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# MELANESIAN JOURNAL OF THEOLOGY



Journal of the Melanesian Association of Theological Schools

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# MELANESIAN JOURNAL OF THEOLOGY

*Journal of the Melanesian Association of Theological Schools*

Published by the Melanesian Association of Theological Schools (MATS), the *Melanesian Journal of Theology* was established to stimulate theological writing in Melanesia and to provide a scholarly forum for faculty and graduate students of the MATS member schools. Article submissions in the areas of applied theology, biblical studies, missiology, and theology are also invited from anyone with an interest in Melanesia and the wider South Pacific.

The *Melanesian Journal of Theology* is committed to the discussion of Christian faith and practice within the context of Melanesian cultures. Article submissions of up to 8,000 words (including footnotes) should be sent to the Editor. All submissions are subjected to an anonymous peer-review process designed to ensure that published articles meet appropriate scholarly standards.

The opinions expressed in the articles published in this journal are those of the authors and do not necessarily represent the views of the Editor or the member colleges of MATS. All articles have been edited to meet the requirements of the journal.

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# EDITORIAL

This combined issue is unusual for a couple of reasons: the last volume (11) in which two issues were combined was published more than two decades ago in 1995; and this is the first time that papers presented at a MATS conference in the middle of the year have been published in the same year (see the articles by Tim Meadowcroft and Douglas Young), a welcome development indeed.

In his report on MATS 2017, Joseph Vnuk expresses appreciation for a return to Port Moresby. While noting that it can be difficult and more expensive to travel to conferences held in smaller provincial centres, Vnuk adds that MATS conferences must continue to be held at the geographical "margins" because "good theology grows out of" dialogue between theological colleges from all over the country.

In the first essay, Kim Papaioannou continues his examination of a controversial subject, the eternal punishment of the wicked. In this second instalment of a two-part study, he surveys the meaning and use of the word *gehenna*, the most prominent motif associated with "hell" in the synoptic gospels. Papaioannou finds that Jesus was referring his hearers to the Old Testament, and Jeremiah in particular, where the Day of Judgement occurs in the context of a final eschatological war. After careful consideration of all of the relevant passages in the New Testament, he takes the position that Gehenna is the "place" where God will completely destroy the wicked, and then concludes with the observation that this "appears to be a much more palatable, fair, and realistic option than the terrible idea that God will torment human beings throughout the ages of eternity."

Wisdom is needed, and Tim Meadowcroft provides an exemplary model in the person of Daniel. He argues that Daniel and his friends function as agents of divine wisdom in Daniel 1, and that this wisdom is on display not just in the court tales, but throughout the rest of the book. The bases for making this argument are continuity in both wisdom terminology and the literary expression of participation, and the wise participation of the holy ones along with one like a son of man in the life of God (Dan 7). In the visions, where the certain outcomes of the court tales are wanting, the holy ones live with a view to the eschaton. Wisdom is hidden and the visions demand faithful participation in the divine life until the end actually comes.

By extension, God's people who are today facing similar uncertain times and/or circumstances can continue to participate in the ethical wisdom required by the visions.

Douglas Young makes a case, in the final essay, for the involvement of the churches and individual Christians in the political process. He adduces John Momis as an example. While serving as a Catholic priest, Momis became Deputy Chairman of the Constitutional Planning Committee and, thereby, brought some of the principles of Catholic social doctrine into the Papua New Guinean Constitution. Young goes on to suggest a number of ways in which the churches might work together to place concern for the innate dignity of each person and pursuit of the common good, instead of corruption, at the centre of political life in PNG. The churches need to demonstrate good self-governance, practise servant leadership, participate in consultative political processes, and speak and witness with a common voice. Individual Christians should also run for elected office. By these means, he argues, the rights that flow from respect for the dignity of individuals – equality, participation, and subsidiarity – might contribute to the creation of a more just society.

Scott D. Charlesworth

# REPORT ON MATS 2017

**Joseph Vnuk**
Catholic Theological Institute, Bomana

Although Jesus himself came from the small town of Nazareth and spent most of his ministry in Galilee, Christianity itself started in Jerusalem, and after the destruction of that city by Roman armies in AD 70, the focus shifted to the Christian communities that were already flourishing in the major centres of the empire such as Antioch, Alexandria, Rome, Carthage and, later, Constantinople. Quite simply, these towns were already centres of travel and communication, and they became natural foci for the networking and the exchange of ideas and personnel that were part of the growth of God's church.

It seems that MATS is following the same pattern. The 2016 conference was held in Popondetta and, therefore, apart from those living in the capital, people needed to make at least two flights to get there—and it was not easy to secure a seat on a plane that was actually flying. The low numbers and the late start are a reminder to us that extra efforts must be made if we hold conferences in places where the geography poses a challenge. But the warm welcome – a true Oro welcome – demonstrates that the remote parts want to have their part in the life of the church, and that includes its theological life. Good theology grows out of a dialogue between the centres and the margins.

The 2017 conference, held at the Catholic Theological Institute, Bomana, had the advantage of a central location. There were about 37 academics in attendance, representing ten local institutions including, for the first time, Rarongo Theological College, as well as about ten clergy – Catholic priests and Adventist pastors – from around Port Moresby; a large number of students from CTI attended the sessions as well. The larger number of attendees also meant that we had a full programme of presentations.

The conference theme – one of four possibilities proposed by those at the Popondetta – was Church and Politics. The keynote speaker was Dr. Andrew Murray, a Marist priest and philosopher based in Sydney. Dr. Murray's interest in the South Pacific, and particularly its political life, has led him to use the categories of the philosopher Aristotle to describe and

analyse our own experiences of political life in his most recent book, *Thinking about Political Things: An Aristotelian Approach to Pacific Life*. He gave a talk on each morning of the conference. On the first two mornings he led us in thinking about what political life is, for instance, how the state is like or unlike the family, and the different ways that people can organize themselves when they move beyond the family. Above all, he focussed on Aristotle's idea that the constitution of the state should aim at achieving good, in a way that is related to each particular people and its situation, and then led us through various possibilities of what that "good' might be, in particular asking whether the goods aimed at by western constitutions are the goods that the peoples of the Pacific want to achieve. Having prepared us to think about the political sphere, on the final morning he looked at "Church and State or Religion and Political Life."

Each day, after the keynote talk, the conference participants gave their own papers. A number of papers – those by Simon Davidson (Sonoma), Barrie Abel (Sonoma), Joses Imona (Sonoma), and Tim Meadowcroft (Laidlaw) – were based on particular biblical passages or books (Jeremiah, Jonah, Acts, and Daniel) that exemplified a possible relation between God's people on the one hand and a king or a city, normally a hostile one, on the other. Although the state was hostile, the attitude of God's people was more nuanced, as is elegantly captured by the verse Simon Davidson chose as the title of his paper, "Pray for the peace and prosperity of the city" (Jer 29:7).

Some other papers set out to expose those ways in which the state tries to usurp a religious rôle. Joel Bernardo (MI) did this in a general way in "Demystifying PNG Politics," as also did Kirene Yandit (CLTC). Joseph Vnuk (CTI) argued that it is not the state, but only Christ, that can achieve a true reconciliation and a true peace; and Sussie Stanley (Sonoma) took the historical example of the First Council of Nicaea to present the case that the church should never allow the state to dictate matters of belief.

In regulating relations between people, the state must take a stand on relations between men and women, and three papers tackled various aspects of that issue: some of the more controversial papers of the conference fall into this group. Jenny Tobul (CLTC) explored the factors that limit women's perspectives on ministry among Tungag women; Brandon Zimmerman (GSS) looked to Thomas Aquinas to give natural law arguments against polygamy; and Scott Charlesworth (UNE), by drawing compari-

sons with slavery, argued (among other things) that the passages about the submission of women in the New Testament household codes should not be used to keep women out of ministry.

In keeping with MATS policy, papers were presented that did not relate directly to the theme, but which provided opportunities for post-graduate students to speak on their research, such as the paper of Steven Yamok (CLTC) on the gifts of the Holy Spirit.

Finally, some of the speakers drew on their own extensive experience. Archbishop Douglas Young, although focussing on what Catholic social teaching has to say on the conference theme, often illustrated his talk with examples from his own extensive work on government committees. Coming from a much less friendly state, Vongai Mkaronda (Newton) spoke of her experience of church-state relations in Zimbabwe, an experience of fear, of courage, and of solidarity.

One question that emerged a number of times was that of religious freedom. There have been moves at various times in PNG to outlaw Islam, and many argued that this is not an appropriate thing for a state to do, even a Christian state. Taking its lead from this, and from the great diversity among the Christians who make up MATS, the theme for the next conference emerged: Inter-faith and Ecumenical Dialogue in Melanesia. This theme was endorsed by the MATS Annual General Meeting, which also accepted Pacific Adventist University's generous offer to host MATS 2018, which will be held from Tuesday 17th to Thursday 19th July.

The annual meeting on the final day of the conference elected a new Executive Committee:

> Joseph Vnuk (President),
> Joses Imona (Vice President),
> Bruce Renich (Secretary/Treasurer),
> Bishop Jack Urame and Garo Kilagi (Members at Large),
> Jacklyn Nembai (Student Representative).

The meeting also looked closely at the Melanesian Journal of Theology. Tim Meadowcroft was appointed editor from mid 2018, and it was left to the new MATS Executive to appoint an associate editor. Decisions were also made to set up an editorial board and to continue to publish the journal twice a year. There was also a desire to improve our presence on the internet, and Tim Meadowcroft was asked to make some enquiries about web-

site design. The other major decision relating to the activity of MATS was the possibility of engaging a volunteer field-worker, not only to promote MATS among the theological colleges, but to assist the colleges in the task of meeting academic standards and complying with legislation. It is hoped that eventually MATS might win back its accrediting role.

The return to the centre proved to be a strengthening moment for MATS, and it is hoped that the 2018 conference, also to be held in Port Moresby, will enable further consolidation. But it would not be good to hold every conference in the national capital. The dialogue that sustains good theology is not only between denominations that once engaged in polemics that we shall explore at the conference. It is also a dialogue that takes place within denominations and across denominational boundaries, between large and small, recent and ancient, local and universal, and between margins and centre.

# MOTIFS OF DEATH AND HELL IN THE TEACHING OF JESUS. PART 2: AN EXAMINATION OF GEHENNA

**Kim Papaioannou**
Cyprus

**Abstract**
The final punishment of the wicked has held a strange fascination for Christians. From medieval paintings of torment to a plethora of contemporary books, articles, and popular literature, it is a topic that is of interest to every believer. For most Christians, hell is a place of everlasting torment that will become a reality on the Day of Judgment. For others, hell exists already and receives the wicked at the time of their death. Hell as everlasting torment may be the majority view, but is by no means the only one. A vocal minority of mostly Protestants, the Conditionalists, views hell as the complete annihilation of a person on the Day of Judgment. For still others, the Universalists, the sufferings of hell serve to purge persons of all uncleanliness making them fit to live with God for eternity. The Bible contains many motifs and references to eschatological judgment. This study will focus on one, Gehenna, which is the most prominent motif in the Gospels. A careful exegetical study demonstrates that Gehenna fits best into a Conditionalist outlook.

**Keywords**
Gehenna, hell, death, destruction, everlasting torment, day of judgement, eschatological judgement

## INTRODUCTION

"Gehenna" is the most common New Testament (NT) toponym associated with hell. It appears twelve times, seven in Matthew, three in Mark, and once each in Luke and James. With the exception of James, all other appearances are in the words of Jesus. Some consider Gehenna, the valley of Hinnom outside Jerusalem, to have been an ancient dump where rubbish was thrown and where a fire was kept burning to consume it, giving rise to concepts of everlasting fire. Others view Gehenna as a common Jewish

term that Jesus borrowed from his milieu, and maintain that its use in Jewish literature outside the Bible is important in understanding its meaning in the NT.

Beyond questions of the origin of the term, there is debate as to what Gehenna entails. Will God torment the wicked forever, as most Christians believe? Or is something else in view? This study will first explore the origins of Gehenna and trace its use in various ancient literature, beginning with the Old Testament (OT). It will endeavour to determine how this little valley outside Jerusalem became a byword for eschatological punishment. Then it will discuss the gospel texts in which Gehenna appears and attempt to determine the type of punishment envisaged. James will not be discussed as it offers little information on these issues.

## BACKGROUND

### *1. OT*

"Gehenna," γέεννα, is a NT transliteration of the name of a valley outside Jerusalem variously designated in the OT as "valley," גֵּרְא, "of the sons of Hinnom," (2 Kgs 23:10), "of the son of Hinnom" (Jer 19:2), or simply "of Hinnom" (Neh 11:30). For simplicity I will use "Ge-hinnom" when referring to the OT references and "Gehenna" for the NT. The valley located south southwest of Jerusalem, adjoins the Kidron valley to the south southeast of the city. It is usually associated with today's Wadi er-Rababi. Gehinnom appears thirteen times in the OT.

Sometimes it is simply a geographical location (Josh 15:8, 18:16; Neh 11:30). Part of it was possibly a burial ground.[1] At other times, it appears in association with important religious events. In the later years of the monarchy the valley became a centre of idolatrous practices including human sacrifice (2 Chr 28:3; 33:6; Jer 32:35). In ancient worldviews the location of an altar was an entrance to the realm of the deity and it was thus common to build altars to chthonian (or underworld) deities in deep val-

[1] E.L. Sukenik, "Jewish Tombs in the Kidron Valley," *Kedem* 2 (1945): 23 (23–32). M.R. Lehmann, "A New Interpretation of the Term Sedemot," *Vetus Testamentum* 3 (1953): 365 (361–71); cf. L.R. Bailey, "Gehenna: The Topography of Hell." *Biblical Archeologist* (Sep. 1986): 190 (187–91); see Jer 19:2, 6 (LXX).

leys.[2] Ge-hinnom was also a focus of Josiah's sweeping reforms (2 Kgs 23:1–25). He defiled the Topheth,[3] burned vessels associated with Baal, scattered human bones to defile the place (2 Kgs 23:1–25), and thus cleansed "Judah and Jerusalem" (34:5).

Salmond has suggested that after the desecration by Josiah, the valley became an object of horror and a receptacle for refuse, bodies of animals, criminals, and all sorts of other impurities.[4] It is believed that eventually it became a rubbish dump where fires burned perpetually to consume the rubbish, thus giving rise to such images as Isaiah 66:24 and Mark 9:43–48.[5] There is little doubt that Josiah's acts left a deep impact, and may have influenced the language of Jeremiah. However, as Bailey points out,[6] the lack of early literary references and the fact that there have been no relevant archaeological discoveries suggests that such a dump most probably did not exist either after Josiah or during the time of Jesus.

