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MELANESIAN JOURNAL OF THEOLOGY

EDITORIAL

Revd Christopher Garland

GATARI JI AMONG THE YEGA

Fr Spencer Kombega

A POLITICAL THEOLOGY: MELANESIAN MILIEU

Revd Kasek Kautil

DREAMS IN PAPUA NEW GUINEA, AND THEIR INTERPRETATION

Meg Maclean

MAN AND HIS WORLD: BIBLICAL AND MELANESIAN WORLDVIEWS

Fr Theo Aerts

A DANCE TO THE GIVER OF LIFE

Revd Christopher Garland

BOOK REVIEWS

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CONTENTS

Editorial: The compatibility of Melanesian and biblical approaches to life. Whence comes a holistic approach to justice, peace, and the integrity of creation <i>Revd Christopher Garland</i>	7
<i>Gatari Ji</i> among the Yega <i>Fr Spencer Kombega</i>	11
A Political Theology: Melanesian Milieu <i>Revd Kasek Kautil</i>	20
Dreams in Papua New Guinea, and their Interpretation <i>Meg Maclean</i>	27
Man and His World: Biblical and Melanesian Worldviews <i>Fr Theo Aerts</i>	29
A Dance to the Giver of Life <i>Revd Christopher Garland</i>	56
Book Reviews:	
Harvey Cox: The Silencing of Leonardo Boff <i>Bishop Paul Richardson</i>	65
Dom Helder Camara: Questions for living <i>Fr Theo Aert</i>	67
Suliana Siwatibau and David Williams: A Call to a new Exodus <i>Garry Trompf</i>	68
Contributors	70

[Note: Page numbers are different to original edition – see page 29 for explanation. –Revising ed.]

EDITORIAL

The compatibility of Melanesian and biblical approaches to life. Whence comes a holistic approach to justice, peace, and the integrity of creation?

In this issue, Fr Spencer Kombega, an Anglican priest, shows how traditional Ewa Ge chants to a creator spirit, Sirorari, have been given Christian words, and used in Christian worship. Has the music brought with it overtones of yearning and wander from its pre-Christian origins? Are these overtones of feeling satisfied and transformed by their Christian interpretation, or does an undercurrent of convert meaning subvert the overt sense? In their traditional setting, the chants united feeling and sense in a way that reflected the holistic approach to mind and body of the community that formed them. Through the incarnation of Jesus Christ, Christian faith sums up all previous incomplete unities. The gospel can convert and sanctify all human feelings. Therefore, there is a long history of stirring secular music being put to good Christian use. In the case of the Ewa Ge chants, also, the rhythms alert the senses and minds of the participants and hearers, so that they attend and respond to what is chanted.

Pastor Kasek Kautil, secretary of MATS, offers a Lutheran approach to the unity of religious and secular life. He points out that we each have a “third eye”, which is our ability to reflect on ourselves, as we are involved in the various compartments of our lives: economic, political, and religious. As we stand outside ourselves in this way, we have a vantage point, from which to see life as a whole, and reconcile all dichotomies, including the Luthern dichotomy between church and state. From our reflective vantage point beyond our active selves, we recognise that all our lives take place in the presence of God, and we are challenged to take responsibility for the whole of our lives, religious and secular,

as calling for obedience to God. Melanesian culture agrees with this holistic view of religion and secular life, since human beings are seen, not as individuals, but as members of a community. Therefore, any religious feeling will have both economic and political consequences, which will need to be worked out. So, once more, there is a link between a Biblical and a Melanesian approach.

Fr Theodoor Aerts shows how Melanesian culture is in tune with the holistic vision of the Bible. His approach is reminiscent of that in John V. Taylor's book, *The Primal Vision*. We may quote Fr Aerts' article: "A close look at Melanesian worldviews cannot be without benefit, for a correct understanding of the scriptures, which were written by men of a comparable world view . . . yet always they were related to man's needs, and are a part of his so-called integrated experience."

So Melanesian culture provides an integrated approach, which helps redress the unbiblical dichotomies between man and God, man and man, man and nature, which are fostered by Western culture. What does this sense of integrated community have to teach us about the current concern for justice, peace, and the integrity of creation? Justice and peace are the result of true community, stemming from the agape-love of God. God loves by taking delight in His creatures, and blessing them, so that they become what He created them to be. The love He gives helps those who appreciate it to do the same, and it is such agape-love that we see in Jesus. He loved people for what they really were, confronting the hypocritical and affirming the misunderstood. He saw beyond the outward effects of oppression and rejection to what people had it in them to be. So He was on the side of the poor, and by restoring them to their rightful place in the community, offered healing, not only to them, but to the community as a whole. When the community recovered the proper order between its members, the unease caused by disorder was removed, and there could be peace. So the good of the individual could not be divorced from the good of the community, nor could justice

be divorced from peace. If we may see the stilling of the storm, not as an act of arrogant domination, but as an act of love, symbolising peace between man and nature, then Jesus is working to bring all creation into one community under God. In that community, the nature of every created force, and every creature, has the potential, if treated with agape-love, to contribute to the building up of the community. The lower orders of creation are not to be treated as if they were persons with wills like human beings, but they have the right to the respect due to a proper understanding of their God-given nature.

In Melanesian culture, natural forces and objects are seen as belonging to the same community as human beings. Is this holistic view the same as what we see in the Bible? In Melanesian culture, the community, as a whole, exists primarily to conserve itself, and so its openness to what is beyond itself, above all to God, is limited. In many PNG stories of the origins of life, the life-giver is put under duress by the community, and made to yield his secret power, so that it can be used by the community. So, the life-giver is than a fully-free and fully-loving God, and the blessing He gives are judged solely in terms of their usefulness to the community, and not for any intrinsic goodness. Thus, any tree that cannot be used for food or shelter is seen as a “tree *natin*”, and may be cleared away, without compunction, when the time comes to make gardens. Therefore, there is an integrated, holistic view of nature in Melanesian culture, but it is restricted by the needs of self-preservation, and falls short of the Christian vision of dying to self, as the means to life.

In a PNG community, the good of the community, as a whole, seems to override the good of individual members, and this applies to both human and non-human members of the community. All would be governed by exchanged or payback. As long as a person, animal, or tree could contribute to the society, he would be supported, so that he could make his contribution as payback. He would make his offerings, including his life, not as a free act of sacrificial love, but as the

making of, or submitting to, a demand. So, the land and trees are conserved, not for their own sake, but because of the contribution they make to society. So, when the land and trees are threatened with being laid waste, the concern is not with their preservation, for their own sake, but for compensation for the loss of their “payback” contribution to the community.

Although the approach of the community to its natural environment is holistic, and includes a sense of interdependence, it is based on communal self-interest, and not on agape-love. Trees, of course, do not willingly give their fruits for the good of others, but, according to a Christian doctrine of creation, they have a natural potential for growth, which is worth developing beyond any consideration of the usefulness of the tree to society. When this potential is properly cultivated, the fruit of the tree becomes available to human beings as God’s free gift. Human beings have a duty to husband the natural processes of death and rebirth, by pruning and thinning, but this is far from wanton destruction. So, good as it is, Melanesian culture will still need transforming by gospel insights, based on the self-giving love of Jesus Christ.

This article may seem over-critical about Melanesian culture, and over-naïve about the relevance of the gospel to the conservation of the environment. It is hoped that it is, at least, sufficiently controversial to prompt articles and letters to the editor that can be included in a future issue.

Revd Christopher J. Garland

GATARI JI AMONG THE YEGA

Spencer Kombega

Anglican church, Simbu Province

Introduction

This article describes the local traditional music of the Yega tribe in Oro Province. The Yega people have adopted music from all over the country (like Kiwai, Sia, Dobu, Baruga, Buari ya, Gauma, and Geve), which was not originally from the Yega tribe. However, I will deal specifically with *Gatari Ji*, because it shows the true identity of the Yega.

The Yega people speak the Ewa ge dialect, in which the word *Gatari Ji* emerges. *Gatari* means “voice out” and *Ji* means “cry”. The *Gatari Ji* has two parts, the primary form and the adjusted form.

The Yega musician uses the tune of the primary and the adjusted *Gatari Ji* to compose religious chants. Traditionally, some were dedicated to the deities, as well as to the supreme spirit, known as *Sirorari*. The word *Sirorari* derives from the word *Siroro*, meaning “creation”. The practical worship of *Sirorari* by the Yega tribe, and the neighbouring villages, led the Yega people to adopt some chants belonging to the neighbouring villages, which were dedicated to *Sirorari*, because they all have one common belief.

The primary form of *Gatari Ji*

Crying is an outward sign of a person in sorrow. It is natural and worldwide. Focusing, in particular, on the Yega tribe, and the *Gatari Ji*, this crying develops into the form of a chant. The utterance is traditional, common, and it expresses, descriptively, a person’s core feelings.

This mostly occurs after a death. The Yega mourners sit around and weep, while some stand to hug and dance. The two rites differ, but the tune of *Gatari*¹ remains the same, because the form of the tune is fixed in the mentality of every old and young Yega person. Actually, the real crying follows after the utterance of the chant. So, the combination of the chant uttered, and the real crying, is known as *Gatari Ji*.

At the death scene, musicians do their part to record, in memory, the words uttered. After the occasion, at leisure time, the chant is sung repeatedly to make it firm, so that everyone learns it by heart, and sings it for himself or herself, as well as for remembrance.

Henry Kombega's death in 1984, at Isivini, brought many relatives together to share their sorrow. At that time, an old man, Colin Ijivi, uttered a chant while crying:

O poio ari o ritari vitido poio ari o
O ritari vitido poio ari
*O pikide rare eriri*².

Which means:

Migrated boy grew up, was migrated
Boy migrated and grew up
Wasn't a right time to depart, but departed.

Apart from the occasion of death, during hunting, fishing, gardening, and on their own, the villages compose their own chants, using the same tune as the original *Gatari Ji*, describing the particular situation. Although the composition may now contain remembrance, happiness, petition, and praise, the Yega people continue to call it *Gatari Ji*, because the idea still originates from the act of crying.

Below, is an example of a chant of happiness chanted by Yauweri, when he was on his brother's hunting track, very early in the morning. The tune is adapted from the original

Gatari Ji, because it was, and remains, the only surviving ancient tune.

O Jojae torido mama iba bojari o tenoda
*O Roedo gido rojedo mama iba bojari o tenoda.*³

Which means:

Before dawn, off for hunting
why follow the path by breaking saplings.

Adjusted *Gatari Ji*

The adjusted form of the *Gatari Ji* has many different tunes, because many musicians, with many different ideas, make their own adjustments. However, all adjusted chants sound similar, so that they can be easily identified by newcomers. They differ slightly from the original chants, because the adjusted ones can be led by either one or two leaders. The practice of individuals leading a chant is called *yabe*.⁴ The adjusted form is also arranged to include a part that can be danced to.

The musicians pick up the primary form of *Gatari Ji* at the death scene, or elsewhere, and adjust it in their own time. They then popularise it during feasting. The new version becomes ceremonial music, that any group or clan can use at times of happiness, such as marriage, initiation, etc.

