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ADDRESS (Editorial, Subscriptions, and Manuscripts):
Melanesian Journal of Theology
PO Box 382
Mt Hagen WHP
Papua New Guinea
Email: deanofstudies@cltc.ac.pg
Phone: (675) 546-1003

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.

CONTENTS

GUEST EDITORIAL

This volume covers a variety of topics related to Melanesia: a report on the MATS conference, the proclamation of Christ, conversion and identity, a study of "enmity" in Gen 3:15, and Catholic social teaching. Each topic, in its own way, adds to the on-going discussion of applying God's Word in a Melanesian context.

Each one of these articles have been adapted from papers submitted to MATS 2011: the Inaugural Conference of the Melanesian Association of Theological Schools, held at the Pacific Adventist University in Port Moresby PNG, between June 21 and 24, 2011. Other papers from MATS 2011 may be included in future issues of the *Melanesian Journal of Theology*

In the first article, Scott Charlesworth reports on MATS 2011, and expresses the hope that an annual conference might inspire theology-related research in Papua New Guinea.

John Hitchen's article outlines the background to the formation of MATS. Using some of Paul's prescriptions to correct false perceptions of leaders, he applies them to handle these same problems in our Melanesian context. He then concludes by saying that Paul's teaching offers a set of criteria, around which we could greatly enhance how we address these issues, through the reestablishing of a Melanesian Association of Theological Schools

In his article, Franco Zocca considers the proclamation of Christ in the context of traditional Melanesian cultures. He believes there is a need for those proclaiming the gospel to be aware of the cultural aspects of the Christianity, from which they come, as well as of what is essential in the gospel message. Comparing the major characteristics of traditional Melanesian religions with modern Western Christianity, he concludes with suggested approaches to presenting the gospel as a "completion" of beliefs and practices already present in traditional Melanesian cultures and religions.

Uwe Hummel, in his article, examines the island of Mansinam, in West Papua, Indonesia, as a centre of pilgrimage, unity, and polarisation. He shows how the history of Christian missions on Mansinam has had an impact on mission work across West Papua. This article also touches on the presence of Islam in West Papua, and the impact of transmigration to this region.

John Skrzypaszek discusses conversion in the context of the Seventh-day Adventist faith tradition.

Thomas Davai then analyses the meaning of "enmity" in Gen 3. His study includes the meaning and interpretation of words and phrases in the Hebrew, as well as in the Greek used in the Septuagint of Gen 3.

Finally, David Willis reflects on 120 years of Catholic social teaching, as established by Pope Leo XIII's encyclical, which takes its title from its first two Latin words, *Rerum Novarum*.

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.

Robyne Hobson,
Guest Editor.

REPORT ON MATS 2011: THE INAUGURAL CONFERENCE OF THE MELANESIAN ASSOCIATION OF THEOLOGICAL SCHOOLS

Scott Charlesworth

Scott Charlesworth has an MA (Early Christian and Jewish Studies) from Macquarie University in Australia, and a PhD (Greek) from the University of New England, also in Australia. He has worked in Australia and Malaysia, and currently teaches in the School of Theology at Pacific Adventist University in Port Moresby, Papua New Guinea.

The idea of organising and hosting a non-denominational theological conference at Pacific Adventist University (PAU) was first raised in 2009. The university was in the process of developing postgraduate degree programs and promotion of research and publishing was high on the agenda. Perhaps all of the enthusiasm led to some overreaching – early plans for the conference were Pacific-wide and too ambitious. The cost of travel is prohibitive and attracting national faculty and postgraduates from the Solomon Islands, Fiji, and Polynesia would be very difficult. After PAU added conference funding to its budget in the first half of 2010, finding an appropriate conceptual framework for the conference became a matter of priority.

A concept was needed that would attract participants from around PNG, and, hopefully, further afield. Slowly, a plan to revive and reconstitute the Melanesian Association of Theological Schools (MATS) began to take shape. If an annual conference were to come under the MATS "banner", then it would be "owned" by everyone. Further, if an annual meeting of the Association were to be held in conjunction with an annual conference, then theological faculty and postgraduate students from all over Papua New Guinea might be persuaded to attend both. MATS had been inoperative for more than ten years, so this was an important initiative for the whole region.

There was a slow response to the first and second round of emails and letters. This was only to be expected – resources are limited, lecturers are overloaded, and time is at a premium. The two catalysts that got things moving were the use of the phone to issue invitations, and the involvement of Dr John Hitchen (Laidlaw College in NZ). John and his wife were in PNG for 15 years from 1965-1979, and he has been coming back for short periods of service since 1989. The credit for founding MATS should probably go to Charles Forman (Yale University in the USA), the well-known Pacific-mission scholar. But it was John, who wrote the original constitution, and it was only right that he should be involved in the revival and reconstitution of the association. Vital support also came from Dr David Thiele (PAU), Dr Graeme Batley (Christian Leaders' Training College), and Dr David Willis (Catholic Theological Institute).

MATS 2011, which was held at PAU between June 21-24, proved to be a resounding success. Scholars came from all over Papua New Guinea, as well as from Australia (Avondale College), New Zealand (University of Auckland), and Thailand (Asia-Pacific International University). A total of 17 papers were presented in four sessions over two days. Missiological papers dominated, but there were also a good number of regional, theological, and biblical studies papers. Presenters came from CLTC, CTI, Divine Word University, Lutheran Highlands Seminary, Martin Luther Seminary, PAU, Sonoma College, Laidlaw College, and the Melanesian Institute. Representatives of Newton College, and the Salvation Army Officer Training College, were also in attendance.

Some of the highlights of the conference were: (a) a collegial and academic spirit throughout (participants soon relaxed and began to enjoy themselves); (b) an engrossing panel discussion on postgraduate theological education in PNG (one of the most gratifying aspects of the conference was that three papers were presented by postgraduates); (c) the presentations of the plenary speaker, Dr Tim Meadowcroft of Laidlaw College (who outlined a theology of the word of God from scripture, in a series of stimulating talks entitled "God speaks"); and (d) very good attendance at the meeting to revive and reconstitute the Association, which was held on the last day of the conference.

All who attended MATS 2011 have seen how an annual conference might inspire theology-related research in Papua New Guinea. It presents an inducement to produce at least one academic paper per year, thus facilitating the continued development of theological faculty (while furnishing articles for the *Melanesian Journal of Theology*). Apart from providing a much-needed forum for postgraduate students to develop their academic skills, an annual conference and active association can also address the severe shortage of Melanesian biblical scholars (and theologians). Melanesia is already well provided for in terms of applied theology. But there is an urgent need for academically-trained biblical scholars. While no disparagement of other areas is intended, until Melanesia begins to produce its own biblical scholars, there will be an inherent weakness in the various theological faculties in the region.

Theology lecturers should be looking out for students with genuine academic potential, who can be assisted into postgraduate research programs, both here and abroad. Such students might be inspired with a vision of what good biblical scholarship can do for the people of God in Melanesia. Finally, an active association can also approach government agencies on behalf of member institutions. Until theology and biblical studies positions can be filled by Melanesians, expatriate faculty will continue to be needed. At times, such as the present, we may need to gently remind the government of that fact.

For all of these reasons, we look forward with anticipation to MATS 2012, and the next meeting of the Association. There is cause to be optimistic about the continued development of the Melanesian Association of Theological Schools.

THEOLOGICAL SCHOLARS' SELF-PERCEPTIONS AND THEIR CONTRIBUTION TO THE UNITY AND MATURITY OF PACIFIC CHURCHES

John M. Hitchen

The address for the Melanesian Association of Theological Schools' Conference, opening dinner, Tuesday, June 21, 2011, at Pacific Adventist University, Port Moresby, Papua New Guinea, by John M. Hitchen, BA, BD, PhD.

INTRODUCTION

Welcome to an expected resurrection! As one of those who shared in the inauguration of the Melanesian Association of Theological Schools in 1968 – I was the Christian Leaders' Training College (CLTC) delegate to the initial meetings, from which MATS grew, and I had a part in drafting the original Constitution, upon which the Association was established – I am greatly honoured, and thank our Lord Jesus Christ for the privilege of welcoming you to this Conference, at which we earnestly hope MATS will be reborn as an effective movement to stimulate theological education for another generation of church and community leadership across Melanesia.

May I, on your behalf, start by expressing our sincere gratitude to Pacific Adventist University, and to Dr Scott Charlesworth, particularly, for taking this initiative, calling this Conference, offering the venue, and making funding available to ensure it became a possibility. Thank you, and we trust your faith will be duly rewarded, for the honour of the Name of Christ Jesus, for the sake on His church, and for the holistic benefit of our region, through the outcomes of our gathering.

What is the role of theological thinkers and theological educators in or through the Christian church? Why should an Association serving such

people be resurrected in Melanesia in the 21st century? Just who do we think we are, and what is our contribution, and the contribution of a renewed MATS, to Melanesian church and society?

As a step towards viable answers to this set of questions, I turn your attention to the words of the Apostle Paul, as recorded in 1 Cor 3 and 4. As the Apostle Paul addressed the issues facing the Corinthian church, he asked the "Who do you think you are?" questions. He gave particular attention to the self-perceptions of their theological leaders, and the perceptions ascribed to them by the church members.

Paul had diagnosed the Corinthians' problems: they were stunted in their spiritual growth – still fundamentally immature; and sadly divided by petty jealousy and inter-party quarrelling (1 Cor 3:1-4). Paul warned they were still "fleshly" or worldly, mimicking the values of their surrounding culture, like mere humans, "behaving in a secular fashion", as Andrew Clarke puts it.[1] 1 Cor 3-4 suggests that, to overcome worldly immaturity and disunity among Christians, requires clear thinking about those who teach and lead the church. Paul drew attention repeatedly to the Corinthians' thinking about their teachers: "What then is Apollos? What is Paul?" (1 Cor 3:5); "Let no one boast about human leaders" (3:21); "This, then, is how you ought to regard us" (4:1); "I have applied all this to Apollos and myself for your benefit" (4:6).[2] For the Apostle, inappropriate perceptions of theological teachers and leaders, contribute to division, and keep believers as mere babes in spiritual experience. As Gordon Fee succinctly says, "At issue is their radically-misguided perception of the nature of the church and its leadership, in this case especially the role of the teachers."[3]

We want to take up this apostolic clue, and explore it in the light of the possible rebirth of an Association of Theological Schools here in Melanesia. The Apostle suggests our self-understanding as Christian theologians, and

[1] Andrew D. Clarke, *Secular and Christian Leadership in Corinth: A Socio-Historical and Exegetical Study of 1 Corinthians 1-6* (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1993), p. 110.
[2] Biblical quotations throughout this paper are from the TNIV.
[3] Gordon Fee, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians*, New International Commentary on the New Testament (Grand Rapids MI: William B. Eerdmans, 1987), p. 128.

the perceptions attributed to us by those we influence as educators and leaders, can promote vital growth to maturity and unity in the church, or they can hinder such proper development in our spheres of influence. In these two chapters, as his solution to these Corinthian problems, Paul uses seven provocative metaphors, which describe the nature of the church, and explain the way to regard theological teachers and leaders. We suggest these same metaphors can also offer wise guidance for the kind of role a renewed MATS should seek to fulfil.

If, in Paul's day, the Holy Spirit's prescription to address immaturity and disunity in the church was to clarify the metaphors by which they should understand their theological teachers and leaders, then we suggest these same metaphors may offer helpful criteria for an effective Association of Theological Schools in our own day.

Of the seven metaphors Paul mentions, the first and second, and third and fourth are so closely linked we can consider them as pairs. From Paul's perspective, we should consider theological teachers/educators as:

- Household servants or farm labourers (**διάκονς** (*diakonos*) 3:5; **συνεργός** (*sunergos*) 3:9);
- Construction workers (**οἰκοδόμος** (*oikodomos*) 3:10);
- Resource custodians and responsible managers (**ὑπηρέτης** (*hupēretēs*), **οἰκονόμος** (*oikonomos*) 4:1);
- Fools for Christ (**μωρός** (*mōros*) 4:10); and
- Parents in the faith (**πατήρ** (*patēr*) 4:15).

THE CHURCH IS GOD'S HOUSEHOLD OR FIELD, AND THEOLOGIANS ARE FAMILY SERVANTS OR CONTRACT LABOURERS – 1 COR 3:5-9

At the root of the Corinthians' immaturity and worldliness lay their open boast that the various factions in their church "belonged to" their respective founders (1:12; 3:4). These founders were ascribed ongoing loyalty and regulatory honour, which only truly belongs to God Himself. Paul confronts this misunderstanding by choosing two basic "serving" terms and

applies them to these their theological instructors. They are household servants, διάκονοι (*diakonoi*), and lowly servants working in the garden, συνεργοί (*sunergoi*) – the agricultural contract labourers. Both words imply being under orders, doing menial, thankless tasks. Christ had established this as the essential nature of spiritual leaders in Mark 10:42-45. Christian leadership is not a grasping of position or power, lording it over others. Nor is it status seeking, and wielding authority, but, conceiving oneself as, and living as, household *servants* and farm *workers*, διάκονοι and συνεργοί (*diakonoi* and *sunergoi*).

The church-founders' true honour consisted in their bringing others to faith in Christ (3:5), and enabling these believers to discover God's purposes for them as productive fruit-bearers in God's garden (v. 9). They were not intended to establish dynasties of loyal followers, submissive to their every word and theological proposition. God allotted each a specific part in the overall task, and God alone gave the life, growth, and effectiveness (3:7).

Thankfully, few if any of us today remember Charles W. Forman, Professor of Mission at Yale University, who was sent by the World Council of Churches in 1967-1968 to encourage the theological schools in our region to consider working together to ensure better standards, and better interchange of ideas between our schools. Nor do many remember Willard Burce, of the Missouri Lutheran Synod, or the United church's Ron Williams of Rarongo, or Father Patrick Murphy, the SVD special delegate for the Catholic Diocese, or Brian MacDonald Milne of Bishop Patteson College in the Solomons, or any of the rest of us who each did their allotted part in establishing MATS in the late 1960s.

The real role of theological educators, then, is to fulfil our varying God-appointed tasks to bring those we serve to faith and productivity, in dependence upon God, the true fruit-producer. And to do so in cooperation with other fellow labourers (3:5-9). Translating those ideas into a prescription for an effective MATS, suggests a series of key potential roles for a rejuvenated MATS:

- To identify the routine, behind-the-scenes, service functions that facilitate the building up in faith and productivity of the member Colleges in our region;
- To serve the needs and concerns of member schools, not seek status and power for ourselves; and
- To foster the mutual understanding of the varying roles and emphases, and ensure the best possible levels of mutually-enriching cooperation between Colleges

THE CHURCH IS GOD'S TEMPLE UNDER CONSTRUCTION AND THEOLOGIANS ARE THE CONSTRUCTION WORKERS – 1 COR 3:10-17

In the first of Paul's sudden switches of metaphor, 3:9 describes the church as God's building under construction. In v. 16 it becomes clear the building he has in mind is the very Temple of God. This metaphor begins with a warning *to be careful how you build*, vv. 10-15. Each part in the building team is assigned by grace, v. 10. The Apostle laid the only adequate foundation, and all subsequent construction must fit squarely on that foundation, the Lord Jesus Christ, vv. 10-11. Each builder's work will be assessed on "The Day", vv. 12-15, when the character and durability of the materials, and quality of the resulting work, are tested.

This leads to a reminder – the first of Paul's ten "Don't you know . . ." reminders in the letter: *Remember those we are building are God's holy home*. This is the most cogent of reasons for care as we build: God dwells among us in the person of His Holy Spirit. Together, we are His sacred place, in which He manifests His Presence and receives our worship. So, beware of damaging His holy people-place, (vv. 16-17; cf. 1 Pet 2:4-10; Eph 2:19-22).

Our patterns of theology, and theological association, need, therefore, to be characterised by utmost respect for each "living stone", being shaped and fitted into this living temple. In our age, when academic "deconstruction" is the preferred mode for learning, and when the very idea of a single universally-appropriate foundation is scorned, this metaphor calls us to a

better, positively "constructive", model, built firmly on Christ, the one and only foundation. There is no place for shoddy workmanship, or theological vandalising of others, as we equip believers unitedly to become a fit dwelling place for God.

Again, this metaphor suggests our Association of Theological Schools will seek standards requiring Melanesian theological equivalents of "gold, silver, and precious stone", and never merely be content with borrowed building materials from other academic cultures, as we determine our approach to quality assurance. The Melanesian wealth of holistic spiritual spontaneity, of communal consciousness, and of daily encounter with the spirit realm must not be lost in the framing and implementing of such standards and quality assurance procedures.

THE CHURCH IS THE STOREHOUSE OF GOD'S RESOURCES AND MESSAGE AND THEOLOGIANS ARE ITS RESOURCE CUSTODIANS AND RESPONSIBLE MANAGERS – 1 COR 3:18-4:7[4]

At this crucial point in his prescription for correcting the identified problems of immaturity and division in the Corinthian church (at 4:1), Paul advises, "Think of us in this way, as servants of Christ and stewards of God's mysteries".

Paul's word for "servants" is the Greek word ὑπηρέτας (*hupēretas*). The verse is pivotal in its immediate context – closely linked to the previous paragraph as well as to what follows. The previous paragraph sets the conceptual context in which the ὑπηρέτας (*hupēretas*) term functions in 4:1.

In 1 Cor 1:10-3:17, Paul had already challenged the Corinthians to grasp the difference between the wisdom of this age and the apparent "folly" of God: a foolishness evidenced by the way God works through a crucified Messiah, uses insignificant people of no social status, and relies on

[4] In this section, I am drawing from my article, "Confirming the Christian Scholar and Theological Educator's Identity through New Testament Metaphor", forthcoming in the July 2011 issue of *Evangelical Review of Theology*.

preaching about the cross to communicate the strange wisdom of His purposes through the Spirit. Now, in 3:18-23, he says human wisdom is foolish from God's viewpoint.[5] The supposed wisdom of this world is narrow and selective. Indeed, it fostered jealousy and divisiveness, as the Corinthians demonstrated all too well with their claims, "I am of Paul", "I am of Apollos". How should Christian theologians respond to these divisive tendencies, inherent in the "wisdom of this world"?

God's wisdom requires "no more boasting about human leaders" (3:21).[6] This means they are not to side with their own preferred option, and reject the rest – not even if "of Paul" were your preference, and you would be quite keen for him to "own" you. Neither are they to withdraw from the world, rejecting all its wisdom as ungodly, or all the Christian factions as "immature". Surprisingly, the call was to embrace them all. God's radically-different wisdom is broad, embracing, and generous towards others with different teaching emphases (3:21-22). God's wisdom expresses a welcoming, inclusive epistemology. He expects His teachers to do the same. The different perspectives, insights, and emphases represented by Peter, Apollos, and Paul are complementary. Each is necessary for full-orbed growth and health in the body.

But there is more: not only the full range of Christian teachers, all the resources of the cosmos, are potential learning and instruction material. Whether the secular world itself, or the wide-ranging lessons of life, or the darker experiences of death – these were God's resources, all given to the children of God for them to learn from, explore, and study. The Corinthians were to gather the contributions from across the time spans, past, present, or future, never becoming stuck in a single, generational time warp. "All are yours!" (3:22).

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[5] Gordon Fee, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians*, p. 152.

[6] C. K. Barrett, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians*, Black's New Testament Commentary (Peabody MA: Hendrickson, 1968), pp. 94-95.

Again, the triad, "Paul, Apollos, and Cephas", presented to the Corinthians a range of distinctions: of cultural background; of national upbringing; of theological emphasis; of communication style and elegance. Corinthians were familiar with judging the status, skill, and sophistication of visiting teachers. But the Apostle calls them to move beyond that whole academic culture by embracing all the diversity as potential resources for building up the people of God. Here is a God-given charter for Christian scholars and theological educators to embrace the full diversity of viewpoints in the family of God.[7] They and their hearers were not to retreat into what we might call a denominationally-, ethnically-, theologically-, ideologically-, or stylistically-bounded isolation, accepting instruction from only one narrow section of the whole range. The wisdom of God, in 1 Cor 3:22b, banished even the dualism which separated sacred and secular as valid instructional material. Every area of study and investigation was here sanctified as resource material for the growth and unity of the people of God.