More importantly, Ge-hinnom also appears in three passages in the context of an eschatological war where God will destroy his enemies. In Jeremiah 7:29–34 Ge-hinnom would become the "Valley of Slaughter" and the slain would be so numerous that there would no space to bury them all (7:32). Their bodies would become food for birds of prey and wild beasts (7:33). This picture is replicated in Jeremiah 19:1–15. In Jeremiah 31:40 the "valley of the dead bodies and the ashes," clearly the devastated Ge-hinnom, will become "sacred to the LORD" (31:40).

The language of the Ge-hinnom prophecies of doom in Jeremiah is very strong. At first sight, it envisions the literal destruction of Jerusalem and its environs at the hands of the Babylonians. But there is also a clear eschato-

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[2] Bailey, 187–91. Bailey cites *b. Erub. 19a*; Isa 57:5–6, and J.B. Pritchard, ed., *Ancient Near Eastern Texts Relating to the Old Testament* (2nd ed.; Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1955), 107, and the above cited article by Lehmann, "A New Interpretation," 366.

[3] Etymologically "Topheth" probably means "heath," "fireplace," or "fire altar," but eventually became a toponym in Ge-hinnom: see W. McKane, *Jeremiah* (International Critical Commentary 20.2; (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1996), 179, and G.A. Barrois, "Tophet," *The Interpreter's Dictionary of the Bible* (ed. G.A. Buttrick; 4 vols; Nashville: Abington, 1962), 4:673.

[4] S.P. Salmond, *The Christian Doctrine of the Immortality* (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1987), 355.

[5] The J.B. Phillips translation renders the Gehenna of Mark 9:43 as "rubbish heap".

[6] Bailey, "Gehenna," 189.

logical dimension. The phrase "the days are coming" is used eight times, the completeness of destruction described, and the idealization of the restoration envisaged, indicate a future divine destruction of the sinful and an idealized reconstitution of God's people.

Apart from Jeremiah, there are other OT texts that anticipate judgment in a valley. The most prominent is Isaiah 66:24 which portrays a battle around Jerusalem where God will destroy sinners and their bodies will remain unburied in the valleys outside the city. In Isaiah 30:33, the "Topheth," a toponym in Ge-hinnom, has been prepared with a fire kindled by God for the king of Assyria. Fudge has suggested that this verse was inspired by the destruction of the Assyrian army outside Jerusalem (Isa 37:36)[7] and it is possible that their bodies were burned in a massive pyre, providing the inspiration for the fiery "Topheth" of 30:33.

In Ezekiel 39:11–16 there is an eschatological battle between God and Gog in a valley named "Oberim" and "Ammon-Gog." Both names appear to be symbolic and mean "travellers" and "multitudes of Gog" respectively. In this valley the enemies of God will meet their doom. The corpses will be left exposed for a long time. Eventually the earth will be cleansed of their pollution (39:16).

Finally, in Joel 3:1–21 God summons nations for judgment in the valley of Jehoshaphat, near Jerusalem (3:16). Multitudes gather (3:14). God destroys his enemies (3:11) in the battle of the "day of the LORD." The prophecy includes apocalyptic images like the sun and the moon becoming dark (3:15). The valley of Jehoshaphat has been associated with the Kidron,[8] Tyropoeon,[9] or Ge-hinnom,[10] or may simply symbolise the Day of Judgment since Jehoshaphat means "YHWH judges."[11]

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[7] E. Fudge, *The Fire that Consumes* (Houston: Providential Press, 1982), 160.

[8] W.H. Mare, "Jehosaphat, Valley of," *The Anchor Bible Dictionary* (ed. D.N. Freedman; 6 vols; Garden City: Doubleday, 1992), 3:668–69. The association of the valley of Jehoshaphat with the valley of Kidron is plausible inasmuch as the former is located outside Jerusalem. However, there is no evidence of any monument built in the Kidron by King Jehoshaphat.

[9] Bailey, "Gehenna," 186–92.

[10] E. Klostermann, *Das Lukasevangelium* (Handbuch zum Neuen Testament; Tübingen: Mohr, 1919), 70.

[11] L. Koehler and W. Baumgartner, *The Hebrew and Aramaic Lexicon of the Old Testament* (4 vols; rev. W. Baumgartner and J.J. Stamm; trans. under supervision of M.E.J. Richardson; Leiden: Brill, 1999), s.v. יְהוֹשָׁפָט.

## *2. Early Jewish Literature*

It is commonly believed that the rudiments of a Gehenna tradition in the OT came to full bloom in intertestamental Jewish literature. We see no established Gehenna tradition in the OT. Now we will discover that in early Jewish literature there is also none.

The LXX renders Ge-hinnom in many different ways: φάραγγα Ονομ, Εννόμ or Εννώμ,[12] φάραγξ υἱοῦ Εννομ,[13] πολυάνδριον υἱοῦ Εννόμ,[14] Γαι Οννόμ,[15] Γαιβενθόμ,[16] Γαμβέ Εννόμ,[17] Γεβανέ εννόμ,[18] Γαιεννα,[19] νάπης Σοννόμ,[20] γή Βεεννόμ,[21] and νάπης Ονναμ.[22] One of these, Γαιεννα, bears closest similarity to the γέενα of the NT and, importantly, it is used in a text without any religious or eschatological implications. The large number of variants in rendering the Hebrew strongly suggests that there was no popular Gehenna tradition.

In the Apocrypha and Pseudepigrapha there are several references, all rather late.[23] In 4 Ezra 2:29 Gehenna is the fate of the nations, after a general resurrection. 4 Ezra 7:36 mentions the "pit of torment that will appear

[12] Josh 15:8 Alexandrinus (A) and Vaticanus (B) respectively, and Neh. 11:30 (Sinaiticus [S]).
[13] Jer 7:31, 32 (B).
[14] Jer 19:6 (B).
[15] Josh 18:16 (A).
[16] 2 Chr 28:3 (B).
[17] 2 Chr 28:3 (A).
[18] 2 Chr 33:6 (B).
[19] Josh 18:16.
[20] Josh 18:16 (B).
[21] 2 Chr 33:6 (A).
[22] Josh 18:16 (A).
[23] In looking at the references to Gehenna in the Apocrypha and Pseudepigrapha, I have used the indexes of R.H. Charles, ed., *The Apocrypha and Pseudepigrapha of the Old Testament* (2 vols; Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1913), henceforth *APOT*, and J.H. Charlesworth, ed., *The Old Testament Pseudepigrapha* (2 vols; London: Danton, Longman and Todd, 1983 and 1985), henceforth *OTP*. In general, we should keep in mind that the extant texts for most of these writings are considerably later than the actual composition and often show evidence of later additions. It is thus difficult to determine whether the word "Gehenna," even in the few instances it occurs, was part of the original or subsequently interpolated.

… the furnace of Gehenna[24] [that] will be made manifest." 4 Ezra 2:29 is a late Christian interpolation, and 4 Ezra 7:36 dates from no earlier than 100 AD.[25]

In 2 Baruch 59:10 God shows Moses "the mouth of Gehenna" where the wicked will be tormented in the coming judgment (54:21). Then God will blot them out (54:22). 2 Baruch 85:13 says that there is no repentance in Gehenna.[26] 2 Baruch is dated around or after AD 100.[27]

The *Ascension of Isaiah* 1:3 makes a passing reference to the "torments of Gehenna." In 4:14, after the return of the Messiah, the wicked will suffer the torments of Gehenna where they will be "consumed" and "will become as if they had not been created" (4:18). The Ascension is a rather late Christian composition.[28]

In *3 Enoch* there are two references to Gehenna. The work is Jewish and is attributed to Rabbi Ishmael of Palestine who died in AD 132. However, as Alexander indicates,[29] it is a pseudepigraphon of much later composition, which might contain some early traditions. In 44:3 Enoch is shown the souls of the wicked carried by the angels Zaariel and Samkiel to be tormented in Gehenna, and in 48D:8 Gehenna has been in existence since the creation week.

In the *Apocalypse of Abraham* 15:6 the visionary sees a light in which "a fiery Gehenna was enkindled" where the wicked suffer in bodily form. The book is Christian, but derives from a Jewish work. It is dated around AD 100.[30]

In the Greek Apocalypse of Ezra 1:9 there is a brief mention of Gehenna, though the writer envisages punishment as occurring in the valley of Jehoshaphat (3:5ff.). The wicked suffer in bodily form, and are eventually annihilated. This book is dated AD 150–850.[31]

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[24] "Gehenna" in the Latin, Syriac, Ethiopic, and Georgian versions, but "fire" in the Arabic 1 and 2 and the Armenian versions: M.E. Stone, *Fourth Ezra* (Hermeneia; Minneapolis: Fortress, 1990), 203.
[25] B.M. Metzger, "4 Ezra," *OTP,* 1:520 (517–60); Stone, *Fourth Ezra*, 9–10.
[26] Charles, *APOT,* 1:470–526; cf. J. Klijn, "2 Baruch," OTP, 1:652 (615–52).
[27] Klijn, 616–17.
[28] G. Carey, "The Ascension of Isaiah: An example of Early Christian Narrative Polemic," *JSP* 17 (1998): 65–78.
[29] P. Alexander, "3 Enoch," *OTP*, 1:226 (223–316).
[30] R. Rubinkiewicz, "Apocalypse of Abraham," *OTP*, 1:681–705.
[31] M.E. Stone, "Greek Apocalypse of Ezra," *OTP*, 1:561–579.

In the *Sibylline Oracles* there are three references (1:104, 2:292, 4:186), all dated well after AD 100.[32] 1:104 describes how the "Watchers" were noble but nevertheless "went to the dread house of Tartarus … to Gehenna, of terrible, raging, undying fire." In 2:292 angels throw the wicked into Gehenna, where they will "call death fair … [but] it will evade them" (2:307). By contrast, in 4:186 Gehenna is mentioned in connection to a mound of earth that will cover the wicked, suggesting perhaps their death and burial.

Lastly, there is the testimony of *1 Enoch* 27:1–2 in which an unnamed accursed valley is mentioned in the environs of Jerusalem.[33] The fact that it is not named should preclude the suggestion that we have here a developed Gehenna tradition.

When looking at other Jewish documents, one is struck by the lack of references to Gehenna. The Dead Sea Scrolls are completely silent. The relevant texts of Jeremiah are absent from the biblical manuscripts. More conspicuous is the absence of the word in the War Rule. Since this document portrays an eschatological battle between the "sons of light" and the "sons of darkness" Ge-hinnom would be the natural locale for such a battle had there existed a developed Gehenna tradition. Philo and Josephus do not mention Gehenna, even though Josephus describes the environs of the valley without naming it.[34]

The Mishnah has five references and the Talmud more than fifty. The earliest attribution would be to Akiba ben Joseph[35] towards the end of the

[32] J.J. Collins, "Sibylline Oracles," *OTP*, 1:331 (317–472). J. Geffcken, *Komposition und Entstehungszeit der Oracula Sibyllina* (Leipzig: Hinrichs, 1902), 49, has dated both Jewish and Christian Oracles in the 3rd century.

[33] R.H. Charles, *The Book of Enoch* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1912), 57. Isaac's translation of the Ethiopic text (*OTP*, 27 [5–90]), reads: "For what purpose does this blessed land … (have) in its midst this accursed valley?" Extant Greek Manuscripts (primarily Panopolitanus) phrase the question slightly differently: "and why is this valley accursed?" In the Ethiopic, Enoch expresses surprise that the accursed valley is located in the midst of the blessed land. In the Greek, he expresses surprise at the very existence of an accursed valley. The Ethiopic would thus be more in harmony with the existence of developed traditions of punishment in a valley. The relevant Aramaic phrase is not extant in Qumran, ultimately leaving the issue of which version is more authentic, in the balance.

[34] Josephus, *Jewish War* 5.12.2; 5.12.3; 6.8.5.

[35] E.g., *b. B. Bat*. 10a; *b. Hag*. 15a.

first century AD. The remaining references come from the second century onwards.

### *3. Gehenna in the NT*

There are twelve references to Gehenna in the NT. With the exception of James 3:6, all others are found in the synoptic gospels on the lips of Jesus. This suggests strongly that Gehenna was authentic to the preaching of Jesus. The synoptic gospels are dated before AD 70 or not long thereafter. As such, they are the earliest writings to mention Gehenna in an eschatological context after Jeremiah.

Additionally, the gospel references are thematically all bound together by two strong common elements. First, in all Gehenna follows a bodily resurrection implied in the repeated mention of the body. Second, the punishment of Gehenna always affects the person in full bodily form, not as disembodied souls. Furthermore, Mark 9:43–48 quotes and Luke 12:4–5 alludes to Isaiah 66:24, one of the judgment-in-a-valley texts of the OT. This suggests that the NT references are more coherent and closer to the OT sources than early Jewish writings.

### *4. Evaluation of the Development of the Tradition*

Bringing the discussion together, we can conclude the following. First, the appellation Ge-hinnom is well attested in the OT. Second, the eschatological motif, in which God judges and destroys the wicked in an eschatological battle in a valley outside Jerusalem, is also well attested. Third, the direct association of such judgment/destruction with the name Ge-hinnom is poor and appears directly only in Jeremiah.

Fourth, the LXX with its variant transliterations of Ge-hinnom indicates there was no developed Gehenna tradition. Fifth, in other early Jewish works Gehenna appears only in late writings, from AD 100 onwards. Fifth, in contrast, the NT material dates in the first century, and can with certainty be traced back to Jesus. Sixth, whereas the NT material is theologically cohesive and shows OT influence, the Jewish material is not only late, but divergent and theologically far removed from the OT, suggesting a later development than the NT.

It appears fairly evident, therefore, that in referring to Gehenna Jesus was not drawing from contemporary Jewish usage, which as we have seen

was non-existent, but directly from the prophecies of the OT, especially Jeremiah. The Jewish views on Gehenna developed later, and probably as a response or development of the Gehenna of the NT.

## THEOLOGY OF GEHENNA: EVERLASTING TORMENT OR ANNIHILATION

Having briefly explored the development of a Gehenna tradition we now will explore the theology of the term. Was Gehenna presented in the words of Jesus as a place where the wicked will be tormented forever without end? Or is something else in view? To answer such questions, we will discuss the eleven occurrences in the gospels.