The adjusted form is accompanied by instruments, consisting of kundu drums, conch shell, and rattles.⁵ All of which sound and beat at the same time. The warning beat starts in a way that tells the participants that the next song is about to start. This is called *Jogota*. A leader chants the first half of the adjusted *Gatari Ji*, then the group takes over, to chant the second half. As soon as the group finishes, the beat of *Jogota* starts again. The sequence is repeated until the *Jogota* ends it.

Most of the chants have only one verse, and, during each chanting of the verse, one or two words are changed by the leader.

Here is one example of an adjusted chant with one *Yabe*.

LEADER:

O Bega re kundo bugera giwo

O Itadi sedo bugera giwo.

GROUP:

*O oro tepoda yeira toriwo oro o oro orokaiva oro.*⁶

Which means:

LEADER:

We bring you peace

to give it to you.

FIRST LEADER GROUP:

Welcome, this is the place of peace, welcome, welcome.

The other form of the adjusted *Gatari Ji* is led by two leaders. The first leader chants the first *Yabe*, the second leader chants the second *Yabe*, and finally the group joins in. This means that three separate vocalists, or groups, participate in one chant.

Here is one example of an adjusted *Gatari Ji*, with two *Yabe*.

FIRST LEADER:

O Esega o bugudo pira o.

SECOND LEADER:

O Baiyau o kumbudo pira o.

GROUP:

*O Toriwo oro kaiva oro.*⁷

Which means:

FIRST LEADER:

A visitor is coming

SECOND LEADER:

He is bringing treasure

GROUP:

Come in, welcome, welcome.

Local Traditional Religious Chants

In all aspects of the relation to the deity, the ancestors of the Yega tribe assumed supernatural power, and they were classified under the existence of the spiritual world. Special chants were composed, and dedicated to the deities, having in mind, that all blessings would flow their way in hunting, fishing, and gardening.

In the midst of this polytheism, a belief in a supreme spirit also existed. This supreme spirit was known as *Sirorari*.⁸ *Sirorari* was understood to have power over the material and spiritual world. This understanding motivated the Yega ancestors to offer sacrifice in a primitive way, in terms of food and prayers.

The dedication of chants to the deities was common. The composers had to compose a tune that would make the deities happy. Some used the tune of the original tune, or the adjusted *Gatari Ji*, and some used a monotone. All these tunes were thought to be acceptable to the spiritual beings (they could be heard quickly, for swift blessings).

Here is one example: Uareba Kombega, from Kanauje village, using a chant for hunting. It was a chant of petition, sung monotonously, so that edible animals would come his way. Although the chant had no mention of the specific hunting god, the idea remained that his hunting would be blessed.

*Wo, wo, wo – O Undari wo budo dogedo itio
rejedo bane – wo, wo, wo.*⁹

Which means:

*Animal, animal – Give me the tamed animal
and I will easily catch it, animal, animal.*

Another of the Uareba Kombega's monotonous chants, used before planting in the garden, was addressed to the supreme spirit *Sirorari*. This was chanted to the tune of the original *Gatari Ji*.

1. *O Siroro ari embo iso poiwo mei rare
be ba itigae gowedo bane iso itari gido.*
2. *Natopo asisi iso ikowegari mei
itigae tano tigare iso itari gido.*¹⁰

Which means:

1. *Self-created man, I am your fatherless child
help me to plant and harvest the taro, because it
is your gift.*
2. *Everlasting spirit, for your lost son
give more than enough, because it is your gift.*

Apart from the Yega circuit, the neighbouring villages also held the same belief in the supreme spirit *Sirorari*. This allowed the Yega people to exchange chants. The Yega people also composed new chants, using tunes from neighbouring villages.

Here is one example of a chant that was adopted from the neighbouring villages, because of the common belief in *Sirorari*.

*O Siroro bemire e ai
E maiama yowa siroro, siroro
O siroro bemire e ae.*¹¹

Which means:

The truth about creation
The continuous creation of the pearl
The truth about creation.

Chanting in church worship

The pioneer missionaries introduced the worship of the Christian God in the midst of this polytheism, and, in time, supplanted the traditional religious worship. The Yega people lost their traditional religious identity, in terms of belief and chants dedicated to many deities, as well as to *Sirorari*. However, a very few remained, that the old people taught to the new generation, who brought them forward into the structure of the church.

Bishop George Ambo, having in mind for the church to move towards indigeneity, introduced traditional instruments, customary dress, and dancing into church worship in the early 1960s. This helped the Yega people understand Christ, in their midst, and in the *Gatari Ji*. Many Yega musicians composed chants in the form, and the tune, of the original, or adjusted, *Gatari Ji*, and the adopted chants, using Christian ideology. All these chants were accompanied by instruments.

Here is one example of a chant composed to the tune of the original *Gatari Ji*. The tune remains, but the adjustment is designed to be chanted by two *Yabe*.

FIRST LEADER:

O Bejeio nango gore o.

SECOND LEADER:

O Keriso da buari o.

GROUP:

Keriso da buari o bejeio nango gore o.

Which means:

FIRST LEADER:

Speak out for us to hear.

SECOND LEADER:

The coming of Christ.

GROUP:

The coming of Christ, speak out for us to hear.

The *Sirorari* chants, adopted from the neighbouring tribes and villages, were also brought into church worship, but the words were slightly changed to focus on Christ. For example, the chant *siroro bemire*, was rearranged for Holy Communion.

O Siroro ge bemisi rare ingio

O Asisi bondo re siro siroro rare

O Siroro ge bemisi rare ingio.

Which means

Hear the tune creative message

The spiritual feasting is creative

Hear the tune, creative message.

Conclusion

The primary form of the *Gatari Ji* emerges from a person in sorrow. This form is then adjusted by musicians, so that a leader chants the first part, and the group chants the second part. Some musicians go far as to adjust it so that three parts are chanted separately.

The church within the Yega circuit has already adopted three forms of the *Gatari Ji*, but it could move deeper into indigenuity, by using *Sirorari* chants in their original form, without rearrangement.

The three parts of the *Gatari Ji* can be theologised as the Trinity. Thus the *Gatari Ji* could be as symbol of the Trinity in the music of the Yega tribe.

NOTES

1. A descriptive chant before the crying.
2. I was present at the time, and learned it by heart.
3. Hayward Kombega explained to me, in 1987, at Isivini, how his uncle, Yauweri, composed the chant.
4. *Yabe* derives from the word *Ya*, meaning “song”, and *be*, meaning “mouth”. The leading part is a chant called *Yabe*.
5. Kudu drums and conch shell are common through out PNG. Rattles are small nuts taken from a tree known as Bua in the Ewa dialect.
6. This was adjusted and rearranged by Gordon Gill Tangara, from an unknown surviving oral source in 1986.
7. My own chant, but I had to adjust it again to welcome Bishop Swing into Newton Theological College in 1987.
8. *Sirorari* generally means “creator”. It is a common belief among the people of the Killeton and the North Coast area.
9. This was explained to me by Hayward Kombega, when I interviewed him in 1987 at Isivini.
10. Ibid.
11. Adopted chant from the North Coast area called Kasamba.

A POLITICAL THEOLOGY: MELANESIAN MILEU

Revd Kasek Kautil

*(A case study presented at APATS Symposium,
Hong Kong, March 9-15, 1988.)*

I

A search for appropriate political theology must be a task that can be compared to Dr Theodor Reik's famous psychoanalytic title, *Listening with the Third Ear*, and has a three-headed person as a cover design. The third person turned out to be himself, because it is a psychoanalytic insight, that a true psychologist is one who can listen to himself.¹ Listening with the third ear is exactly what we need in our search for appropriate expressions of our conceptions.

We are embarking on a subject that must be a concern to every Christian and citizen. No responsible person can avoid it. That is why we must ask anew, what is true in our experience, and contexts, that true for the Reformation milieu? Luther, and Reformation, constitute immense works, that one immediately faces the likelihood of reading too much into the milieu, or deducing too much of the same. But this should not mean taking a passive attitude towards issues of theology and politics that were unique to Reformation milieu, as much as it is a valid concern for our contexts. And, in order that we may do justice to history and the traditions of the West, as well as to ourselves, we must consider traditions other than the West, for concern with politics is a universal one. I wish, therefore, to present a brief description of the Melanesian political milieu, or rather, the Papua New Guinea milieu, and then to make a few comparisons with Luther's responses.

II

The Preamble to the Constitution of the Independent State of Papua New Guinea states, in part:

We the people of Papua New Guinea . . . united in one nation . . . pledge ourselves to guard and pass on to those who come after us our noble traditions, and the Christian principles that are ours now. . . . We, the people, declare ourselves, under the guiding hand of God. . . . And . . . that all power to the people. . . . And community interdependence are basic principles of our society.²

At least three important aspects of the statement are worthy of note. They account for history, traditions, Christian principles, and community interdependence. Since Christian principles, and community interdependence, were enshrined in the constitution, there is a presupposition that all tribes belong to the same family, and share the same history. Structures, therefore, are not as important as the spirit and principles, on which the nation was founded. It is the spirit of unity and interdependence among the people and tribes. The Constitution, as such, reflects the values of the people, and, in a more-religious sense, the beliefs of the people. Statements of values and beliefs, in turn, reflect the people, and their identity. Let us now consider this preamble was reborn, by looking briefly at the culture, religion, and history.

1. The culture milieu

The relation between the church and the government can be described as close, even though there are marked differences in structures and objects. The close relation can be attributed to cultural milieu. There were traditional forms of centralised government, with chiefs as head of the tribes, but they were not our forms of central government, with warriors, medicine man, and gardeners. What mattered most, was not

instruments of a tribe state, but how best the welfare of members were served and guaranteed. Therefore, in large parts of Papua New Guinea, in the past, as well as the present time, we speak of government for and by the people. A tribal state, and its structures, were established, not to serve itself, but to serve its people.

An extreme example can be drawn from the traditional payback practices in many parts of Papua New Guinea. When the life of a member is endangered, the whole tribe is endangered. The whole tribe retaliates, by payback, or compensation demands, whether every member participates in the act or not. The power to execute peace, war, or justice was collective, not directed by written codes, but by the collective power of reason. People had their ethical code of conduct and wisdom, as complex as any written codes of modern times. They were as capable of horrific crimes as any human being, and as capable of godly virtues. People were neither religious nor unreligious; worldly nor spiritual, for they belonged to one and the same order of creation. I hope this will be made clearer, when we look at the religious milieu.

2. The religious milieu

A Papua New Guinean, like the rest of his/her Melanesian counterparts, is a religious person. Religion was the central value, and provided the framework for daily work and relationships between the members of the clan, with the deity, with the environments (sea, rivers, and mountains). As an ultimate concern,³ religion is the complex whole of man, with his surroundings and relationship, which all constitute his existential concern. Religion was the way of life, and life was religion. There was no separation of the secular and the worldly, or the spiritual and the worldly. For religion is part of the great drama of bio-cosmic⁴ life. Religion, in this sense, plays the role of maintaining the proper balance in created order and relationships.