There was, however, one proviso: "They are all yours, but you are Christ's" (3:22-23). The Corinthian believers did belong to one person – not Paul, or Apollos, or Cephas, as they boasted – but to their Lord, and, to Him, both teachers and taught must be loyal at all times, especially in their scholarship and learning. The full breadth of study and exploration was to be brought consciously under the Lordship of Christ Jesus. He, in turn, ensures it will glorify God the Father (v. 23). Such a missional freedom, and generous expansiveness of viewpoint, provides scholarship with an academic freedom, securely rooted in the theological realities of the Lordship of Christ, and unity of the Godhead.

Paul now, with this context in place, says definitively, "This, then, is how you ought to regard us: as ὑπηρέτας (*hupēretas*) – resource custodians!" (4:1). Christian leaders need to know their sources, in all their depth and breadth: theologically, ecclesiastically, culturally, and across the disciplines, as the Apostle has just shown. They are the ones who locate the appropriate and relevant teachings for each particular occasion, and ensure those resources will be kept safe and accessible for the next time they are

[7] See Fee's pointed application, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians*, pp. 155-156.

needed, as the scroll-tending **ὑπηρέτῃ** (*hupēretēi*) is recorded as doing in Luke 4:20. These are, of course, the basic tasks of research, scholarship, and librarianship. Christian leaders need such scholarly skills. Christian theological scholars are to be Christ's librarians, discoverers and curators of the wealth of material from the range of sources for effective work in their field of study. This is the way Christians are to conceive their leaders – as the resource persons, able to equip and "service" them, for their obedience to Christ, wherever He has placed them vocationally as His representatives (cf. Eph 4:12).

To the **ὑπηρέτης** (*hupēretēs*) term, Paul links, as a necessary twin, the word for a household steward or responsible manager, **οἰκονόμος** (*oikonomos*): the servant to whom the household head delegates the managerial responsibilities of the household. The **οἰκονόμος** (*oikonomos*) was classically exemplified in Joseph's role in Potiphar's household, Gen 39:1-6. The **οἰκονόμος** (*oikonomos*) understands the need for faithful execution of duties, and accountability to the master.[8]

This link between **ὑπηρέτης** (*hupēretēs*) and **οἰκονόμος** (*oikonomos*) in 4:1 is elaborated in two main responsibilities in the following paragraph. The custodial manager is responsible for the "mysteries of God" (4:1). The gospel was, for Paul, a previously-hidden, but now openly-manifest message. Its mystery value relates to that earlier hiddenness.[9] Christian leaders and scholars are responsible to manage, and take a custodian's care, of the wealth, resources, and dynamic potential inhering in this glorious message, centred on the Lord Jesus Christ. This honour carries matching obligation.

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[8] Philip H. Towner, "Households and Household Codes", in Gerald F Hawthorne, and Ralph P. Martin, eds, *Dictionary of Paul and His Letters* (Downers Grove IL: IVP, 1993), p. 418.

[9] Cf. Col 1:25-29, where Paul again describes his missional service as a "management responsibility", **οἰκονομία** (*oikonomia*), and outlines its threefold nature. He has a message to make fully known, Col 1:25; riches of the previously-hidden but now open secret to bring to people of every culture, namely, that Christ among them guarantees the hope of glory, Col 1:26-7; and Paul has people to bring to maturity in Christ by his preaching and warning, Col 1:28-29.

Responsible custodian managers are to be faithful and accountable. In a transparently biographical passage (1 Cor 4:1-5), Paul develops the Christian scholar/teacher's sense of accountability by referring to three possible courts, which may distort this accountability, and with which, therefore, he had come to terms.

Free, indeed, are the theological educators, who responsibly manage their roles so they can accept, with equanimity, the interim judgments of *those they serve*, or of the various courts to whom they must give earthly account (whether they be church, or college, or accrediting agency, or research funders!), and, at the same time, are not slaves to the drivenness, fear, or "workaholism" that spring from *a personal sense* of inadequacy about their own work. Relaxed expectation and joyous anticipation of judgment from a much higher court than any of these, namely, the Lord Jesus, whose tendency is always to praise; these were, for Paul, the way to true academic freedom – and to more-productive study, scholarship, and teaching!

Let us pause to imagine for a moment what a MATS would look like if the **ὑπηρέτης** (*hupēretēs*) and **οἰκονόμος** (*oikonomos*) style characterised all its operations:

- We would respect, value, and appreciate the diverse personnel, resources, and heritage, in the full spectrum of denominational, ethnic, theological emphases, and tribal, national and international provenance of resources.
- We would think and act on the basis that Christ alone is the one to whom we all ultimately belong, not our denominational boards, constituencies, or power brokers; and that any and all of these resources are available for the whole Melanesian church. We would work to make them accessible to all member Colleges.
- We would own, here in Melanesia itself, the responsibility to organise, catalogue, preserve, securely store, and dispense our distinctly Melanesian parts of the global wealth of the gospel, and theology of the church.

- So we will work to have the best archival and up-to-the-minute teaching and research resources *on* Melanesia, here *in* Melanesia, rather than only in the ANU, Mitchell, Hocken, SOAS, Pontifical, Pasadena, or Day libraries.
- We will foster excellent responsible management of our theological resources and heritage for future generations – in spite of humidity, cockroaches, termites, and equipment breakdowns.
- We shall foster publication and dissemination of reflection, research, and theological evaluation by Melanesians for the enriching of the global church.
- But only those who have imbibed the **ὑπηρέτης** (*hupēretēs*) and **οἰκονόμος** (*oikonomos*) lifestyle dare be trusted with such tasks.

THE CHURCH IS ON COSMIC DISPLAY BEFORE THE WORLD AND SPIRIT POWERS AND THEOLOGIANS ARE EXHIBITED AS FOOLS FOR CHRIST – 1 COR 4:18-13

Paul turns from the theological educator's accountability within the church community to our wider role before the world and the unseen spirit realm. The Corinthians had grasped the eschatological vision of the inbreaking of the Kingdom of God so well that they were living in their society as if they were already reigning fully, and that the whole consummative victory was already theirs, 4:8. "How I wish . . .", says Paul, v. 9. Paul is all too personally aware the full reality is rather different for faithful theological teachers. Formers of Christian opinion are certainly involved in the battle. But they are more like prisoners on display in the enemy's triumphal procession. A successful general, to celebrate his victory, would lead a procession into his home town, displaying all the booty and treasure confiscated in battle, as the triumphant soldiers do their "victory lap" around the streets. But, at the back of the procession, are the humiliated prisoners – held up as the rubbish, the dregs of a conquered society, for all to scoff at and mock before their execution in the arena. That, says Paul is more like the reality he knew, because Christian leaders are on display, both

before the powers of this world, and before the spirit powers of the angelic world, 4:9.

The powers of both these worlds, as Paul had explained earlier, 2:6-8, thought that hardship, hunger and thirst, persecution, homelessness, dishonour, and public humiliation were victory for them and defeat for the church. In their kind of wisdom, the spirit powers assumed that evil, deception, and shame, expressed in sorcery, idolatry, and lies were significant victories in the cosmic battle between good and evil. According to this wisdom, the Christian teachers were fools, out of touch with real power, and of no influence.

But Paul knew the real battle was won in the values the Christians displayed, and the way they responded to the hurts and misjudgments thrown at them. With a tinge of sarcasm, he challenges the Corinthians to think again about their own values. He saw subtle victories for the enemy in the way they were congratulating themselves on their wealthy and comfortable lifestyles. They boasted they were living like kings: apparently wise, insightful, known for their intellectual prowess, apparently strong, popular, and well-honoured in their city.

Paul warns the reality of loyal theological leadership is different from such "prosperity doctrine". Those, whom the worldly wisdom counts as weak, misunderstood, and of disrepute, but who live by and model Christ's values, are in touch with a deeper reality. How could it be otherwise – our Lord was a "man of sorrows, despised, and rejected of men"? His pathway leads to a cross of rejection and suffering. But His way is the wisdom of God. And knowing this deeper wisdom empowers the Christian theological educator to absorb the misrepresentations and misunderstandings of those who reject our fumbling attempts to articulate our Christ-centred ontology and epistemology.

But Paul does not have a "martyr spirit". He acknowledges the real cost in upholding this alternative wisdom before the worlds of academic and religious forces at work around us, v. 11. He is well used to hunger; thirst, poor clothes, verbal and physical abuse, and pressure on his home life. He

returns kindness for attack, and patiently persists amid rejection and hardship, never speaking back at those who slander and spread false criticisms. He accepts the snide put downs of being regarded as the "rubbish of this world". "We're treated like garbage, potato peelings from the culture's kitchen" (MSG*)*. The reality is that, to lead God's people, we must be ready to go out on a limb and be misunderstood, and sometimes to be defamed and even tossed aside, because of misunderstandings when we have dared to be different in our attempt to show the love and concern of Christ, where others just pass by on the other side.

So what might this "fools for Christ's sake" metaphor have to say about rejuvenating a Melanesian Association of Theological Schools?

- MATS will be seen and observed by other sections of academia, and the name and honour of Christ will be judged by the way we relate to each other, and work as an Association.
- Will we model an Association, not governed by status seeking, or by the dominance of the powerful over weaker members?
- Will ours be an Association, in which those who might be expected to claim rights, because of academic standing, library holdings, or faculty qualifications, choose, instead, to serve other schools, share their resources, and build up, encourage, and support those weaker and less well-endowed schools?
- Will our Association give serious academic attention to the realm of spirit powers, and issues related to the dominance of evil forces over the people of God, even when such studies are given little academic credence elsewhere?
- Will MATS become an Association in which the self-effacing cruciform marks of the Lord, who loved us and gave Himself for us, are evident in its ethos and *modus operandi*, and will the realities and implications of that same crucified and risen Lord's redemptive work over the forces of evil feature prominently in its publications?

- Will our Association redress the lack of Melanesian content and witness in the global exhibition of the wisdom and foolishness of Christ in academic circles?

THE CHURCH IS THE FAMILY OF GOD AND THEOLOGIANS ARE TO BE PARENTS IN CHRIST – 1 COR 4:14-21

Paul's last metaphor in 1 Cor 4 turns full circle, and brings us back to the family household again. He shows that he has filled the role of spiritual parent to the Corinthians – and suggests that parenting for Christ is another way of understanding real theological leadership.

Many want the status – few, the responsibilities – of parenting. Thousands are ready to fill the role of παιδαγωγός (*paidagōgos*): instructors, advice givers, paid guardians, we might even call them "supervisors" or "counsellors", today. They are willing to give measured help and assistance – but there are limits to their availability, and to the depths they will walk with people in need.

This is not the model Paul approves. He seeks parents, not just advice givers. "Indeed, in Christ, I became your father through the gospel." Parenting means relationships, in which the theological teacher accepts the full responsibilities of parents. Not just the prestige, but the problems. Not just the public approval of the well-known teacher, but those willing to do the dirty work – nappy changes behind the scenes, as it were. Ready to persist with the difficult student, as a mother or true father does with their own children.

In our world of broken, disrupted family backgrounds, so many of those coming to theological study have such family deficits that more and more surrogate parents are needed to foster and bring eager, immature converts to maturity. This involves all the parenting relationships and skills we can bring. It means warning, not shaming, modelling, and setting an example, ensuring ongoing learning, and even discipline, when necessary

Paul challenges them – "*I appeal to you, then, be imitators of me*" – in such a role. This metaphor needs to be properly nuanced in its application. Paul calls for parenting, not paternalism. Parents seek the welfare, growth, and development of those entrusted to their care – not paternalistic power and authority for their own sakes. Parents uphold the inherited, and willingly-embraced new values, which fulfil and retain all that is best in the family's own heritage, not an imported or imposed value set, accompanied by paternalistic dominance. Parenting is motivated by a vision for increasing maturity, independence, and full adult participation in family life from the younger members, whereas paternalism continues to regard them as mere children, and expects to always treat them that way. Parenting accepts the difficulties, struggles, and forgiven failures, because parents, themselves, own the responsibility for the family to live well into the next generation. Paternalism writes off the failing, and puts limits around the costs it will endure, itself, for the good of the family. Parents know, as Paul's contrasts in vv. 19-21 suggest, where the word of God is working effectively, it produces, not arrogant talk, but life-transforming power. Theological educators, who appreciate the relational features of their parent-like role, yearn to express love and gentleness – rather than having to function in a corrective mode with those under their care.

As Melanesians, we also know it is not paternalistic pretenders, but true parents, who become worthy ancestor *tumbuna,* who are respected and honoured, and, even as living-dead, continue to exert a family-enriching influence.

This is the parenting model this metaphor offers for MATS to consider as its role in its re-birth.

CONCLUSION

Paul had diagnosed the Corinthian problems as worldliness, immaturity, and disunity, and saw right perceptions of their leaders and theological teachers as a, if not the most, significant factor in addressing these issues.

In Melanesia, *disunity* among the people of God often takes the form of denominational tribalism. Its more recent manifestations are dividing

families and villages, which, until recently, enjoyed an almost sacral unity through whole-village loyalty to a single denomination. That era has past, and very few villages today are not divided, with allegiance given to two, three, or even more, distinct church groups within one family line. And this, at a time when villages, wider communities, the nation, and the whole region need cohesion, cooperation, and harmony to withstand the rapid changes encroaching at so many levels.

In its earlier phase, MATS was, for quite some time, the most-genuinely ecumenical of the church agencies serving the churches of PNG. Catholics, Protestants, SDAs, Evangelicals, and mainline churches participated together from the beginning. The diversity and challenges are even greater today. Only an in-depth grasp of the concepts, we have discussed above, will enable a reinvigorated MATS to fulfil any similar unifying role today. But that is a priority need of our nation and region.

Melanesian *worldliness* is a many-headed monster. Never-quite-discarded traditional beliefs and powers, whether of sorcery, *sanguma, glasman*, or direct spirit intervention, are resurgent realities confronting the church. Western secular worldliness matches, or exceeds, those challenges in seriousness across much of the country, accelerating rapidly with every advance of many multi-nationals and undisciplined media. Churchly nominalism adds its own religious veneer over, or alongside, each of these. The pressure to allow aspects of one or another of these options to shape our theological leadership mounts steadily.

The standard for Christian *maturity* in Melanesia can never be anything other than "the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ". But, again, inadequate self-perceptions by, or inappropriate perceptions attributed to, Christian leaders and theological educators, hinders and undermines growth towards that mark.

We have suggested the metaphors, which Paul promotes as his prescription to correct false perceptions of leaders, are vital to handle these same three problems in our Melanesian context. They also offer a set of criteria, around which we could greatly enhance how we address these issues,

through the reestablishing of a Melanesian Association of Theological Schools that embraces and strives to exhibit the characteristics the metaphors dynamically present. May God recommission and equip us for just such a task this week.

PROCLAMATION OF CHRIST IN THE CONTEXT OF TRADITIONAL MELANESIAN CULTURES

Franco Zocca

Franco Zocca, is a Catholic priest, originally from Italy, and has a Master of Theology from the Gregorian University of Rome and a Doctorate in Social Sciences from the State University of Trento. After having worked in Indonesia from 1974 to 1988, he was transferred to the Melanesian Institute at Goroka, where he has been working in various capacities up till now. At the moment he is the Head of the Research Department.

INTRODUCTION

The following paper is based on my theological and anthropological studies, as well as on my almost 40-years experience in Indonesia and Papua New Guinea. The theological principles, which I am going to apply to the proclamation of Christ, in the context of traditional Melanesian cultures, can easily be applied to the context of other cultures as well.

I am a Catholic pastor with a Master in Theology (Gregorian University, Rome, 1969) and a Doctorate in Sociology (Trento University, 1978). After spending 13 years in Indonesia (Flores 1974-1987), and a few years in Italy and England (1987-1993), I was assigned to the Ecumenical Melanesian Institute of Goroka,[1] where I have been working since 1994.

The paper is limited to the "content" of the proclamation of Christ, although the author is aware that other factors should also be taken into consideration for a successful approach, such as relying on prayer and God's providence, having a humble attitude, achieving the trust of the

[1] The Melanesian Institute of Goroka, founded in January, 1970, is presently run by the four mainline churches in Papua New Guinea: Anglican, Catholic, Lutheran, and United.

targeted population, knowing the language and culture of the society, etc. These factors are very important, and cannot be neglected.[2]

IDEOLOGICAL ASSUMPTIONS

In regard to the content of the proclamation, my most important theological assumption, as far as the relationship between gospel and peoples' cultures and religions is concerned, is that of the so called "theory or model of fulfilment". According to this theory, Christianity brings to completion what God has already sown in peoples' cultures and religions, while, at the same time, purifying them from sinful elements. This theory is based on the approaches used by Jesus and Christian missionaries in proclaiming the Good News throughout the centuries.

The fulfilment theory is based, first of all, on the approach of Jesus towards the Jewish culture and religion. Jesus came into the Jewish culture, not to "abolish the Law and Prophets, but to complete them" (Matt 5:17).[3] In other words, Jesus came to earth, born to a specific people at a specific time, and in a specific place. He learned how to behave in that culture, learned how to speak in that language, and ministered to the real needs of the people in the context of their historical and political situation. He did not destroy, though he did confront the Jewish culture and religion, and correct its deviations (cf. Matt 5:20-48). In the gospels, the incarnation and mission of Jesus Christ is described as the coming into the Jewish culture of God's Word in flesh, who was "the real light, which enlightens everyone" (John 1:9), and which "shines in the darkness, and the darkness could not overpower it" (John 1:5).

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[2] There are various books on the communication of the Christian faith. See, for instance, the groundbreaking work of Eugene A. Nida, *Message and Mission: The Communication of the Christian Faith*, 1960.

[3] The Greek text has πληρώσαι (*plērōsai*), sometimes translated "fulfil" instead of "complete". The *Jerome Biblical Commentary* comments: " 'Fulfil': this word cannot refer to the simple literal observance; the following six examples negate such a facile interpretation. 'Fulfil' means to bring the Law to perfection. Jesus affirms indirectly that the Law is imperfect, unfinished; He will perfect and finish it" (*JBC*, vol 43, p. 34).

The theory of fulfilment is then based on the practice of the apostles and early missionaries, in regard to the Jewish communities. In their first proclamation of Christ, they made use of Jewish religious beliefs and institutions. Christ's life and preaching were presented as fulfilling prophecies, figures, and institutions of the First Testament. The proclamation of the gospel was done in the familiar context of traditional terminology, beliefs, and practices. Look, for instance, at the titles given to Jesus: Messiah, Lamb of God, Second Adam, High Priest, Word and Wisdom of God, Son of Man, Redeemer, Paschal Lamb, Rabbi, etc. They must have sounded very familiar to the Jews.

The "completion" brought about by Jesus did not only regard the Jewish legislation, but also its religious institutions and symbols. Jesus is the "second Adam" (cf. Rom 5:14), the "Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world" (John 1:29), the "Supreme High Priest" (Heb 4:14), "the Mediator of a better Covenant" (cf. Heb 8:6-7), "the new temple" (cf. John 1:19), etc. Jewish festivals, too, came to assume Christian forms and meanings, like the Passover meal, Easter festival, Pentecost, the baptism ritual, etc.

Also, in relation to the pagans – the non-Jews – the initial proclamation of Christ strived to build on their beliefs and traditions. Christian missionaries avoided imposing the Jewish Law on the non-Jews (cf. Acts 15), Paul and Barnabas addressed the pagans of Iconium in a way accessible to them (Acts 14), and the same happened in Paul's speech before the Greek council of the Areopagus (cf. Acts 17). The gospel of John borrowed the notion of *Logos* from the Greek philosophers, and the early Western church was strongly influenced by Greek and Roman civilisation in its presentation of the Christian faith, as well as in its institutions.

Ideally – if not always in praxis – Christian missionaries continued to build on the beliefs and customs of the people they intended to evangelise.[4] John

[4] Worthy of notice are the directives imparted by Popes and the Congregation for the Propagation of Faith to the missionaries sent to England and to China (see Thomas, 1995).