### *1. Gehenna in Mark 9:43–48 – The most complete description*

> [43] And if your hand causes you to sin, cut it off; it is better for you to enter life maimed than with two hands to go to hell, to the unquenchable fire.
> [44] [absent in the critical text; the Majority text replicates v. 48]
> [45] And if your foot causes you to sin, cut it off; it is better for you to enter life lame than with two feet to be thrown into hell.
> [46] [absent in the critical text; the Majority text replicates v. 48]
> [47] And if your eye causes you to sin, pluck it out; it is better for you to enter the kingdom of God with one eye than with two eyes to be thrown into Gehenna,
> [48] where their worm does not die, and the fire is not quenched.

Mark 9:43–48, as a detailed and well known text on Gehenna, is a good place to begin our study. Its language about the "worm" that "does not die" and the "fire" that cannot be quenched have exerted considerable influence on later Christian writings on hell.[36] It is commonly used in support of hell as never-ending torment. Sadler wrote back in 1887: "The triple declaration [vv. 44, 46, and 48 about Gehenna] … is, doubtless, on account of the unwillingness of the human heart to accept the doctrine of Eternal Punishment."[37] We will make five observations on Mark 9:43–48.

[36] See M. Himmelfarb, *Tours of Hell* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania, 1983).
[37] M.F. Sadler, *The Gospel According to St. Mark* (London: George Bell and Sons, 1887), 202.

First, judgment and punishment affect the person in full bodily form. Three times within this passage (9:43, 45, 47) it is said that it is better for a person to lose a part of the body, than for the whole body to go to Gehenna.[38] We meet similar language again in the two related Matthean texts, 5:29 and 18:8–9. Punishment of the body implies a resurrection of the body and a Day of Judgment. Mark 9:43–48, therefore, presupposes the sequence temporal death–bodily resurrection–judgment.

This language concerning the body is important in that it links the fate of a sinful limb that is cut and thrown away with the fate of the whole body of the sinner in Gehenna. When an offending body part is theoretically cut off and thrown away, it is not thrown away to be tormented. It is thrown away because it is no longer useful, and might pollute the rest of the body. The act of throwing away is not vengeful but precautionary. Perhaps, the destruction of the whole person in Gehenna should be seen in similar terms.

Second, the context of the quotation from Isaiah 66:24, "where their worm does not die, and the fire is not quenched," needs to be examined. Isaiah 66:1–24, like the Ge-hinnom passages in Jeremiah, presents an eschatological battle. The Lord is in the holy temple about to recompense his enemies who appear to be outside Jerusalem (66:4, 24). He approaches with fire and chariots that are as fast as the whirlwind (66:15) to mete out justice by fire and the sword (66:16). The result is that all his enemies, "those who eat swine's flesh and rats and other abominations" (66:17), are slain, they "come to an end together" (66:17). In 66:24 the slain are said to be an abhorrence because they are left unburied to be consumed by fire and maggots. Fudge[39] suggests that Isaiah 66:24 might well allude to the defeat of the large Assyrian army in the vicinity of Jerusalem in the reign of Hez-

[38] The idea of cutting off a hand or foot is clearly a hyperbole, not an injunction to be taken literally. See H. Scharen, "Gehenna in the Synoptics, Part 1" *Biblioteca Sacra* 149 (1992), 333 (324–37); C.A. Evans, *Mark 8:27–16:20* (Word Biblical Commentaries 34b; Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 1998), 71, calls the statements "grotesque recommendations" that are not to be taken literally. B. Witherington, *The Gospel of Mark* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2001), 272, on the other hand, suggests that the cutting off of a hand or foot, or the plucking out of an eye, were punishments for such crimes as theft, runaway slaves, and voyeurism respectively. The point he sees in these sayings is that even such drastic remedies are better than sinning and going to hell. Cf. Mark 12:18–27.

[39] E. Fudge, "The Final End of the Wicked," *Journal of the Evangelical Theological Society* 27 (1984): 329 (325–34).

ekiah, with the dead possibly being burned in a massive pyre in a valley outside the city walls (see Isa 30:31–33).

Third, the Isaiah quotation mentions a worm that "does not die" (9:48). This is understood at times to mean that the worm will never die.[40] The grammatical structure however, does not bear this out. τελευτᾷ is present active indicative. If the writer wanted to indicate unending activity, a future tense would have made more sense—οὐ τελευτήσει for example, "it will not die." The use of the present indicative puts the emphasis on quality rather than duration. The worm cannot die at this moment in time, because it has to complete its work.

It is worth noting that in the Hebrew of Isaiah 66:24, the word for worm is תּוֹלַעְתָּם and refers to worms that spring from putrefaction.[41] It appears again in Isaiah 50:9 where it is said that the dead will be eaten by the "worm." The "worm" appears in 66:24 with פִּגְרֵים, "corpses" or "dead bodies."[42] So there is no suggestion that worms torment the wicked. Rather, what we have is a battle image where the wicked are slain and the worms devour the dead bodies.

Fourth, the Isaiah quotation mentions a fire that "is not quenched," οὐ σβέννυται. As with τελευτᾷ, the Greek verb is in the present indicative which, as noted, deals primarily with what is happening now. A future tense would have been preferable if unending duration was in view. Moreover, σβέννυται is passive from the root σβέννυμι, "to extinguish," or "to quench."[43] The force of the passive is that the fire "cannot be put out," obviously by a third party, rather than "it will not go out itself." The verb form thus has no bearing on how long the fire will burn, but rather on its intensity or nature at this moment in time.[44]

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[40] R. Lenski, *The Interpretation of St. Mark's Gospel* (Minneapolis: Augsburg, 1946), 187.

[41] W. Gesenius, *Hebrew and Chaldee Lexicon to the Old Testament Scriptures*, trans. S.P. Tregelles (London: Samuel Bagster & Sons, 1859), s.v. תּוֹלַעְתָּם; cf. Koehler and Baumgartner, *Hebrew and Aramaic Lexicon*, s.v. תּוֹלַעְתָּם.

[42] פֶּגֶר is used of both dead humans and dead animals. It also conveys the idea of absence of life, as in Lev 26:30 where it describes the lifelessness of the idols.

[43] H.K. Moulton, *The Analytical Greek Lexicon Revised* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing, 1977), 364.

[44] H.B. Swete, *Commentary on Mark* (Grand Rapids: Kregel Publications, 1977), 212.

The validity of this conclusion is further evidenced by our fifth observation, the presence of the cognate adjective ἄσβεστον in 9:43. Etymologically, it combines the negating prefix α- and the verb σβέννυμι noted above. It qualifies the nature of the fire, namely, that it cannot be put out by a third party.[45] Duration does not come into view. This adjective occurs only twice again in the NT, in two parallel texts, Matthew 3:12 and Luke 3:17, where in the context of divine judgment the fate of the wicked is compared to the burning of chaff in πυρὶ ἀσβέστῳ, "unquenchable fire." The fire that burns chaff is characterised by its intensity and short duration, chaff lights very quickly but is also consumed very quickly and the fire dies out.[46]

It becomes evident that there is nothing in Mark 9:43–48 that suggests everlasting torment of souls. The strong body language, the parallel between a part of the body that is cut and thrown away with the fate of the whole person in Gehenna, the background of the Isaiah 66:24 quotation, the present tenses οὐ σβέννυται and οὐ τελευτᾷ, as well as the "unquenchable fire" all underline the fact that Gehenna is not a place of torment, but a place of destruction where, as in the Ge-hinnom passages of Jeremiah, the wicked will be destroyed.

## *2. Gehenna in Matthew 5:29–30, 18:8–9 – The Eternal Fire*

**Matthew 5:29–30**

29 If your right eye causes you to sin, pluck it out and throw it away;
it is better that you lose one of your members than that your whole
body be thrown into Gehenna.
30 "And if your right hand causes you to sin, cut it off and throw it
away; it is better that you lose one of your members than your
whole body go into Gehenna.

[45] That ἄσβεστον does not deal with duration is even admitted by everlasting hell proponent R.A. Cole, *The Gospel According to St. Mark* (Tyndale New Testament Commentary 2; London: Tyndale Press, 1961), 153, who nonetheless proceeds to suggest that everlasting torment is implied here.

[46] In the LXX ἄσβεστον appears only once in Job 20:26 in A and S. It is used with reference to the temporal death of the wicked as 20:7–9, 11,16, 24 indicate.

**Matthew 18:8–9**

[8] And if your hand or foot causes you to sin, cut it off and throw it from you; it is better for you to enter life maimed or lame than with two hands or two feet to be thrown into the eternal fire.

[9] And if your eye causes you to sin, pluck it out and throw it from you; it is better for you to enter life with one eye than with two eyes be thrown into the Gehenna of fire.

Matthew 5:29–30 and 18:8–9 parallel Mark 9:43–50 closely. The admonitions to spiritual vigilance appear in a similar format and the presence of the body in the judgment is a very prominent element, suggesting, as in Mark, judgment following a resurrection of the body.[47] There is however, a difference between the two gospels with respect to Gehenna. Matthew describes the fire of Gehenna as τὸ πῦρ τὸ αἰώνιον, "the eternal fire" in 18:8. Does αἰώνιον suggest everlasting duration? Or is something else in view? In search for answers we will first look at the use of the cognate substantive αἰών with a special emphasis on the notion of two ages. Then we will look at the adjective αἰώνιος and its implications for Gehenna.

In the LXX αἰών most commonly renders the noun עוֹלָם, which denotes an unspecified period of time, often quite short. Furthermore, αἰών is also connected to the idea of the two "ages" into which Jews divided history: "this age or αἰών" meaning the current corrupt state of human affairs; and "the age or αἰών to come" when God would establish his kingdom.

This two-age view is abundantly evident in the NT. In the Synoptic Gospels αἰών occurs nineteen times. In thirteen of these the theology of the two ages is either stated or implied.[48] For example, Matthew 12:32 reads: "but whoever speaks against the Holy Spirit will not be forgiven, either in this age or in the age to come."[49] It is noteworthy that of the three Synoptics, Matthew is the most familiar with the two-age concept. Of the

[47] R.H. Gundry, *Matthew* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1994), 89.

[48] Matt 12:32; 13:22, 39–40, 49; 24:3; 28:20; Mark 4:19; 10:30; Luke 16:8; 18:30; 20:34–35. In six cases (Matt 21:19; Mark 3:29; 11:14; Luke 1:33, 55, 70) αἰών is used as in the LXX to denote a long period of time either past or future.

[49] The use of αἰών with μέλλοντι probably reflects the Greek of Isa 9:5, the only instance in the LXX where there is a direct reference to the "coming age."

eight occurrences of αἰών, seven can best be understood within this framework.[50] The Pauline literature shows an equally strong familiarity.[51]

With regards to αἰώνιος, in the LXX it corresponds in meaning to the substantive αἰών. When used in the context of the two-age theology, it denotes that which belongs to the age to come. Turner holds that most NT usages fall under this category.[52] But is he right?

Perhaps the clearest qualitative use of the adjective αἰώνιος is found in Jude 7 where the fire that destroyed Sodom and Gomorra is described as πυρὸς αἰωνίου, "aionian fire," which is semantically nearly identical to Matthew's τὸ πῦρ τὸ αἰώνιον. The fire that destroyed Sodom and Gomorra barely lasted a few hours. Lot and his family escaped late at night and, shortly after the sun rose the only thing left was the smoke (Gen 19:1–27).[53] The aionian fire, therefore, was aionian not in duration, but in quality, a fire that came directly from God, a punishment characteristic in its thoroughness of the quality of the age to come.

Beyond this clear use, we have some that are rather more ambiguous, but still congruent with the understanding of αἰώνιος proposed. In Mark 3:29 we read of an αἰώνιον ἁμάρτημα, "an aionian sin." It is hardly possible to translate it as "everlasting sin" in a quantitative sense, for the sin in question is blasphemy against the Holy Spirit, which certainly does not last for eternity. We also have "aionian salvation" (Mark 16:8; Heb 5:9), "aionian redemption" (Heb 9:12), "aionian destruction" (2 Thess 1:9), "aionian

[50] Matt 12:32; 13:22, 39–40, 49; 21:19; 24:3; 28:20. The only instance where Matthew uses αἰών without denoting one of the two ages is in 21:19 (the curse on a barren fig tree). In contrast to Matthew, Mark uses αἰών four times (3:29; 4:19; 10:30; 11:14), of which only two are references to the two ages (4:19; 10:30). In Luke the comparative usages are seven (Luke 1:33, 55, 70; 16:8; 18:30; 20:34–35) and four references (Luke 16:8; 18:30; 20:34–35) respectively.

[51] E.g., Rom 12:2; 1 Cor 2:6, 8; Eph 1:21; 2:7; 1 Tim 6:17.

[52] N. Turner, *Christian Words* (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1980), 456; c.f. D. Hill, *Greek Words and Hebrew Meanings* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1967), 187–88.

[53] R. Bauckham, *Jude, 2 Peter* (Word Biblical Commentaries 50; Milton Keynes: Word Publishing, 1983), 55, maintains that the "still burning fire" that destroyed Sodom and the surrounding cities was for Jude an example of the eternal fires of hell. Cf. E.M. Sidebottom, *James, Jude and 2 Peter* (New Century Bible 30; ed. R. Clements and M. Black; London: Nelson, 1967), 87, who argues that there was a belief that the cities continued to burn underground. Contrary to Bauckham and Sidebottom, Jewish sources upheld the short duration of the destroying fires (*Wisdom* 10:7; Josephus, *Jewish War*, 4.8.3; *Tg. Neof*. Gen 19:25–6, 29; *Tg.Ps.-Jon*. Gen 19:25–9; *Jubilees* 16:5–6).

consolation" (2 Thess 2:16), "aionian judgment" (Heb 6:2), "aionian inheritance" (Heb 9:15), and "aionian gospel" (Rev 14:6). At first glance all of these references appear to be quantitative, but when they are subjected to deeper analysis the qualitative meaning seems to take precedence. Any quantitative dimension appears to derive more from *the permanence of the age to come* than from any inherent semantic meaning in the adjective αἰώνιος. For example, salvation and redemption are a based on an historical fact, the death and resurrection of Jesus, and in the life of the believer, on a decision to become a follower of Jesus.[54] The "aionian destruction" of 2 Thessalonians is "a destruction of the coming age," a complete destruction, rather than an ongoing destruction since it is a reference to the final death of the wicked in the judgement. The "aionian consolation" is a consolation of coming-age quality, rather than everlasting duration, since it appears in the believer's temporal life. The "aionian judgement" likewise conveys quality over quantity. The Greek for "judgement," κρίμα, highlights as much the pronouncement of a court as it does the process. The κρίμα, therefore, takes place at a specific moment in time and by definition cannot be of prolonged duration. It is aionian because it is a pronouncement that comes directly from God, i.e., a qualitative use. The κρίμα does have prolonged consequences, and as such has a quantitative dimension, but this quantitative dimension lies in the very fact that this is the judgment of the coming age, a judgment directly from God. Quality takes precedence over quantity. The "aionian gospel" of Revelation 14:6 is not a gospel proclaimed throughout eternity;[55] rather it is proclaimed at a specific point in time to prepare people for the coming judgment. The "aionian inheritance" of Hebrews 9:15 is the inheritance of the age to come. It is of divine origin and permanent only because the age to come is permanent.[56]

The use of the phrase ζωὴ αἰώνιος, "aionian life," also fits this context. In many instances "aionian life" refers to a present reality in the be-

[54] E.g., Mark 16:16; Heb 2:1–4, 9, 14–15; 3:6–8.