Another way of describing the Melanesian milieu, may be described in the three senses used by a current writer on Melanesian religions: religion is a system, a personal attitude, or a complex of symbolic systems. As a system, religion is part of the social structure, and the political structure of beliefs and rituals. In this sense, the major religions of the world, including Christianity, as well as ethnic religions, may be included. And, as part of the social structure, religion plays an important role in both the spiritual and secular spheres of life; hence, dichotomy exists, but only superficially. For life belongs to the one Creator and Father.

In another sense, religion is a personal attitude of an individual towards God, or any object of one's religion.⁵ Politicians, civil servants, bishops, and pastors can become objects of people's religion, as much as the structures which put them there. These public servants, from both the church and the government, can actually become gods, if only little gods. This is apart from the honour and respect all authorities deserve. However, they will be either be servants of God, or servants of the devil. This is the essence of the spiritual meaning of the two kingdoms. "By their fruits, you will know those who are My servants."⁶ Jesus was invited to leave His humanity, to usurp the kingdom from the Father. To leave His humanity, to pursue self-glorification and power, was to abuse His role. In a real sense, it means to cease to serve God the Father, and to cease to serve the people.

Many religious values and beliefs are expressed through symbols.⁷ In this sense, we may speak of the whole structure of "church" and "government". As symbols, they both point to something. That something may be the good life, peaceful relationships, material well-being, or power. They both represent the same reality, in that they both exist as instruments of God. The difference between the two may be a matter of degree in quality of service, and experience of fullness of life, rather than a choice of one or the other. True denial of self, and the world, is measured by a faithful heart, and the service of love, rather than merely outward gestures.

A good politician, or a minister of religion, does not become either by right of inheritance, but by faithful service to his neighbour, and obedience to God.

3. The historical milieu

From the very beginning of mission contacts, Christianity was the only universal religion that penetrated the largely tribal, and ethnic, religions of Melanesia. The gospel of peace, reconciliation, and unity provided new attractions for the people. Those who responded, were converted to the new faith and life. The response was both individual and collective. Conversion of a chief, or an elder, meant conversion of his whole tribe or household. Those who held political positions, traditionally did not change the old with new title, but took on an added role. In many cases, the new role was a religious one. For them, they were made both political and religious figures. Because, for them, it was like Joshua, who declared, “as for me and my family, we will serve the Lord”.⁸ Tribes then became the church, because tribes received the new faith, not individuals. Tribes become the church, and the church was the tribe.

Christian Keysser, missionary to the Sattelberg people from 1899-1921, was the first to recognise this, when he said: “The tribe is, at the same time, the Christian congregation, and considers itself as such, and acts as such.”⁹ Even those individuals, who declared allegiance to the Christian faith, were, in a sense, churches within a “church”.¹⁰ An individual cannot be a Christian, apart from his natural ties (tribes), for that would be suicidal, and inhuman. Either the whole tribe is converted, or they must face the consequences of being ridiculed as not being members of one’s family. Many were caught in a paradox. Am I for Christ, or Caesar? Am I for church, or government? Etc. Thus, like the church in Corinth, we break the body of Christ, and the order of God’s creation. But the world, and its people, are one family of God.

III

For Christians, Christian social responsibility is not an option, but a duty. Christians are called individually, and corporately, to bear witness in the world. This may be through the priestly function of all believers, or a pastoral office. It may be reflected through political office, or civil service. From the point of view of cultural milieu, the question of the relation of church and state is not a question of separation of two spheres, rather it is fulfilling of duty to God. Demarcation of territories is not the essential issue, but the quality of life and service, characterised by love and obedience under God. The substance of the issue is not one of spirit against body, or church against state, but serving God against mammon – children of the heavenly Father, or servants of darkness, the Devil.

It would be quite safe to conclude that Luther's concern, in his polemics on Christian responsibilities, both for ministers and lay persons, is a life of faithful service, according to the call of office, be it office of the Word or politics. All are under the rule of Christ, and His Word, which must prevail, under whom all authorities in heaven, on earth, and under the earth, shall bow. Thus, in dealing with our paradoxes and dialectics, we may, all the more, listen with the third ear, to the third person.

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10. I use "church" here in a symbolic form sense, or typological form. Referring to natural order, particularly the tribal units, with all its spiritual and political concerns, as a total vehicle of God's activities.

DREAMS IN PAPUA NEW GUINEA AND THEIR INTERPRETATION

Meg Maclean

Dreams are much more prominent in Papua New Guinean culture than they are in the West. They are used as a means of communication, and are full of symbolism.

My first encounter with dreams, as a means of communication, was when young people wanted to test my reaction to an idea without making a direct approach. On one occasion, a girl on a course, told me how she had dreamt that she and her friends had been climbing an Okari tree to collect the nuts, and I had come, and had been angry with them.

Family fortunes are often the subject of dreams. At the time, exactly what will happen is not very clear, except something good, or something bad, is going to happen. In retrospect, the symbolism is clearly understood.

Religious dreams usually involve religious personalities, either from the past or the present, or have the religious theme. One night, an Anglican sister dreamt of a lake, with a house on one side, and a mountain on the other. Many people had gathered for a celebration of the Mass by the Archbishop. However, when a fire started on the mountain, the people began to run away. The religious sisters in the congregation were frightened also, but the Archbishop told them to stay, and not to be afraid. As the Archbishop continued to celebrate, a huge tree behind him caught fire, and was shooting out sparks. When it started to fall, the Archbishop led them around the lake towards the house. Months later, this was seen as a prophecy of the resignation of a bishop, which resulted in a lot of confusion, anger, and misunderstanding. The sisters were, unwillingly, caught up in it.

What guidance should we give to our people as to how to know when dream is from God, and not the result of worries, indigestion, or sickness? There seems to be no clear indication in the Bible as to how to judge a dream, except by whether the interpretation is proved true or not. This is only a valid test if the dream contains a prediction, but it is no help in deciding whether or not you should act on that prediction. In Papua New Guinea cultures, I have seen dreams to be almost as destructive as gossip.

In today's terms, Old Testament figures, such as Daniel and Joseph, would probably be said to have the gift of being able to interpret dreams. Is the Papua New Guinean church prepared to recognise anyone as having this gift? Can we rely on the gift of discernment to distinguish between the dreams that are of God and those that are not? Should we use the same standard of measurement as scripture gives us for false prophets and teachers: "By their fruits shall you know them", or should it be left to other members of Christ's body to judge their interpretation, as Paul directs in 1 Cor 14:29?

From my own experience, I would say that dreams are very much like speaking in tongues. They are private, rather than public, and provide edification, or revelation, for the individual. I don't think that dreams, in Papua New Guinea, can be equated with the dream experience of the cultures of the East, such as Tibetan Buddhist, or Hindu yoga, experiences. All the dreams that have been shared with me by Papua New Guineans, I can relate to similar experiences of my own, except that I would interpret them according to a different worldview. I have never established whether sorcerers, who travel to other places by non-physical means, do so by dreams.

MAN AND HIS WORLD: BIBLICAL AND MELANESIAN WORLDVIEWS

Fr Theodoor Aerts

[In the original edition of this article, the Bibliography and endnotes 9 to 15 were omitted, and were published in MJT 6-1. They have now been included in this online edition, with an increase to the page numbering. –Revising ed.]

People who are familiar with the existence of distant planets and galaxies, and who are used to seeing, via satellite transmission, what is happening on the other side of the globe, need some mental changeover to re-place themselves in biblical times. Yet, in everyday life, they still use biblical language when they speak about “the end of the world” (cf. Is 5:26), about “the rising of the sun, and its going down” (cf. Mal 11:1), and about “stars falling from heaven” (cf. Apoc 9:1). This is natural, and spontaneous, because all these expressions derive from external observation, and from the immediate appearance of things. They represent, also, the scientific insights of an age past.

I THE BIBLICAL WORLDVIEW

1. Some ancient scientific views

Scientific knowledge is often present in the Bible, starting already with the geographical location of the “garden of Eden” (Gen 2:8). It is used to be said that Eden was the name of the country, in which this garden was located, and suggestions were made to place it somewhere on the west bank of the lower Euphrates. Today, exegetes rather connect the word “Eden” with the Sumerian term *edinu* (wilderness, flatland), and believe that the Greek Old Testament was

correct in interpreting the whole expression as “a garden (Greek: *paradeisos*) of delight”, for which no particular place should be contemplated. In other words, the concept would be related to similar ideas of Mesopotamian mythology. The same is also true of the notation that, from this garden, started four streams, to water the earth. The Tigris and Euphrates are easily identified, but the two other streams – Pishon, near the land of Havilah, and Gihon, encircling the land of Kush (Gen 2: 10-14) – are not found in their neighbourhood, and reflect, possibly, rivers known from Egypt. We have then, once more, an apparently geographical, but, in fact, a half-mythical localisation, in which the more important point is that life-giving waters streamed out of Paradise, the place of the tree of life, as is again known from Babylonian mythology.

A wider knowledge of the world is found in the “table of nations”, which explains the people of the earth, starting from Noah’s three sons, Shem, Ham, and Japheth (Gen 10:1-32). This lists sums up the historical and geographical knowledge available to the scribes at Solomon’s court, and gives us the widest-ever frame of reference found in the Bible; it clearly falls short of embracing the whole-inhabited world.¹ Hence, the “Solomon Islands”, so familiar to us, must be sought near Israel, within the limits of the earth known in the ancient Near East.² The only conclusion, which can be drawn of the table “of nations”, is that, even though many of the genealogical links affirmed are hypothetical, it nevertheless gives us a sum of ancient geographical knowledge, as kept in some scholarly circles at the time of king Solomon. The popular views, at that time, were surely more limited than that.³

Natural science has left its traces, too, in scripture. Quite incidentally, it is said, for example, that snow and rain returned to heaven (Is 55:10), where the clouds dissolved in rain (Jdg 5:4; 1 Kgs 18:45) to water the earth. The same benefit derives, also, from the dew of heaven (cf. Dt 33:13, 28). Again, the rivers flow to the sea (Qoh 9:13), sometimes explained as the moon,⁴ is a clear sign the weather is about to

change, and will become pleasant again. Such a down-to-earth view contrasts sharply with the view expressed by the Babylonian epic of creation, where it is said that the god Marduk suspended “his bow” in heaven, after defeating his rebellious god-mother, Tiamat, and those who supported her (Enuma Elish 6:82-94: ANET 69:514). If this particular myth inspired the biblical story of the flood, and its aftermath, we would have our first example of de-mythologising a pagan god tale, under the influence of the Israelite belief in the one God Jahweh. However, this may be, the rainbow has, in fact, become the sign of Jahweh’s benevolence, and of His promise not to destroy the earth any more (Gen 9:13), while the earlier example of the returning rain is used by Isaiah to explain the life-sustaining function of the word of God (Is 55:11). Again, the regularity of sun and moon (cf. Ps 72:5; 89:37), cold and heat, winter and summer, etc. (Gen 8:22), are seen as reliable signs of the same faithfulness and reliability of Israel’s God.