Newman sums up the whole process of "indigenisation" of evangelisation in the following lines:

> The use of temples, and those dedicated to particular saints, and ornaments on occasions with branches of trees, holy water, holy days and seasons, use of calendars, processions, blessings on the fields, sacerdotal vestments, the tonsure, the ring in marriage, turning to the east, images at a later date, perhaps the ecclesiastical chant, are all of pagan origin, and sanctified by their adoption into the church.[5]

The fulfilment theory is in line with what Pope Pius XII already wrote in 1951:

> The church, from the beginning, down to our time, has always followed this wise practice; let not the gospel, on being introduced into a new land, destroy or extinguish whatever its people possess that is naturally good, just, and beautiful. Therefore, the church, when she calls people to a higher culture, and a better way of life, under the inspiration of the Christian religion, does not act like one who recklessly cuts down and uproots a thriving forest. No, she grafts a good scion upon the wild stock that it may bear a crop of more delicious fruit. (*Evangelii Precones* – Heralds of the Gospel – #89.)

To the above statement the Second Vatican Council added some solid theological foundations,[6] which could be summarised by the following quotation:

> The Catholic church rejects nothing of what is true and holy in these [non-Christian] religions. With sincere respect, she looks in those ways of conduct and life, these precepts and teachings, which, though differing in many points from what she herself holds and teaches, yet not rarely reflect the ray of that Truth, which enlightens all human beings. But she proclaims and must ever proclaim, "the way, the

[5] Newman, *The Development of Christian Doctrine,* p. 373.
[6] *Lumen Gentium*, pp. 2, 16, 22; *Nostra Aetate*, p. 2; *Ad Gentes*, pp. 4, 9, etc.

> truth, and the life (John 14:6), in whom humans find the fullness of religious life, and in whom God has reconciled all things to Himself [cf. 2 Cor 5:18f]. (*Nostra Aetate* – In this Age of Ours – #2.)

On his part, Pope John Paul II supported the statements of the Council in his encyclicals,[7] and in other documents issued by the Vatican during his term of office.[8] He even implicitly referred to the "fulfilment theory" in some documents. The following are two quotations among many:

> God's Spirit presence and activity affect not only individuals, but also society and history, peoples, cultures, and religions. It is the Spirit who sows the "seeds of the Word", present in various customs and cultures, preparing them for the full maturity in Christ. (*Redemptoris Missio* – The Mission of the Redeemer, 1990: #29.)

> The incarnate Word is the fulfilment of the yearning, present in all the religions of humankind: this fulfilment is brought about by God Himself, and transcends all human expectations. Christ is the fulfilment of the yearning of all the world's religions, and, as such, He is their sole and definitive completion. (*Tertio Millennio Adveniente* – On the Approaching Third Millennium, 1994: #6.)

The theory of fulfilment, while holding a positive attitude towards human cultures, certainly does not deny the presence of sin in all of them. All cultures – including those in so-called Christian countries – wear the stains, and bear the shame of human sinfulness.[9] They may even contain, and perpetuate, corrupting elements. This fact does not generally mean that they are completely depraved, but, rather, in need of purification and redemption.

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[7] *Redemptor Hominis*, p. 4; *Dominus et Vivificantem*, p. 53; *Redemptoris Missio*, pp. 10, 18, 20, 28, 29, etc.

[8] *Dialogue and Proclamation*, pp. 19, 31, 50; *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, pp. 70, 71, 689, etc.

[9] *Gaudium et Spes*, pp. 13, 37; *Dialogue and Proclamation*, pp. 31, etc.

> For sin has been at work in the world, and so religious traditions, notwithstanding their positive values, reflect the limitations of the human spirit, sometimes inclined to choose evil. An open and positive approach to other religious traditions cannot overlook the contradictions, which may exist between them and Christian revelation. (*Lumen Gentium* – The Light of the Nations – #10.)

One major presupposition of the fulfilment theory is that, in similarity with Jesus' and the early Christians' approach, carriers of the initial gospel proclamation are to be well acquainted with cultural and religious beliefs and practices, and more in general with the so called "epistemology" of the targeted population. Such deep knowledge will make the "proclaimers" not only aware of what God has already sown in the culture of the people, but also of the possible misunderstandings of the gospel's message, since it will be received within the people's already-established frame of mind. This deep cultural knowledge is particularly important in Melanesia, since its cultures are very different from those of other continents' populations.

> And so the church has this exhortation for her children: prudently and lovingly, through dialogue and collaboration with the followers of other religions, and in witness to the Christian faith and life, acknowledge, preserve, and promote the spiritual and moral good, as well as the socio-cultural values found among them. (*Nostra Aetate* – In This Age of Ours – #2.)

Another presupposition on the part of the Christian proclaimers' proclamation is their awareness of the cultural aspects of the Christianity, from which they come, as well as of what is essential in the gospel message. There were and are, in fact, many types of Christianity across the centuries, and across the continents.

Besides, the author assumes that the recipients of the proclamation of Christ are not only the non-baptised, but also the baptised, whose knowledge of Christ is not adequate, or even false, which is often the case among the baptised in Melanesia nowadays. The fulfilment theory can be usefully applied, also, in further stages of the gospel proclamation.

Finally, I assume that the proclamation is not only made by words, but also by deeds and examples. Having stated that, let us start with a summary of the main characteristics of Melanesian traditional religions.

MAJOR CHARACTERISTICS OF TRADITIONAL MELANESIAN RELIGIONS

In primal cultures, it is difficult or impossible to separate religion from culture in general, if by "religion" we mean beliefs and practices directed of beings not to be found in mankind's common experience. In fact, traditional Melanesian religions permeated the whole life of the communities. For instance, people would not engage in hunting, fishing, planting, or go out fighting without first calling on supernatural help through religious rituals. Initiation rites were also accompanied by magico-religious practices. It is only because of the nature of this paper that the author tries to extract religious aspects from the more-general Melanesian cultures.

A summary of some major characteristics of traditional Melanesian religions is presented in Chart 1. They are contrasted with the correspondent characteristics of the kind of Christianity preached by the first missionaries, who were mostly north-Europeans (British, German, and French), or descendants from north-Europeans (American and Australian). Their type of Christianity is here called "modern Western Christianity".

Chart 1: Some Major Characteristics of Traditional Melanesian Religions, and of Modern Western Christianity

TRADITIONAL MELANESIAN RELIGIONS	MODERN WESTERN CHRISTIANITY
Integrated worldview No separation between the natural and supernatural realms: gods, spirits, ancestors, men, and animals, all of which inhabit the same cosmos, and interact with each other.	**Dualistic worldview** Separation of the natural and supernatural; only exceptionally does the supernatural interact with the natural world; scepticism concerning vision, dreams, miracles, etc.

Pre-scientific attitudes Natural phenomena are attributed to supernatural causes; importance of magical techniques to control natural phenomena. Belief in sorcery as explanation for sickness, death and disaster.	**Scientific attitudes** Natural phenomena are due to natural causes, which are discovered with the help of experiment; magical practices are not considered effective.
Clannish dimension Beliefs differ according to the clan, and so do rites, ancestors, spirits, taboos, and moral codes.	**Universalistic dimension** Christianity promulgates doctrines, rites, and a moral code applying to the whole human race.
Communitarian Relations with the supernatural world are community-centred; the moral code is based on the welfare of the community.	**Individualistic** Relations with the supernatural are individual and personal; the moral code is based on the salvation of each individual person.
Holistic Religious beliefs and rituals permeate the whole life. No activity is only secular.	**Compartmental** Clear division between secular activities and religious ones.
Immanent Creative deities are immanent, but not involved in the life of humans. Nature and ancestors' spirits are immanent and involved. Presence of "*dema*" figures.	**Transcendent** Creator is one and transcendent, benevolent and provident. Spirits and ghosts are also transcendent. Only exceptionally, they interfere with humans.
Based on veneration of the spirits Nature spirits, and spirits of the ancestors (ghosts) are venerated, and considered powerful.	**Limited veneration of spirits** Only the angelic spirits are venerated.
Magical It is believed that wealth and benefits, as well as sickness and disaster, can be obtained by means of rites and spells, which have automatic effects when correctly used by magicians.	**Trusting on prayer** The divinity cannot be forced by magical rites and spells. It can only be asked in prayer, in the confidence of being heard.

Pragmatic Religion is all about attaining practical and immediate ends: hunting, fishing, healing, rain, fertility, sickness, death, etc. Rites are changed if they do not work. The highest aim is fullness of life here on earth.	**Non-pragmatic** Religion is primarily concerned with the attainment of spiritual ends: pardon for sin, eternal life, strength to practice the commandments, etc. Rites are more stable.
Ritualistic There are all sorts of rites to obtain the desired result; great importance is placed on the exact execution of rites, and on their being done by experts.	**Non-ritualistic** Rites, especially among Protestants, are reduced to the minimum, and are considered more to be symbols of inner attitude than actions invested with their own power.
Based on reciprocity Relations with the non-empirical world are of the same type of those between humans, based on systems of exchange. Punishment is seen as the consequence of a faulty or failed exchange. Vengeance and pay back are a moral obligation.	**Based on grace** Relations with God are based on His free, gratuitous, condescension. Redemption and eternal salvation are freely given. Forgiveness and reconciliation are stressed.
Indigenous moral code The highest principle of morality is the welfare of one's own clan, but there are countless rules to observe: taboos, dietary requirements, fear of menstrual blood, strict observance of rituals, etc.	**Western-Christian moral code** Monogamy, free choice in marriage, gender equality, courts to resolve conflicts, individual rights, abolition of tribal fighting, universal brotherhood of mankind, code of modesty, etc.
Emotional Festivals, initiation rites, funerals, myths, etc., are celebrated with great emotional intensity; ecstatic phenomena are keenly sought after.	**Self-restraint** The participants in rituals should be calm and orderly; scepticism with regard to ecstatic phenomena.
Esoteric Secrecy is essential about rites, myths, etc., if these are not to lose their effectiveness; only initiates are supposed to have the knowledge, or full knowledge, of them.	**Transparent** Everything will be spoken about and explained; religious knowledge is open to anyone; the content of faith and rituals are explained.

Oral Religious knowledge is transmitted orally to the appropriate people. Myths are always open to adaptation to changing social and environmental circumstances.	**Written** Tradition is written down, and it is not subject to creeping or unnoticed change; especially in the case of the Bible or other holy books.
Millenarian Many Melanesian myths foresee the sudden irruption of a golden age, involving the return of the ancestors.	**Non-millenarian** Many Christian denominations do not emphasise the parousia, the second coming of Christ.

Source: Zocca, 2007: pp. 150-152.

BRIEF EXCURSUS ON THE EVANGELISATION OF MELANESIA

The first attempts in the evangelisation of Melanesia were sporadic. In the 17th and 18th centuries, the Spanish and Portuguese ships that plied a regular trans-Pacific route from South America and the Central Americas to the Moluccas and return, usually had religious personnel on board. From time to time, local islanders would be taken on board and transported to places like the Spanish Americas to be Christianised there, and to return as evangelisers of their own people. But these Catholic efforts were without fruit in Melanesia.

It wasn't until the late 18th century that Christian missionaries began a serious evangelisation effort in Polynesia, which reached Melanesia a few decades later. With the exception of the Indonesian Province of Papua – which was first evangelised by missionaries coming from Java – the Pacific evangelisation spread from east to the west. Protestant missionaries, sent by mission agencies, mostly located in Europe and Australia, arrived first, and made use of indigenous Christians in spreading the Good News to other islands. They reached Fiji in 1830, New Caledonia and Vanuatu in 1840, the Solomon Islands in 1845, and Eastern New Guinea (the present Papua New Guinea) in 1871. Protestant missionaries had already reached Western New Guinea (the present Indonesian Papua) by 1855. The founding Protestant denominations were Methodist, Congregationalist, Presbyterian, Lutheran, Calvinist, Anglican, and Adventist.

On the part of the Catholic church, the evangelisation of Oceania was first entrusted by the Vatican to religious orders of recent formation, such as the French *Society of Mary*, the Italian *Pontifical Institute of Mission Overseas* (PIME), the French *Missionaries of the Sacred Heart,* the French *Missionaries of the Sacred Hearts of Jesus and Mary,* and the German *Society of the Divine Word.* Catholic missionaries arrived in New Caledonia in 1843, in Fiji in 1844, in the Solomon Islands in 1845, in Eastern New Guinea in 1847, in Vanuatu in 1848, in Western New Guinea in 1912.

Enormous difficulties, and heavy loss of personnel, accompanied the evangelisation of Melanesia. Mission stations often had to be abandoned, due to the hostility of the local populations, or to infections and epidemics. Many foreign missionaries suffered from a violent, or early, death. The evangelisation of Melanesia did not happen as smoothly as that of Polynesia, and also suffered severe setbacks during the First and Second World Wars. In spite of all that, by the mid-20th century, most Melanesians had been "converted" to Christianity. Starting from the 1960s onwards, many Protestant missions became autonomous churches, while the previous Catholic Apostolic Vicariates became autonomous dioceses.

After the Second World War, many new Protestant denominations entered the Melanesian region, as well as male and female Catholic religious orders. The pioneering churches found their ranks being thinned by the success of the newly-arrived, and the scene of religious affiliation was changed significantly. It is estimated that, in Melanesia, during the last 50 years, a good quarter of the faithful of the pioneering churches had transferred their allegiance to recently-arrived churches. Percentages differ, according to the country, but the overall tendency is clear, and seems destined to increase. From the data collected by the Melanesian Institute Research Team in 2003, the following was the situation of Melanesia as a whole in the matter of religious affiliation at the turn of the second into the third millennium.

Table 1: Religious Affiliation in Melanesia (2003)

CHURCH/ RELIGION	Indonesian Papua	Papua New Guinea	Solomon Islands	Vanuatu	New Caledonia	Fiji	TOTAL
Catholic	450,000 *18.4%*	1,500,000 *27.3%*	85,000 *17.3%*	28,000 *13.3%*	112,000 *50.9%*	70,000 *8.2%*	**2,245,000** ***26.2%***
Calvinist (1)	79,000 *32.2%*	***	***	64,000 *30.5%*	47,700 *21.7%*	500 *0.06%*	**902,200** ***9.3%***
Methodist (2)	***	630,000 *11.5%*	49,000 *11.5%*	***	***	300,000 *25.7%*	**979,000** ***10.1%***
Lutheran (3)	***	920,000 *16.7%*	***	***	***	***	**920,000** ***9.5%***
Anglican	***	175,000 *3.2%*	155,000 *28.2%*	28,800 *13.7%*	***	7,000 *0.8%*	**365,800** ***3.8%***
Baptist (4)	90,000 *3.7%*	135,000 *2.5%*	2,500 *0.5%*	***	***	2,000 *0.2%*	**229,500** ***2.4%***
Evangelical (5)	345,000 *14.1%*	350,000 *6.4%*	85,000 *17.3%*	8,900 *4.2%*	***	20,000 *2.4%*	**808 900** ***8.3%***
Adventist (6)	12,000 *0.5%*	600,000 *11.0%*	55,000 *12.2%*	28,000 *13.3%*	460 *0.2%*	22,000 *3.2%*	**717,460** ***7.4%***
Apostolic (7)	***	120,000 *2.2%*	2,000 *0.4%*	3,900 *0.9%*	100 *0.05%*	3,000 *0.4%*	**129,000** ***1.3%***
Pentecostal (8)	27,000 *1.1%*	500,000 *9.1%*	10,000 *2.0%*	22,600 *10.8%*	3,100 *1.4%*	35,000 *4.8%*	**597,700** ***6.2%***
Mormons (9)	***	23,000 *0.4%*	250 *0.05%*	2,100 *1.0%*	1,900 *0.9%*	4,000 *0.5%*	**31,250** ***0.3%***
Jehovah's Witnesses	***	24,000 *0.4%*	9,000 *1.8%*	400 *0.2%*	1,660 *0.8%*	7,000 *0.8%*	**42,060** ***0.4%***
Other Christian (10)	127,500 *5.2%*	407,000 *7.4%*	22,250 *4.5%*	15,000 *7.1%*	***	16,500 *2.0%*	**588,650** ***6.1%***
Total Christian	**1,841,500** ***75.2%***	**5,384,400** ***97.9%***	**475,000** ***96.9%***	**201,700** ***96.0%***	**166,920** ***75.8%***	**487,000** ***58.0%***	**8,556,530** ***88.1%***

CHURCH/ RELIGION	Indonesian Papua	Papua New Guinea	Solomon Islands	Vanuatu	New Caledonia	Fiji	TOTAL
Baha'i	***	18,000 *0.3%*	3,000 *0.7%*	2,000 *1.0%*	800 *0.4%*	1,000 *0.1%*	**24,800** ***0.2%***
Muslim	600,000 *24.5%*	1,000 *0.02%*	***	100 *0.05%*	5,500 *2.5%*	64,000 *7.6%*	**670,600** ***6.9%***
Hindu	4,000 *0.2%*	600 *0.01%*	***	120 *0.05%*	***	275,000 *32.7%*	**279,720** ***2.9%***
Buddhist	2,000 *0.1%*	1,000 *0.02%*	***	***	200 *0.1%*	***	**3,200** ***0.03%***
Other religions (11)	***	15,000 *0.3%*	5,000 *1.0%*	***	***	5,000 *0.6%*	**25,000** ***0.3%***
Traditional Religions (12)	***	50,000 *0.9%*	2,000 *0.4%*	5,500 *2.6%*	***	***	**57,500** ***0.6%***
Other non-Christian (13)	2,500 *0.1%*	30,000 *0.5%*	5,000 *1.0%*	1,680 *0.8%*	46,580 *21.3%*	8,000 *1.0%*	**92,860** ***1.0%***
TOTAL NON-CHRISTIAN	**608,500** ***24.8%***	**115,600** ***2.1%***	**15,000** ***3.1%***	**8,300** ***4.0%***	**53,080** ***24.4%***	**353,000** ***42.0%***	**1,153,680** ***11.9%***
TOTAL POPULATION	**2,450,000** ***100.0%***	**5,500,000** ***100.0%***	**490,000** ***100.0%***	**210,000** ***100.0%***	**220,000** ***100.0%***	**840,000** ***100.0%***	**9,710,000** ***100.0%***

*** Not available, not offered.

(1) *Calvinists*: Presbyterians, Christian Evangelical Church in Indonesia, Union of Reformed churches, Evangelical Church of New Caledonia, Free Evangelical Church of New Caledonia, Protestant Church of Indonesia in Papua, etc.

(2) *Methodists*: Methodist church, United church of PNG, United church of Solomon Islands, Wesleyan Methodist church, etc.

(3) *Lutherans*: Evangelical Lutheran church of PNG, Gutnius Lutheran church, Melpa Lutheran church, Church of the Protestant Community in Papua.

(4) *Baptists*: Baptist Bible Fellowship, Maranatha Baptist church, Baptist Unions, Sovereign Grace Baptist Union, Tabernacle church, Independent Baptist church, etc.

(5) *Evangelicals*: Evangelical Church in Indonesia, Evangelical Church of the Tabernacle, Christian Community of the Bible, Church of Christ, South Sea Evangelical church, etc.

(6) *Adventists*: Seventh-day Adventist church, Reformed Adventist church.

(7) *Apostolic*: Apostolic church, New Apostolic church.

(8) *Pentecostals*: Assemblies of God, Pentecostal Church of Bethel, United Pentecostal church, Four Square Gospel church, etc.

(9) *Mormons*: Church of Jesus Christ of the Latter Day Saints, Reformed Church of Jesus Christ of the Latter Day Saints.

(10) *Other Christian churches*: Independent indigenous churches, Eastern Orthodox, smaller churches not federated or affiliated, etc.

(11) *Other religions*: Confucianism, Sikhs, modern orientalising sects, etc.

(12) *Traditional religions*: Both the really-traditional ones, and the more-modern, usually messianic versions.

(13) *Other non-Christian*: Atheists, agnostics, not members of any institutionalised church.