[55] D.E. Aune, *Revelation* (Word Biblical Commentaries 52a–c; Nashville: Thomas Nelson Publishing, 1997–98), 826 comments: εὐαγγέλιον αἰώνιον in Rev 14:6 "refers to the permanent validity of its proclamation." H.B. Swete, *The Apocalypse of St. John* (London: Macmillan, 1909), 182: "a gospel belonging to, stretching forward to, the eternal order."

[56] G.W. Buchanan, *To the Hebrews* (The Anchor Bible 36; Garden City: Doubleday, 1978), 150, renders 9:15 as "the inheritance of the age." Cf. Heb 3:1.

liever's life.[57] It is much easier to assume that the quality of the life of the age to come has dawned in the life of the believer than to argue that the believer has begun to live everlastingly. Furthermore, John 17:3 explains that eternal life is knowledge of the only true God and of Jesus Christ. In 1 John 1:2 and 5:20 Jesus becomes a personification of everything that eternal life stands for. These occurrences seem to favour a qualitative meaning, for knowledge of God or Jesus Christ brings a quality of life not found in this age. Finally, in Mark 10:30 (cf. Luke 18:30) Jesus directly links the concepts of "eternal life" and the "age to come."

Therefore, in the NT αἰώνιος denotes primarily quality rather than quantity and aionian fire of Gehenna is the fire that comes directly from God, one of coming age quality, rather than one that will last for a prolonged, let alone everlasting time. More and more commentators are recognizing this. Barclay for example, writes that a "punishment which is αἰώνιος is [a] punishment which it befits God to give," rather than an everlasting one.[58] Tasker notes that αἰώνιος is a "qualitative rather than a quantitative word" and its use is "no indication as to how long that punishment will last." Likewise, Green writes that the thought behind the phrase "aionian fire" is "of irrevocable condemnation rather than continuous torment."[59] In light of this, we could say that τὸ πῦρ τὸ αἰώνιον of Matthew 18:8 carries the same force as Mark's "unquenchable" fire discussed above, unstoppable not everlasting.

### *3. Gehenna in Matthew 10:28 – Destruction of Body and Soul*

> And do not fear those who kill the body but cannot kill the soul, rather fear him who can destroy both soul and body in Gehenna.

Matthew 10:28 appears within the context of a prolonged discourse by Jesus to his disciples. He is about to send them out in pairs to preach in the towns and villages of the "house of Israel". He warns them that since they will likely face persecution, they should not fear human enemies because they cannot cause real harm (10:26, 28). They may kill the body, but be-

[57] John 3:36; 5:24; 5:39; 6:47; 6:54; 17:3; 1 John 3:15; 5:11, 13.

[58] W. Barclay, *The Gospel of Matthew* (The Daily Study Bible 1–2; Edinburgh: St. Andrew Press, 1956), 201.

[59] B.H. Green, *The Gospel According to Matthew* (The New Clarendon Bible (New Testament) 1; Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1975), 207.

lievers have the hope of the resurrection. The disciples should rather fear "him who can destroy both soul and body in Gehenna."

Several observations can be made on Matthew 10:28. First, the "one" who is able to destroy "both soul and body" is God, not Satan as some have tried to argue.[60] Nowhere in Scripture are believers to fear the devil. Rather they are to resist him and he will flee.[61] On the contrary, in many cases they are called to fear God.[62]

A second observation is that the judgment where "body and soul are destroyed" presupposes a resurrection of the wicked as well as of the righteous. This parallels the other Gehenna passages where, as noted, the body plays a prominent role.

A third point is that not much emphasis should be placed on the apparent distinction between body and soul expressed in the phrase "do not fear those who kill the body but cannot kill the soul." While it is beyond the scope of this study to examine the usage of the ψυχή, the word in the NT does not reflect a dichotomic anthropological understanding.[63] McNeile explains that it refers to (a) the principle of life, (b) the seat of thoughts and feelings or (c) what comprises all that makes up the real self.[64] France notes that the purpose of Matthew is not to separate body from soul, but to show that being human involves more than an animal existence. Body and soul comprise the whole person; thus, the saying emphasizes the totality of the final destruction.[65] Schweizer maintains that ψυχή should, as a rule, be

[60] K. Stendahl, "Matthew," in *Peake's Commentary on the Bible* (ed. M. Black; London and New York: Thomas Nelson, 1962), 783 (769–98); G.W.H. Lampe, "Luke," in *Peake's Commentary*, 834 (820–43); W. Grundmann, *Das Evangelium nach Matthäus* (Berlin: Evangelische Verlagsanstalt, 1968), 297.

[61] E.g., Zech 3:1; Matt 4:10; 16:23; Luke 4:13; Eph 4:27; 6:11, Amos 4:7; 1 Pet 5:8.

[62] Ps 19:9; 111:5; Prov 9:10; Eccl 12:13; Rev 14:7; 15:4.

[63] W.D. Davies and D.C. Allison, *The Gospel According to St. Matthew* (International Critical Commentary 26; 3 vols; Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1988–2000), 2:206, emphatically state that ψυχή here refers to "the disembodied 'soul' which can survive the bodily death" (cf. Scharen, "Gehenna," 458–59). F. Godet, *A Commentary on the Gospel of St. Luke* (2 vols; Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1889), 2:91, stated more than a century ago: "This saying of Jesus distinguishes soul from body as emphatically as modern spiritualism." These suggestions are negated by Matt 10:28b, which states that the "soul" can be killed, and Matt 10:39 within the same pericope, where ψυχή has the meaning "life" (as there is a reference to losing and gaining it in the context of persecution).

[64] A.H. McNeile, *The Gospel According to St. Matthew* (London: Macmillan, 1928), 145.

[65] R.T. France, *Matthew* (Tyndale Commentaries 1; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1985), 186.

translated "life" and the phrase here would thus be "body and life," indicating two aspects of a person rather than two distinct parts. The meaning would then be that humans cannot kill "life itself, real life, but God can."[66]

The point in Matthew 10:28 meriting most focus is the light it sheds on Gehenna. In Gehenna God can destroy both body and soul. The Greek word for "destroy" is ἀπολέσαι, aorist infinitive of the verb ἀπόλλυμι. This verb frequently occurs in both the NT (90 times), and also in the LXX. The related noun ἀπώλεια is rarer.[67] ἀπόλλυμι is a stronger form of ὄλλυμι and has the meaning "to destroy utterly," "to kill," "to bring to naught," "to make void," "to lose," "to be deprived off."[68] Kretzer points out that in classical Greek ὄλλυμι is found only in epic poetry, frequently in relation to violence; but both verbs express loss, destruction, and annihilation, which can extend to the final destruction of a person in death.[69] According to Liddell and Scott, at least one occurrence in Homer, ὄλλυμι, refers mostly to death in battle.[70] It is used in relation to the destruction of individuals, cities, groups of people or whole tribes and nations without eschatological connotations.

In the NT, when ἀπόλλυμι appears in its active form, and both the subject and the object of the action are a person (as in Matthew 10:28), the meaning is "to destroy" or "to kill." Thus, in Mark 3:6 the Pharisees decide that αὐτὸν ἀπολέσωσιν, "that they will kill him (Jesus)."[71] In Matthew 2:13 the wise men are instructed in a dream not to tell Herod about the child Jesus because he would want to "destroy" (ἀπολέσαι) the child. Likewise, the priests and elders convince the crowds to ask for Barabbas' release and for the death of Jesus (ἀπολέσωσιν; Matt 27:20). While in Mark 9:22 an evil spirit tries to kill a demon-possessed boy (ἀπολέσαι) by throwing him in fire or water.[72]

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[66] E. Schweizer, *The Good News According to Matthew* (London: SPCK, 1976), 246.
[67] It appears 18 times in the NT and 108 in the LXX.
[68] Moulton, *Lexicon*, s.v.
[69] A. Kretzer, "ἀπόλλυμι," *Exegetical Dictionary of the New Testament* (eds. H. Balz and G. Schneider; 3 vols; Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1990–93), 1:135–36.
[70] H.G. Liddell and R. Scott, *A Greek-English Lexicon,* rev. by H.J. Jones (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1968), s.v. ὄλλυμι (henceforth *LSJ*).
[71] Cf. Matt 12:14; 27:20; Mark 11:28; Luke 19:47.
[72] An exception to such usage of derivatives of ἀπόλλυμι could be John 18:9; but here ἀπώλεσα is used metaphorically to indicate that Jesus had not "failed to save" anyone

Even more conclusive is the use of ἀπόλλυμι to describe acts of judgment by God. In addition to Matthew 10:28, there are nine other references in the NT. Four are in parables, three in the Evil Tenants (Matt 21:41; Mark 12:9; Luke 20:16) and one in the Wedding of the King's Son (Matt 22:7). In the former, the owner will "destroy" the evil tenants who refused to give him his due from the harvest, mistreated his representatives, and killed his son. In the latter parable, the king sent his armies and destroyed (ἀπώλεσεν) the guests who not only had refused to attend the wedding, but had also murdered the king's representatives.[73] A destruction resulting in death is the sense conveyed in these parables.

Similar observations apply to the other usages of ἀπόλλυμι in relation to divine judgment. Luke 17:27 describes the Flood that killed everybody (ἀπώλεσεν πάντας). In Luke 17:29 fire killed the inhabitants of Sodom and Gomorrah. Similarly, for their disobedience the Israelites perished in the desert by the hand of the "destroyer," God's avenging angel (1 Cor 10:10).[74] In Jude 5 and 11 some Israelites died because of their unbelief (v. 5) and during Korah's rebellion (v. 11). Thus, in all the NT instances that ἀπόλλυμι is used of divine judgment, a destruction leading to death is always involved. The same is true in the LXX where the number of texts is too large to be discussed here in detail.[75]

In light of the above usages of ἀπόλλυμι, it is reasonable to conclude that the ἀπολέσαι of Matthew 10:28 should be understood in its most natural and consistently used form—as destruction that involves the death of the object of the action.

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but Judas. A possible exception is also found in Rom 14:15 where Paul warns believers not to "ruin" or "destroy" another believer over matters of food. However, here again the idea is that by being led to stumble a believer will lose his faith and suffer the fate of "destruction." The fact that here the meaning of ἀπόλλυμι is death/destruction is understood by the contrast Paul makes: Christ died for him so that he should not die. Paul is saying, Why then by making him stumble are you willing to lead him to death?

[73] The mention here of armies that bring destruction agrees perfectly with the Kretzer's point (see above) that in classical Greek ἀπόλλυμι is usually found in epic writings, frequently denoting violence. This is also true of the use of ἀπόλλυμι in the LXX (see below for a sample of texts). Perhaps here it is an allusion to the destruction of Jerusalem.

[74] See Exod 12:23.

[75] E.g., Gen 18:24; 19:13; 20:4; Exod 19:24; Lev 7:10, 15; 20:3, 5–6; Num 14:12; Num 16:33; Deut 2:21; 7:23; Josh 23:5; Job 12:15.

### *4. Matthew 5:21–22 – Gehenna and Capital Punishment*

> [21] You have heard that it was said to the men of old, "You shall not kill; and whoever kills shall be liable to judgment."
> [22a] But I say unto you that everyone who is angry with his brother shall be liable to judgment;
> [22b] whoever insults [ῥακά] his brother shall be liable to the council [συνεδρίῳ]
> [22c]and whoever says, 'You fool' [μωρέ] shall be liable to the Gehenna of fire.

A note on the terms used in this verse is appropriate. ῥακά comes from the Aramaic and means "emptyhead," "empty one," or simply "fool."[76] μωρέ is the Greek equivalent[77] and could be translated, "you fool."[78] συνέδριον (22b) usually refers to the Jewish high court in Jerusalem, the Sanhedrin.[79]

Beyond these points on which there is agreement among commentators, 5:22 poses some exegetical problems. The saying mentions three offences: (a) anger; (b) calling someone "emptyhead;" and (c) calling someone a "fool." It also mentions three punishments. The offender will be liable to: (a) judgment; (b) the Sanhedrin; (c) Gehenna of fire. The problem is that, while the offences appear to be very similar, there is differentiation in the punishment. There have been numerous attempts to explain these verses and no consensus has been reached.[80]

The saying begins with the sin of murder and the ensuing sentence (5:21). The punishment for murder was death (Exod 21:12–14; Lev 24:17, 21).[81] The death sentence would be passed by an earthly court, yet "judgment" is not so much a reference to the local court itself, as it is to the sentencing decreed by God. Jesus then declares that anger is an offence in the

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[76] W. Bauer, *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and other early Christian Literature* (trans. W.F. Arndt and F.W. Gingrinch; rev. and exp. F.W. Danker; 3rd ed.; Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2000), s.v. ῥακά (henceforth, BDAG); Koehler and Baumgartner, *Hebrew and Aramaic Lexicon*, 1227–28.
[77] This is not a transliteration of the Hebrew מוֹרֶה. See Gundry, *Matthew*, 84.
[78] BDAG, s.v. μωρέ.
[79] BDAG, s.v. συνέδριον. For a fuller discussion of these words and other possible derivations, see Davies and Allison, *Matthew*, 1:513–14.
[80] For discussion and evaluation see K. Papaioannou, *The Geography of Hell in the Teaching of Jesus* (Eugene: Pickwick, 2013), 57–63.
[81] Cf. Exod 21:12; Lev 24:17; Num 35:16–34; Deut 17:6–7.

same category and calls for a similar sentence (5:22a). By way of comparison, then, 5:22a must also refer to the death sentence, this time as the judgment of God. This is the point that Jesus was trying to make after all, that anger is in the same category as murder and, therefore, deserves a similar punishment. Furthermore, it becomes obvious that ῥακά and μωρέ are outward expressions of anger and should therefore call forth the same sentence, if not from humans, then certainly from God. This is specifically stated in 5:22c where the one calling his brother μωρέ will face God's judgment in Gehenna. It is obvious that we have an interesting interplay between the death sentence of 5:21 and the sentence God will pronounce in the Day of Judgment in 5:22a and 22c. Once again, we see that the sentence of Gehenna is not everlasting torment, but death/destruction.

