

CORRESPONDENCE

Dear Sir,

**re: “The Name of God in Melanesia” by Rufus Pech
(*Melanesian Journal of Theology* 1-1 (1985), pp. 30-46)**

Christian greetings to you.

I wish to bring to your attention that, having carefully looked at *Melanesian Journal of Theology* 1-1 (April, 1985), I discovered that on page 33 No.5b, the Toaripi name for God is incorrect. The right name should be *UALARE* and not *Atute*, as printed.

I further wish to advise for your information that the Trinity names for God in Toaripi language area as follows:

UALARE Oa – God the Father
UALARE Atute – God the Son
UALARE Safu,
ARAHOHA Lareva – God the Holy Spirit

Trusting that this meets your approval.

I remain yours in Christ Jesus,

Mark Makeu Forova,
Second-year Student,
Rarongo Theological College,
Keravat, via Rabaul

Dear Sir,

**Re: The Name of God in Melanesia –
Comments by Mark Makeu Forova**

I am very grateful to you both for passing on to me a copy of Mark's letter of September 26, 1985. I believe it presents an excellent chance to start a correspondence column in the *Melanesian Journal of Theology*.

I make no excuses for the error as regards the name of God in Toaripi. There may well be others as well, and it would be good to have them pointed out. The error does show up one very good point: that a secondary writer is only as good as the sources he is using. In my case, two things worried me: firstly, that I had no way of checking my source; secondly, that the sample given by H. Rosin is 35 years old. What we really need is an accurate and up-to-date listing of such material from the many more translations we have today, thanks chiefly to the efforts of SIL/WBT translators. These, in turn, should be arranged according to their language "families", phyla, etc., as these have now been set out in volume 1 of the new *Pacific Language Atlas*.

In the meantime, let me copy for you and other readers, in full H. Rosin's summary paragraph on p. 88 of his *The LORD Is God*, on which I relied so heavily in my presentation:

The total picture of New Guinea is extremely variegated and intricate in this respect. Certain groups may be discerned, besides isolated units. In 1950, there were translations in about 30 out of 300 languages (two complete Bibles, nine New Testaments; the remainder are smaller portions, but none of them less than a complete book). Further development, of course, depends on the radius of the respective language ("trade languages", "minor languages"). Tests of translations show that *elohim*, respectively *theos*, is rendered as follows: In the Dutch area in the West of the gigantic island, the Malay-Arabic *Allah* (*Alla*) has made its way (Windessi-Bentuni, Mafur = Numfor). In the area of the Lutheran Mission in the North-East, it was possible to agree on *Anutu* (Kate),

Anute (Ragetta), *Anoto* (Yabim = Jabem). In the field of the London Mission Society in the South-East, liberty and diversity prevail, not always to the advantage of Bible translating: *God* (Kiwai, Kunini), *Iehovah* for *theos* in the NT (Goaribari = Kerewa), *Eloi* (Namau), *Harihu* (Orokolo), *Atute*, akin with *Anute*? (Toaripi), *Dirava* (Motu), *Palagu* (Keapara, Hula), *Oeva* (Mailu). In the extreme South-East, where the missionary area of the LMS touches the Methodist area, the already-mentioned designation *Eaubada* appears (Suau = Dau, Tavara). In the area of the Methodist Mission in the islands contiguous in the North-East, *Eaubada* is to be found in the important Dobu Bible (1926), but also in other translation (Bwaidoga, Tubetube, Kiriwina). On Deboyne Island, however, one discovers *Iehovah* (Panaieti) 1894, introduced by the Australasian Methodist Missionary Society (for *theos* in the NT), whereas the Liebenzeller Mission did the same in Manus Island (Admiralty Group) in 1921. North of Goodenough Bay, in the range of the Anglicans, one meets everywhere with the designation *God* (Wedau, Mukawa, Binandere, Notu), which carries the more weight as a complete Bible (Mukawa), is to be found here, and the aforementioned Pentateuch in Wedauan, together with a NT in the same language.

What we must deplore in view of this multiplicity, is not the diversity of the renderings in itself, but, rather, the diversity of the principles, or better their absence. . . .

With sincere thanks for your helpful explanation of the names given to the Holy Trinity in the Toaripi language,

Revd R. Pech,
Lecturer, Martin Luther Seminary, Lae.