2. The external appearance of things

Most of the time, we should not suspect any scientific pretensions, but merely a description of what is directly observed, and a statement of what is inferred from it, without further reflection. A worldview, as something unified and scientifically secured, is not available; even a Hebrew word denoting “world”, or “universe” is missing⁵, although, in the later books of the Bible, we meet the Greek term *kosmos*, as, for instance, in the following philosophical statement that God’s hand “from formless matter created the world” (Wis 11:17). The typical Semitic view merely takes together what one sees, that is “heaven and “earth” (Gen 1:1), or, from the time of Solomon onwards, “heaven and earth and sea” (Gen 49:25; Ex 20:4, 11). The dual expression, combining two opposites to include everything, is very common in the Bible⁶. It would, therefore, not be significant enough to prove a specific “dualistic” outlook. Analogous remarks might be made concerning the tripartite division (Ex 20:4; Ps 115:15-17), which some authors understand as defining a three-

storeyed universe, with water below, heaven above, and the earth in between, but which often can be seen on a mere literary level, without implying much speculative thought at all⁷. In fact, the Semites did not have a single systemic view of the universe; they used a multiplicity of approaches, according to the circumstances. Comparisons with Egyptian myths would allow us to find not only (two) bi-, or (three) tri-partite divisions, but also, by distinguishing, for example, sea and underworld, or the different superimposed heavens, a universe with even more divisions. For our purpose, we keep the common tri-partite division.

(1) The impression of having the sky as a ceiling above one's head is expressed in calling it "something flattened" (Gen 1:6), like a thin sheet of iron (cf. Ex 39:3), although it might be likened to a Bedouin's tent as well (Is 40:22c). Such a sky needs to rest its "edges" (Ps 18:6) upon some distant mountains, which are "the pillars of heaven" (Job 26:11). From the experience that the sky touches all around the horizon, it was naturally inferred that the earth itself was round surface (cf. Is 40:22a).

There are, however, some texts which reflect known Babylonian myths, e.g., the view that the earth has four sides (Is 11:12; Ez 7:2); pagan mythology assigned to each of these sides another protecting divinity. Of the latter polytheistic belief, however, we do not find any traces in the Bible. According to a few passages, there is a "heaven of heavens", or a "highest of heaven" (Dt 10:14; Ps 148:4), which, once more, mirrors a Babylonian view of three or seven superimposed heavens, an idea, which later Jews picked up, especially in the non-biblical books written between the Old and New Testaments, such as 2 Enoch (cf. 8:7-22), and others.

(2) As to the flat earth, one view is that it floats or rests upon the world-sea (Hebrew: *tehom*), which, in primal time, covered the whole earth (Gen 1:2; Ps 105:6), and which still surrounds it on all sides, only filled with some distant islands (cf. Sir 43:23). To explain, however, that the earth

does not move, it needs a foundation, or “pillars”, which, during a mighty storm, might even be laid bare (Ps 18:15). No thought is given, though, to what would support the world foundations themselves.

In this geography, fits also the expression of a “navel of the land”, which is used once to refer to the hills near Shechem (Jdg 9:37), and, another time, to Jerusalem, built upon Mount Zion (Ez 38:12). If for a moment, we disregard the different periods to which these two texts belong, the double use would suggest that different traditions have used the same expression for their respective central places, which, in this case, are a mere 50 kilometres distant from one another. This would underline how very limited each of these societies did draw its own limits.

Another earthly place with mythical associations is the “mountain of the Lord” (Is 14:13), located in the recesses of the North. A historicisation of this one-time Phoenician, or Syrian, idea is found in Ex 3:1, where this applies to Mount Horeb or Sinai (see also Ex 19), and, again, in Ps 48:3, where the image is transposed to Mount Zion in Jerusalem⁸.

Not always is the earth seen as floating or fixed, there is also the rare view of the earth as a building, perfectly measured out (Job 38:4-5), which finds, again, its parallels in Babylonian texts, and, in the scriptural analogy of the underworld, as a city with gates.

(3) The third element, besides earth and sky, is the underworld (Hebrew: *sheol*), which is just under the earth’s surface (Num 16:28-34), or even below the nether sea (Ps 24:2), from which the springs sprout forth. This is “a land of murk and deep shadow, where dimness and disorder hold sway, and light, itself, is like the dead of night” (Job 10:22). Again, *sheol* can be seen as a city with strong gates (Job 38:17; Is 14:17), as was done, already, by the Babylonians.

Within this general cosmological frame, other phenomena find their place. The earth quakes, when its pillars are shaken (Job 9:6), and the rain and hail fall down, when the sluices of the respective storerooms are opened (Gen 7:11; Job 38:22; Ps 148:4). Sun and moon are the great lamps hung against the firmament (Gen 1:16), or also running their heavenly course from east to west, and then proceeding under the earth, to resume, again, the same function (cf. Ps 19:5, Qoh 1:7). Since experience shows that man does not need to see them to have light, the Bible grants the light an independent existence (Dan 3:73), and has it mentioned in Gen 1:3-5, before even the luminaries themselves are decorating the vault of heaven (Gen 1:14-19).

3. The different functional roles

The cosmology, here described, has no importance of its own, but is part of a functional view of the universe. If there is any unity, then it is because God, who “transcends heaven and earth” (Ps 148:13), has made everything, including those elements of nature, which the pagans venerated as their gods⁹. In connection with this view, it will not be surprising that, especially, the elements are in God’s hand. So, it is said that the thunder is “the voice of the Lord” (as in Ps 29, which is possibly a borrowed Canaanite hymn), or that lightning is the arrow of His bow (Ps 18:14), or the scourges of His whip (Job 9:23). However, with the growing awareness of Jahweh’s transcendence, it was also felt that the Lord was not in the wind, not in the earthquake, and not in the fire, but that He was different from all these impressive manifestations of the nature (cf. 1 Kgs 19:11-12).

As to the main divisions of the universe, sky, earth, and underworld, a definite functional view is adopted. Heaven is simply the place of God (Is 66:1; Ez 1:1), although He is not confined to it (Ps 115:3; 139:7-12), from there, He looks down upon mankind (Dt 26:11), and, from there, He will reveal Himself (Gen 22:11). Jacob saw, even in a vision, that there

were steps leading up to heaven, as if the place was a divine palace (Gen 28:12, 17). The nether world is a kind of counterpart of heaven, as appears from the parallelism between the “gates of heaven” and the “gates of death”, this is the proper place of those who are deceased, where they live on as mere “shadows” (Hebrew: *refaim*).

Different, again, from these two distant places, is the earth, which is the place of the living (Ps 115:16), here man can be fruitful and multiply, and here seed-bearing plants and trees are made for him (Gen 1:28-29). This earth is divided according to the man’s needs: there are the arable land (Hebrew: *adamah*, from which *adam* = man, is taken: Gen 2:7), the inhabited country side (Hebrew: *tebel*; cf. Prov 8:26; Is 18:3; Ps 9:9), the steppe, where nomads still can pasture their sheep (Hebrew: *midbar*; cf. 1 Sam 17:28; Jer 23:10), and finally the desert, or wasteland proper, where there are not even waterholes left (Hebrew: *arabah*; cf. Jer 17:6). As said earlier, in relation to the “navel of the land”, such a world is quite distinct from the continuous, homogeneous space, without human qualifications of modern scientists.

That the immediate world is man-centred, can be seen even more convincingly when we note what elements of the landscape are, in fact, explained. There is, for example, the human-like salt rock, standing near the Dead Sea, which is the petrified figure of the too-curious wife of Lot (Gen 19:26), or the piles of stones, covering the bodies of the sacrilegious Achan (Jos 7:26), and the king’s son Absalom (2 Sam 18:17), or the memorial erected after the treaty between Jacob and Laban (Gen 31:45-48). Often, only one impressive stone has become a monument, and is anointed (Gen 28:18; 35:14), or given a symbolic name to remember the original incident (as with Ebenezer, the “Stone of help” of 1 Sam 7:12). In many instances, such stone monuments, or also sacred trees, were the centres of places of worship, or private shrines, of which there were so many in Israel (cf. Ex 20:24b), and which, eventually, were condemned by the prophets (e.g., Is 1:29-31;

Jer 2:20; Hos 4:13). It was believed, of course, that on those sites God kept revealing Himself.

4. New Testament concepts

Having touched upon the Old Testament worldview, in its more-analytical, and its more functional, aspects, there is not much to be added regarding the New Testament. The traditional concepts are taken for granted, when the Christian scriptures refer to “heaven and earth” (Mt 24:35), or to “heaven, earth, and underworld” (cf. Mt 11:23; Rom 10:6-7; Phil 2:10-11; Apoc 5:13), or allude to a plurality of heavens, as in Matthew’s “kingdom of heavens” (indeed a Greek plural), and in Paul’s reference to a rapture into the “third heaven” (2 Cor 12:4). Even the picture of a four-sided world is not absent, e.g., in the description of the heavenly Jerusalem (Apoc 21:12-13), and, possibly, in the other passages as well (Acts 10:10-11). The anthropocentric approach is also there, with paradise as the place of those who are saved (Lk 23:43), Hell: the place of those who are doomed (Greek: *Hades*; cf. Lk 16:23), and the earth assigned to the ordinary humans (cf. Lk 16:27).

Whereas, in the Old Testament, Jahweh was the creator of the world, the New Testament professes that the world, with everything visible and invisible, was made through Christ (John 1:3; Col 1:16), and is subjected to Him (Phil 3:21). Several texts are tainted with an ethical dualism, whereby “this world” is counteracting the salvific will of God, yet – even in John, who favours this view – we can read that Christ is the light and the Saviour of the world (John 4:42; 9:5), and that “God loved the world so much that He gave His only Son, so that everyone . . . may have eternal life” (John 3:16). In continuation of some Old Testament views that heaven and earth will pass away (Is 51:6), the New Testament, too, believes in the transitory nature of this world (1 Cor 7:31). To describe the end of the world, the most impressive catastrophes are listed, culminating in a final destruction by

fire (2 Pet 3:7, 10-13). Yet this is not a total annihilation, but rather the means to arrive at a complete transformation, which brings about “a new heaven and new earth” (cf. Apoc 21:1), that will last forever (cf. Is 66:22).

II THE MELANESIAN WORLDVIEW

1. Contacts with the outside world

The majority of Melanesians live concentrated in the New Guinea Highlands, and believe, according to their myths, that this was their home place.