### *5. Matthew 23:15, 33*

> 15 Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you traverse sea and land to make a single proselyte, and when he becomes a proselyte, you make him twice as much a child of hell [Gehenna] as yourselves.
> 33 You serpents, you brood of vipers, how are you to escape being sentenced to Gehenna?

We now come to the last two Gehenna texts in Matthew which form part of a pericope that may be called "the woes" against the Pharisees (23:13–33). In 23:15 Jesus condemns the Pharisees, not for their missionary zeal, but for the result of their efforts—converts who are more hypocritical than the Pharisees themselves. The phrase "son of Gehenna" is a Semitism that means "destined for" or "worthy of" Gehenna.[82] The phrase does not appear elsewhere. Constructions that come closest are probably τέκνα ἀπωλείας ("children of destruction," Isa 57:4) and υἱὸς ἀπωλείας ("son of destruction," Prov 24:23; John 17:12; 2 Thess 2:3).[83] ἀπώλεια is the substantive of ἀπόλλυμι discussed already in relation to Matthew 10:28. It appears only three times in the Synoptics, but is common in the

[82] W. Hendriksen, *The Gospel of Matthew* (New Testament Commentary 1; Edinburgh: Banner of Truth, 1973), 829.
[83] Cf. ἔθνος ἀπωλείας, "a nation destined for destruction," and λαὸν τῆς ἀπωλείας, "a people destined for destruction," in Sir 16:9 and Isa 34:5 respectively.

rest of the NT and in the LXX. When used in relation to divine judgment, it conveys the meaning of destruction.[84]

Matthew 23:33 offers us a bit more information regarding Gehenna. The term "offspring of vipers," with which the verse begins, recalls Jesus' words in 12:34, and even more the words of John the Baptist in 3:7. Indeed, we can speak of an intentional parallel.[85]

> You brood of vipers! Who warned you to flee [φυγεῖν] from the wrath to come? (Matt 3:7).
>
> You brood of vipers, how are you to escape [φύγητε] being sentenced to Gehenna? (Matt 23:33).

The "wrath to come" in the words of John the Baptist corresponds to Gehenna in the words of Jesus. We can draw conclusions on the nature of Gehenna by looking at the words of John the Baptist and their context. In Matthew 3:7–12 John uses two pictures to describe what will happen to those who do not repent. In 3:10 he says that like a tree that does not bear fruit they will be felled and thrown into the fire.[86] In 3:12 judgment is compared to a farmer who clears his threshing floor, collects the wheat, and puts it in a barn, while the chaff he burns with "unquenchable fire." "Unquenchable fire" is not a fire that burns forever, as was seen above, but a fire of such intensity that it cannot be put out.[87] The use of the verb κατακαίω, which means "to consume by fire," underscores this.[88]

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[84] For a detailed analysis, see Papaioannou, *Geography*, 49–56.

[85] Davies and Allison, *Matthew*, 2:306; Gundry, *Matthew*, 469. According to Matthew, Jesus identifies closely with the preaching and ministry of John the Baptist (cf. Matt 3:2 with 4:17, and also 11:2–19). Thus, there is no reason why Jesus should not have said something similar to John the Baptist. Actually, it is not unlikely that Jesus deliberately used the words of the Baptist in order to forge a link between his and the Baptist's ministry in the minds of his hearers. E. Kinniburgh, "Hard Sayings," *Theology* 66 (1963), 414–16, is probably correct when he says that while John warns the Jewish leaders to repent and escape from the coming wrath, Jesus seems to imply that their refusal to repent of their sins and accept him has already sealed their fate (cf. 23:32).

[86] The verb "to throw," βάλλω, figures prominently in the synoptic Gehenna texts.

[87] See discussion on Mark 9:43–48.

[88] Κατακαίω means not only to burn, but "to consume" by fire (cf. BDAG, s.v.). It is used in relation to burning the gates of the Jerusalem temple (1 Macc 4:38), books (Acts 19:19), trees and grass of the earth (Rev 8:7), weeds (Matt 13:40), and here chaff. In Moses' encounter with God on mount Choreb (Exod 3:2), it is stated that the bush was on fire

Therefore, Matthew 23:15 and 33 concur with the picture of Gehenna as the annihilation of the wicked. In 23:15 this is vaguely evident through the semantic parallels between "sons of Gehenna" and "sons of perdition." In 23:33 it is much clearer through the intentional parallel between the words of Jesus and the words of John the Baptist in Matthew 3:7–10 where the destruction of the unrepentant is clearly in view.

### *6. Gehenna in Luke 12:4–5*

> I tell you my friends, do not fear those who kill the body, and after that have no more that they can do. But I will warn you whom to fear: fear him who, after he has killed, has power to cast into Gehenna; yes, I tell you, fear him.

We have looked at Gehenna in Mark and in Matthew. Here we consider the only Gehenna text in Luke, 12:4–5, which parallels Matthew 10:28. Luke and Matthew have the saying in a similar context but have differences in the wording. While in Matthew 10:28 God destroys both body and soul in Gehenna, in Luke 12:4–5 sinners are first killed and then thrown into Gehenna.

One of the more interesting attempts to explain the difference has been made by Milikowsky, who argues that, in contrast to Matthew, Luke did not believe in a resurrection for the wicked or in a final judgment. Judgment instead takes place at death and for Luke Gehenna is "a post-mortem, incorporeal hell of souls."[89] Such scepticism is not tenable. Luke clearly believed both in a resurrection for the wicked and in final judgment, as

(καίεται πυρί) but *not* consumed (οὐ κατεκαίετο). In contrast to the burning bush, the chaff of Matt 3:12 *will be* consumed.

[89] C. Milikowsky, "Which Gehenna?" *New Testament Studies* 34 (1988): 242 (238–49). Milikowsky also refers to a similar differentiation in rabbinical writings between a post-mortem Gehenna and an eschatological Gehenna into which the wicked are cast after a Day of Judgment. The comparison of Luke 12:4–5 with later rabbinical writings is used not so much as proof to support his exegesis as a case to illustrate a point. He thus holds that Luke 12:4–5 is the first attestation of a Gehenna that follows death, an idea that matured in later rabbinical writings and that "as the Jewish texts … help shed light on the passages in Matthew and Luke, so too these passages in the Gospels help us understand the historical context of the Jewish text" (248–49).

several texts indicate.[90] In both Matthew 10:28 and Luke 12:4–5, therefore, the same sequence is in view, bodily resurrection followed by a final judgment. The difference in wording does not betray a differentiation in eschatological understanding, but represents a difference in emphasis, as I shall proceed to explain.

Luke 12:4 warns believers not to fear those who "kill the body." Persecutors can kill, but then there is nothing more they can do. Their authority is terminated at that point in time. Believers should instead fear him, God, "who, after he has killed,[91] has power to cast into Gehenna." Since the implied subject of ἀποκτεῖναι is God, then the death in view can only be that of the Day of Judgment. According to Luke, in this temporal life it is not God who takes away life but a variety of other powers: the ones who persecute the believers (Luke 12:4); an angry synagogue crowd (Luke 4:28); disease (Luke 8:41–49); Herod (Luke 9:9); a fall from a window (Acts 20:9); and many other natural or human causes. That in 12:5 God is specifically said to be the one who kills verifies the view that what we have here is a killing beyond temporal death, a killing that happens at the eschatological judgment when all natural and human factors that cause death cease to have authority and God himself has the prerogative to remove life.[92]

In contrast to Matthew where Gehenna is the place where the wicked are destroyed, here God first destroys the wicked and then casts them into Gehenna. So what goes into Gehenna is that which God has already killed,

[90] For the resurrection of the wicked see: Luke 11:29–32; Acts 24:15; cf. 17:18, 31. For eschatological judgment see: Luke 11:29–32; 10:10–15; (cf. Luke 3:7, 9, 17; 9:26; 12:4–5).

[91] The Greek phrase μετὰ τὸ ἀποκτεῖναι lacks a subject. Most English translations assume it is God. H.K. Moulton, "Luke 12:5," *Bible Translator* 25 (1974): 246–47, disagrees and argues that it is the persecutors who kill and then God throws into Gehenna. But why would God throw into Gehenna the disciples the persecutors have killed? C.W. Votaw, *The Use of the Infinitive in Biblical Greek* (Chicago: Published by author, 1896), who has done a detailed study of the use of the infinitive in the Greek Bible, explains that the subject is omitted among other reasons when it is clear from the context, as is the case here.

[92] Though he accepts that God is the one who kills, C.F. Evans, *Saint Luke* (London: SCM, 1990), 515, thinks that the casting into Gehenna happens at death. Such a view not only contradicts other Lukan evidence, but also and more importantly is negated by the fact that what is envisaged here is not a normal death, but divine punishment on the Day of Judgment.

lifeless bodies.[93] This is the exact sequence in Isaiah 66:24 where God first destroys the disobedient and then casts their corpses outside Jerusalem to be consumed by fire and maggots. Fudge pointedly suggests that, much more clearly than in Matthew 10:28, the influence of Isaiah 66:24 stands behind Luke 12:4–5.[94] We already saw that Isaiah 66:24 stands behind Mark 9:43–49. Isaiah is the most commonly used OT book in Luke, followed by Psalms and Genesis.[95] So it should not surprise us that we see here clearly the imagery of Isaiah. In light of this, what God casts into Gehenna is not souls—the word soul does not enter at all into the picture. God casts the dead corpses of the unbelievers to be consumed by fire.

## CONCLUSION

This study was divided into two parts. In the first part we traced the development of a Gehenna tradition. Contrary to popular conceptions,

[93] Luke does not clarify whether it is bodies, souls, or whole persons. Nonetheless, since in Luke 12:4 ἀποθνήσκω is used with reference to persecutors killing whole persons, the disciples, it follows that the same may be the case in 12:5—divine judgment on whole persons. This is verified by the thematic connection with Isa 66:24 where again it is whole persons that are destroyed. What is pictured in Luke 12:4–5, therefore, is resurrection and judgment of human beings, not disembodied souls.

[94] Fudge, *Fire*, 177.

[95] Isaiah is the most commonly alluded to book in Luke (84 allusions) followed by the Psalms and Genesis (81 and 54 allusions respectively). The three NT books containing most allusions to Isaiah are Revelation, Matthew, and Luke. T. Holtz, "αἰών," in Balz and Schneider, *Exegetical Dictionary of the New Testament*, 1:44–46, has observed that Isaiah, together with the twelve minor prophets and the Psalms are the OT writings that exerted the most influence on Luke. C. Kimball, *Jesus' Exposition of the Old Testament in Luke's Gospel* (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1994), who has made a study of OT exposition in Luke, gives a list of quotations from and allusions to Isaiah. He cites seven direct quotations from Isaiah out of a total of 33 from the entire OT, and 84 allusions to Isaiah out of a total of 525 (46–50, 204–12). Kimball draws his information from the 26th edition of the Nestlé Aland *Novum Testamentum Graece*, which lists a total of 31 quotations and 494 allusions to the OT and the 3rd edition of United Bible Societies *Greek New Testament*, which lists 24 quotations but does not include allusions. Naturally there is an element of subjectivity as to what exactly constitutes an allusion or even a quotation. Thus, other scholars' estimates vary from as few as 15 by H. Ringgren, "Luke's Use of the Old Testament," *Harvard Theological Review* 79 (1986), 227–36, to 30 by G.L. Archer and G. Chirichigno, *Old Testament Quotations in the New Testament* (Chicago: Moody Press, 1983). The prominent position of Isaiah in Lukan quotations and allusions is, however, widely recognized.

Gehenna was not a rubbish dump outside Jerusalem. Neither was it a common word to denote hell. Rather, its origin lies in the prophecies of the OT prophets who depicted the final judgment in terms of a final eschatological war in which God would destroy the wicked in a valley outside Jerusalem. While in most of the prophets this valley is not specifically identified, in Jeremiah it was connected with the valley of Hinnom, Ge-hinnom. This rather obscure association lay dormant for centuries. Jesus is the first to resurrect it and creates a direct association between the toponym Ge-hinnom/Gehenna and the final judgment. In other words, he is encouraging his audience, if they want to know what will happen to the wicked, to see how Jeremiah describes it in his Ge-hinnom passages. From Jesus the usage found its way into the gospels, into other Christian writings, and eventually into later Jewish and Christian literature.

In the second part we explored what judgment in Gehenna entails. We did so by looking at the eleven texts in the gospels in which the word is used. The picture was coherent and clear. At no point is there any reference to torment of any kind, let alone everlasting torment, nor of immortal souls. Rather, Gehenna is the place where God will totally destroy the wicked. This becomes clear from: the OT background discussed in the first part of the study, especially of the Jeremiah passages and Isaiah 66:24 which is quoted in Mark 9:48; the different expressions to describe the intensity of the destroying fire; the use of ἀπόλλυμι in Matthew 10:28; the parallel to capital punishment in Matthew 5:22–23; the intentional parallel to the words of John the Baptist that the wicked will be consumed like chaff is consumed by fire; and the affirmation that all that will be in Gehenna is lifeless corpses.

The picture is not pretty by any means. Hell is a painful topic. However, the destruction and final death of the wicked appears to be a much more palatable, fair, and realistic option than the terrible idea that God will torment human beings throughout the ages of eternity.

# WISE PARTICIPATION IN THE DIVINE LIFE: LESSONS FROM THE LIFE OF DANIEL*

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**Abstract**
In Daniel 1, Daniel and his friends are depicted as figures of wisdom, and this wisdom from God is then exercised in the court tales. This article argues that the exercise of wisdom continues in the Hebrew visions of Daniel (8–12). This continuity may be described theologically as a participation in the divine life. As a result of this continuity, wise participation may be further described as a paradox around the hiddenness or otherwise of God. In the court tales the wisdom of God is evident; in the visions it is obscure. Wise participation in the divine life, it is argued, involves both the ethical clarity of the court tales and the eschatological mystery of the visions.

**Keywords**
Daniel, incarnation, participation, people of God, saints, son of man, wisdom

## INTRODUCTION

The book of Daniel is about Daniel; that is why it is called the book of Daniel. That may sound trite, but in fact the book of Daniel is not often read as if it really were about Daniel. More often, it is read as a combination of disembodied life lessons from the court stories, and coded predictions of the future from the visions. With respect to the visions, even where there is caution about the visions as predictive for our own day, there is a strong focus on the emergence of the final kingdom with the accompanying message that God is in control. Very few writers look in depth at what is actually going on for Daniel himself as the book unfolds. Yet there is much to learn from doing so; and, in the process, much to learn about what it means for the believer to say that God is in control.

