This article has explored how a misunderstanding of the biblical doctrine of justification may contribute to them. If the Melanesian church could properly grasp the doctrine of justification, there would be a reduction in the number of problems that have historically caused spiritual immaturity in the church (as identified in this article). As a result, the Melanesian church would be better placed to grow toward maturity.

²⁴ An understanding of justification enables the believer to see that salvation depends totally on what God has done, and will do, not on what the believer does. This understanding helps the believer deal with the sense of condemnation and guilt that arises from within (personal failure and sin) and outside the believer (other people and the enemy). Thus, instead of becoming discouraged, the believer is encouraged and motivated to move forward in the grace of God.

The purpose of this paper has been to examine the theological links between spiritual immaturity in the Melanesian church and the misunderstanding of justification. It is my prayer and hope that, through the awareness, created by this article, other servants of God will take up the challenge of suggesting relevant ways and means that a proper understanding of justification can become a reality in the contemporary Melanesian church.

Finally, a misunderstanding of justification may not be the primary factor behind all of the issues discussed within this article. However, if teachers and leaders of the Melanesian church properly addressed misunderstandings of justification, the corrections in theology and doctrine would have a significant impact on many of the factors that have brought about immaturity in the church.

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