Yet, although the Polynesians outdo them, there are also many local island people, with traditions about a distant land, where they came from. From a Manus Islanders, who trace their origin to Nimei, and his wife Niwong, their mythical ancestors came, in a canoe, from a far-away unnamed country (PARKINSON, 1907, p. 709). For the Trobrianders, the place of origin is the island Tuma, only ten miles to the north-west of Kiriwina, but, at the same time, the “other world” of the spirits (SELIGMANN, 1910, p. 676). Actual knowledge of distant countries is sometimes fantastic, as they are believed to be inhabited by tailed people, and by people with wings, or only by women, so that any man, who adventures to go to this Kaytalugi, would die an untimely death (MALINOWSKI, 1922, p. 223).¹⁰

Recent archaeological discoveries have shown that, at certain stages, actual knowledge of distant places may indeed be assumed. In fact, coastal shells reached New Guinea Highlands at least 9,000 years ago, while obsidian from Talasea (West New Britain), used for knives and spearheads, reached the Eastern Solomons up to 3,000 years ago. There is evidence that the same material from Lou Islands, in the Admiralties, did travel to the New Hebrides, be it in one or more trips, but still linking places, which, in a straight line, are separated some 4,300 kilometres (ALLEN, 1977, p. 389). On these, and other, accounts the people engaged in *kula-*, *hiri-*, and other trade expeditions, must have known more about

their surroundings than the ancestors of the Jewish people knew about their outside world.

2. Traditional concept of the universe

Leaving the immediate geography, we come to the broader view of man's place in the universe. As far as these Melanesian concepts are published, they look very similar to those found in the Bible. One such view has been reconstructed by H. I. HOGBIN, in relation to the Busama, a people living on the coast of Huon Gulf, between Lae and Salamaua. Here, it is believed that one, who would like to journey beyond the small world of the ancestors, had to climb up the blue vault of the sky, which is supposed to be solid, "just like thatch" (HOGBIN, 1947a, p. 121).

The sky itself is peopled with so-called "sky spirits", which are supposed to look like humans, but who always carry torches. The two largest of these, representing the sun and the moon, are borne by the headmen, the rest being content with stars. Subsequent to the original chaos, sun and moon sent some of their followers down to instruct men in the proper way to behave, so that, in the end, the culture of the earth duplicates the culture of the sky (1947a, p. 124). Having completed their tasks, these spirits have forgotten all about their handiwork, or, at least, they have displayed no further interest in it. Rain is ascribed to the displeasure of certain of the spirit men at the goings-on of the spirit women, and, when the ground is shaken, it is as a result of their wars.

Another kind of supernatural being, which occasionally took the form of bright, varicoloured eels, snakes, or lizards, are the so-called "spirits of the land": they are responsible for tempests, thunderstorms, and heavy downpours, especially when out of season, while their multicoloured breath is to be seen in the sky, from time to time, forming the rainbow. The dwellings of these types of spirits are definite sacred places, noteworthy for their gloom, chill atmosphere, or danger – a

cave, with a fern-covered entrance, perhaps, a waterfall, drenched with cold spray, a lonely pool, where a stray crocodile may be lurking, or a slippery precipice. Dangerous as these spirits are believed to be, however, it is thought that the group dwelling at each sacred place has made a promise to the first claimant of the surrounding area to leave him, and his heirs, unmolested, as long as they respect the holiness of the site. Persons, however, who have no claim to ownership, were not included in the contract, and could expect no favours either (1947, p. 125).

A third category of supernatural beings is the “souls” of the deceased. After an interval of one to three months, depending on the dead person’s status, they leave the village they have lived in, and go to dwell with the particular land spirit, which has previously granted them his protection. There is, in other words, no single afterworld, where all the departed are assembled (1947a, p. 128). The Bukaua, who live across the Huon Gulf, between Lae and Finschhafen, and who are culturally related to the Busamas, hold very similar concepts of the universe (cf. LEHNER, 1911; 1930b). They are positive about the place of the deceased; first they stay a while at the traditional ancestral places, but then they go to a place under the earth, whose entrance is somewhere towards the east (1911, p. 430). This place is also in some relation to the bottom of the sea. From here, the souls of the departed grant favours to those who survive them on earth, on condition that the latter keep honouring them.¹¹

The earth, itself, is seen, by the Bukaua, as a broad, mountainous mushroom-like mass, surrounded by water. It is flattened towards the sides, and tapers off, below, to a mere stick. Earthquakes are happening, when the stick of the earth is moved. This occurs when under-earthly being, with a long and a short leg, who leans against the earth-stick, is changing position. Other explanations of the earth tremors relate them to powerful humans, or to the magic of some sorcerers (1930b, pp. 105-106).

The firmament is like a huge shell of a sea turtle, resting upon the ends of the earth. Yet, there exists, also, the belief that one “man”, called Nohta, is sitting on the horizon, supporting the heavenly vault, lest it should fall down and crush all the living (LEHNER, 1930b, p. 107). This heaven is conceived as another inhabited world, planted with trees, of which the stars are the roots.¹² Sun and moon are the eyes of dreaded, but also venerated, powers. When, at evening, “Lord Sun” sets, it is believed that his grandmother came to fetch him; he then passes underneath the earth, to appear on the other side next day. The moon follows the same route, but takes more time, because he is smaller, and also slower. There exists a fear that, one day, the sun and moon will disappear, thus marking the end of mankind; therefore, moon eclipses cause a great show of sorrow and grief, because of the nearing disaster. A halo around the moon is a premonitory sign that somebody is about to retire into a seclusion hut, e.g., the next widower, or the next girl coming to puberty. When a rainbow appears, it is believed that it shows the blood of the killed person, which mounts to heaven, or, also, somebody’s bile, which burst and splashed up into the sky (1930b, p. 110). Similar explanations cover nearly all atmospheric phenomena, but those mentioned here will suffice for the people near the Huon Gulf.

Elsewhere in Papua New Guinea, we find ideas, which, in many instances, are exactly the same as those described, but there are also differences to be noted. One missionary, noting the keen interest in cosmological problems among the Austronesian Palas of New Ireland, refers how, once an old man asked him, whether he – a white man – had come from below, evidently using a ladder, which was standing in the world below (NEUHAUS, 1934, p. 87). According to these islanders, the earth and the sea form a flat, round disk, like the knots of a bamboo. Above us, there is, like another bamboo knot, the upper world, while our earth rests upon pillars planted upon another earth, right under us. The lower side of our earth is, then, the heaven of the earth below, and the heaven above us is the lower side of the earth above. Contact

between these worlds is quite feasible, with ladders, and the same is true to go from one heaven to the other (NEUHAUS, 1962, pp. 218-219). One wonders whether this model does not better fit some ancient Near-Eastern views, than some of the complicated three-dimensional constructions, proposed thus far (cf. WARREN, pp. 33-40, and frontispiece).

In some of the information gained from among a Papuan society, the Mbowamb (near Mount Hagen), we meet the greatest variety, from plain, naturalistic explanations, to the most-mythical ones. The society, referred to, knows a Western-type explanation of the rain, that it is evaporated water in the clouds, which reliquefies, and falls on the earth (STRATHERN, 1977, p. 8). In one mythical explanation, it is said that the rain is the tears of the sky people (*taewamb*), who own the game, and weep over the wild animals, which have been killed by men. The other says that rain happens when Rangkopa, a female sky being, urinates over the earth. This explains, also, the rainy season, while, during the dry spell, Rangkopa hitches her skirt, and allows the sun to shine all the time (1977, p. 8).

The rainbow is understood as a heavenly reflection of a giant snake lying in the forest. If there are two rainbows, it is said that there is a married pair there, the “woman” lying below, and her husband lying above (1977, p. 8). During a thunderstorm, people hear the voice of Kukakla, and some say a red man comes below to eat men, while others say it is a red pig, which comes and kills men. Others are still more specific, and see, in the lightning, the sexual act of a heavenly, flecked boar, and an earthly red sow. When a man is struck by lightning and dies, it is a sign that he stood on the spot where the two animals mated, and burnt him, as with fire (1977, p. 9). The human, or animal, form of these heavenly beings is not really of importance, while the main idea is to connect the various atmospheric events with the “parents of the world”, a male-heavenly and a female-earthly principle, as is done in many other religious systems.¹³

To this complex, one can also reckon some myths of the Samap (East Sepik), which compare the moon, either to the genitals of, for example, a fish-women (GEHBERGER, 1950, pp. 79-85), or those of a man, who could change himself into a pig (1950, pp. 96-100). As such traditional tales should be seen against their respective cultural backgrounds, there is nothing absent about them, but they witness how, generally, daily experiences are linked with the ever-present supernatural beings, who secure survival and vitality for man, animals, and plants, alike.

For the descriptions given, so far, one can see that no rounded-off cosmology is intended, and that earth and sky, day and night, and the most-varied phenomena, from earthquakes to moon halos, used to be seen in direct relation to man's practical concerns.¹⁴ People believe that they depend, somehow, on what is going on in the sky; hence they try to avoid the dangers, which threaten them from above, or they seek to catch the benefits which, according their observations, are connected with the appearance, or disappearance, of some definite atmospheric phenomena (LEHNER, 1930b, p. 105). As a rule, the heavenly bodies, or events, are, themselves, related to some spirit beings, whose nature is supposedly known, and not further described. Finally, the views expressed may have no wider currency than the one particular society they derive from. As in the Bible, then, there is not one authoritative worldview, but there is a multitude of partial concepts.

3. The immediate human environment

Of more importance than either the geographical knowledge of distant places, or the practical concern with cosmology, and with atmospheric phenomena, is man's interest in his nearby physical environment: the village or place he lives in, the soil he tills, or the sea he sails, the strange shapes of beaches and rocks, the fascination of trees and groves, and of many other features of his immediate

surroundings.¹⁵ One story of the Siwai-Papuans (South Bougainville) might illustrate this kind of concern (KINNA, 1972, pp. 22-26:

Long before the missionaries, and other Europeans, came to Bougainville and Papua New Guinea, two gods lived on the mountains above Tonelei Harbour in South Bougainville. These two gods were TANTANU and PAUPIAHE. Because they were gods, each of them had servants to do his work.

Tantanu's servants worked very hard in his gardens, and Tantanu would reward them with four or five pigs every day.

The servants used to have a feast every night.

Paupiahe's men were very lazy, and never worked at all. To make it look as though they were working very hard, they would burn dry banana leaves and cover themselves with ash. Paupiahe did not realise their tricks, and he would also reward them with four or five pigs. So they, too, feasted every night.

This went on for years, but, finally, Paupiahe realised that he did not have any more pigs and food to reward his men. He then knew that this had happened, because his men had not really worked.

Tantanu's men kept on, as usual, working hard in the gardens, feasting, and having dances every night.

Paupiahe becomes jealous of Tantanu. He decided to chase Tantanu away, so that he could get his property and servants. Paupiahe stood on his high mountain, and commanded Tantanu to move away. "If you don't," he cried, "I'll send you right out of this world, to the world of spirits."

Tantanu had no choice. He started to move along the beach towards the south-west. When he came to the point, which is known as Moila Point today, he bent the trees towards the sea, to hide himself. But, still, Paupiahe could see him from the top of the mountain. Tantanu kept on till he was out of sight, and he finally came to a small coastal village, called Siwais. They got their name from this small village.

When Tantanu came to Siwai village, he found only children. They were alone in the village. Their parents had gone to gather food in the jungle. At that time, people were food gatherers. They did not plant gardens of their own.

Tantanu told the children to cook him in a pot. They did as they were told. After an hour, the children saw a man coming along the beach, combing his hair. It was Tantanu, himself. They asked him how he got out of the pot.

“You did not cook me,” he told them. “You cooked food for yourselves.”