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In this essay I argue that the experience of Daniel, and occasionally also that of his three friends, throughout the book that bears his name has much to say about the wise participation of the people of God in the life of God. I will show that there is continuity in both the literary expression of participation and in wisdom terminology throughout the book. In the light of that, the nature of wise participation is illuminated by a theological consideration of the vision of the throne room scene and of the one like a son of man with respect to the saints of the Most High. This line of reasoning is reasonably evident in the court tales,[1] but I will argue it in more detail with respect to Daniel's experience of the visions. What emerges is a picture of wise participation in the divine life, comprising subtle interactions between temporal and eschatological understandings and between the availability and hiddenness of the wisdom of God.[2]

## CRITICAL CONSIDERATIONS

Rather than spending too much time discussing technical critical issues in the study of Daniel, of which there are many, two particular positions that undergird this article will be outlined. As is well known, Daniel 1–2 is in Hebrew until the text switches to Aramaic at 2:4 and remains in Aramaic until the end of chapter 7, before reverting again to Hebrew in chapters 8–12. There is a consensus among a considerable majority of scholars that the vision chapters are probably later than the court tales. The court tales probably emerge in the Persian period, not long after the events which they recount, while the vision material is probably best dated around the time of the crisis concerning the Greek kingdoms and the abomination of desola-

[1] For some the term "tale" implies non-historical. I use the term as a literary category, not in any sense to pass judgment on the historicity of the material. While there is little external evidence to tie Daniel to a known historical figure, from what we know of the period it is entirely plausible that Daniel is a remembered historical figure on the basis of the text of Daniel.

[2] Aspects of this article are distillations of more fully argued positions in T. Meadowcroft, "'Belteshazzar, Chief of the Magicians' (NRSV Daniel 4:9: Explorations in Identity and Context from the Career of Daniel," *Mission Studies* 33 (2016): 26–48; idem, "'One Like a Son of Man" in the Court of the Foreign King: Daniel 7 as Pointer to Wise Participation in the Divine Life," *Journal of Theological Interpretation* 10 (2016): 245–63; and idem, "Daniel's Visionary Participation in the Divine Life: Dynamics of Participation in Daniel 8–12," *Journal of Theological Interpretation* 11 (2017): 217–38.

tion in the 160s BC.[3] Whether they are dated then or not, in the opinion of many commentators the vision texts themselves direct the reader to relate the visions to that period of the Jewish experience. My reading assumes that the visions have a particular applicability in the life of the people of God – those regularly referred to in the text as "the holy ones of the Most High"[4] – to the Greek crisis of the second century BC.

Since that material is primarily in Hebrew, what does this say about Daniel 1, which, although set in the court with the other court tales, is written in Hebrew while the other court tales are in Aramaic? One possibility is that chapter 1 was written later as an introduction to the court stories.[5] As if to say, this is how it came to be that Daniel and his friends are at the imperial court, and these are the lessons they learned to help them to be wise in those circumstances. Nobody is able to explain why the book of Daniel is written in two different languages, but the concept of Daniel 1 as introduction to the book as a whole is a helpful one. In reading that chapter as introductory, it can also be read as setting the wisdom agenda around which the rest of the book may be read. That is also assumed in my reading.

## THE WISDOM OF DANIEL IN THE COURT TALES

Daniel and, at times, his friends are wise participants in great events at the Babylonian and Persian courts in Daniel 2–6. The wisdom dynamic is set up in Daniel 1. We can see that by looking in particular at 1:4 and 1:17. The men selected, according to the account (1:4), were to be "versed in every branch of wisdom, endowed with knowledge and insight, and competent to serve in the king's palace." Each of the terms used is freighted with significance to a post-exilic Jewish audience familiar with the wisdom tradition. They were "versed in every branch of wisdom" (lit. "those who are insightful in every wisdom," מַשְׂכִּילִים בְּכָל־חָכְמָה). The word חכמה might be described as the generic term for matters of skill, morality, attitude towards life experience and a response of fear and reverence towards God in the multifarious aspects of human existence.[6] Of course, the call towards such חכמה elicits a response of either wisdom or folly. In the case

[3] See for example J.E. Goldingay, *Daniel* (Dallas: Word, 1989), 328–29.

[4] Unless indicated otherwise, I am using the NRSV for scriptural quotations.

[5] See for example C.-L. Seow, *Daniel* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 2003), 7–8.

[6] R.L. Harris, G.L. Archer Jr., and B.K. Waltke (eds.), *Theological Wordbook of the Old Testament* (Chicago: Moody, 1980), 283–84.

of Daniel and his friends, their approach to the call to wisdom, on the evidence of this phrase, was that of the משׂכילים, those whose decisions are characterised by the sort of insight into and understanding of the great issues of life that makes success, as generally conceived, more likely. Once again this is a word that has strong biblical pedigree. With respect to the book of Daniel it is a recurring participle in the later chapters (11:33, 35; 12:3, 10), and it seems likely that it refers to a particular group of people deemed to be those who were faithful under the difficult circumstances occasioned by the invasion of "the Beautiful land" by Antioches IV Epiphanes (11:33, 41).[7]

The translation in the NRSV, "endowed with knowledge and insight" (ידעי דעת ומביני מדע) has been somewhat compressed, as a result of which the young men appear more like recipients of wisdom and less like agents of wisdom than is evident in the Hebrew. In fact, they are those who know (ידעי) and those who understand (ומביני). And the objects of the participles describe that which is known and understood by the young sages: knowledge (דעת) and thought or understanding (מדע). Each of those four words is used regularly within the Hebrew wisdom tradition. They may have had common currency with their Semitic surrounds (and this usage in Daniel suggests that to be the case), but they were also routine ways of speaking about Hebrew wisdom and would have been recognised as such. Together they speak of the range of abilities and qualities that we associate with intellectual achievement and ability under the wider rubric of Jewish wisdom (חכמה).[8]

What is interesting is that the same people who show these qualities are those who are "competent to serve in the king's palace" and are to be "taught the literature and language of the Chaldeans" (1:4). The text thereby recognises that the wisdom sought by Nebuchadnezzar, that which would entail the formation of a Babylonian worldview and (subsequent) service in the imperial palace, has something in common with Hebrew ways of expressing wisdom. The wisdom of God is unwittingly being de-

[7] See the summary of possibilities and the proposal by P.L. Redditt, "Daniel 11 and the Sociohistorical Setting of the Book of Daniel," *Catholic Biblical Quarterly* 60 (1998): 463–74.

[8] On this cluster of words, and including משׂכילים, see Harris, Archer and Waltke, *Theological Wordbook*, 282.

ployed by the King of Babylon in the service of his empire.[9] Godly wisdom is, therefore, something placed in the service of all humanity, whether that wisdom is acknowledged as such or not. And Daniel, Hananiah, Mishael and Azariah qualify this wisdom by placing it in the service of God and not of the empire.

If this perception of Hebrew wisdom is merely hinted at in the early verses of this introductory narrative, it becomes explicit once we get to the outcome of the training period. At the end of their training, the young men display the same sort of wisdom that was anticipated of them in v. 4 (1:17). They are given "knowledge and skill" (מדע והשכיל). Both terms reflect the earlier description and, again, they are both words that are familiar to those accustomed to the Hebrew wisdom tradition. Additionally, Daniel is given "insight" (הבין), another word also appearing in v. 4 as part of a cluster of words descriptive of Hebrew wisdom. In addition, the object of this wisdom has a familiar ring to it: "every aspect of literature and wisdom" (כל־ספר וחכמה). This phrase is a kind of portmanteau of the evocative dual focus back in v. 4, namely, the portrait of wisdom in Hebrew terms, and yet a wisdom placed at the service of "the Chaldeans." Now we find that wisdom, unmodified by any limiting adjectives, is linked, not to the literature (ספר) of the Chaldeans, but simply to "every aspect of literature." What once looked like wisdom deployed in the service of the Chaldeans has become, by means of the grace of God and the young men's faithfulness during the period of their training, the wisdom of God at work in Babylon.

Thus, chapter 1 sets up the terms in which the wise participation of Daniel and his young friends in the great events of their day are to be understood: as the wisdom of God both particular to the people of God and embracing all wisdom.

## THE WISDOM OF GOD AND DANIEL IN THE HEBREW VISIONS

If this dynamic is programmatic for the book of Daniel as a whole, then we should expect to find wisdom language in the accounts of the visions, or at

[9] J.J. Collins, *Daniel: A Commentary on the Book of Daniel* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1993), 138.

least in the accounts of Daniel's participation in the visions, and that of Daniel's people in the visionary experiences.

The generic wisdom term חכמה does not appear at all in chapters 8–12. At first glance this is surprising, given the amount of other wisdom language that does appear. However, the narrative of chapter 1 uses the term in a generic sense; this level of generality simply does not exist in the vision accounts, which are, in general, more sharply focused on particular experiences and events in which the wise man is participant, rather than being concerned with general statements about wisdom.

That aside, however, it turns out that much of the language used to describe the wisdom of the young men at the beginning and end of their court training reappears in the accounts of Daniel's visionary experiences. This is best illustrated from the clusters of wisdom terms in 1:4 and 1:17. Daniel needs "understanding" (בין, 1:4, 17) for the vision of chapter 8 (8:16–17, 23, 27). The angelic interpreters offer this *understanding*, although Daniel routinely falls short of appropriating it. Nevertheless, the aspiration is there. Similarly, as one who has learned the wisdom of literature (1:17), Daniel seeks *understanding* of Jeremiah's prophecy (9:2), and once again is offered *understanding* by the interpreters (9:22–23). We are not told if *understanding* was actually achieved on this occasion, but 10:1 assures the reader that this time, in his third vision, Daniel *understand*s. Again, it is with the help of heavenly interpreters (10:12, 14). Strangely, though, in the epilogue to the ensuing vision Daniel himself, in claiming that he does not *understand* (12:8), is less certain than the third person narrator. Once again, assurance of *understanding* comes from the heavenly figure (12:10).

The one to whom it is given to "know" (ידע, 1:4) is also on a quest for *knowledge* in each of the three visions. As he observes the goat and the ram of chapter 8, an interpreter comes to Daniel in order to cause him to *know* (8:19). Daniel is commanded by the interpreter of the seventy weeks to *know* (9:25), and in 10:20 the "one in human form" (10:18) asks Daniel if he *knows* why he has come (10:20).

The young Jewish men also exhibit skill or competence (שׂכל, 1:4, 17). Later, one of the failures on the part of his people mentioned by Daniel in prayer is a lack of this very *competence* or *insight* (9:13). But that same *insight* is urged upon Daniel by his interpreters (9:22, 25). Later, a reward is offered to these *skilled discerning* ones (12:3), and *understanding* is offered to those who are not among the wicked (12:10).

The links continue with the competencies that are endowed or later urged on the wise young men as outcomes of their wisdom. One of the results of Daniel's training, as expressed in 1:17, is unanticipated by 1:4, and it entails Daniel having insight into "visions" (חזון) and dreams. This becomes part of the exercise of Daniel's wisdom in the court tales and continues on in the vision accounts. Given that chapters 8–12 are entirely devoted to the revelatory experiences of the wise Daniel, the one who has *visions*, this is not surprising. We are told that Daniel has a *vision* (8:1; 9:21; 10:14; etc.) as part of the introduction to each of the three vision accounts.

The recurrence of the word *'amad* (עמד) is also relevant. Because it is a stock verb with a wide semantic range, care is needed. Nevertheless, its occurrence in the visions is in harmony with the evidence adduced above. The king was in search of candidates who would be competent and qualified to *stand* (NRSV "serve", 1:4) in the king's palace. There is a sense of taking a place and by implication fulfilling a role.[10] There is also just a hint of resistance about the term; it might in certain contexts have the sense present in the English idiom, "to take a stand."[11] In standing in the king's court these wise men undertake a work of significance, a work that both meets resistance and provides resistance. The verb also occurs a number of times in the vision narratives, often simply as descriptive of a physical action, but occasionally with this sense of "taking a stand." In 8:4 the other beasts are powerless to *stand* against the ram, as the ram subsequently cannot *stand* against the goat (8:7). In chapter 11 the verb occurs regularly to describe the ability or inability of one of the warring parties – the kingdoms of the North and the South – to *resist* the other.[12] Later, one of the angelic beings speaks of his own *standin*g (11:1) in support of the prince, Michael, who himself *stand*s as the protector of Daniel's people (12:1). However, during that first vision Daniel does not distinguish himself by *standing* in response; quite the opposite, in fact. Later in the prologue to the final vision, though, Daniel is told to *stand* (10:11) by those attending him. In doing so he confronts the portentous vision that is being explained to him; and then promptly collapses with the declaration, literally, that "there is no strength *standing* in me" (10:17). Only at the end does he hear

[10] Goldingay, *Daniel*, 5

[11] See among many examples Judg 2:14; 1 Chr 21:1; Esth 9:2; Jer 49:19.

[12] 11:1–4, 6–8, 11, 13–17, 20–21, 25, 31.

the promise that he will *stand* to receive his allotment at the end of days. But the narrative ends there and we do not know what ensued for Daniel.

In any case, we see that the role of wisdom continues to be crucial throughout the visions of Daniel 8–12, just as it was in the earlier court tales. Before considering the further significance of that, another significant continuity between the tales and the visions should be considered.

## Daniel and Daniel's People as Participants

That continuity concerns the participation of Daniel in the narrative. At this point, I do not use the term "participation" in any special or theological sense, but simply to indicate the engagement of Daniel with what is happening. As far as the court tales are concerned, there is little that needs to be said. Daniel and/or his friends are evidently participants in the stories which concern them and their engagement with the king and his empire. What is not so evident is that Daniel continues to be a participant as we move into the visions. For the visions are not merely visions; they are narratives about a man having visions. And this ongoing participation contains an important aspect of the message of the book of Daniel. An analysis of the contents of chapters 8–12 makes this evident.

Some aspect of Daniel's visionary experience is recounted in the following verses: 8:1–7, 13–20, 26–27; 9:2–23, 25; 10:1–12, 14–20; and 12:4–9, 13. Thus 81 verses out of a possible total of 143 verses, or 57 percent of those verses, entail the participation of Daniel in the visions described. However, within that we can treat chapter 11 as a special case, in that it is an extended account of one particular vision, and by virtue of its focus on a series of identifiable temporal events develops its own narrative momentum while the vision context tends to drop away. If the 45 verses of Daniel 11 are excluded from the calculations, then the percentage of the narrative concerned with participation rises to 83 percent.