Source: Zocca, 2007, pp. 197-198.

ATTEMPT AT AN IDEAL PROCLAMATION OF THE GOSPEL IN MELANESIA

The following attempt is based on the already exposed "fulfilment theory". The initial proclamation of Christ should be presented in the first instance as a "completion" of beliefs and practices already present in traditional Melanesian cultures and religions.

The following are some suggestions in that direction.

- Belief in Creator deities, sometimes in a supreme Spirit, was almost universally present. Monotheism and creationism could be adapted into that belief.
- The integrated vision of the world could facilitate the acceptance of a provident God-Father, who is close to His children, and cares for their well-being.
- Belief in good and bad spirits was also universally present. The doctrine of angels and demons could fit into it.
- Belief in the existence of souls, and their permanence after the death of a person was held by all Melanesians. New teaching would have been that the fate of the ancestors' souls was now completely in God's hands.
- The myths regarding the "*dema*" convey the principle that the death of one person brings life to the community. A profound insight, which can easily be applied to Jesus and His death. To the search for a fullness of life here on earth could be added the search for a fullness of life beyond the grave (cf. John 10:10).
- The communitarian society, in which the well-being of all takes priority over the individual interest, could become a concrete image of an ideal "body of Christ".
- Leaders, who acquire their status because of the services provided to their people, are also a good example of that leadership as service, proclaimed in the gospel.
- The need of rituals for different activities and initiation should also have been recognised, and taken into consideration, in providing Christian rituals, or adapting the old ones. Several sacraments, such as initiation rituals, could easily fit into Melanesian cultures.
- The authority attributed to the mythological stories, handed down by the ancestors, could also have easily been transferred to God's word in the Bible.

- Beliefs surrounding the veneration of the ancestors could be applied to the veneration of saints as well.
- The attitude of "awe" and taboo in regard to magic things and places could be transferred to Christian holy books, rituals, and places.

As already said, this kind of approach presupposes a deep knowledge of Melanesian cultures, on the part of the proclaimers. The same knowledge is also needed to oppose and correct beliefs and practices, which are in clear contrast with the Christian message. To mention some:

- The blaming of sorcerers and witches for sickness, death, and disasters, followed by accusations and punishments.
- The pay-back mentality, which sees forgiveness as weakness.
- Easy harming and killing of supposed enemies.
- The low status of women, who are easily abused.
- The prestigious status enjoyed in the society by polygynous men
- The fear of ancestral ghosts.
- Resorting to tribal fights in order to resolve conflicts.

These bad habits, too, should be corrected, beginning with their cultural roots. For instance, accusations and punishments of supposed sorcerers are rooted in the belief of the effectiveness of magical practices, and in the non-acceptance of natural causes as final explanations for natural phenomena. They could be corrected by education, exposure to modern medicine, and appropriate legislation.[10] Pay-back mentality could be corrected by presenting the advantages of peaceful living, and the sacredness of human life.

[10] In Papua New Guinea, there is a "Sorcery Act", which criminalises the practice of malevolent sorcery. According to the author, this Act is rather reinforcing the belief, instead of taking it away.

Nowadays, the almost all of the indigenous inhabitants of Melanesia call themselves Christian. It seems, therefore, that the phase of initial proclamation should be over, at least for the adult people. Unfortunately, this is not the case, since many important values, proclaimed by Christ, have not yet been internalised, and made their own, by Melanesians.

Besides, apart from the traditional customs not yet transformed by the Christian message, there are many new customs, which are strongly in contrast with Christian ethics, such as corruption, abuse of alcohol and drugs, prostitution, gambling, pornography, and other crimes of various type. Secularisation and agnosticism, especially among young, educated Melanesians, are also affecting the modern population. We now experience a certain amount of no-churched youth and adults. Melanesian cultures and peoples are still in need of conversion, prompted by an ever-deeper understanding and acceptance of the gospel of Christ. The above list of suggestions for the proclamation of the gospel might still be useful in the present context, and in the transmission of the Christian faith to the younger generation.

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MANSINAM: CENTRE OF PILGRIMAGE, UNITY, AND POLARISATION IN WEST PAPUA[1]

Uwe Hummel

Dr Uwe Hummel is a pastor of the Evangelical-Lutheran church, and, since April, 2010, has served as Lecturer in Theology at the Lutheran Highlands Seminary in Ogelbeng, near Mt Hagen Papua New Guinea. In previous years, he served as Coordinator of the German West Papua Netzwerk (2004-2009), and as Asia Secretary of the United Evangelical Mission (2007-2010).

INTRODUCTION

Annually, on February 5, especially in every round fifth year, thousands of pilgrims populate the tiny island of Mansinam in the Dorehri Bay in the Regency of Manokwari, West Papua, Indonesia. While the mainly Protestant Christians commemorate the arrival of the first missionaries in 1855, the local hotel industry has its peak season.

Coming from Manokwari town on the mainland – some having travelled from neighbouring Papua New Guinea,[2] or farther abroad – the pilgrims reach Mansinam by traditional canoe in less than 30 minutes. Because an islet of 450 hectares is not very well suited to accommodate thousands of people, the worshippers, often including the governors, and other VIPs, of

[1] The author presented this paper in abbreviated form on June 23, 2011, during the Inaugural Conference of the Melanesian Association of Theological Schools (MATS), held from June 21-24, at the Pacific Adventist University in Port Moresby, Papua New Guinea. A special word of gratitude goes to Mr Wolfgang Apelt, librarian at the Archive of the Rhenish Mission/United Evangelical Mission (UEM) in Wuppertal Germany, who provided the author with some of the bibliographical data.

[2] In 2010 and 2011, delegations from the Evangelical-Lutheran Church of Papua New Guinea (ELC-PNG), which, since October 26, 2009, has an official partnership with the Evangelical Church of West Papua (GKI-TP), have attended these celebrations.

the two provinces of Indonesian Papua[3], can hardly move towards the memorial site[4] for the torch-lighting opening ceremony on February 5.[5]

But, there is another reality as well in Manokwari: while the largely Christian indigenous population is joyfully celebrating, the Muslim settlers, about half of the population in coastal cities, such as Manokwari, are in great fear. "Irian", as they still use to call West Papua, has become their home, too; they refer to history for proof of some deep Muslim roots in the ground of Manokwari. Unfortunately, some politicians and religious leaders on both sides exploit such fears and religious sentiments.

THE MISSIONARIES AND THEIR JOURNEY TO PAPUA

Johann G. Geissler[6] and Carl W. Ottow[7] were so-called missionary-workmen, pious craftsmen, without much formal theological education, prepared during some months in the missionary seminary of Gossner[8] in Berlin, and thereafter by Heldring[9] in Hemmen in the Netherlands. They had left the Netherlands for the Dutch Indies by ship on June 26, 1852, and arrived in Batavia three-and-a-half months later. While waiting for permission from the Dutch authorities to do mission work in New Guinea,

[3] The provinces of Papua (bordering PNG), and Papua Barat (the "Bird's Head" of New Guinea, bordering the Moluccas). Until 2000, the region was officially called Irian Jaya.

[4] Since 2010, a huge white cross, flanked by statues of angels, marks the centre of the memorial site. Greenpeace supported this project by donating a renewable energy plant. This hybrid power station produces electricity from sun and wind, allowing the memorial cross, and the nearby memorial church building, to be illuminated, as well as the speakers and musicians to use microphones and amplifiers during the celebrations. Cf. *Inisiatif Energi Terbarukan di Pulau Mansinam: Revolusi Energi berawal disini!*, Greenpeace internet web-site, *Greenpeace/Shailendra Yashwant*.

[5] Cf. Ichwan Susanto, "Puluhan Ribu Peziarah Padati Pulau Mansinam", newspaper article in *KOMPAS*, February 5, 2010 (translation by U. Hummel).

[6] Johann Gottlob Geissler (German spelling: Geißler) was born on February 18, 1830, in Langenreichenbach in Torgau, Kingdom of Saxony (later a part of Germany), and died during furlough in Siegen, Westphalia, on June 11, 1870.

[7] Carl Wilhelm Ottow was born on January 24, 1827, in Luckenwalde, Mark Brandenburg, Kingdom of Prussia (later a part of Germany), and died on November 9, 1862, in Kwawi, Manokwari, Dutch New Guinea.

[8] Johannes Evangelista Gossner (1773-1858).

[9] Otto Gerhard Heldring (1804-1876).

they did some manual labour to provide for their living, because missionary-workmen did not get a salary, or other regular support, from an organisation.[10] They used their spare time to learn the Malay language, and soon were able to teach local pupils, as well as tending to the sick in the villages.

One-and-a-half years later, the permit arrived and Geissler and Ottow embarked on a steamship for Ternate in the Northern Moluccas, bordering New Guinea. This journey lasted more than five months. On Ternate, they stayed at the parsonage of Revd J. E. Höveker for a few months of intensive preparations, after which they got the opportunity of a free trip on a Dutch merchant's vessel,[11] taking them to Mansinam, with their livestock, and a prefab house (which, unfortunately, was incomplete, and of no use), as well as a 12-year old boy by the name of Frits Weggers, who served as a Malay translator.[12]

BEGINNINGS OF MISSION WORK ON MANSINAM

On February 5, 1855, Geissler and Ottow stepped ashore on Mansinam, thus being the first missionaries to serve on New Guinea. Falling on their knees, they proclaimed: "In the name of God we set foot on this land"[13] – a dedication today known to every Christian child in West Papua.

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[10] For their basic equipment, and initial travelling expenses to their destination on Dutch New Guinea, the Amsterdam Society of Women in Support of Mission (*Amsterdamse Vrouwenvereniging tot Bervordering van de Zendingszaak*) provided the means. In Batavia, the "Committee of the Christian Workman" provided the means for travelling to Ternate.

[11] Mr van Duivenbode, the merchant, generously offered other necessary logistic support to the missionaries as well.

[12] In the wake of celebrations in 2011, Izak Morin wrote a remarkable reflection on the use of Melayu Papua, the dominant lingua franca of Papua-Indonesia. In this article, he reflects also on the contribution of young Frits, son of a teacher on the Moluccan island of Ternate, as translator to the first missionaries on Mansinam. Regarding the key role of communication in missionary work, little Frits' role should not be underestimated. Cf. Izak Morin, "Melayu Papua dan Injil di Tanah Papua", in: Artikel & Berita – Bedah Bahasa (Internet forum), February 7, 2011, p. 1.

[13] Perhaps also spoken in Malay: "dalam nama Tuhan kami menginjak tanah ini".

On the return voyage, the captain of the merchant vessel, witnessing the poor state of health of the missionaries, left a 12-year old girl by the name of Saptu behind as cook. Saptu and Frits became indispensable supporters of this initial missionary venture. Thus, the "Apostles of Papua", as they are affectionately called, who introduced Christianity to New Guinea, included two children.

The early beginnings of missionary work on Mansinam[14] were extremely difficult. The missionaries suffered from various illnesses, and, initially, the indigenous Numfor and Arfak kept their distance from, or even reacted somewhat hostile towards, the intruders.

In order to sustain themselves, the missionaries engaged in retail trade in birds of paradise, tortoise, shells, etc. In return, they could get medicines, wheat flower, coffee, tea, and other necessary things. These trading activities gradually strengthened relations with the local population.

Geissler and Ottow followed the method of a comprehensive missionary approach,[15] which included development work, mediation in conflicts, and education. Like others on some other primary "mission fields" in the Dutch East Indies, they also manumitted some slave children, took them into their home, and educated them, both informally, as members of their household, and later also formally in school. They became the core of the first Christian congregation on Mansinam.

In April, 1855, Geissler had to leave Ottow, Frits, and Saptu behind to have a dangerously-infected foot injury treated in Ternate.[16] On his return,[17] five Muslim tradesmen, who built the missionaries' house, which was dedicated on July 6, 1856, accompanied him.

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[14] For the following data in this chapter, I depend strongly on the work of Helga and Johannes C. G. Ottow, *Im Namen Gottes betreten wir dieses Land*, 2004.

[15] Cf. Roeber, K., *Zum 175. Geburtstag von Johann Gottlob Geißler (1830-1870).*

[16] In the meantime, Ottow had thoroughly studied the Numfor vernacular, primal religion and customary law. After a while, he was admitted to attend meetings of the elders. His anthropological studies, started during these solitary months, and published after his death in 1862, was the first authentic report about Papua.

[17] Geissler returned to Mansinam on February 12, 1856.

While Ottow stayed on Mansinam, Geissler again left the isle from March until June, 1857, in order to rescue shipwrecked persons in the Gelvink Bay (today Teluk Cenderawasih), for which both missionaries were awarded 250 guilders, plus an annual aid of 600 guilders each. Ottow accompanied the three rescued seamen to Ternate, and stayed there until the arrival of his fiancée, Auguste.[18]

In 1857, Ottow and Geissler opened a school, in which they taught their "children" (the manumitted slaves), as well as some local boys. At the end of 1858, Auguste, the wife of Ottow, who had arrived at the beginning of the year, added a class of seven to nine girls.

On October 1, 1860, the Ottow couple moved over to a new missionary house in Kwawi on mainland Manokwari – in sight of Mansinam – while Geissler remained on Mansinam. Ottow translated the gospel of Matthew into the Numfor vernacular, and published a little hymn book containing 27 songs in Numfor. As of 1861, he held two worship services on Sundays, for men in the morning, and for women in the afternoon, using the Numfor vernacular.[19]

In 1862, Geissler married the Dutch Pauline Justine Reynaert. They stayed on Mansinam, where they completed a house for themselves, and some years later built the church.

On November 9, 1862, Ottow died of malaria, leaving behind his pregnant wife, Auguste, and his son Johannes.[20] He was buried near the missionary

[18] Wilhelmine Auguste (called Auguste) Ottow nee Letz, (born July 2, 1830, in Luckenwalde – died November 20, 1899, in The Netherlands). Auguste was the first European woman to stay permanently in New Guinea.

[19] When Geissler and Ottow got the message that the Utrecht Missionary Society wanted to send out three of its missionaries to Mansinam, they began seriously to look for another mission post in Amberbalken, and developed a mission and development plan, which was later, in 1863, acknowledged by the colonial authorities.

[20] Johannes Carl Gottlob Ottow (born on November 12, 1861, in Manokwari – died on December 21, 1945, in Zeist, Netherlands), became a missionary and seminary teacher on Talaud, but later requested a transfer to another area in the Dutch East Indies, which was rejected. He then became a successful teacher (later headmaster) at public elementary schools in the Dutch East Indies.

house in Kwawi. The grave in Kwawi has become a memorial, which, like the island of Mansinam, is held as a sacred place for most Papuan Christians today.

Auguste left Mansinam for Ternate on March 16, 1863.[21] Two days after her departure, three missionaries of the Utrecht Missionary Society[22], two of them with their wives, arrived to join the Geisslers on Mansinam. They were missionary J. L. Van Hasselt and his wife, missionary T. F. Klaassen and his wife, and missionary W. Otterspoor. After an earthquake and a tsunami hit the islet the next year, only the Geisslers and Van Hasselts stayed on.

Van Hasselt, who served on the isle until 1907, is the founder of the Christian congregation on Mansinam.[23] On February 5, 1880, after 25 years of mission work and the death of 17 missionaries and 20 Papuans, the first fruits of New Guinea, were baptised. The spread of Christianity in West Papua, however, was a later development of the 20th century.

SPREAD OF CHRISTIANITY IN WEST PAPUA

By the beginning of the 20th century, a movement by Papuans had sprung up, in which Christianity spread from village to village in the northern regions of Dutch New Guinea.[24] The village elders themselves asked the Protestant mission to send Christian teachers and evangelists. These usually came from the neighbouring Moluccas.

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[21] In order to give birth to her second child, Wilhelm Martin Ottow (May 18, 1863-November 22, 1916). Little Johannes, too, was seriously ill, and needed treatment on Ternate.

[22] *Utrechtsche Zendings Vereeniging* (UZV), 1859-1907 (in 1907, UZV merged with other Dutch Reformed Missionary Societies in the *Samenwerkende Zendingscorporaties*).

[23] On March 15, 1865, the Utrecht Missionary Society wanted to stop all missionary work in New Guinea. But, because of the protest of Geissler and Van Hasselt, and especially also of Auguste Ottow, the move was reconsidered and the work continued. Geissler, together with Pauline, and their son Gustav, left Mansinam for furlough in 1870. Due to the death of Geissler, they were never to return to Mansinam. The work, however, was continued by the Dutch brethren.

[24] Cf. Siefried Zöllner, "The culture of the Papuans in transition", pp. 66-72.

The Roman Catholic Mission started in south-western Fak Fak in 1894, and later in south-eastern Merauke. Here, the missionaries of the Sacred Heard from the Netherlands were very successful. Today, about 18 percent of the population of West Papua belong to the Roman Catholic church.[25]

From 1912 until 1928, the Dutch colonial government had a policy of avoiding "double mission", allocating the North to the Protestants, and the South to the Roman Catholics.[26] In 1939, Protestant mission work in the Western Highlands (Eranotali) was started by an American missionary of The Christian & Missionary Alliance (CAMA) with his Dayak assistants.[27] In the 1950s, the Dani of the eastern parts (Baliem Valley) were reached by CAMA, and, in 1960, the Rhenish Mission commenced its work among the Yali.[28]

During the 1960s and 1970s, a movement, similar to that 60 years earlier on the north coast, established Christianity in most parts of the highlands. Various Christian missions competed with one another. Franco Zocca rightly calls it a "real race for souls, as, indeed, it was also a desperate race to 'develop' the region".[29] Siegfried Zöllner, a former Rhenish missionary and West Papua expert, summarises the significant impact of the gospel on the indigenous people of West Papua as follows:[30] it ended "tribal feuds and vendettas", and broadened the horizons of the people to an expanded world. Christian education, often at the request of the Papuan people, brought about a "shift in values", resulting in a gradual change from traditional to educated leadership. The Christian worship, which, unlike the primal religion, does not exclude women from ritual activities, but, rather,

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[25] Cf. Franco Zocca, *Melanesia and its Churches*, pp. 130.
[26] Ibid., pp. 120-130.
[27] Cf. Benny Giay, Zakheus Pakage and his Communities, pp. 27-31. The Dayak are the major indigenous people of Kalimantan, the Indonesian part of Borneo.
[28] Siegfried Zöllner was the pioneer of the Yali. Today, in his retirement, Revd Dr Zöllner is the chairman of the Advisory Board of the German West Papua Netzwerk. His dissertation on the mythology and primal religion of the Yali has just been published in Bahasa Indonesia (Zöllner, Siegfried, *Pohon Yeli dan Mithos Wam dalam Agama Orang Yali*, Penerbit Wahine, LAI, Jakarta, 2011, ISBN 9783941387041).
[29] Franco Zocca, *Melanesia and its Churches*, pp. 128.
[30] Siefried Zöllner, "The culture of the Papuans in transition", pp. 67-68.

encourages them to participate, contributed towards the emancipation of women. While Christianity introduced Western medicine, in order to combat illnesses, which traditional remedies were unable to cure, at the same time, it opened the interiors to previously-unknown diseases, and paved the way for the introduction of modern currency and trade, which, though unavoidable, had rather negative effects on the life of traditional communities.

Today, it is estimated that 90 percent of the indigenous population of West Papua not only adheres to Christianity, but also values it as an integral, if not the most important, part of its identity. It marks a major difference between the vast majority of Melanesian Papua, and most of the Asian settlers. Great efforts have been made by the Indonesian authorities, and (until recently) even the Indonesian Communion of Churches (PGI), to keep the Protestant churches in West Papua apolitical, if not even supportive of the state ideology of "unity at all costs" (even at the expense of human rights) from Sabang in Aceh to Merauke in West Papua. Despite this kind of indoctrination and intimidation, the Papuan churches have maintained (and, in the past decade, significantly increased) their role as human rights defenders. In this respect, the Roman Catholic Justice and Peace Secretariat or SKP,[31] and the Human Rights, or JPIC,[32] Desk of the Protestant GKI in Tanah Papua, take a lead, while there are also significant contributions by the Baptist Union in Tanah Papua, the Christian Tabernacle church (KINGMI), and others. Amid continuous gross human rights violations,[33] especially committed by elements of the Indonesian

[31] *Sekretariat untuk Keadilan dan Perdamaian.* There are offices of SKP in Jayapura, Merauke, Timika, and Sorong.