So the children took the lid off, and each child picked up one type of food and named it. “That’s my taro,” said one.

“This is my yam,” said another.

“That is my singapore taro,” said a third.

This was how we got the various names of food. Then, all around the village, the various sorts of food started to grow by themselves.

Tantanu then started to teach the children a song, which is translated:

“God has found us.
God has found us.
Throw all the other food away.
The yams, and other food, are growing.”

Tantanu advised them to sing this song to their parents. He lived with them as their leader, till the people disobeyed him. Then he left.

Today, in Siwai, yams, taro, and other food, can be seen growing around. The pot, in which Tatanu was cooked, is also there, as a pool of water. Paupiahe still stands, as a rock on the mountain above Tonelei Harbour.

When the missionaries came to Siwai, they chose TANTANU as the word to mean the Christian God. Today, the Siwai people still call the Almighty God and Creator, by the name of TANTANU.

This tale is clearly confined to the coastal region, inhabited by the Siwai, with the old village, Moila Point, the mountains above Tonelei Harbour, with one specific rock formation, and one definite pool of water. All these items are, somehow, related to the “gods” Tantanu and Paupiahe. The story is, of course, not isolated, and so one could add the explanations of other noteworthy features of the landscape, as the large sickle-shaped stone, lying behind the village Koromira (South Bougainville), which is the petrified canoe given by Bakokora, as model for canoe building, or also the nearby fireplace and cooking pot used by the same “god”, when he taught the people how to prepare food (cf. RAUSCH, 1911, pp. 814-815). Almost every particularly large tree in the forest is connected with the tree spirit (OLIVER, 1955, p. 306), while one definite pool, elsewhere on Bougainville, where people used to feed a sacred crocodile with pigs and dogs (RIBBE, 1903, p. 148), has no doubt a similar spirit-story to explain the corresponding custom.

Mountains and valleys, and various coastlines, all have their own aetiologies. So, the Buka people tell us that their

island was created by a “god” and a “goddess”, which came in a canoe from the south (Bougainville); while the “god” steered the canoe, the coast line was straight, but later, when the “goddess” piloted the craft, the course was crooked, and, hence, the Queen Carola Harbour, on the north-west of the island (THOMAS, 193, p. 220). Similarly, the Tolai people explain that the region of Rebar is flat and dry, because it was made by their good cultural hero To Kabinana, whereas the Papatava area is full of gorges and wells, because it is the work of the hero’s silly brother, To Purgo (KLEINTITSCHEN, 1924, pp. 18-19).

Not only natural features are explained in this way, but also, what appear to be, early man-made structures. At Wapaiya, for example, a village on Kitava Island (Trobriands), there are several megalithic monuments. One big, standing stone, measuring over 1.7 metres in height, is the petrified ancestor Yanusa (compare Gen 19:26), whereas the nearby remains of roughly-rectangular shapes are his wife, children, and dog. The story goes that Yanusa and his family were out hunting pigs, when, for some unknown reason, they all turned to stone (OLLIER, et al, 1973, pp. 45-47).¹⁶ Again, in the village of Barim, on the south-west coast of Umboi or Rooke Island (West New Britain), one finds, outside the men’s house, some standing stones, which, during feast time, are sprinkled with the blood of pigs (compare Gen 28:18). People say that they belong to the *man bilong bipo*, and that they now guard the village (CHINNERY, 1928, p. 29). The explanations, just quoted, show that essential elements of some legends, such as the reason of Yanusa’s punishment, or the specific aetiology for the Barim stones, can be easily be lost during the oral transmission, or, maybe, because of changes in the population, when earlier inhabitants have died out, or were chased away by new immigrants.

In more recent times, several geographical myths have emerged, in connection with some syncretistic movements. As a rule, it has been observed that biblical stories do not have the status of the tribal lore, because they did not leave any

proofs, or visible marks, in the immediate surroundings (MALINOWSKI, 1922, p. 302). To obviate this deficiency, local “prophets” often rename parts of their environment; this explains in the Korero movement (West Irian), the use of Bethlehem, Judea, and the places of the unclean spirits, Gadara (KAMMA, 1954, p. 161), or, in the story cult of Kallal (West New Britain), the new location for Lake Jordan and Nazareth, and for Mounts Sinai and Galilee (JANSSEN, 1974, pp. 21-22). In the Mambu movement, something similar can be observed, when actual and mythical geography are combined into one single picture. A native of Manam Island (near Bogia) explained it all to K. BURRIDGE, with drawings in support. The concentric circles, in the middle of the design, may recall the spherical form of the sky, and the waters surrounding the earth (as in traditional myths). The central point, however, was explained as the place where *bikpela bilong ol gat hap*, or where the Creator generated Himself. The frustrated Manam Islanders live at the far right, whereas the “cargo” is to be found at the far left, beyond Europe and America, although some benefits are trickling through to Rabaul, Port Moresby, Aitape, and Manus, some of the administrative centres in Papua New Guinea. The four cardinal points show a factual knowledge of a ship’s compass.¹⁷ We have, then, here, a good example of how experimental knowledge about Manam, Rabaul, etc., and learned facts about Tokyo, England, etc., are related to the place “no one in the world has seen . . . or knows its name” (BURRIDGE, 1960, pp. 10-11, 240-241).

CONCLUSION

A closer look at Melanesian worldviews cannot be without benefit, for a correct understanding of the scriptures, which were written by men, who had the comparable worldview. In neither of the two views, is there an attempt to ever arrive at the single valid synthesis; on the contrary, different views were cherished at the same time, yet, always, they were related to man’s needs, and are part of his so-called

integrated experience. In this matter, Israelite and Melanesian views clash with modern scientific insights, based up on experiments and logical deductions, but, at the same time, showing hardly any relation to the daily experiences of one's senses.

One has not to choose between either a traditional, or a scientific, view, because each applies to a different realm. Again, the scholarly explanation is apt to indicate that the more-imaginary views don't pretend to be taken literally, or to be matters of saving truth. In their own fashion, popular views remain valid, though; they remind Melanesians that the Bible, too, has a human scale, of which smallness, one has to be aware, to grasp properly the greatness of its message. Even the Manam Islander, "who brings out from his storeroom, things both old and new" "(cf. Mt 13:52), reminds us of the fact that, for a truly religious man, not he, himself, or his tribe, or his land, are the centres of the universe, but, rather, what he called the place *bikpela bilong ol gat hap*.¹⁸ Seen from Manam, the "unknown land" is situated in the same (westward) direction as the centre of all things, maybe thus, betraying the conviction that "religion" is the means of obtain "cargo". The latter would be in line with much Old Testament thinking, but it does not seem to follow from Jesus' word of guidance: "seek first the kingdom of heaven, and all the rest will fall in line" (cf. Mt 6:33).

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NOTES

1. One author, of the last century, believed that the Bible contained a reference to New Guinea, in as far as this as this island, and Australia, would have been settled by the descendants of Cush, the son Ham (Gen 10:6); the time of such an immigration, together with the occupation of India, might have occurred about 4,000 years ago (S. F. H. UNGEWITTER, *Der Welttheil Australien*, Erlangen 1853, p. 49, quoted in WHICHMANN 1909, p. 1). The dates proposed are completely out of the question, while exegetes usually identify the Cushites with the Nubians.
2. The Island, or Islands of Solomon, together with the places Ophir (1 Kings 9:28, 10:11) and Tarshish (1 Kings 10:22), are in the Bible; the ports from which Solomon's fleet brought, in its three-year-long voyages, great amounts of gold (14 tonnes!), silver, precious stones, sandalwood, etc. (1 Kings 10:20). Sixteenth-century European explorers spread the news, founding them in Pacific Ocean, South of islands Buka and Bougainville. The proposed identification only shows what the Spaniards expected to find in 1568, while the false rumours, subsequently spread in Europe and Central America, were intended to nourish the once-awoken interests (cf. JACK HINTON, 1969, 1-5, pp. 80-82). Exegetes now believe that Ophir is rather to be sought in India, Arabia, or Eastern Africa, while Tarshish could be located somewhere near Italy or Spain. It is possible, though, that "a ship of Tarshish" would not refer to any port called upon, but simply to "a sea-going vessel", able to make long voyages on the high seas.
3. Modern authors have, sometimes, yielded to the temptation to connect the South Pacific with the biblical lands; we will quote only

two or three of these attempts. D. MACDONALD, a Presbyterian missionary on the New Hebrides, was one who tried to prove that the Oceanic languages had a common stock of purely, and exclusively, Semitic words (trilateralism), with also the appropriate word-forming additions (such as prefixes, infixes, and suffixes); hence the contemporary Efate-language was a linguistic “cousin” of modern Syriac, and vulgar Arabic dialects. The historical contact would have occurred via the Phoenicians, manning Solomon’s fleet (cf. his book: **The Oceanic Languages: their Grammatical Structure, Vocabulary, and Origin**, London, 1907, 34, 52, 94, with the long index of Semitic words on pp. 317-352). The suggestion has not been taken up by later comparative linguists.

Again, the diffusionists of the Manchester School, like G. ELLIOT SMITH and W. J. PERRY, did believe that a megalithic culture (expressed in huge stone monuments like the pyramids, and the South American temples) spread from Egypt via India, over Indonesia, and Melanesia, to start at the end the Inca and Maya civilisations (cf. PERRY 1923, esp. pp. 458-466, 473-476, and the index under: “Melanesia”). A more-limited diffusionist view has been defended recently, on the basis of some Egyptian/Greek inscriptions found in different places of Polynesia, and even of West Irian (cf. H. B. FELL, *America B.C.*, New York, 1974; also KRAUS, 1975). However, such affirmations are not taken seriously by the scientific community, because all the evidence adduced has not the strength of bridging several centuries in time, and many thousands of miles of space (cf. RIESENFELD, 1950, p. 537), whereas, against the latest attempts of B. FELL, serious linguistic difficulties have been raised (cf. e.g., CLARK, 1976). The safer position at this stage would be to admit different Neolithic centres of diffusion, in, say, the Near East (agriculture, with wheat and barley), South-east Asia (rice culture), and Peru-Middle America (maize) (cf. COON, 1955, e.g., 126, CAMPBELL, 1960, e.g., 138, etc.).

4. The Hebrew word *geset* means, in other contexts, an ordinary “bow”, and so it has been understood in the Greek Old Testament, which has: *toxon*: “bow” (and not: *iris*: “coloured rainbow”, or “moon halo”), so that, in principle, the text could apply to the moon segment, although the explicit references to the clouds rather supports the traditional understanding. The “bow” of God is referred to in the cosmological fragment of Hab 3:11 (cf. also Ps 18:14). In classical myths, the rainbow is often seen as a sign of disaster.
5. The Hebrew term *olam*, which, for late Rabbis, indicated the universe, has, in the canonical books, the meaning of “unending time”, “eternity”. Hence, Qoh 3:11 refers to God permitting man to

have an overview of the course of “time”, not a contemplation of the “world”, as in R. A. KNOX’s translation of this passage. (For “time”, see, e.g., the Jerusalem Bible).