Furthermore, as will be shown below in discussion of the context of the throne room scene of Daniel 7, the participation of Daniel in these visionary experiences is in some respects undertaken on behalf of the people. Not surprisingly, then, in addition to the participation of the visionary himself, the people of God (variously described) appear in some sense as participants, or at least the affected party, in the following 24 verses of Daniel 8–

12: 8:10–13, 25; 9:24–27; 11:30–35, 41–45; and 12:1–3, 10–12.[13] Allowing for the fact that two of these verses overlap with the list above of those concerning Daniel, 103 of the 143 total verses in Daniel 8–12 are about Daniel or Daniel's people: that is, 72 percent of the total. Thus, the raw data asks us to take seriously the fact of participation in the visions and, therefore, to consider that participatory experience.

It will be noted that I have not accounted at all for the prayer of Daniel in 9:2–19. Without necessarily assuming the form-critical implication that the prayer is out of place in the context in which it appears, Daniel's prayer is anomalous in several respects: it is a prayer; it looks back to what has been, rather than forward; it entails both Daniel and the people together; and the response of Gabriel assumes a vision, although none has been recounted. While such ambiguities of categorization make it difficult to account for the prayer of Daniel in the statistical analysis above, if anything it reinforces the participatory nature of these chapters. It does so in that the prayer focuses strongly on the experience of Daniel and his people, and in that, although he prays alone, Daniel implicitly prays on behalf of his people.

Staying with Daniel and his people as participants in these visions, there are some clear links from chapter 7 into subsequent visions around the saints of the Most High. Note in particular 8:23–27, which evokes the interpretation of the court room scene in the previous chapter, albeit without exact linguistic correspondence.[14] Just as the people of the holy ones of the Most High will be worn down by the horn of the fourth kingdom that makes war on them (7:25), so will "the king of bold countenance" destroy the people of the holy ones (8:23–24). Just as the horn of the fourth kingdom, or at least its dominion, will be utterly destroyed (7:26), so will the king of bold countenance be broken (8:25). Furthermore, the destruction of this king will be "not by human hands" (8:25), thus evoking the quarried granite that destroys the great statue of Daniel 2 (8:25, cf. 2:34). Again, the vocabulary is not exact, but the allusion to "not by human hands" creates a link between the destruction of the statue and that of the "king of bold countenance." Thus, the vision of Daniel 8 has links to the vision of Daniel 2 in the court tales. Moreover, Daniel 7 and 8 are bound together by a

[13] The verses of editorial framing have not entered into my calculations.

[14] J.J. Collins, *The Apocalyptic Vision of the Book of Daniel* (Ann Arbor: Scholars Press, 1977), 132.

common linking with Daniel 2, and by the echo in chapter 8 of the fate and destiny of the holy ones of the Most High. In this way, the reader is encouraged to read what we have seen of the life of the saints in chapter 7 into chapter 8 and beyond.

At a technical level, beyond chapter 8 the interests in the life of the saints may be expressed in several ways: first of all, in the relationships between Daniel 8 and 9. In an intriguing analysis, André Lacocque proposes that Daniel 8 and 9 are linked together in a structural schema for what he calls the "future facing" Hebrew chapters of visions (8–12). He begins with comment on the occurrence of the root שׂכל, which is used in 8:25 with respect to the skills (NRSV, "cunning") of the destructive king. In chapter 9, the same root is used three times with a similar, but differently applied usage (9:13, 22, 25).[15] It is used negatively in the prayer of Daniel to speak of the people's failure to exercise understanding. Then it is used twice in the introduction to the interpretation of the vision to express the process of inducing understanding in Daniel. Lacocque sees a further link in that the "desolator" on whom a "decreed end is poured out" (9:27) is a further reflection of the destructive king who eventually is "broken, and not by human hands" (8:25).

Additionally, once the link is made between the experience of the saints in the court room scene and the saints who encounter the king of Greece in chapter 8, and the experience of the saints of chapter 8 is further linked to the prayer and interpretation of chapter 9, subsequent mentions of the people, enumerated above, most naturally refer back to the same people who are implicated in the throne room vision. These are they on whose behalf Daniel confesses in his prayer (9:15–16), and with whom he associates himself (9:20). From chapter 10 onwards the visionary experience is Daniel's, but his people are regularly kept in view as somehow implicated in what Daniel sees and how he reacts. So Daniel hears from his interpreter (presumably angelic) that the vision of chapter 11 is about "what is to happen to your people" (10:14). Then Daniel is reminded of his people's implication in the great events alluded to by chapter 11 (11:14, 32–33), with the tantalising glimpse of dissension and failure amongst those people. Finally, as the vision comes to an end, the angel promises that Daniel's people would eventually and finally be delivered (12:1). In the epilogue that

[15] A. Lacocque, *Daniel in His Time* (Columbia: University of South Carolina Press, 1988), 10.

follows, Daniel asks how long all this is to be and receives an enigmatic reply relating to the "holy people" (12:7). Thus, this final mention of Daniel's people evokes the initial description of them as the people of the holy ones of the Most High back in 7:27, who themselves appear in the vision of chapter 8.[16]

With respect to the participation of the people of God in the visions, it has become evident that Daniel is thoroughly immersed as both participant and observer within the visions which he has also been recounting.[17] As a consequence, the temporal context of Daniel – and hence of his people – is intertwined with that which he is observing. This is experienced acutely in Daniel's person.

## PARTICIPATION IN THE DIVINE LIFE

Having established the continuities in wisdom and participation across the book of Daniel, the question of the nature of this participation now needs to be considered. Daniel 1 has been seen as programmatic for the wisdom dynamic at play throughout the book, but now Daniel 7 will be discussed as potentially programmatic for understanding the nature of Daniel's participation in the narrative. It is uncontroversial that Daniel 7 has been regarded as the *literary* hinge on which the book of Daniel swings, concluding as it does the Aramaic court tales and anticipating as it does the visions ascribed to Daniel. I suggest that Daniel 7 may also be read as the *theological* hinge in the book of Daniel:[18] that what we discover arising theologically from the throne room vision and its interpretation is the clue to a

[16] In making this case, I am accepting the view of many commentators that there is an equivalence of some sort between the holy ones of the Most High and the people themselves. See L.F. Hartman and A.A. Di Lella, *The Book of Daniel* (New York: Doubleday, 1978), 100–102.

[17] The related discussion on the interaction of observation and participation as constitutive of the wisdom enterprise, implicit in the title of P.S. Fiddes' monograph, *Seeing the World and Knowing God: Hebrew Wisdom and Christian Doctrine in a Late-Modern Context* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013), is beyond the scope of this article.

[18] See the argument of G. Sumner, "Daniel," in *Esther & Daniel* (S. Wells and G. Sumner; Grand Rapids: Brazos, 2013), 111–14, for discussion of Daniel 7 as "the interpretive centre of the book" and, in particular, the comment: "The thematic center (and almost the actual center of the text) of Daniel is the coming of the 'one like a Son of Man' to the Ancient of Days in Dan. 7."

fuller appreciation of the theological significance of the wise participation evident before, in, and after chapter 7.

Therefore, we see that the multivalence of the throne room vision of Daniel permits the possibility – perhaps even invites the possibility – of some sort of identification between the one like a son of man and the holy ones of the Most High. At the same time, the one like a son of man and the holy ones of the Most High remain differentiated from each other. Nevertheless, while the differentiation is preserved, the identification is so close that it is possible to describe it in terms of participation. The holy ones of the Most High participate in that into which the one like a son of man has entered as he comes before the Ancient of Days; that is, the people of God participate in the life of God as encountered in that throne room scene. In short, the faithful in Daniel arguably "become participants in the divine nature," as 2 Peter 1:4 describes the experience of believers in Jesus Christ.[19]

Much more could be said about this from a Christian and New Testament perspective, but suffice it to say that this dynamic of participation in the divine life hinted at by the throne room vision in Daniel 7 has been explored by means of the significance of the incarnation and of the life and significance of the one who himself points to a fulfilment of the vision of the one like a son of man.[20] The dynamic of the incarnation is much richer than simply saying that God has become one with humanity and in the process become caught up with all that it means to be human. It turns out that humanity too is caught up into the very life of God. To reprise 2 Peter 1:4, humanity participates in the divine life.[21] Others who have expressed the implications of this include T.F. Torrance, who speaks of the "deification" of humanity as the obverse of God's "inhominization" in Christ.[22]

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[19] For a fuller argument to this effect see Meadowcroft, "'One Like a Son of Man' in the Court of the Foreign King."

[20] For a full exposition of this position, see Meadowcroft, "'One Like a Son of Man' in the Court of the Foreign King."

[21] See N. Russell, *Fellow Workers with God: Orthodox Thinking on Theosis* (Crestwood: St Vladimir's Seminary Press, 2009), 55–71, for a survey of other biblical material relating to the theme of participation in the divine life, which Russell explores by using the vocabulary of theosis.

[22] T.F. Torrance, *The Trinitarian Faith: The Evangelical Theology of the Ancient Catholic Church* (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1995), 189, cited in M. Habets, "'Reformed Theosis?' A Response to Gannon Murphy," *Theology Today* 65 (2009): 491–92 (489–98).

At the same time, this participation in God, who has become one with us in Christ, has an ethical outcome. As Habets has expressed it, in this intermingling of God and humanity "Christ occupies the central stage in a Christian ethic; ethics is the life of Christ lived out in those savingly united to him."[23] Or, less technically, our participation in the divine nature begs of us the question: how then shall we live? And the answer comes: as those who are caught up with Christ into the very life of God.

Transposing this back to the throne room vision of the book of Daniel, which foreshadows a developed theology of participation in the divine life, those to whom that vision was addressed are called to live wisely as the people of God who are caught up with the son of man into the very throne room of God. Such wisdom works itself out in the court tales and in the participation of Daniel in the visions that were sent to him.

## THE VISIONARY PARTICIPANT

We have looked at some of the literary and theological continuities that bind the tales and the visions together. However, if the nature of participation in the divine life that emerges in the book of Daniel is to be appreciated adequately, the discontinuities are also important. For there are some key differences between Daniel's participation in the divine life through these visionary encounters, and his participation in the divine life as expressed in his courtly conduct.

At court, Daniel's participation was revelatory to the participant, the intentions of God were evident and reasonable, the resulting wise (and hence ethical) actions achieved a resolution, and the inner life of Daniel (to the extent that it was implied) was characterised by a serene confidence. The only example of a lack of confidence could be Daniel's initial response to Nebuchadnezzar's dream of the great tree (4:19). Despite the cryptic response to Daniel's terror, he responds assertively to what he has been shown, and the scene culminates with some direct counsel for his employer (4:27). The picture that emerges is of a man confident in his relationship with the king whom he serves, and with the God on whose behalf he serves.

[23] M. Habets, "'In Him We Live and Move and Have Our Being': A Theotic Account of Ethics," in *Third Article Theology: A Pneumatological Dogmatics* (ed. M. Habets; Minneapolis: Fortress, 2016), 417 (395–417).

In the visions, Daniel's participation in the divine life enables him to see much but apparently to understand little, the intentions of God are obscure, there is no temporal resolution, the ethical issues relate less to faithfulness within and with respect to a hostile Gentile environment and more to faithfulness in the struggle for control of the life of the people of God, and the inner life of Daniel that emerges is characterised by uncertainty and fragility. In sum, instead of the certainty of contextually specific divine guidance, there appears to be less certainty and a shift of focus towards the future. The locus of hope is now different. Where hope was once focused on the behaviour of the king, it now shifts towards a more uncertain but more all-embracing eschatological perspective. To put it another way, hope entails a commitment to that which cannot always be comprehended or predicted. This too is part of what it means to be amongst the saints of the Most High drawn alongside the throne of the Ancient of Days with the one like a son of man.

## THE PARADOX OF WISE PARTICIPATION

As a result, there is a shift of emphases in the visions with respect to the court tales: a change from present to future; from success to uncertainty; from temporal location to future possibility; from confidence to fear; from history to eschatology with an accompanying allusion to the resurrection (12:3). And we also see a shift in ethical focus from wise action to faithful living.

At the same time a quest to see how the discontinuities might talk to each other is validated and encouraged by the continuities that have been identified: wisdom terminology; continuity of participation; and a focus on the people of God. One way to discuss the continuity of divine participation across the discontinuities is by means of paradox.

The paradox occurs around the notion of the hiddenness or otherwise of the wisdom of God. In the court tales the results of the young men's wise participation in the divine life are evident and certain. Key ethical decisions are made at key moments and the outcome is decisive in some way. The will of God prevails, lives are preserved, or in some cases judged and destroyed. The king recognizes, albeit usually in his own terms, the activity and reasonableness of "the holy gods" (4:18; 5:11). The hand of God is evident and assumed throughout. From alongside the throne of the Ancient of Days, the saints, represented by Daniel and his friends, have exercised

the dominion given to them by the fact of their participation. This clarity is refreshing and encouraging, as it has been for many who have read the book of Daniel through the centuries. But it is also mysterious to those who read it, for the clarity and experience of dominion is in the context of an incomplete process. The end is not yet; there is always the potential for another crisis; and, from the perspective of readers, the lived experience of faith is seldom so clear cut. Yet the possibilities within history and the call to ethical responses to life's various contexts are crystal clear.

In the Hebrew visions, although there is considerable continuity, the paradox reverses. Things take a turn to the eschatological; in the light of the present situation, a final resolution is sought and offered. And yet the question of behaviour recedes into the background. Instead of leading to wise action, participation in the divine life now leads to wise affiliation, to loyalty and to faithfulness. But the certain outcome offered by the eschatological vision does not lead to clarity or certainty on the part of the participant. There is no visible resolution.[24] Instead there is uncertainty, and lack of direct access to understanding. The more certain the visions become of the final rule of God, a rule into which the saints themselves are invited to participate, the harder it becomes for the participant to function. At the same time, the more certain the vision, the more that suffering begins to impinge on the participant in the divine life.[25] At the point where the reader expects to find relief from the complexities of historical context and the pain of suffering, and to begin to find a final certainty and resolution, uncertainty increases, suffering continues, and the hidden or sealed nature of the resolution becomes more explicit (12:9).

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[24] D.N. Fewell, *Circle of Sovereignty: Plotting Politics in the Book of Daniel* (Nashville: Abingdon, 1991), 135: "The ultimate irony in the book of Daniel, then, is that the kingdom as Daniel envisions it – whether mediated or otherwise – never manifests itself." Fewell describes the "irony" well, but does not consider the aspect of participation in her attribution of the vision of the kingdom to Daniel. The point is that Daniel is never quite able to envision that which remains hidden.