[32] Justice, Peace, and the Integrity of Creation. The main office is situated at the Synod Office of the GKI-TP in Jayapura.

[33] Authoritative reports by UN Special Envoy Hina Jilani on the ill treatment of human rights defenders in West Papua in 2007, and by UN Special Rapporteur on Torture, Manfred Nowak on March 7, 2008 (cf. UNOG, Special Representative of Secretary-General on Situation of Human Rights Defenders concludes visit to Indonesia, June 12, 2007; UN News Service. See also articles in West Papua Rundbrief No. 43 (January, 2008, pp. 13-14, on the web-site of the German West Papua Netzwerk (www.westpapuanetz.de). For a recent report on severe torture in custody and violence committed against civilians by the by the security forces, impunity, and also attacks by

security forces, and impunity by the judicial courts against the practices of human rights offenders, the indigenous Papuans turn to the churches, rather than to any other bodies (including NGOs), for protection and advocacy. Often Papuan churches openly support the distinctly Melanesian identity of the Papuans.

ISLAM IN WEST PAPUA

Christianity, however, has not been the first world-religion entering these parts. For hundreds of years, possibly as early as the 16th century, the Muslim sultanate of Tidore in the Moluccas had claimed Manokwari as its hinterland, but had failed to set up any kind of regular administration.[34]

Mainly due to the influence of Muslims from the Moluccas, certain regions, such as Fak Fak, Kaimana, Bintuni Bay, the Raja Ampat Islands, Sorong, and Manokwari have a strong indigenous population, traditionally adhering to Islam. Papuan Muslims, who have traditionally lived peacefully alongside their Christian neighbours, make up about 10 percent of the total indigenous population of West Papua.

The heavy influx, especially since the 1980s, of mainly Muslim settlers from Java, Madura, Bali, Sulawesi, Moluccas, and other parts of Indonesia, have, however, changed the harmonious social and demographic composition dramatically.

TRANSMIGRATION AND SECTARIAN STRIFE

Since the implementation, by presidential decree in 1978 (*Impres* 7/1978), of the Indonesia transmigration program in West Papua, and also,

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PNG security forces against West Papua refugees (so-called illegal border-crossers), see the report of West Papua Advocacy Team (WPAT), *West Papua Report February 2011*. WPAT is closely affiliated to the Robert F. Kennedy Memorial Foundation, and is serious in its documentation of human rights violations in West Papua.

[34] Cf. Th. Van den End, et al, *Ragi Carita 2*, pp. 112. The Sultanate of Tidore was founded in 1495 by Sultan Ciriliyati (cf. *Tidore Sultanate*, Dunia Melayu Se-dunia, Melayu Online.de). The neighbouring Sultanate of Ternate likewise claimed New Guinea as part of its territory near the end of the 16th century (cf. *History of Ternate*: From Islamic Sultanates in modern Indonesia).

exceedingly, on their own initiative (*swakarsa*), tens of thousands – if not hundreds of thousands – of people from other parts of the country have settled in West Papua. The vast majority of them are Muslims. Therefore, in towns and cities, such as Jayapura, Sorong, Timika, and Manokwari, Islam is growing rapidly, gradually outnumbering the Christians, and gaining control over the economy.[35] Some estimates, though without solid statistical basis, put the non-indigenous (and, therefore, mainly Muslim) part of the population at 40-45 percent.[36]

Especially since the more-recent settlers do not adjust to the Papuan way of life, but, conversely, with the assistance of the national authorities, often enforce their cultural values on public life, this dangerously increases the potential for sectarian conflict.

In June, 2008, a report by the International Crises Group (ICG)[37] warned about the real danger of communal tensions in Manokwari, similar to those in the Moluccas during the years 1999 until 2002. The reason was the "change of the religious map" caused by the recent influx of intolerant migrants, both Muslims and Christians, from the neighbouring Moluccas. Certain "new strands of Christianity and Islam", i.e., fundamentalist Christians, and Wahabite, or Salafistic, Muslims, had arrived in West Papua, as from 2000. In parts of the Bird's Head Region of New Guinea, this has intensified already-existing communal fears caused by transmigration, implemented in West Papua since 1978, and supplemented by ever-growing numbers of Indonesians, who come on their own initiative (*transmigrasi swakarsa*).

[35] For the "Demographic Situation in Papua" and the impact of the rapidly-increasing number of settlers (especially in the cities) against the very low growth of the indigenous population, as well as the economic dominance of settlers, see Theo van den Broek, "Social Aspects in Papua", pp. 134-147. Also, Franco Zocca, *The Plight of Papuans in Irian Jaya (1963-1998)*, pp. 82-84.

[36] Theo van den Broek mentions one such estimate of 45 percent for the year 2004 ("Social Aspects in Papua", p. 138). Such a figure seems possible to me, and has often been mentioned to me by Papuan tribal and church leaders.

[37] *Communual Tentions in Papua*, ICG Report, June 16, 2008.

AUTONOMY AND RELIGIOUS POLITICS

The move, since 1999, towards regional autonomy in Indonesia, in general, and special autonomy in Aceh and West Papua,[38] in particular, has strengthened the tendency of religiously-biased, or sectarian, politics in Indonesia. A number of regencies in altogether 15 provinces of Indonesia have implemented some form of Sharia legislation, ranging from prohibitions on "immorality", alcohol, and pork, "decent" clothing, public flogging of thieves and fornicators (only in Aceh), to Islamic banks, insurances, and a prohibition on interest and betting. Similar tendencies have arisen in Hindu Bali and in some of the Christian enclaves. In West Papua, the regency of Supiori-Biak-Numfor was the first to implement a form of Christian legislation in 2005. Next on the agenda was Manokwari.

GRAND MOSQUE OR "GOSPEL CITY"?

In 2005, rumours were spread by SMS, and other means, that a grand mosque was to be built on Mansinam (or in front of the Manokwari airport). Some local leaders, both Christian and Muslim, eagerly took this up, and the rumour turned into a political issue, causing an outcry among Christians. As a reaction, in 2006, Christian leaders developed a regional bill for legislation for turning Manokwari into a "gospel city" (*Perda Kota Injil*). Muslims were to be prohibited to dress in a religious manner in public, or use Arabic in public. The building of new mosques was to be restricted. The call for prayers (*azan*) was not to be amplified. Public buildings and civil servants' uniforms were to have Christian symbols. There were to be only Christian public holidays, and even public prayers were to be of a Christian kind. The first draft of this legislation was to be presented to the regional parliament on March 7, 2007, but it was denounced by both Christian and Muslim leaders. Nevertheless, the issue (in form and substance related to the much-criticised Sharia legislation elsewhere) had gained national significance.

[38] The National Law on Special Autonomy for Papua Province (West Papua) was passed by the National Parliament in Jakarta on October 22, 2001 (UU Otonomi Khusus 21/2001).

In May, 2008, a second draft, called "Regulation designed to protect Christian values and traditions", was to be tabled in the regional parliament (DPR-D) of Manokwari. Jakarta, however, did not allow this bill to be passed (quite contrary to the implementation of Sharia elsewhere, as stated above). Nevertheless, even today, at a number of locations in Manokwari, posters announce boldly that Manokwari is a "gospel city".

THE MOTIVES OF THE MASS PILGRIMAGE

Considering these social tensions, and the real danger of sectarian conflict, there need to be strong motives for thousands of Christians from all over West Papua and beyond to undertake such a pilgrimage. What makes them flock on this tiny island? Why has the event on February 5 become so popular?

I would like to suggest the following two motives: firstly, there is the fascination of the event character of Mansinam celebrations. Godly people, of whom there are many in West Papua, enjoy an occasional evangelical mass rally. The phenomenon of tens of thousands of pious people, who regularly meet in small devotional circles (the "Quiet in the Land"), occasionally flocking to evangelical rallies and mission festivals, is well recorded in the history of the awakenings and revivals of the 18th, 19th, and 20th centuries in Germany, Great Britain, and North America. Even today, the German Kirchentag, and the Communaute of Taizé in France, are attracting tens of thousands of Christians. The Mansinam pilgrimage seems to fulfil the same kind of religious need.

But there seems to be also another, rather less evangelical, side to the mass pilgrimage. In the midst of a social, cultural, and political crisis in West Papua, the Mansinam event is affirming and strengthening a Melanesian Christian identity. The fear and despair, felt deeply by indigenous Papuans, is caused by the above-mentioned massive migration of Indonesians from other parts of the country to West Papua, the subsequent loss of land, and of economic and political power, cultural estrangement, large-scale exploitation of the natural resources by outsiders, and the destruction of the environment, the violation of human rights, impunity for the violators of these rights, heavy militarisation, and security forces seemingly biased

against Papua, the general failure of a pro-Papuan implementation of the Special Autonomy law, etc. In the eyes of many Papuans, Melanesia is a utopia: a place where people with dark skin and frizzy hair are being respected; where there is no oppression and violence; and this Melanesia, to which West Papua naturally belongs, is associated with Christianity (though a considerable minority, even inside West Papua, is not Christian). Indonesia, on the other hand, is associated with Islam (although a considerable minority, even inside West Papua, is not Muslim). "Mansinam", therefore, has become a symbol of the Melanesian Christian hope for West Papua, contrasted against Indonesian Islam, causing despair.

It thus seems that the motives behind the Mansinam pilgrimage are both devotional and ideological. Whereas evangelical rallies can be important experiences, strengthening the faith and communion, and a Melanesian Christian identity can be a very positive step towards the contextualisation of Christianity in West Papua, its polarisation against Islam and the settlers certainly is not a good road for building peaceful coexistence and mutual respect. Strengthening one's own identity, by contrasting it over and against people of another culture, race, and religion can hardly be called "Christian", in terms of the gospel of Jesus Christ.

A Dream of Peace

In January, 2008, I had the privilege of accompanying Bishop Zephania Kameeta of Namibia on his first visit to West Papua.[39] It was Kameeta's special wish to reserve some time for Mansinam.

Since there were no other visitors, Mansinam was a quiet place. We were received by the pastor and a few members of the small church called *Lachai Roi*, built right next to the foundations of the first church consecrated by Geissler in 1867.[40] The name of the church refers to Gen 16:14, meaning "well of the one who sees me and who lives",[41] and was chosen because of

[39] Cf. *West Papua Rundbrief* No. 44 (May 2008), p. 8.

[40] Geissler named his church "Church of Hope".

[41] This option for translating "Beer Lahai Roi", offered by the NIV, comes quite close to the Lutheran version ("Brunnen des Lebendigen, der mich sieht"), which was most probably used by Geissler.

the holy-water well adjacent to it, which was dug by the first missionaries. After having refreshed ourselves with this sacred water, our small group entered the church. The bishop prayed for justice and peace for all of the people of West Papua. In the solemn atmosphere, it was not hard to believe that that was possible.

Weeks later, however, during the February 5 celebrations, the isle was again crowded, demonstrating the power of Papuan Christianity, so much feared by the settlers. And, alas, there is also evidence that politicians and faith-activists misused the momentum of the mass event for their ideological battles.

It would, therefore, be in line with the evangelical mission of Geissler and Ottow that the dynamics of the Mansinam event be utilised for peacemaking. Considering the significance of Manokwari for both Christians and Muslims, the churches could take the initiative to turn the former mission station of Mansinam into a centre of interreligious and intercultural learning, an oasis of reconciliation for the children of Abraham in West Papua.

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CONVERSION AND IDENTITY IN THE CONTEXT OF THE SEVENTH-DAY ADVENTIST FAITH TRADITION

John Skrzypaszek

John Skrzypaszek (BATh, MATh, DMin) is the director of Ellen G. White/SDA Research Centres at Avondale College of Higher Education in Australia, and is a lecturer in the denominational church history. Prior to his academic appointment, John served as a pastor.

ABSTRACT

This paper explores the relationship between conversion and identity-formation in the context of the Seventh-day Adventist faith tradition. It argues that the lack of a clearly-defined and contextualised contemporary identity, coined with the organisational expectations for conformity to ethical and cultural standards, rather than the liberating qualities of the gospel, lead to the demise of Christian identity. Further, empirical research demonstrates that a relationally-internalised faith leads to a positive and secure Christian identity, which enables believers to communicate faith in God in a language, which flows from the heart, and speaks to the heart.

IDENTIFYING THE PROBLEM

The Seventh-day Adventist self-understanding is deeply ingrained in the historical roots of the 16th-century radical reformers, such as Anabaptists, and the 19th-century Restorationist movement among American Protestants.[1] These groups examined established church beliefs and traditions in the light of the Bible and the New Testament church.[2] However, the heartbeat of the Seventh-day Adventist identity streamed from the 19th-century apocalyptic fever, and, more specifically, the Millerite

[1] George Knight, *A Search for Identity: The Development of Seventh-day Adventist Beliefs* (Hagerstown MD: Review & Herald, 2000), pp. 30-31.
[2] Ibid.

expectancy of Christ's imminent return. According to Bull and Lockhart the Millerite Advent movement "defined itself with reference to the future."[3] The Great Disappointment of 1844 shattered the dream. The momentous event forced the surviving Adventists to search for self-understanding in relation to past experience. As well, it challenged them to define its meaning for the ongoing journey.[4] Doctrines, such the Sanctuary, the Sabbath, the State of the Dead, the Second Coming, and Spiritual Gifts, gave the embryonic movement a new sense of identity and theological distinctiveness. However, as stressed by Knight, with time, "the unifying focal point" of the movement's theology was found in the apocalyptic core of the book of Revelation.[5]

Again, the apocalyptic focus defined the movement, in reference to the future, by giving it a strong sense of distinctiveness and mission. In an environment of 19th-century Protestant America, the progressively growing group of Advent believers paved the way of its self-understanding in terms of doctrinal difference to other Christian denominations. While, with passing time, the sense of theological distinctiveness ignited a vision of "an ever-expanding mission of warning to the world",[6] it also created a barrier of elitist isolationism. Quoting Borge Schantz, Knight identifies the nature of this underlying problem.

> Mission [between 1874-1890] to non-Christians was approved of and praised by Adventists, but it was regarded as the task that other evangelical missionary societies could take care of. When they [evangelicals] had brought them to Christ, the SDAs were committed

[3] Malcolm Bull, and Keith Lockhart, *Seeking a Sanctuary: Seventh-day Adventism and the American Dream* (Bloomington IN: Indiana University Press, 2007), p. 39.
[4] Ibid. Bull and Lockhart argue that the early Adventist believers began to redefine identity in terms of the past. At the same time, they raise the question regarding its significance for the present.
[5] Ibid., p. 86.
[6] Knight, *A Search for Identity*, p. 86.

> to bringing them to the last warning [i.e., the distinctly Adventist doctrines].[7]

Naturally, such a view raises questions concerning the relationship between *conversion* and the *formation of identity*. Is Christian identity determined by its beliefs, or is it an outcome of a faith-relationship with God?[8] Erickson points out that man's identity finds its locus in God – "the fact that God created Him".[9] So, identity includes much more than a well-defined construct of doctrinal beliefs. According to Erickson, it links with man's fulfilment of the divine plan.[10] In other words, Christian identity, and its relationship to life's journey, must include a vertical dimension. As shown in diagram 1, at the foundation of such a journey is the search for meaning, and the experience of conversion. Further, one may ask, what role does Christian identity play in the ongoing journey of life in a changing world?

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[7] George Knight, *Historical Sketches of Foreign Missions* (Berrien Springs MI: Andrews University Study, 2005), p. xvi.

[8] One of the leading pioneers of the Seventh-day Adventist church exclaimed "Strive earnestly for identity with the Redeemer. Live by faith in Christ", Ellen White, *Testimonies for the Church*, vol 6 (Mountain View CA: Pacific Press, 1948), p. 416.

[9] Also see Millard J Erickson, *Christian Theology* (Grand Rapids MI: Baker Books, 1985), p. 488. Millard suggests, "Man's identity will be founded in the fact that God created him." Hence, identity is linked with much more than a defined construct of beliefs.

[10] Ibid.

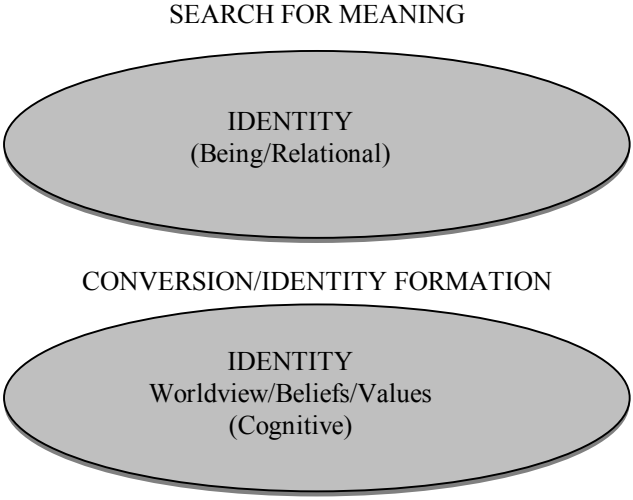

Diagram 1

CONTEMPORARY CHALLENGE

Research data suggests that the absence of a clearly-defined and contextualised Seventh-day Adventist identity in the 21st century contributes to a *syndrome of transitional identity* (Diagram 2).[11] The cultural shift from the rational and verbal forms of Christianity to more experimental and emotional forms enhanced a stage of a cognitive dissonance. The emerged tension of seeing mission in terms of 19th-century doctrinal identity, and the contemporary challenge of seeing mission in the 21st century, in terms of spiritually-authentic identity, impacts Seventh-day Adventist relevance and effectiveness in Western society.

This paper argues that the lack of a clearly-defined and contextualised identity compels the church to retract to the faith-affirming beliefs-construct

[11] John Skrzypaszek, *Refolding the Flock: Examining Trends in Contemporary Conversion Patterns in the Seventh-day Adventist Tradition in Australia: Suggested Strategies for Arresting the Inertia which Impacts Conversion Growth in the Contemporary Australian Culture* (D.Min thesis: Australian College of Theology, 2009), p. 76. http://nash.mst.edu.au./index.php/component/search/?searchword=thesis&ordering=&searchphrase=all.

of the 19th century. Further, it adds another dilemma. Hiebert argues, "If the interaction with the outside world threatens to diminish the cultural distinction of the groups, then groups resist, and avoid the interaction."[12] This stance, coined with the internal insecurity resulting from the lack of a life-relevant identity, enhances a barrier of elitist isolationism, and shapes the lenses through which the church views people's lives and the conversion experience.