6. Some well-known examples of this figure of speech, called “hendiadys” (literally “one through two”), are: “flesh and blood”, “bind and loose”, “morning and evening”, “coming and going”, and many others more. We could refer here to the pidgin term: *bulmakau*, “bull and cow” for cattle, *manmeri*, “men women” for people, and even *banara*, “bow and arrow” for weapon.
7. Although less observed, and often obscured in translations, there are quite a number of scriptural examples of threefold enumerations, such as: decrees-laws-customs (Dt 4:45), suffering-punishment-disgrace (2 Kings 19:3), riches-honour-life (Prov 22:4), wisdom-discipline-discernment (Prov 23:23, terror-pit-snare (Is 24:17), etc. See BRONGERS, 1965, esp. pp. 104-105.
8. The name *El Shaddai*, which Ex 6:3 places before the revelation of the divine name *Jahweh* (Ex 6:6), has been explained as deriving from the Accadian *shadu* = “mountain”, and pointing towards an archaic hill-worship, but this interpretation is not secured. As to the common biblical expression: “to go up to Jerusalem”, one should not press its mythological associations (found, e.g., in Is 2:2), since it might merely be an idiom, derived from Jerusalem’s geography (compare the English: “to go down town”, of the Gunantuna “go up to the village, go down to the forest” (cf. KROLL, 1937, p. 205 n. 1).
9. Sun and moon were commonly seen as gods of the gentiles (cf. Dt 17:3), and some traces of such a view might be detected, even in the Old Testament, e.g., where they are said to “govern” day and night (Gen 1:16), or “to strike (men) down” (Ps 121:6), or that the sun “comes out of his pavilion . . . to run his race” (Ps 19:5), or “stands still” (Jos 10:12-13). Again, such concepts as *tebel*, “the land”, *tehom*, “the deep” (compare the god-mother Tiamat), and *sheol/abaddon*, “the underworld” (cf. Job 25:6), are often used without an article, that is: as being personal names.

Finally, references to a primal battle between Jahweh and the monsters, Rahab and Leviathan, are not completely expurgated, as can be seen in Is 27:1; 51:9-10; Ps 74:13-14; 98:9-10; Job 7:12; 26:12-13, and might be suspected, in more innocuous-looking places, as Hab 3:8; Ps 93, etc., which do refer, e.g., to the subjugation of Rivers and Sea (without capitals in the translations!).

10. The "island of women" is a common theme in Melanesia, as seen from MEIER, 1909, p. 85; PARKINSON, 1905, p. 688, and others, while the specific treatment on the island Kaytalugi reflects the customary mishandling of men, caught at certain stages of the female communal work on Kiriwina.
11. Whereas, in Hebrew thought, the dead live on as frail "shadows", the general Melanesian view is that, when people grow older, they grow in authority and spiritual power, and can even disregard the commonly-observed taboos. After death, their power still increases, till, finally, they obtain a full spirit existence, with the respective magical powers to harm or to save. (For the latter distinctions, see the correlations drawn by LAWRENCE-MEGGITT, 1965, p. 14). There are, however, also cases where the attitude towards the deceased is full of ambiguity, with elements of fear and mourning and alacrity alike (cf. POWWER, 1956, pp. 381-386).
12. LEHNER, 1930b, p. 107, explains that this belief is founded upon the fact that, during dark nights, one can see, in the forest, various lights caused by the phosphorescence of putrefying wood, or also, of certain species of moss.
13. In Egypt, where life is not so much dependent on sunshine and rain, but, more visibly, on the fertilising floodings of the River Nile, the primal time was described as the embrace of the protective Mother Sky (*Nut*) with the Earthly Father (*Geb*), till the skygod Shu (their son?) "separated" them from one another. One might possibly see here the mythical background of the biblical "separation" of Gen 1:7 and Ps 74:13.
14. It is not clear whether Melanesians also dissociate sun and moon from light and darkness, as this is sometimes done in the scriptures. One should, however, observe that, although the Bible well develops a kind of light-symbolism (e.g., 1 John 1:5c; Eph 5:8), it is not altogether negative in its appreciation of moon and darkness and night (cf. Gen 1:2; Ex 10:21; Ps 104:20; Lk 23:44, a fact which, no doubt, has something to do with the climatic reality of the Near East. Missionaries, who generally came from more-temperate zones, lacked these experiences; for them, night was only associated with darkness and gloom, with evil and all that is second rate. When bringing the "light" of the gospel, they easily condemned the *pasin bilong tudak*, whereas the South Sea Islanders did see the night with respect and admiration (because of the closeness with the spirit world), and the day as something ordinary and trivial, and without such emotional appeals. This is even more true of Polynesians, because of their distinct cosmologies (cf. BAUSCH, 1970).

15. In a different way, this immediate concern is expressed by EVANS-PRITCHARD, 1965, p. 54, where he writes: “. . . it is a plain fact that primitive man shows remarkably little interest in what we may regard as the most-impressive phenomena of nature – sun, moon, sky, mountains, sea, and so forth – whose monotonous regularities they take very much for granted”. He wipes away, in one swoop, a library on solar mythologies, which also looked very much to Melanesia. See further, DORSON, 1955.
16. Stories of petrified ancestors are very common in Melanesia. One can compare, for example, the legends about the four Kekeni (women) – rocks near Yule Island (Mendi Legends, 5), or the explanation attached to the two rocks Ndekatl and Mokatl near Mount Hagen (STRATHERN, 1977, p. 7 n. 53). Different versions of one tale are the legends of Mount Sigul Mugal, near Kagamuga airstrip, (Mendi Legends, 10) and of the rocks Tagal and Magal in the Kuna river (KOEHNKE, 1973, p. 82).
17. Traditional geography has no “orientation”, according to the four cardinal points, but bases itself, for example, upon the relation of a place towards the sea, or downstream, and towards inland, or upstream. Hence, for one group, with a river flowing towards the west, the sun rises “up-stream”, whereas, in a linguistic-related group, living near a river, which flows towards the east, the sun goes down “up-stream”! Cf. JENSEN, 1947, pp. 43-47, HOELTKER, 1947, pp. 192-199.
18. From this insight, we might derive a practical hint for religious instruction. In this part of the world, maps usually show Australia and the International Date Line in the centre. A common term like “the ancient Near East”. Coined by the English, becomes, then, a manifest contradiction, since Palestine is located towards the west. It might be more helpful to use, whenever necessary, so-called European maps, with the zero meridian of Greenwich in the centre. This would bring out how the “Holy Land” occupies a central position to at least three continents: Asia, Africa, and Europe. This visual aid will show how God’s word, which is historically bound to this place, has a critical function to all men, and all cultures, Western and Melanesian alike. In fact, Christians already use a similar approach, when reckoning the time, and divine history, into “before Christ” and “after Christ”.

A DANCE TO THE GIVER OF LIFE

Revd Christopher Garland

Scene 1

Husband and wife emerge from their hut. The husband is carrying a scrappy dancing mask, with some feathers missing.

HUSBAND: Tomorrow is the Forest Spirit's dance
In which we must their power enhance.
And as, by dancing, we show for them
our care
We pray them, with us, their power to
share.

But, in a mask like this, I can't appear.
You have forgotten about it all the year.
WIFE: You wear it: you prepare it.
Just some feathers are all you need
Which a proper man would find with
speed.

HUSBAND: You come with me on a hunting trip
And I'll soon find feathers I can strip.

They set on a hunting trip, and there is slapstick, as the wife points to birds, which the husband tries to go after, and misses. The wife becomes tired, and the husband tells her off in dumb show, and drags her along. Then, as she is being dragged, she points to another bird, he drops to go after the bird, she runs away, and hides, he comes back, searches for, and finds, her, and then drags her along again. In the end, they both settle exhausted against an egg-shaped object.

Scene 2

In this scene, there are a group of chanters and kundu at the side of the drama-area, as well as the dancers waiting inside

the “egg”. The husband and wife are still sleeping against the egg, as both kundu drums begin to beat, both inside and outside the egg, and the husband and wife wake up and sit up.

HUSBAND: I feel the air alive with sound
I feel that spirits are all around.

WIFE: See, the egg, where you rest your back
Quick, turn, and see it crack.
We made it by our bodies warm.
Now life from it will outward swarm.

HUSBAND: The egg is home of wondrous power.
Come wife, behind that bush, let us
cower.

The egg opens, and the dancers slowly emerge, and begin to dance, with movements that accompany the words of the chanters.

CHANTERS: Beating, beating to the rhythm of life
Beating slowly, with no need of strife.
Slowly, we gather to a dancing pace
Emerging out, with natural grace.
Twisting and weaving, along the line,
Advancing and glancing, we intertwine
Now, freely and gaily, we stamp our
feet,
Giving ourselves, fully, to the rhythm’s
beat,
Nodding and swaying, in our dancing
dress.
Our every move to life says yes
The music and dance makes us into one
The rhythm of life has its work well
done
Now, our steps link us up, in a line of
peace
In turn, we settle in waking ease
In quiet, we quake with waiting vigour

Till the dance grows again, bigger and bigger.

Four other dancers enter.

With other spirits, we leap turn
To win the release, for which all life
must yearn
(This may be repeated)
Then, back to the egg, we make our way
To wait to be born, at the break of the
day.

The kundu drums die down, the dancers crawl back into their egg.

HUSBAND: We have the paradise birds' spirits seen.
But I do not know whether we wake or
dream.

WIFE: If we could, of those birds, some
feathers glean,
We would, of the dance, be King and
Queen.

HUSBAND: Now, of the birds, I feel such awe,
I could not kill them any more.

WIFE: You speak as a fool, and as a coward
Kill them, and, by them, be empowered.

HUSBAND: Speak not like, in this fearsome place,
Come, back to the village, at our
quickest pace.

(They go back to the hut.)

Scene 3

On the way to the hut, they meet the white man, who is carrying the gun.

WHITE MAN: Where are you going, at such fretful speed.
What's your problem, what's your need?

HUSBAND: Oh air, we have forest spirits seen
And, I would, we could, of our fears, be clean

WIFE: Do not hear his talk of fright.
He is captive of the dreams of night.
What we have seen, could all be ours
If he didn't fear its wondrous powers.
If in the forest, you dare to roam,
You'll find the paradise birds' secret home.

HUSBAND: Of forest spirits, I have no care,
So to find the birds, is an easy dare.
I'll follow your tracks back, right away.
While the trail is fresh, I need not stray.

WIFE: You'll know you have the answer found
If you see the large egg upon the ground.

WHITE MAN: If those birds, I can shoot and kill,
Of their feathers, I will take my fill.
The egg you saw, must be from a nest,
So, with my gun, I will go in quest.

HUSBAND: Those whom the spirits do not scare
May find they miss what is special there.
Before you go, please, your heart prepare,
For you are going to the spirits' lair.

WHITEMAN: Delay me no more with your worries poor.
I've left much worries behind; I've a modern mind.
Into the forest I'll press ahead. . . .

(He blunders roughly in the direction from which the husband and wife have come. The husband and wife return to their hut.