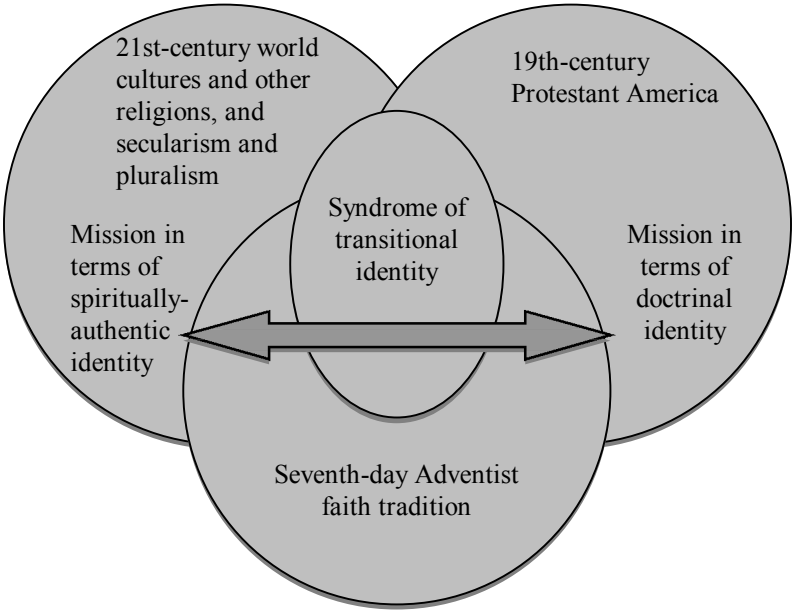

Diagram 2

Further, mission expressed *predominantly* in terms of doctrinal identity delineates strong religious and cultural boundaries, specific beliefs, standards of morality, and lifestyle. The plethora of expectations contributes to the scrutiny, through which the church evaluates the conversion experience of new believers. It often initiates demands for

[12] Paul G. Hiebert, *Cultural Anthropology* (Grand Rapids MI: Baker House, 1983), pp. 278-279.

conformity to theological, ethical, and cultural standards, rather than the liberating qualities of the gospel. Hence, the authenticity of conversion tends to be measured by changes in lifestyle, or, more precisely, whether the converts live an Adventist lifestyle. The cited barriers to conversion are: (a) overemphasis on doctrinal beliefs; (b) people are encouraged to come to church for theological reasons; (c) the danger of evaluating conversion with a checklist of expectations.[13]

DISCOVERING THE PRESENCE OF THE MISSIONAL GOD: THE JOURNEY TO CONVERSION

This research explored the life stories of people who transitioned to the Seventh-day Adventist faith tradition from a secular, unchurched background. Further, it focused on the causes that led individuals to the awareness of God's presence, the experience of conversion, and finally to a successful connection with the SDA community of faith, providing an intentional ministry for the unchurched. The journey divides into three phases, namely the stage of reorientation, the stage of turbulence, and the stage of adaptation (Diagram 3).

[13] Skrzypaszek, *Refolding the Flock*, p. 81.

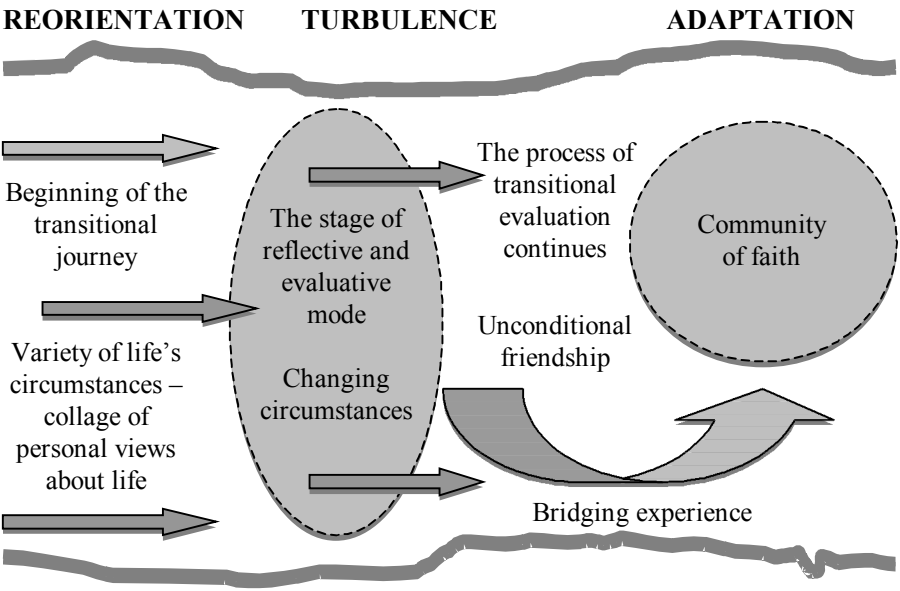

Diagram 3

THE STAGE OF REORIENTATION

The stage of reorientation began with the unsettling time, during which a variety of events or ambiguous circumstances of life challenged the interviewee's worldview, provoking new question about the meaning and purpose of life. Although each experience differed, the common denominator in all cases was the uniquely-personal integration between reasoning and the encountered experiences. *This part of the journey was intimately private, unknown to others, and extended over a long period of time.* However, the injected jolts, triggered by changing circumstances, often unexpected and ambiguous, awakened reactive responses, and instigated a new transitional phase in the experience of life.[14]

[14] Walter E. Coon, "Book Review", *Horizons* (March 1, 1981), p. 178. Coon highlights the three stages of conversion identified by Gillespie. He refers to this stage as pre-conversion with questioning, tensions, and stress, followed by the stage of crisis and postconversion. However, this paper argues that the preconversion stage is more complex, and divides into the two distinctive stages of reorientation and emotional

THE STAGE OF TURBULENCE

The changed circumstances in life's journey introduced a phase of *emotional turbulence*, where, in the vastness of the unchartered waters, individuals searched for a new script. This new phase pulled the mind into an emotionally-charged reflective and evaluative mode. From this private and uniquely-personal domain, the subjects searched, watched, listened, and tested the climate of the changing patterns of life, and the authenticity of the Christian environment. While the distant observer may assess people's lifestyles as secular or irreligious, the responses suggest that the individuals were already engaged in a transitional and transformational journey. *The observed promptings caused by a variety of circumstances initiated a movement towards God*. From the depth of such emotionally-heightened experiences, the subjects searched for safe and secure places. During this phase, the reflective and evaluative mindset increased openness to receptivity to new values. Crabb suggests that the emotional turmoil, or what he refers to as "confusion", creates a state of openness to receptivity.[15] In other words, people search for genuine and relevant solutions to life's problems.

Prior to the successful transition into the community of faith, and the final stage of adaptation, *unconditional friendship* provided an important *bridging* experience. Firstly, during the bridging experience, relational connections played a significant role in providing a nurturing safe place. Secondly, during the bridging phase, time continued to play a significant role in the nurturing process of the subject's transitional journey. It provided the first building blocks towards integration and adaptation of the new life-changing script. Thirdly, the positive impact of the church community, offering *unconditional acceptance*, provided a further nurturing ground for the life-changing commitments and conversion.

It appears the relational bond of *unconditional friendship* shaped the steps towards the subject's connection with God. Rather than entering into

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turbulence. Bailey V. Gillespie, *How and Why People Change* (Birmingham AL: Religious Education Press, 1979.

[15] Larry Crabb, *The Safest Place on Earth Where People Connect and are Forever Changed* (Nashville TN: Word Publishing, 1999), p. 5.

people's lives as intruders, by providing domination and submission through information overload, people, who offered unconditional friendship, entered people's lives as welcomed strangers. According to Guenther, a welcomed stranger acts as a midwife, providing presence and attentiveness.[16] During this phase, individuals recognise and accept the authenticity of God's involvement in a human life. Understanding God's commitment to humanity, and how He works in the life of other people, helps them to transfer their allegiance to the Lordship of Jesus Christ. This change is evidenced by a successful acceptance and adaptation of the liberating and life-changing power of the gospel. The transformational nature of this experience helped individuals to discover their *uniqueness and potential*.

THE STAGE OF ADAPTATION

Thirdly, during the stage of adaptation, one observes the interplay between ongoing reflective evaluation and the growing bond of friendship between individuals and the community of faith. During this stage, the growing awareness of beliefs is tested by the authenticity of the Christian faith, and the question of whether they are walking the talk. At the same time, a healthy Christian climate provides an inspiration for life-changing decisions, and commitment to God.

THE SIGNIFICANT FIND OF THE RESEARCH

The significant finding of this research shows that the transitional nature of the journey to the conversion experience began a long time before the convert's first contact with the SDA community of faith. The initial stages were intimately private, unknown to others, extending over a long period of time. While the sampled community of faith provided an intensified involvement during the bridging process of the convert's journey, there was a noticeable absence of a relational engagement with unchurched people during the critical early stages, in the places where God's Spirit was at work.

[16] Margaret Guenther, *Holy Listening: The Art of Spiritual Direction* (Boston MA: Cowley Publications, 1992), p. 1.

The stories, shared by the interviewees, suggest that, through a variety of circumstances, God was attracting them to a relational journey of faith. The survey data supports this assertion, showing that a search for meaning appeared the highest on the list of descriptors of life before conversion.[17] The findings show that the early stage creates a time of unsettling changes. These, in turn, heighten openness to new questions about life, and the search for meaning. The research shows that, while the community of faith was active and influential during the later bridging phase in providing a nurturing support, there was a noticeable absence of a relational engagement with people in the early stages of the transformational journey to conversion.

RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN CONVERSION AND IDENTITY

The themes emerging from the interviews with converts suggest that varied circumstances instigate the uniquely-personal nature of people's life journey leading to conversion.[18] The promptings, caused by various circumstances, suggest that God has already commenced the process, through which people are lured to Him. Peace points out, correctly, that the "Holy Spirit is an active agent in the whole process".[19] The experience of conversion, or a decisive moment, when individuals decide for God, may occur during the church-organised programs. However, the data suggests that it often occurs at unspecified moments during the bridging phase. It links closely with the relational influence of either an individual or a community of faith.

The role of Christian engagement is crucial, for it involves the experience of entering into people's personal journey as a guest and a fellow struggler. It involves the task of showing what it means to be God's people. In contrast to the program-oriented emphasis of the organisational drive for success, the interview data indicate the important role that genuine unconditional friendship plays in conversion. Here, friends do not act as spectators, but

[17] Skrzypaszek, *Refolding the Flock*, p. 116.

[18] Peace refers to it as a "plethora of quite different experiences", and that the movement towards conversion takes "place in fits and starts". Richard V. Peace, *Conversion in the New Testament: Paul and the Twelve* (Grand Rapids MI: William B. Eerdmans, 1999), p. 6.

[19] Ibid., p. 353.

as active catalysts, which authenticates God's involvement in human life. Hence, they encourage people to embrace the transformational experience of one's personal journey with God.[20]

It is evident that conversion means more than adherence to ideas, and conformity to ethical values. It has even less to do with denominational loyalty. Often, these are blurred by self-interests.[21] It is not just an intellectual decision, rather, it involves a heart-response to the awareness of God's acceptance, forgiveness, and involvement in human life. The process includes repentance, and loving commitment to God, and to His service. In all, it places Christ at the centre of one's being.[22] It means "a change in a person's central allegiance, and a personal commitment to follow Christ in life and in death".[23] Stepping into the realm of God's kingdom of grace, individuals rediscover personal worth, uniqueness, and potential – the thriving hub of identity.

In other words, identity formation includes the entire process of a transformational journey towards a personal relationship with God. It involves a human response to God's offer of salvation that enables individuals to recapture their identity, value, potential, and God-designed

[20] The NCSL Research data supports the findings of this research, showing that "newcomers take longer to develop a sense of belonging to a congregation". Therefore, "It is also important to create opportunities to develop relationships with other attenders". Peter Kaldor, John Bellamy, Ruth Powell, Keith Castle, and Bronwyn Hughes, *Building My Church: Trends and Possibilities for Australian Churches* (Adelaide SA: OpenBook Publishers, 1999), p. 45.

[21] Lesslie Newbigin, *The Open Secret* (Grand Rapids MI: William B. Eerdmans, 1995), p. 139.

[22] Ibid.

[23] Allan Edward, "Approaches to Conversion in a Postmodern Setting", in *Adventist Society for Religious Papers* (San Antonio TX: November 18-20, 2004), p. 71. Also, see Peace, *Conversion in the New Testament*, pp. 6, 7. He suggests that "the essence of conversion is not found in the experience itself, but in the content of that experience." I argue that it flows from the relational attachment of trust to Christ, and initiates "transformation of a cognitive, affective, behavioural, social, and religious nature" of one's life.

purpose for life (Diagram 4). Erickson points out correctly, "The key to man's identity will be found in the fact that God created Him."[24]

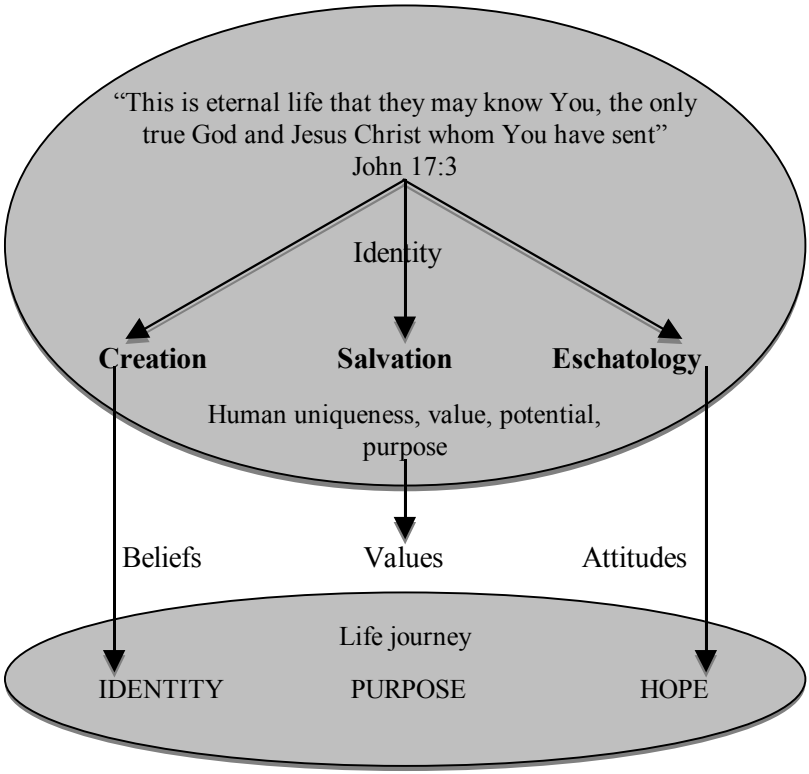

Diagram 4

Hence, the belief system should never be seen as an end in itself. Rather, the doctrine of creation, salvation, and eschatology should serve its primary purpose of leading individuals to the source of spiritual life (John 5:39). Grenz argues,

> Christianity is not merely intellectual assent to a set of doctrinal truths. As important as belief is, it is not enough. To be a Christian

[24] Erickson, *Christian Theology*, p. 488.

> is more than merely reciting the Apostles' Creed in church, for faith must entail a personal commitment that becomes the ultimate focus of the believer's affection . . . it includes a personal attachment to a risen and living Person, with whom the believer experiences "a personal relationship".[25]

In other words, a relational faith attachment to God anchors identity in the hands of the potter, who moulds and shapes its beauty on the pathway of life's journey (Matt 10:28-31; Luke 13:3-7). It is a lifelong experience, necessitating continual contextualisation of beliefs, attitudes, and values (Rom 12:1-2), making them relevant and applicable to life's journey in a changing world. In this context, conversion is not simply a sociological phenomenon, transitioning individuals from one worldview to another. Rather, it is a matter of transformational allegiance empowering them with a new spiritual vitality and direction in life.[26]

This ardent search for meaning and identity transfers into a congregational experience. According to Roxburgh and Romanuk, the missional church is not about "new techniques or programs".[27] It may be added, it's not about confidence in an elitist-oriented identity. Rather, "At the core, missional church is how we cultivate a congregational environment, where God is the centre of conversations, and God shapes the focus and work of the people."[28] God's saving acts reminds the church that its identity is not grounded in a passive experience of waiting for the Second Coming of Jesus. Neither is the church's identity grounded in activity, but it is grounded in God's call to a journey of pilgrimage. The pilgrimage reminds the church that its identity is not a descriptive nametag that separates it from the world. The pilgrim's identity grows out of the transformational faith-experience with God. In fact, it is anchored in God. Hence, the power to witness does not stem from learned skills, but from life, shaped and

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[25] Stanley Grenz, *Revisioning Evangelical Theology: A Fresh Agenda for the 21st Century* (Downers Grove IL: IVP, 1993), p. 45.
[26] Erickson, *Christian Theology*, p. 942.
[27] Alan Roxburgh, and Fred Romanuk, *The Missional Leader: Equipping Your Church to Reach a Changing World* (San Francisco CA: Jossey-Bass, 2006), p. 26.
[28] Ibid.

moulded by the divine initiative. On the transformational journey, the pilgrims display to the world what it means to be God's people, and what it means to have faith in God.[29]

OUTCOMES

The research data demonstrates that the organisational expectations towards quantitative growth, coined with the emphasis on program-oriented ministry, and the lack of contextualised identity, impacts the effectiveness of ministry to reach the secular and unchurched people in Australia. In consequence, the converts, who transitioned to Seventh-day Adventist faith tradition, on the basis of doctrinal convictions, showed a notable percentage of disadvantages.

THEY DID NOT FULLY UNDERSTAND THE GOSPEL

(a) Even though a high percentage indicated awareness of God's forgiveness and unconditional love, a notable percentage indicated they did not fully experience God's forgiveness.

(b) Less need of divine help to live a life committed to God.

(c) Moderate confidence in understanding God's purpose for personal life

(d) Moderate confidence in sharing faith with friends.

On the other hand, the converts, who transitioned to the Seventh-day Adventist churches specialising in ministry to unchurched people, showed the following advantages.

(a) They understood the gospel, in terms of full acceptance and forgiveness offered by Jesus.

(b) They spoke of the life-changing influence of the gospel in personal attitudes, commitment to service, and willingness to witness and share personal faith.

[29] Peter Kaldor, Keith Castle, and Robert Dixon, *Connections for Life: Core Qualities to Foster in Your Church* (Adelaide SA: OpenBook Publishers, 2002), pp. 14-20.

(c) They expressed a high confidence in understanding God's purpose for their personal life.

(d) They indicated a high confidence to share faith with friends.

The research shows that two diverse currents impact conversion trends in the SDA faith tradition. The organisational inertia sways the decision-makers to support the traditional programs. The nature of the faith-affirming programs attracts people from a religious, rather than from the secular, background, and the organisational top-down control contributes to congregational malaise. In consequence, the church bypasses its greatest witnessing potential to secular, unchurched society. As Shore defines it, "Mission consists in living, for the good of the neighbour, godly lives ahead of time, ahead of the end of the age."[30] The resulting climate contributes to the scrutiny, through which the church evaluates the conversion experience of new believers. The demand for conformity to specific beliefs overrides the liberating qualities of the gospel. As expressed by several leaders, the conversion experience is associated with head knowledge of doctrinal beliefs.

On the other hand, churches providing a specialised ministry for the unchurched, by nurturing a friendly and unconditionally-accepting environment, attract unchurched, secular people. Members, who offer unconditional friendship and acceptance, play a significant role in the process leading to conversion. Not only did they transmit objective truth, rather, they acted as witnesses to what God had done in their lives.[31] Edwards suggests that friends still communicate objective information, but it is not "impersonal knowledge".[32] Rather, it is "ideas that interact with feelings and values in complex ways to produce decisions and actions".[33] It may be defined as a relationally-internalised knowledge, which keeps Christians "from being ineffective and unproductive" in the knowledge of Jesus Christ (2 Peter 1:3-9).

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[30] Mary Hinkle Shore, "Preaching Mission: Call and Promise in Matthew 28:16-20", in *Word & Word*, 26-3 (Summer 2006), p. 325.
[31] Edwards, "An Approach to Conversion in a Postmodern Setting", p. 71.
[32] Ibid.
[33] Ibid.

CONCLUSION

This paper concludes that a relationally-internalised faith leads to a strong, positive, and secure Christian identity, for it flows from the transformational faith experience with God. Such identity is not grounded in activity or achievements, but in the heart of a missional God. Further, it argues that such an identity displays to the world what it means to be God's people, and communicates what it means to have faith in God, in a language that flows from the heart, and speaks to the heart. On this journey, believers contextualise beliefs into life-applicable principles. In defining and expressing the heart of Seventh-day Adventist identity, the church needs to recapture the vision of how to cultivate astuteness to discern what God is already doing in the lives of people. It needs to discover the presence of a missional God, and enter into people's lives as welcomed strangers, offering presence and attentiveness, helping them to discover the thriving hub of identity, personal worth, uniqueness, and potential.

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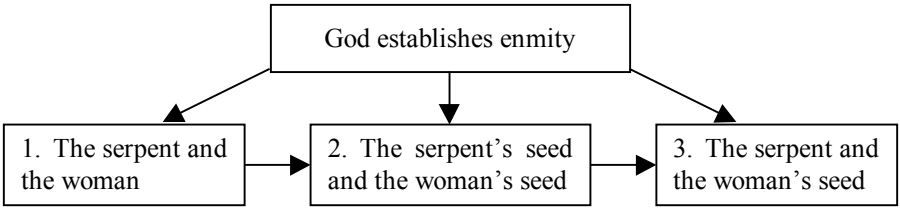
ANALYSIS OF "ENMITY" IN GENESIS 3:15

Thomas Davai

Thomas Davai is a Seventh-day Adventist pastor. After ministering in both rural and urban areas in various parts of Papua New Guinea, he currently teaches theology at the Pacific Adventist University in Port Moresby, PNG. He has a DipMin from Sonoma College, with a BA and MTh from Pacific Adventist University.

ENMITY OF GEN 3:15 IN TERMS OF THE EXEGESIS OF THE IMMEDIATE CONTEXT

The elements of Gen 3:15 can be grouped into three categories: The three parts to the "enmity" in Gen 3:15 are illustrated below:



To elaborate, God is the source of enmity. Firstly, He establishes enmity between the serpent and the woman. Then, this enmity is passed on to the serpent's seed and the woman's seed. Finally, the enmity reaches its climax between the serpent and the woman's seed.

GOD THE ORIGINATOR OF ENMITY

The final form of the story gives readers the analysis of the process of temptation, through suggestion of doubt, superior wisdom of the serpent, who knows how to deny God's directives, and promise wisdom through the artistic, intellectual, and useful appeal of the "forbidden fruit".[1] In Gen

[1] W. Caldwell, "The Doctrine of Satan: 1. In the Old Testament", in *Biblical Word* 41 (1913), p. 31.

3:15a, וְאֵיבָה אָשִׁית ("And I will put enmity"), the Qal imperfect of the root verb שִׁית ("to place"), refers to a future action of God. In context, the enmity is to be introduced by God. How soon the enmity will come into effect may be unclear, but the imperfect expresses an action, a process, or a condition, which is incomplete. In this verse, the imperfect refers not only to an action, which is about to be accomplished, but one that is not yet begun.

William Ralston suggests that enmity has already taken place prior to the judgment. He argues that, in the old Palestinian story, the serpent was already in a form of a god, a god who was at enmity with the God of the garden, jealous both of His ownership of it, and of the man and woman who lived in it. Ralston says that enmity, jealousy, and deceit already existed before the judgment.[2] Other scholars have suggested that the serpent story is a pagan idea that had been used in an earlier source. The writer, therefore, thought the story was highly dangerous to the basic polytheistic understanding of God, which Israel had brought with them from the desert.[3] Ralston's interpretation suggests that enmity did not originate with God. But, looking at the text, the Lord God is portrayed as the originator of this hostility, and the enmity came into effect when God placed a curse upon the serpent, the woman, and the man.

The word עָרוּם ("subtle") implies that the serpent showed wisdom.[4] From the woman's perspective, the serpent seemed to occupy a prominent place. For example, the serpent was convincing in its argument. To the woman, the serpent seemed to be a life renewer and restorer.[5] But, because God had put enmity, the woman will come to see the serpent as a life destroyer, rather than life renewer. Whatever the serpent may have meant to earlier versions of the story, in its final form, the writer makes reference to the Lord God as the originator of enmity.

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[2] H. Ralston, "That Old Serpent", in *The Sewanee Review* 81 (1973), pp. 402-404.

[3] C. S. Wake, "The Origin of Serpent-Worship", in *Journal of the Anthropological Institute of Great Britain and Ireland* 2 (1873), p. 376.

[4] H. Blocher, *In the Beginning*, (Nottingham UK: IVP, 1984), p. 150.

[5] F. Hvideg, "The Canaanite Background of Gen I-III", in *Vetus Testamentum* 10 (1960), p. 287.

According to the biblical account, the serpent is a creature and not a god. The Lord God did not set out to put enmity between His creatures (serpent and woman). He created them to live in harmony. The serpent, being an animal, is punished in the story.[6] It is impossible to imagine the serpent talking, and yet it talks in the story. However, the serpent of Gen 3:15 is not a "fanciful character", even if not "invented by the ancient author". He has based it on a figure, which played a prominent part in the worldview of his time.[7] The serpent was seen as a god, at the time of the writing of Genesis. By God establishing enmity, and cursing the serpent, the prominent character of the serpent is diminished.

The reader can certainly see wisdom and evil, or opposition to God, embodied in the serpent, in the temptation story. In terms of animal symbolism in the OT, the snake was an obvious candidate for an anti-God symbol, since the serpent openly contradicted the divine warning (3:4-5).[8] The name for serpent became the name for magic. The Arabic word *hanash*, "to enchant", and נָחָשׁ "the serpent" are etymologically connected, and it simply meant that the enchanter, medicine man, or priest was as clever as a serpent.[9] The noun נָחָשׁ, "serpent", is linked to the word שָׂרַק "to hiss", i.e., a sound the snake makes to show aggression. It, therefore, shows that the serpent was against God, or disapproved God's commands. Because of the serpent's aggression towards God's directives, God initiated the woman to hate the serpent by establishing enmity.

God created Adam and Eve in His image (Gen 1:26-27), but now they attempt to make themselves to be, in the words of the serpent, "like God".[10] It is also because of this malicious spirit, controlling the serpent's body and

[6] S. R. Driver, *The Book of Genesis*, 6th edn (London UK: Methuen, 1907), p. 47.
[7] R. G. Murison, "The Serpent in the Old Testament", in *American Journal of Semitic Languages and Literature* 21 (1905), p. 129.
[8] M. Emmrich, "The Temptation Narrative of Genesis 3:1-6: A Prelude to the Pentateuch and History of Israel", in *Evangelical Quarterly* 73 (2001), p. 11.
[9] Murison, "Serpent in the Old Testament", p. 118.
[10] J. Katz, "The Social Psychology of Adam and Eve", in *Theory and Society* 25 (1996), p. 547.

speech that God puts enmity between the serpent and the woman.[11] In the Garden of Eden, the snake was known for its intelligence, knowledge, and power (Gen 3:1-6). The serpent, which was believed to be full of wisdom, and the source of healing, was now to be hated, rather than respected, because it spoke and acted against God.[12] From God's perspective, putting enmity was the only reasonable and satisfactory response to the serpent's action.[13]

This animal does not appear to be an ordinary animal. It is endowed with the capability of speech, and is inspired with wisdom – being able to predict the effect of eating the forbidden tree. In some sense, the serpent is more knowledgeable than man. It acts like a person, talks like a person, reasons like a person, and so, effectively, has personhood.[14] The serpent is used as a medium of impersonating a human, through which the power of temptation can be brought to bear.

Besides Gen 3:1-6, Num 22:28 contain a reference to "beastly speech" (Balaam's ass). Num 22 affirms the miraculous ability of an animal to speak. In both texts, the animals exhibit a deeper understanding of the relationship between God and man than Eve and Balaam.[15] Christians may argue that, if the Lord opened the mouth of the ass (Num 22:28), then, the serpent's mouth was opened by another power, probably Satan. However, the OT provides us with little information on which to build an understanding of the devil. In reading this story in its own terms, the serpent should not be identified as Satan. However, this identification is made in later sources.

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[11] H. M. Morris, *The Genesis Record* (Grand Rapids MI: Baker Book House, 1976), p. 19.

[12] D. E. Burns, "Dream Form in Genesis 2:4b-3:24", in *Journal for the Study of the Old Testament* 37 (1987), p. 8.

[13] Murison, "Serpent in the Old Testament", p. 18.

[14] D. Sheriffs, " 'Personhood' in the Old Testament? Who's Asking", in *Evangelical Quarterly* 77 (2005), p. 21.

[15] G. Savran, "Beastly Speech: Intertextuality, Balaam's Ass, and the Garden of Eden", in *Journal for the Study of the Old Testament* 64 (1994), p. 33.

Satan emerged as a rebellious being, jealous of humanity, and as the primary foe of both humanity and God. Satan gradually became a useful way to explain sin and suffering. Nestor Rilloma says that, in the book of Jubilees, the prince of evil spirits is called "Mastema", which means the "prince of enmity". According to Rilloma, Satan, or "Mastema", and his followers, rebelled, and, as a result, were punished and expelled from heaven to earth.[16] Christians also see the serpent as an agent of the devil (Satan).

God had made the woman and man to hate the serpent, because God Himself was the ultimate lifegiver, but the serpent brought death. The snake was attributed to life, according to other ANE societies.[17] God spoke the truth, but the serpent lied. It was through the wisdom of the Lord God that the world was created, but it was through the deceitfulness of the serpent that disaster came to the world.[18] The act of placing enmity was out of God's love for His creation. God showed His love to the woman by placing the spirit of "hatred" and "hostility" between her and the serpent.

Enmity Between the Serpent and the Woman

In context, the serpent of the story is not the Satan of the later portions of the OT (Job 1:6; Zech 3:1; 1 Chron 21:1). It is one of the creatures of the earth, though more subtle and clever than any other (Gen 3:1). The idea of the serpent representing evil does not come from the text, because God created the serpent. Gen 3 is not yet prepared to accept the explanation of the serpent as a satanic agency.

Although the serpent tempts Eve to eat, it does not itself even touch and eat the forbidden fruit. Its task is to urge the woman to opt for knowledge, by taking advantage of one element in the garden that the Lord God does not control (the possibility that Adam and Eve would eat from both trees).[19]

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[16] N. C. Rilloma, "Biography of the Devil: An Alternative Approach to the Cosmic Conflict", in *Journal of the Adventist Theological Society* 13 (2002), p. 140.

[17] D. J. Thomas, " 'D. H. Lawrence's Snake': The Edenic Snake Inverted," *College Literature* 13-2 (Spring 1986), p. 200.

[18] Hvideg, "Canaanite Background", p. 289.

[19] Burns, "Dream Form", p. 8.

The serpent forces the Lord God to issue curses.[20] The serpent's distance from human beings is made definite after it receives the punishment, and the enmity is placed between them.[21]

The first occurrence of enmity is between the serpent and the woman: וְאֵיבָה אָשִׁית בֵּינְךָ וּבֵין הָאִשָּׁה ("And I will put enmity between you and the woman", Gen 3:15.) This is hostile strife between Eve, herself, and the serpent, itself. God established this enmity, because the serpent and Eve had formed a relationship, because Eve subscribed to the lies of the serpent. The serpent's attempt to establish a relationship with the woman resulted in a "pitiless and never ending enmity between them".[22] The enmity that was placed came out of God's mercy towards Eve, though she believed the serpent's accusation of the command of God.[23] This is because she was deceived. The woman gave in to the subtlety of the serpent, and, being first deceived, had drawn her husband to take part (Gen 3:1-6).

Without enmity, the woman and the serpent would have been friends, and she would continue to believe his lies. Without enmity, she would rely on the promises of the creature, rather than trusting God. She would continue to trust in, and communicate with, the serpent, and she would continue to have doubts about God's love and wisdom.[24] The serpent would also continue to arouse desires, and incite to disobedience.[25] This then, would indicate some victory for him.[26]

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[20] T. Stordalen, "Man, Soil, Garden: Basic Plot in Genesis 2-3 Reconsidered", in *Journal for the Study of the Old Testament* 53 (1992), p. 22.
[21] Katz, "Social Psychology", p. 550.
[22] J. Skinner, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on Genesis* (New York NY: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1910), p. 79.
[23] J. Calvin, *Commentaries on the First Book of Moses Called Genesis*, J. King, tran. (Edinburgh UK: Bibliolife, 1923, trans out of Latin into English by T. Tymme, 1578), p. 167.
[24] A. J. Ferch, *Genesis: In the Beginning* (Hagerstown MD: Review & Herald, 1985), p. 43.
[25] Blocher, *In the Beginning*, p. 142.
[26] D. G. Barnhouse, *Genesis: A Devotional Exposition* (Grand Rapids MI: Zondervan, 1973), p. 23.

However, the declaration of enmity carries a far deeper meaning. Eve had found, in her experience, that the serpent had deceived her, and caused her ruin.[27] She would, therefore, withdraw from him, as a "dangerous and deadly enemy".[28] According to Fritsch, this enmity was natural. It was fixed, confirmed, and with clear understanding between the serpent and the woman.[29]

Enmity Between the Woman's Offspring and the Serpent's Offspring

The second part of the enmity is between the woman's seed and the serpent's seed. Gen 3:15: וּבֵ֣ין זַרְעֲךָ֔ וּבֵ֖ין זַרְעָ֑הּ ("And between your seed and her seed"). The **זֶרַע** ("seed") comes from the root **זרע** meaning to sow; and, figuratively, it means to "disseminate", "plant", or "fructify".[30] In the LXX, it is rendered as σπέρμα, meaning "lineage", or "descent".[31]

Biologically, it is, of course, a fact that the male, not the female, passes the seed, although there is a famous accidental crux in Heb 11:11, which refers to Sarah producing seed.[32] Adam's role in this passage in Gen 3 is not mentioned, but the idea remains that, because **זֶרַע** is progressive, Adam, as a husband, has a part to play in producing **זֶרַע** (Gen 1:28). In fact, the usage of the concept of the seed of the woman is not unique to Gen 3:15. In Hebrew, the noun, **זֶרַע** can be used as both a singular and a plural, depending on the context of the passage. The word appears in the Hebrew Bible 230 times (see Table 1 below).

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[27] R. Jamieson, A. R. Fausset, and D. Brown, *Genesis-Esther: A Commentary: Critical, Experimental, and Practical*, 13 vols (Grand Rapids MI: William B. Eerdmans, 1978), p. 1:56.

[28] Ibid.

[29] C. T. Fritsch, *The Book of Genesis*, Layman's Bible Commentary, 25 vols, (Atlanta GA: John Knox Press, 1978, reprint), p. 2:33.

[30] Brown, Driver, Briggs, s.v. "**זֶרַע**".

[31] S. Z. Schulz, "σπέρμα", in *TDNT*, pp. 7:536-538.

[32] See J. Irwin, "The Use of Hebrews 11:11 as Embryological Proof-Text", in *Harvard Theological Review* 17 (1978), pp. 312-316.

Table 1: The Range of Meanings of the Noun זֶרַע.

Hebrew	Meaning	Number	Examples
זֶרַע	Part of a plant's fruit, from which a new plant will grow	27	Gen 1:11, 12, 21, 24; Ps 65:9-13; Deut 14:13, 18
	The sowing seed	2	Gen 8:22; Jos 3:15; Ps 67:6; Jer 5:24; Zech 14:18
	Field crops and grain	11	Gen 47:24, 26; Deut 14:28, 29
	Progeny/offspring	182	Gen 6:20; 7:3
	Semen	8	Lev 15:32

Whenever the noun זֶרַע is used, the term is implicitly plural, which is similar to terms in the English language, such as chicken, fish, sheep, and so on. Yet, when it refers to an explicit or identified offspring, the word is always singular in the Hebrew Bible. Furthermore, when זֶרַע is used in reference to children in the Hebrew Bible, it refers exclusively to progeny, i.e., biological descendants.[33] So, the woman's offspring refers to godly descendants of the woman.

The term זַרְעָהּ ("her seed") in Gen 3:15 denotes Eve's generic descendants, i.e., humanity, since Adam and Eve are considered the progenitors of humanity, as stated in the account of creation in Genesis. Theologically, the "seed" refers to godly human descendants of Eve. This verse would be understood as a situation or a condition of enmity between godly human descendants of Eve, and ungodly human descendants of Eve, who characterise the serpent.[34]

The woman and the serpent are "representatives" of their descendants.[35] From this understanding, the hostility that commences with the woman and

[33] See *Jewish Publication Society Hebrew-English Tanakh* (Philadelphia PA: The Jewish Publication Society, 1999), p. 6.
[34] Woudstra, "Recent Translations of Gen 3:15", p. 194.
[35] J. H. Sailhamer, *Genesis*, The Expositor's Bible Commentary, 12 vols, F. E. Gaebelein, ed. (Grand Rapids MI: Zondervan, 1990), p. 1:55.

her deceiver is to be continued by their descendants.[36] The reference made to the ages-long struggle serves as a constant reminder of the enemy serpent.[37] Every descendant must go through the path the woman went through, and the descendants of the woman should never reconcile with the descendants of the serpent.

In a literal sense, the verse describes the general idea that people will fear snakes, and will attempt to kill them by hitting them on the head. Snakes will fear people, and, will bit people on their feet.[38] However, the author of Genesis views the snake in terms that extend beyond a literal snake of the garden. The snake, for the author, is anti-God.

In this part of the passage, the snake is represented by its seed. The serpent's "seeds" represent those generations, who would be hostile to God and His law. Careful observation reveals that a program is being set forth, or a plot established, which will take the author beyond just the woman and the serpent. It seems likely that the author intended these words to be read as "programmatic and foundational for the establishment of the plot".[39]

In the narrative, the concept of enmity now spreads. The two sides are represented by the two seeds. Throughout Genesis, the historical development of this hostility is progressive. In other words, this enmity unfolds in the following chapters of Genesis: the enmity between the serpent and the woman (Gen 3) spreads to enmity between Cain and Abel (Gen 4), which continues through Cain's godless line (Gen 4:16-24), and is counteracted by Seth's godly line (Gen 4:25-5:32).[40] The universal flood follows, but God preserves the seed family (Gen 7:21-2:2). God assures Sarah that she will bear a son, and the seed line will be preserved and

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[36] T. Whitelaw, *Genesis*, Pulpit Commentary, 23 vols, H. D. M. Spence, and J. S. Exell, eds, reprint (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans, 1978), p. 1:66.

[37] *Great Texts of the Bible*, 20 vols plus index, *Genesis-Numbers*, J. Hastings, ed. (Grand Rapids MI: William B. Eerdmans, 1976), p. 1:91.

[38] P. Haupt, "The Curse on the Serpent", in *Journal of Biblical Literature* 35 (1916), pp. 161-162; see also Becker, *Messianic Expectation*, pp. 34-35; Sarna, *The JPS Torah*, p. 27.

[39] Sailhamer, *Genesis*, p. 56.

[40] See R. S. Hendel, "Of Demigods and Deluge: Towards an Interpretation of Genesis 6:1-4", in *Journal of Biblical Literature* 106 (1987), p. 24.

continued (Gen 17:15-19). God's seed people were doomed to starvation (Gen 42:1-2, cf. 43:8), but God was with Joseph, so the seed continued.

In summary, if Gen 3:15 is the skeletal framework of the enmity theme, a major part of the rest of Genesis is the fleshing out of this one verse and its related theme. In other words, the theme of enmity is developed throughout the book of Genesis. The structural analysis demonstrates that the beginning of the two seeds is to be found in the two sons of Adam and Eve – Cain and Abel. The enmity between them is on a "cosmic scale", it is about the two seeds – the line of Cain (Gen 4:17-26) and the line of Seth (Gen 5).[41]

Later in Genesis, that enmity is reproduced in Noah and Ham. Ham's seeds grow to become the Canaanite nations, which opposed God's people. The same can be seen in Jacob and Esau. The two seeds then grow from just being family members to being nations. The theologically-significant use of the term "seed" is found in certain passages of Genesis that deal with the Abrahamic covenant (i.e., Gen 12:7; 13:15, 16; 15:3, 5, 13, 18; 17:7, 9, 10, 12, 19). A great many OT uses of זֶרַע are in connection with God's covenant promises to the patriarchs.[42]

You will Strike his Heel and He will Bruise your Head

The enmity described here הוּא יְשׁוּפְךָ רֹאשׁ וְאַתָּה תְּשׁוּפֶנּוּ עָקֵב ("you will strike his heel and he will crush your head", Gen 3:15) describes a confrontation between the serpent and the woman's seed. Just as the enmity began between one individual person (Eve) and the serpent, it will approximately reach its brutal climax with enmity between one (He: Eve's descendant) and the serpent. Just who is הוּא ("He") can be ascertained from the rest of Genesis, which traces down the identity of this זֶרַע or הוּא (Gen 12:3; 22:17-18; 49:10).

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[41] D. Spencer, "Protoevangelium of Genesis 3:15", in *III Magazine* 2 (August 20, 2006).