The white man wanders round and round, until he comes near the egg.)

Now does that, or that, mark their trend?
Confound those people, I've lost my way
And now it is no longer day.
My mind, with anger, is disturbed
And empty fears, I must keep curbed
The air heavy, I want to sleep,
I can just up to this white stone creep.

(He crawls up to the egg, rests against it, and sleeps almost till dawn the next day.)

Scene 4

The kundu drums begin to beat out odd taps, with no real rhythm. The white man wakes up.

WHITEMAN: Desire for riches disturbs my rest
But I will not, by forest fears, be oppressed.
This stone is the egg, of which they spoke,
My body's warmth has the egg shell broke
An egg so big is a foolish dream,
But I'll take my distance, so I can scheme.

CHANTERS: Doubt and anger disrupt our dance
One by one, we must take our chance.

The egg splits open, and spirit dancers came out one by one. As they do so, the white man shoots at them. One or two he hits, others struggle off into the forest to hide. The white man takes some feathers from the birds that have been shot.

CHANTERS: One by one, one by one
Our line has gone,
Our dance is done
We are scattered, by the gun.
WHITE MAN: With the feathers I've caught
I'll see what wealth can be bought.

(He starts back to the direction of the hut.)

Scene 5

The white man goes the hut, where the husband and wife are waiting.

WHITE MAN: Come out, come out,
And obey my shout.
No thanks to you,
I've feathers few.
Now, I'll make my way.
To see for what they'll pay.

(The white man goes off.)

HUSBAND: Wife, it's with you I'm annoyed
That he's the spirits destroyed.
By your sharp tongue and scorn
You have the weaving torn
That wrapped our world with the spirit
powers
And linked the rhythm of their life with
ours.
WIFE: That link do we, with music, make
Our dance can the rhythm, from the
spirits, take.
HUSBAND: But now, the spirits are death and done,
Doomed by the white man's doubt, and
his gun.
The world they lived in is split apart

And can't be renewed by the dancers'
art.

The white man's feathers were the
marks of death,

For they were all of the spirits that he'd
left.

WIFE:

Death shall have the final word,

Our life is not tied to the spirit of a bird.

Now I will, the Christian preacher, hear

Who has told me, of death, to have no
fear.

For Christ has risen from the dead

And with new life has His people fed.

It is to Him, we should reverence give,

And, in His name, respect all things that
live.

Come, your dancing mask, now let us
take

And back to the egg, our way now
make!

The egg that breaks, new life to free,

In that a sign of life we see.

Though forest spirits have no power to
scare,

For the life of the forest, let us show our
care.

The good news of Christ, let us
celebrate

By giving new life to our former state.

Scene 6

The husband and wife return to the forest, and the broken egg.

HUSBAND: By calling spirits, by magic, we tried,
To gain their power upon our side.
Now, grace, we know, by God is given,

And by no earthly power may life be
driven.
So, for God's sake, His gift we praise,
And our thanks to Him, for them we
raise
Our dance, we see, from spirits draws
no power
But prays God, on life, His blessings to
shower.

*The man begins to dance, with his mask on, the kundu drums
begin to play. One by one, the fallen spirits wake, and join in
the line of the dance, and perform a dance similar to that
performed in Scene 2. The chanters chant.*

CHANTERS: Bless the Lord, all created things
Sing his praise, and exalt him forever
Bless the Lord, you heavens
Sing His praise, and exalt Him forever
O let the earth bless the Lord
Bless the Lord, you mountains and hills
Bless the Lord, all that grows in the
ground
Sing His praise, and exalt Him forever.
Bless the Lord, all the birds of the air,
Bless the Lord, you beasts and cattle.
Bless the Lord, all men on the earth,
Sing His praise, and exalt Him forever
O people of God, bless the Lord
Bless the Lord, you priests of the Lord
Bless the Lord, you servants of the Lord
Sing His praise, and exalt Him forever.
Bless the Lord, all men of upright spirit
Bless the Lord, you that are holy, and
humble in heart.
Bless the Father, the Son, and the Holy
Spirit
Sing His praise, and exalt Him forever.

The dancers end the play by dancing out of the drama area. The wife has been watching the dancers, and she may make an act of worship, such as kneeling before the cross, which may be brought on, and then she may leave by following the dancers.

BOOK REVIEWS

The Silencing of Leonardo Boff, by Harvey Cox. Meyer Stone, 1988. Price: US\$9.95.

Harvey Cox will probably score another major success with *The Silencing of Leonardo Boff*. As, in his famous work of the 1960s, *The Secular City*, Cox writes fluently, and never asks his readers to accept an unusual point of view, or an unfashionable opinion. He describes the events of 1986 (when the Brazilian Franciscan, Fr Leonardo Boff, was asked by the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith to undertake a period of silence), with an attempt at fairness, but it is obvious where his sympathies lie. He gives us a good old-fashioned story, with a hero, and a villain. Boff is the hero, valiantly struggling for the right of the local churches to develop their own theologies, and incarnate the gospel in their own culture. Cardinal Joseph Ratzinger is the villain, busy seeking to retain Rome's control over the church, and over all forms of theological expression.

A careful reader of Cox's own text, might wonder whether the issue is really so simple. It is notable that the proponents of liberation theology seek recognition beyond the bounds of South America. We are told, for example, that Boff praised the Vatican's second statement on liberation theology as "giving a universal significance to values that were those only of the Third World" (page 7).

Boff shows good judgment in seeking recognition beyond the confines of his own religion. My own experience at the Lambeth Conference, and elsewhere, has been that Western liberals are always ready to invoke "pluralism", when they do not want to have to assimilate insights from other parts of the world. However, if liberation theology has a message for the universal church (and I believe it has), then its advocates will have to be ready for critical scrutiny from the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith, and elsewhere as well.

Actually, Cardinal Ratzinger make a good point when he ask how far liberation theology really is a product of Latin America, and how far it is a European import. He is able to show that Boff, himself, relies a good deal on European theologians, and then there is a figure of Karl Marx, whose influence on liberation theology cannot be denied, even if it is sometimes exaggerated. For Cox to reply to all this, by saying that Ratzinger quotes Hans Kung, is no answer to the criticism. After all, Ratzinger does this, because he is conducting a debate with a major theological figure in his own culture.

Reading Cox's book, made me wonder how he, and other Western liberals, can also be blind to the contradictions in their own position. He claims to be on the side of what he sees as genuine Catholicity and cultural pluralism in the church, but what happens when people from a non-Western culture challenge the dearly held tenets of the liberal creed? Take the question of women in the church, for example. For Cox, and those who think like him, there can be no two opinions about this. Role differentiation means inequality. It cannot be tolerated. The current liberal North American view of what constitutes a desirable relationship between the sexes must be imposed on the rest of humanity, with as much fervour as once led missionaries to clothe women in Mother Hubbards, or to try to wipe out polygamy. So we are told that "men still subject women to an under-caste in most parts of the world, by appealing to traditional definition of womanhood, many of them sanctioned by religion". Here is the modern inquisitor ready to get to work, and detect the sexist heresy, wherever it be lurking!

I read Dr Cox's book while on patrol, visiting Anglican congregations in the mountains of Madang Province. As I turned the pages, I marvelled at the facility of his style, but wondered how far he, himself, is really ready to pass over into a different culture. He certainly helps us to focus on what is, perhaps, the key question for the church in our time: how far can the gospel be incarnated in different worldviews, and still

retain a universal cohesion? For what it is worth, my assessment would be that Cardinal Ratzinger has a more-profound grasp of the issues at stake than either Fr Boff or Dr Cox.

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Questions for Living, Dom Helder Camara. Maryknoll New York: Orbis Books, 1987, ISBN 0883445581, pp. 100. US\$8.95, paperback.

Among the current top 15 bestsellers of Orbis Books is this slim volume by the Brazilian Bishop Camara. The original French text dates back to 1984, and is – as J. de Broucker explains in the forward – the result of the prelate’s pastoral tour in Brittany during the previous year. The replies he gave during the question time, after his well-attended talks, have here been revised, and grouped in twenty short chapters. They deal with the Archbishop’s personal background, his place in his home church, and his relationship with the world church, in particular, with the present Pope John II. We learn about his religion and prayer life, his expectations and hopes, but mainly about “his position on politics, economics, pacifism, or non-violence, and on to concrete inquires about how individuals can actually conform their lives to all the lovely ideas, about which Dom Helder Camara speaks” (p. viii).

Although the questions were raised in a European context, and are somewhat different from those directed to the Bishop, when, in 1974, he visited Papua New Guinea, and, although the answers are given by a Catholic Archbishop from South America, who does not shy away from making his stand clear on Mary and the saints, his priesthood and the Vatican

billions, etc., his message has a universal ring. This is because he acknowledges that the Spirit of God breathes even where missionaries have not yet set foot (p. 20). Camara does not provide ready answers, and would not agree that “young Latin America has lessons to teach its old parent, Europe” (p. 39); instead, he sees the benefits of informing one another, and of stirring one another up, to be, or become, true Christians. His words, illustrated with some twenty well-chosen photographs, are substantial food for thought and action. They contain the highlights of a biography, and the main points of the man’s vision, in a language accessible for all.

Theodor Aerts.

A Call to a New Exodus: an Anti-Nuclear Primer for Pacific People, by Suliana Siwatibau and David Williams. Suva Fiji: Pacific Council of Churches, 1982, pp. 96.

This is a well-timed publication to answer a badly felt need. It conveys basic information – pictorially, diagrammatically, and in writing – about the nuclear-free-Pacific issue. Many Pacific Islanders have not been informed about the dangers and effects of nuclear war, let alone about the way in which the world’s greater powers have abused their region, through bomb testing, waste disposal, and the deployment of nuclear arms (with their plentiful nuclear submarines). This book does a superb educational job in supplying this information gap, and it can be hoped that the work will be disseminated as widely as possible throughout all Pacific communities.

It is serviceable in walks of life. Politicians can use it to draw attention to international political problems, of vital concern to their nations, and particular constituencies. Church leaders, school teachers, and many communities leaders, working at the grassroots, will find the book invaluable for study groups, school projects, and generally raising

consciousness about human survival. The style is simple, the layout easy to follow, and non-literate persons can obtain a lot, simply from the photographs.

The book (at a modest K5.80) contains 21 chapters, organised into four major parts. The first part simplifies technical questions on the nature of nuclear energy, the effects of radiation, etc., the second, with economic, social, and political questions (e.g., who control nuclear power?), the third covers the nuclear debate, and the fourth asks what people can do about the problems of nuclear threats to the Pacific. The book does not stop short at the study of scientific and political considerations. It is not just part of a (by now, worldwide) campaign for nuclear disarmament. Its authors try to develop a theologically- and biblically-based understanding of peace, and a practical platform to pursue alternatives to nuclearisation (with all the high-level technology it implies). In other words, content, and not just lip service, is given to peace. Thus, in this important book by two “church persons”, one a Fijian woman, the other an expatriate, working in the same country, we can find out how the church can take a crucial, even a leading part, in “the way out” (Exodus) of the nuclear nightmare.

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