[42] L. O. Richards, *The Expository Dictionary of Bible Words* (Grand Rapids MI: Zondervan, 1985), p. 469.

Francis Schaeffer argues that the "seed" here should be considered a personal "he". The one who is promised here is a person. He says a person will bruise Satan's head, and, in doing so, will be wounded.[43] Surprisingly, the RSV translates הוּא as he. But the use of masculine pronoun in English is hard to defend. It is true that, in Hebrew, this word is a masculine singular personal pronoun, but this is required by the fact that Hebrew words have only masculine and feminine gender (in contrast to English, which has a neuter gender). The antecedent of הוּא (he) in Hebrew is זֶרַע (seed). Grammatically, זֶרַע is masculine, but often it is a collective noun, whose natural "gender" is neuter. The proper translation in English would be "it" or "they" (meaning the descendants of Eve).[44] "They" is probably better, because of the progressive development of זֶרַע, as outlined in the previous section.

Upon the announcement of the fatal wound of the serpent, the serpent is left in the dark as to which person would be the seed, and at what time. Both Satan and Eve may have thought, initially, it would be her first-born son. As the centuries passed, attacks continued against males born in the promised line of the woman (e.g., Abel, Seth, Noah, Abraham, Jacob, and Joseph).[45]

Concerning the result of the confrontation, various translations have been made of "crush" and "bruise", with the understanding that one party in this conflict will receive a fatal blow, and the other a less-severe injury. For example, the exegesis of the early church found a protoevangelium, or messianic prophecy, in this verse; a reference to a final victory of the woman's seed, Jesus, over Satan, on the cross. But this interpretation does not agree with the sense of the passage. As already noted, the word "seed"

[43] F. A. Schaeffer, *Genesis in Space and Time* (London UK: Hodder & Stoughton, 1972), p. 103.
[44] Martin, "The Earliest Messianic Interpretation", p. 425.
[45] Morris, *Genesis Record*, p. 122.

should not be translated personally, but should be translated more generally with the meaning "posterity".[46]

The confrontation needs to be seen in a progressive way, because the "seed" of Gen 3:15 is generic. The enmity unfolds between Cain and Abel, Noah and Ham, Jacob and Esau, Jacob's sons and Shechem, and Joseph and his brothers. When interpreting this confrontation, there are no shortcuts. The historical development of this confrontation in Genesis must be acknowledged. In Hebrew, the same word is used to describe what the woman's seed will do to the serpent's seed and vice versa.

Modern translations use the weaker word "strike". Other translations use the stronger word "to crush".[47] In the Vulgate, it is *insidiari* ("lie in wait for"), and, in the LXX, the verb τηρέω is used.[48] According to Johan Lust τηρέω means "to guard, to keep, to take care of", and he further states that the future τηρήσει means "he will lie in wait".[49] Also, according to Maraoka, τηρέω means "to watch", or to "attack at an opportune moment".[50] However, Brown, Driver, and Briggs uses the Hebrew word שׁוּף, and suggests that it may be closer to Hebrew שָׁאַף, which means to "gasp", "pant", or to "pant after".[51]

The concept of "strike" derives from the habit of the snake (recognised by the author) to bite its victim in the heel, or from behind, and that of mankind striking the head of the snake (i.e., with a stick). As mentioned earlier, the same verb is used to describe the attack upon the heel and the head, to show that destruction is aimed at both. But, though the bite of the serpent on the heel of a man, when the poison enters the blood, is quite dangerous, it need

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[46] Von Rad, *Genesis*, p. 93.
[47] See *TWOT*, s.v. "שׁוּף".
[48] See *TWOT*, s.v. "שׁוּף".
[49] Lust, s.v. "τηρέω".
[50] T. Maraoka, "τηρέω" in a *Greek-English Lexicon of the Septuagint* (Paris: Peeters, 2002), p. 555.
[51] See Brown, Driver, Briggs, s.v. "שׁוּף".

not be fatal. The crushing of the serpent's head, however, is completely destructive.[52]

It is important to note that the enmity is progressive; it can be described as strife between the descendants of the woman and the serpent itself. It is the head of the serpent and not its seed that is to be crushed. The multitude of descendants on both sides will struggle. Outside of the immediate text, most Christian commentators argue that the actual crushing of the serpent's head would be accomplished by a single individual.[53] Such an interpretation may be legitimate in the wider biblical understanding, but the details of any climax in the conflict are not made explicit in Gen 3:15 itself.

CONCLUSION

Gen 3:15 is really the seedbed of the theme of enmity. All other enmities in Genesis are the fleshing out of this text. God had to put enmity, because of the malicious spirit controlling the serpent's body and speech. It was used as a medium through which the power of temptation was brought to bear.

The enmity was established between the serpent and the woman, because, without enmity, the woman and the serpent would be friends, and she would continue to believe its lies. She would rely on the promises of the creature, rather than God. The enmity was also placed between the woman's seed and the serpent's seed, because the enmity, which commenced with them, was to be continued by their descendants. The woman's descendants are those who were faithful to God. The serpent's descendants are, theologically, those who thought, spoke, or acted against God's directives. This enmity was meant to be progressive. It can be described as strife between the seed of the woman and the serpent itself.

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[52] Jamieson, Fausset, and Brown, *Commentary*, p. 57.

[53] *Genesis*, Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary, p. 1:235.

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2011: AN ANNIVERSARY YEAR FOR CATHOLIC SOCIAL TEACHING: A REFLECTION

David Willis OP

David Willis completed his studies for ordination in the Catholic Church in 1971. He then went on to complete a BA at the Australian National University in Canberra (1982), a MA (Theology) at Graduate Theological Union, Berkely CA (1986), and a DTh from the Melbourne College of Divinity, Vic (1998). He was been a lecturer in philosophy and theology at the Catholic Theological Institute in Port Moresby PNG, the Melbourne College of Divinity and the Australia Catholic University. He has been president of the Catholic Theological Institute since 2008.

This year is the 120th anniversary of Pope Leo XIII's encyclical, which takes its title from its first two Latin words, *Rerum Novarum*, but is often referred to as "The Conditions of Labour", the first encyclical devoted specifically to social teaching, hereafter referred to as *RN*.[1] This paper, after introducing modern Catholic social teaching, investigates one major topic treated by *RN*, namely, private property.

[1] An encyclical is a letter addressed to Catholics on matters of faith and morals. Other anniversary encyclicals followed: *Quadragessimo Anno* (The 40th Year) in 1931, *Mater et Magistra* (Christianity and Social Progress) in 1961, *Laborem Exercens* (On Work) in 1981, and *Centesimus Annus* (The 100th Year) in 1991. Following *Mater et Magistra*, there were three other encyclicals devoted to social justice: *Pacem in Terris* (Peace on Earth) in 1963, *Populorum Progressio* (On the Development of Peoples) in 1967, *Sollicitudo Rei Socialis* (On Social Concern) in 1987. The conciliar document on social justice of Vatican II was published in 1965, and a major apostolic letter, reflecting on social justice, was issued in 1971, the 80th anniversary of *RN*. This year, it seems there will be no such anniversary encyclical published. Thus, it can be an occasion to examine *RN*, itself, or rather, to focus on one issue raised by it.

INTRODUCING MODERN CATHOLIC SOCIAL TEACHING

In its introductory section to the social doctrine of the church the *Catechism of the Catholic Church* commented that this doctrine was

> developed in the 19th century, when the gospel encountered modern industrial society with its new structures for the production of consumer goods, its new concept of society, the state, and authority, and its new forms of labour and ownership.[2]

The teaching began, therefore, as an endeavour to relate the gospel to issues of justice in society at a time of major political and social change. The topics addressed over the last 120 years by social encyclicals and related writings have been wide ranging. To name a few: human rights, marriage and the family, economic matters, the political community, international organisations, globalisation, the natural environment, and war and peace. We can complement this list by drawing attention to the themes treated by the social encyclicals as found on the US Conference of Bishops' website: (1) life and dignity of the human person; (2) family; (3) community and participation; (4) rights and responsibilities; (4) options for the poor and vulnerable; (5) the dignity of work, and the rights of workers; (6) solidarity; (7) care for God's creation.[3]

THE CONTEXT OF *RN*

The context of *RN* was the major political and economic upheavals of the 19th century. In that century, Europe had been marked by political revolutions. In particular, there were the revolutions of 1848 in Sicily, Paris, Berlin, and Vienna. It can also be noted that 1848 was the year of the publication of *The Communist Manifesto*, co-authored by Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels, a work making accessible the communist vision of history and society that was to shape much of the political and economic life of the 20th century, beginning with the communist revolution in Russia

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[2] *Catechism of the Catholic Church* (New Delhi India: Theological Publications in India, 1994), p. 2421.

[3] United States Conference of Catholic Bishops; available at http://www.usccb.org/sdwp/projects/socialteaching/excerpt.shtml.

in 1917. On the economic front, the 19th century saw the emergence of industrial capitalism, and, for many, the growing appeal of socialism. The consequences of these political and economic upheavals had far-reaching consequences for workers, which account for *RN*'s opening paragraph:

> That the spirit of revolutionary change, which has long been disturbing the nations of the world, should have passed beyond the sphere of politics, and made its influence felt in the cognate sphere of practical economics is not surprising. The elements of the conflict now raging are unmistakable, in the vast expansion of industrial pursuits, and the marvellous discoveries of science; in the changed relations between masters and workmen; in the enormous fortunes of some few individuals, and the utter poverty of the masses; the increased self-reliance and closer mutual combination of the working classes; as also, finally, in the prevailing moral degeneracy.[4]

The general characteristics of 19th-century industrial capitalism were commonly listed as: (1) private ownership of the means of production; (2) buyers and sellers operating in unregulated markets; (3) employers and workers pursuing their own interests, either in the use of their capital, or making available their labour; (4) consumers spending their money as they pleased; (5) government's minimal role in society, defending it from foreign invasion, protecting its citizen's private property, and guaranteeing contracts. The other major influential political and economic worldview of the 19th century was socialism. Contrary to industrial capitalism, it affirmed state ownership and control of the fundamental means of production and distribution of wealth. Individual self-interest was subordinate to community well-being, and the market was regulated by government.[5]

[4] *RN*, p. 1; available at http://www.vatican.va/holy_father/leo_xiii/encyclicals/documents/hf_l-xiii_enc_15051891_rerum-novarum_en.html, http://www.vatican.va/holy_father/leo_xiii/encyclicals/documents/hf_l-xiii_enc_15051891_rerum-novarum_en.html.

[5] This summary of both industrial capitalism and 19th-century socialism is based closely on the treatment of these found in the *Encarta* online website, now defunct.

RN AND THE RIGHT TO PRIVATE PROPERTY

THE DISCUSSION OF PRIVATE PROPERTY AND THE SOCIALIST DENIAL OF THE RIGHT TO PRIVATE PROPERTY

At the heart of the socialist remedy for the conditions of poverty-stricken workers was the abolition of the right to ownership of property. Property ought to be held in common, and be administered by the state.[6] *RN*'s response to the socialist vision was to defend the right of ownership of property, and then to set out its own agenda for improving the conditions of workers. In summary, this included the call to conversion and faith, acknowledging that the state has the responsibility to intervene in society to oversee working conditions, including the payment of a just wage; encouraging the formation of associations of employers and employees (friendly societies) and workers associations (trade unions) while affirming that the Christian community had an important role in helping workers and their families through its charitable institutions.

RN AND THE RIGHT TO OWN PROPERTY

The encyclical agreed with the socialist assessment of the conditions of the worker under capitalism, namely, that "it has come to pass that working men have been surrendered, isolated, and helpless, to the hardheartedness of employers, and the greed of unchecked competition".[7] In particular, it stated that

> the whole process of production, as well as trade in every kind of goods, has been brought almost entirely under the power of a few, so that a very few rich, and exceedingly rich, men have laid a yoke

[6] RN outlined its understanding of the socialist answer to the misery of so many workers: "To cure this evil the Socialists . . . contend that it is necessary to do away with private possession of goods, and, in its place, to make the goods of individuals common to all, and that the men who preside over a municipality, or who direct the entire State, should act as administrators of these goods. They hold that, by such a transfer of private goods from private individuals to the community, they can cure the present evil through dividing wealth and benefits equally among the citizens." *RN*, p. 7.

[7] RN, p. 3.

> almost of slavery on the unnumbered masses of non-owning workers.[8]

However, *RN* immediately proceeded to defend the right of ownership of property, arguing that it was in keeping with human nature, and could not, without causing injustices, including injustices to workers, be abolished. Human beings are distinguished from animals by having self-mastery or self-determination. This characteristic includes the ability to plan for oneself and one's family. To do this, however, requires that a person owns property. The denial of the right to property, then, is a failure to respect the capacity of the person for self-determination.[9]

In the years since *RN*, the argument for private property in Catholic social thought has been refined: Private ownership safeguards the appropriate autonomy or independence of individuals and families; it is a condition for civil liberties; it enables people to participate in, and make their contribution to, the economy and society, and it enables people to express their personalities.[10]

RN AND PRIVATE PROPERTY: ITS LIMITS

The encyclical clarified how its understanding of the right to private property differed from 19th-century capitalist thought on the matter. Drawing on the thoughts of Thomas Aquinas, *RN* distinguished between (a)

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[8] *RN*, p. 3.

[9] "The brute has no power of self-direction, but is governed by two main instincts, which keep his powers on the alert, impel him to develop them in a fitting manner, and stimulate and determine him to action without any power of choice. One of these instincts is self-preservation, the other, the propagation of the species. Both can attain their purpose by means of things, which lie within range. . . . But with man it is wholly different. . . . It is the mind, or reason, which is the predominant element in us, who are human creatures; it is this, which renders a human being human. . . . And on this very account . . . it must be within his right to possess things, not merely for temporary and momentary use . . . but to have and to hold them in stable and permanent possession." *RN*, p. 6.

[10] The fuller development of the reasons that ground the right to private property is found in the conciliar document of Vatican II, *Gaudium et Spes* (Pastoral Constitution on the Church in the Modern World), p. 71. See G. Grisez, *The Way of the Lord Jesus*, vol 2, *Living a Christian Life* (Quincy IL: Franciscan Press), 1992, pp. 794-795.

personal ownership of property; and (b) the use of that which is owned.[11] Indeed, this distinction of ownership and use is first found in the thoughts of the 4th-century BC Greek philosopher, Aristotle: "property should be private, but the use of it common".[12] Ownership (me, mine) is in the context of community (us, ours).

The right of private ownership, which is to be upheld, does not mean that a person is free to use possessions, in whatever way he or she pleases. Thus, *RN* raises the question: "How ought persons use their possessions?" Again, there is the appeal to Aquinas:

> But if the question were asked: How must one's possessions be used? – the church replies without hesitation in the words of the same holy doctor [Aquinas]: "Man should not consider his material possessions as his own, but as common to all, so as to share them without hesitation when others are in need. Whence the Apostle with, "Command the rich of this world . . . to offer with no stint, to apportion largely."[13]

The position regarding the use of one's personal property "as common", according to *RN*, is based on the relationship of humans to the natural world, as expressed in Gen 1:26:

> Then God said, "Let us make humankind in our image, according to our likeness; and let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the birds of the air, and over the cattle, and over all the wild animals of the earth, and over every creeping thing that creeps upon the earth."[14]

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[11] Thomas Aquinas, *Summa Theologiae*, 11-11, q. 65, a. 2. *RN*, p. 36.

[12] Aristotle, *Politics*, Benjamin Jowett, tran., *The Basic Works of Aristotle*, Richard McKeon, ed. (New York NY: Random House, 1941), pp. 1263a, 38.

[13] *RN*, p. 22. See Thomas Aquinas, *Summa Theologiae*, 11-11, q. 66, a. 2. Aquinas' scripture reference is to 1 Tim 6:17-18.

[14] The translation is the *New Revised Standard Version*.

God gave the natural world as a gift to the whole of humanity. This scriptural vision is the basic fact that establishes the context for understanding the use private ownership.

RN then goes on to clarify whether a person is obliged, out of justice, or out of charity, to share his or her possessions. The duty to share with the poor arises out of justice when someone is in extreme need; otherwise the duty to share arises out of charity or alms-giving.[15] The encyclical pointed here to what later encyclicals refer to as the "social character", or the "social quality", of private property.[16] The case for this, as we have seen, is "that God has given the earth for the use and enjoyment of the whole human race".[17] Socialists saw this as an objection to private property. *RN*'s response was that it situates private ownership in the context of community, and it accounts for responsibilities that come with ownership. Owners of property have to take into account others in difficulties, either in justice or in charity, in using what they own.

Ownership is a type of stewardship. It enables persons to fulfil their own needs, and it helps others fulfil their needs as well.[18] The encyclical quotes St Gregory the Great (540-604) on this point: "let him see that he hide it not; he that hath abundance, let him quicken himself to mercy and

[15] "True, no one is commanded to distribute to others that which is required for his own needs and those of his household; nor even to give away what is reasonably required to keep up, becomingly, his condition in life, "for no one ought to live other than becomingly". (Thomas Aquinas, *Summa Theologiae*, q. 32, a. 6.) But, when what necessity demands has been supplied, and one's standing, fairly taken thought for, it becomes a duty to give to the indigent out of what remains over. "Of that which remaineth, give alms (Luke 11:41). It is a duty, not of justice (save in extreme cases), but of Christian charity – a duty not enforced by human law." *RN*, p. 22.

[16] Pius X1 refers to the "social character" of ownership. The church in the modern world of Vatican II to its "social quality" of private property, and Pope John Paul II to its "social mortgage".

[17] *RN*, p. 8.

[18] "Whoever has received from the divine bounty a large share of temporal blessings . . . has received them for the purpose of using them for the perfecting of his own nature, and, at the same time, that he may employ them, as the steward of God's providence, for the benefit of others." *RN*, p. 2.

generosity; he that hath art and skill, let him do his best to share the use and the utility hereof with his neighbour."[19]

On the Right to Private Property Being Consistent with the State's Right of Ownership

To fill out this understanding of private property further, it can be noted that it does not deny the legitimacy of some public ownership of property. This important issue can only be touched on here. Indeed, *RN* does not address this question, but later encyclicals do. Pius XI, in his anniversary encyclical of 1931, *Quadragessimo Anno*, defended the authority of the state to bring "private ownership into harmony with the needs of the common good", but affirmed that this exercise of state authority "does not destroy private possessions, but safeguards them; and it does not weaken private property rights, but strengthens them".[20] Pius XI appealed to what he calls the principle of subsidiarity to clarify the relationship of the state to the individual, or private group: "Just as it is gravely wrong to take from individuals what they can accomplish by their own initiative and industry and give it to the community, so also it is an injustice . . . to assign to a greater and higher association what lesser and subordinate organisations can do."[21] In other words, it is unjust for the state to take away from its citizens what they can do for themselves. Self-mastery, or appropriate autonomy, is to be defended.

We can sum up this section of our paper by saying that *RN* defends the right of ownership of private property, but that it did not consider that this right was identical to the capitalist's understanding of it, because ownership, which promotes self-mastery, brings with it responsibilities in justice and/or charity. Ownership is a type of stewardship, which is meant to benefit owners and others alike.

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[19] Quoted at *RN*, p. 22.

[20] *Quadragessimo Anno*, p. 49; available at http://www.vatican.va/holy_father/pius_xi/encyclicals/documents/hf_p-xi_enc_19310515_quadragesimo-anno_en.html.

[21] *Quadragessimo Anno*, p. 79.

IN CONCLUSION

Reflection on private property does not exhaust *RN*'s content. Its treatment of it was by no means the final word on the subject, but it was an important issue to tackle, because it was fundamental to *RN*'s programme of reform, necessitated, in particular, because of the emergence of the institutions of industrial capitalism. *RN* argued that it was a reform to be carried out through the initiative and creativity of individuals and groups in society, something it saw socialism devaluing. In saying this, *RN* also affirmed the unique role of the state authority or government in promoting a just society, which went beyond its minimalist role in capitalist thought. Finally, its discussion of private property was significant, because it was part and parcel of the first steps of a dialogue with the modern world over matters of justice, which has now continued for 120 years.