[25] Although the themes of this article have not been considered explicitly in missiological terms, see, with respect to suffering and participation in the mission of God and hence in the life of God, S.W. Sunquist, *Understanding Christian Mission: Participation in Suffering and Glory* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2013), 18: "Christian missionary involvement must not be bound to what is popular, popularly known, or even what seems like 'viable' mission. All of the suffering world is the concern of the *missio Dei*, and therefore of our missiology."

Whatever else may be intended by the inflation of the time between the "regular burnt offering [being] taken away and the abomination that desolates [being] set up" in 12:11–12, it compounds the effects noted above. It offers no certainty for the future, and implies that just when a resolution is in sight, the period of uncertainty may be stretched further. This is a regular facet of human experience, inescapable despite the human yearning for certainty. That is perhaps why so many readings of this material in every age have been determined to bring this final hope and define it in terms of contemporary dates and events. But such certainty is simply not available.[26] The more the end is glimpsed, the more hidden that end becomes. Thus, the paradox of participation encountered in the court tales is turned on its head by the visionary experience of participation.

This is the hinge around which the participation of the saints in the life of God swings in the book of Daniel.[27] As the saints we are not God and God to some extent is hidden from us, so the wisdom of God is correspondingly not fully in view. There is suffering and uncertainty and anguish. The call in the face of an uncertain future is to loyalty and faithfulness to the one who has promised the resolution of history, just as the "end" of the King of the South foreshadows "the end" (11:39-45).[28] At the same time the court tales remind us that, even in the midst of uncertainty, there is a clarion call to wise ethical decision-making for action and identification, drawing on the fact that the wisdom of God is available to humanity even where the end may not be fully known. When there is resolution of temporal crises, when the hand of God is seen at work in contemporary

[26] P.S. Fiddes, *Participating in God: A Pastoral Doctrine of the Trinity* (London: Darton, Longman and Todd, 2000), 141–42, exploring this in slightly different terms ("an openness about the nature of the world"), comments that "God leaves things open, making space for our contribution to the creative project. This is surely why the predominant note of the Old Testament Scriptures is that of Yahweh's promises for the future, rather than exact predictions."

[27] Goldingay, *Daniel*, 333, notes that this paradox, what he calls "two different overall thrusts," manifests itself "by [the book of Daniel] being located by the synagogue among the Writings and by the church among the Prophets … That encourages two alternative readings of Daniel, as wisdom or as prophecy, as pedagogics or as eschatology, as halakah or as haggadah." That both are comprehended within Daniel indicates that each "alternative reading" must be asked to interpret the other.

[28] For further see T. Meadowcroft, "Who are the Princes of Persia and Greece (Daniel 10)? Pointers towards the Danielic Vision of Earth and Heaven," *Journal for the Study of the Old Testament* 29 (2004): 99-113.

events, two things should be remembered. The first is that this resolution and action foreshadow the promised resolution of all things. The second is to have humility in the face of temporal success, and ongoing loyalty and faithfulness. For there is yet more to come. And that "more" could entail suffering and mystery.

## In the Meantime

In the meantime, like Daniel the reader is enjoined, in whatever way the paradox of wise participation is being experienced, to "go [his or her] way and rest" (12:13). For the story is not yet told, but God knows its ending. And Daniel and Daniel's people with him are participants in whatever that will be.

# CHURCH AND POLITICS IN THE SOCIAL DOCTRINE OF THE CATHOLIC CHURCH: AN APPLICATION TO PNG

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**Abstract**
It is now over fifty years since the publication of the groundbreaking encyclical of Pope Paul VI, *Populorum Progressio*. This article reviews the significance for church-state relations of this document and other papal documents that came after it. It applies the principles of Catholic Social Doctrine, especially the concept of Integral Human Development, to contemporary Papua New Guinean society, with special attention to the challenge of corruption. The article concludes with specific suggestions as to how the churches of PNG might work together to defeat corruption and create a more just society.

**Keywords**
Populorum Progressio, church and state, Integral Human Development, corruption, ecumenism

## INTRODUCTION

*"He raises the poor from the dust … to assign them a seat of honour"*
*(The Song of Hannah, 1 Sam 2:8).*

The year 2017 marked fifty years since the groundbreaking encyclical letter of Paul VI, *Populorum Progressio* (The Development of Peoples).[1] This article reflects on how Pope Paul VI approached the issue of the relationship between the Catholic Church and political and economic life, and how this reflection has developed in the last fifty years. The paper then applies these principles to the present context of Papua New Guinea, where the

[1] An encyclical is a papal letter addressed to all of the bishops of the Catholic Church, and sometimes to "all people of good will."

relationship between the state and the Catholic Church is facing new challenges.

Pope Paul's encyclical (1967) addressed the issue of the relationship between the Catholic Church and political life from the perspective of the emerging social doctrine of the Catholic Church,[2] with its biblical (e.g., Gen 1:26–31; Matt 19:13–15; 1 Cor 3:16; Rom 5:6–8), doctrinal, and theological foundations in the inherent dignity of the human person and the obligation to pursue the common good, which includes the development of each person and of the whole person.

> The Church, which has long experience in human affairs and has no desire to be involved in the political activities of any nation, 'seeks but one goal: to carry forward the work of Christ under the lead of the befriending Spirit. And Christ entered this world to give witness to the truth; to save, not to judge; to serve, not to be served.' Founded to build the kingdom of heaven on earth rather than to acquire temporal power, the Church openly avows that the two powers—Church and State—are distinct from one another; that each is supreme in its own sphere of competency. But since the Church does dwell among men, she has the duty 'of scrutinizing the signs of the times and of interpreting them in the light of the Gospel.' Sharing the noblest aspirations of men and suffering when she sees these aspirations not satisfied, she wishes to help them attain their full realization. So she offers man her distinctive contribution: a global perspective on man and human realities. The development We speak of here cannot be restricted to economic growth alone. To be au-

[2] Earlier explorations include: Leo XIII (1891), *Rerum Novarum* (Of New Things); Pius X1 (1931), *Quadragesimo Anno* (On the Fortieth Year); John XXIII (1961), *Mater et Magistra* (Mother and Teacher) and (1963) *Pacem in Terris* (Peace on Earth); Vatican Council II (1965) *Gaudium et Spes* (The Joys and Hopes); and subsequently, John Paul II (1981) *Laborem Exercens* (On Human Work), (1987) *Solicitudo Rei Socialis* (The Social Concern of the Church), (1987) *Centesimus Annus* (On the Hundredth Year), (1994) *Tertio Millenio Adveniente* (The Coming of the Third Millennium); Benedict XVI (2005) *Deus Caritas Est* (God is Love), (2007) *Spe Salvi* (In Hope We Are Saved), (2009) *Caritas in Veritate* (Charity in Truth); all well summarized by Rob Esdaille, "2000 years of Catholic Ethics," n.p. [cited 31 August 2017]. Online: http://www.catholicsocial teaching.org.uk/principles/history. While he prefers symbolic action, Pope Francis has added the following to this illustrious history: (2013) *Evangelii Gaudium* (The Joy of the Good News); (2015) *Laudato Si'* (On Care for our Common Home). There are also a large number of other documents from the Vatican departments and bishops' conferences.

> thentic, it must be well rounded; *it must foster the development of each man and of the whole man*.[3]

The encyclical begins with an inquiry into the nature of "progress," reflecting on the global situation where so many people are suffering from hunger, poverty, disease and ignorance, at least partly as a result of colonial exploitation. The Pope calls on people to act, and not just talk, so that each person and all people can progress towards a development which enables them to be truly human, free, and fulfilled. There is more to progress than economic growth. Action is required to address anomalies in world trade, distribution of resources, inequality, the growing gap between rich and poor, change related conflict, and racism. The Catholic Church, as an "expert in humanity", has something to say to this situation, especially through gospel-based loving service, even though sometimes its missionaries were also influenced by colonial thinking. A new perspective requires rethinking private property, capitalism, and free enterprise in the light of justice, even including expropriation of landed estates, revolution, or at least radical reform. Family life is the bedrock of human society but parents must plan families responsibly in the light of the "population explosion." The wealthy nations must act in solidarity, with justice and charity, dialoguing and planning together, and establishing a "world fund" from reduced military expenditure and reduction of waste. Development is the new name for peace, which is more than the absence of war.

The relationship between church and state is expressed in terms of "Integral Human Development", a concept that also found its way into the Constitution of PNG as the very first National Goal.[4] I believe that this principle, and other principles contained, at least in nascent form, in *Popu-*

[3] *Populorum Progressio*, Art. 13–14 [cited 31 August 2017]. Online: http://w2.vatican.va/content/paul-vi/en/encyclicals/documents/hf_p-vi_enc_26031967_populorum.html. Italics added.

[4] "1. Integral human development. We declare our first goal to be for every person to be dynamically involved in the process of freeing himself or herself from every form of domination or oppression so that each man or woman will have the opportunity to develop as a whole person in relationship with others. WE ACCORDINGLY CALL FOR– (1) everyone to be involved in our endeavours to achieve integral human development of the whole person for every person and to seek fulfilment through his or her contribution to the common good": Preamble to the *Constitution of the Independent State of Papua New Guinea* [cited 31 August 2017]. Online: http://www.parliament.gov.pg/images/misc/PNG-CONSTITUTION.pdf.

*lorum Progressio,* had a direct influence on the PNG Constitution and our national values by way of then Catholic priest, now President of the Autonomous Region of Bougainville, John Momis.

John Momis was a student at Holy Spirit Seminary from 1963–1970. The seminary moved from Kap near Madang to its present location in Bomana in 1968, with Pat Murphy SVD (1927–1978) as Rector and Professor of Dogmatic Theology and Ecumenism. Holy Spirit Seminary was the first tertiary institution in PNG, pre-dating the University of Papua New Guinea which was established in 1965, by two years. Pat Murphy was a true fruit of the reforms of Vatican II, as manifested in his commitment to both ecumenism and the social teaching of the Catholic Church. While serving as a priest, John Momis became Deputy Chairman of the Constitutional Planning Committee which recommended these principles and values for inclusion in the Constitution of Papua New Guinea.[5] The Constitution, as possibly all law does, still rests on the willingness of human beings to behave ethically.

Thus, the PNG Constitution, enshrining the values of the nation, is in harmony with the values and principles for social life laid out in *Populorum Progressio* and all that followed it. When the church, in this case the Catholic Church, calls the nation to respect the dignity of the human person, "but even more … that the primary commitment of each person towards others … must be for the promotion and integral development of the person,"[6] she is leading the nation towards its true identity. The subsequent documents of Catholic social teaching, especially Pope John Paul II's (1987) *Solicitudo Rei Socialis* (The Social Concern of the Church), develop

[5] Constitutional Planning Committee, "PNG Constitutional Planning Committee Report 1974" [cited 31 August 2017]. Online: http://www.paclii.org/pg/CPCReport/TAB.htm. But there is a "fatal flaw" in the Constitution in that a surprising amount of power is vested in the Speaker on the assumption that he or she will always be neutral. But that has not proven to be the case. C. Stewart, "Papua New Guinea's Constitution: the fatal flaw," *Outrigger: Blog of the Pacific Institute*, 5 October 2012, n.p. [cited 31 August 2017]. Online: http://pacificinstitute.anu.edu.au/outrigger/2012/10/05/papua-new-guineas-constitution-fatal-flaw/.

[6] *Compendium of the Social Doctrine of the Church*, no. 131 [cited 1 September 2017]. Online:
http://www.vatican.va/roman_curia/pontifical_councils/justpeace/documents/rc_pc_justpeace_doc_20060526_compendio-dott-soc_en.html.

this foundational principle by expounding related principles: the dignity of the human person, equality, subsidiarity, and participation.

## THE CONTEMPORARY PNG SOCIAL AND POLITICAL CONTEXT

The Pacific Leadership and Governance Precinct operates as a think tank for training of public servants in PNG and possibly throughout the Pacific.[7] The driving idea behind this project is to ensure not only competence, efficiency, and effectiveness of public servants and leaders, but also promotion of the ethical conduct which must be the basis of these other service skills. The PLGP recognizes all of the negative factors in our social context: corruption, nepotism, discrimination, poor delivery of services; and especially how these have an impact on rural or marginalized people through limited access to quality education and health services.

It is well known and well founded that corruption is at the heart of all these issues. Corruption is commonly defined as the misuse or "abuse of public office for private gain."[8] Using this definition, PNG is ranked at 136 out of 176 countries in the Transparency International Corruption Perceptions Index (2016), with a score of 28/100 where the global average is 43/100.[9] A country at the world average of 43/100 is already perceived as "indicating endemic corruption in a country's public sector."[10] The TI website further points out the close links between (what can be described as a "vicious circle" of) corruption, unequal distribution of power, and unequal distribution of wealth. This type of behaviour is heavily criticized in the

[7] Pacific Leadership + Governance Precinct [cited 31 August 2017]. Online: http://pacificprecinct.org/.

[8] Poverty Reduction and Economic Management Network of the World Bank, "Helping Countries Combat Corruption: The Role of the World Bank" (September 1997): 8 (1–69) [cited 31 August 2017]. Online: http://www1.worldbank.org/publicsector/anticorrupt/corruptn/corrptn.pdf. See also United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, "Documents, publications and tools" [cited 31 August 2017]. Online: https://www.unodc.org/unodc/en/corruption/publications.html.

[9] Transparency International Papua New Guinea Inc., "Annual Report 2015," 6 (1–48) [cited 31 August 2017]. Online: http://www.transparencypng.org.pg/wp-content/uploads/2017/08/TIPNG-AR-2015-small.pdf. See also Transparency International, "Papua New Guinea" [cited 31 August 2017]. Online: https://www.transparency.org/country/PNG.

[10] Transparency International, "Corruption Perceptions Index 2016" [cited 31 August 2017]. Online: https://www.transparency.org/news/feature/corruption_perceptions_index_2016.

Scriptures (see, e.g., Prov 28:15, 29:2; Eph 5:11), and Pope Francis describes corruption as a cancer.[11]

The second National Goal of the PNG Constitution speaks of "equality and participation."[12] *Populorum Progressio* deals with equality more in terms of post-colonial international relations (Art. 52, 54, 58, 60) and with "participation" only once[13] where it is taken for granted as a value. Both these dimensions (equality and participation) have been much further developed since 1967, based largely on the radical equality implicit in the incarnation and spelled out by Paul (e.g., Gal 3:28). The most obvious act of participation in a democratic society is the vote, exercised in freedom and with due respect for the equal voting rights of others. However, citizens may participate in many other ways through the activities of civil society. In PNG, at this time, they are supposed to also be able to participate in the deliberations of District Development Authorities which set priorities for expenditure in a district.[14] The right of a person to contribute to the fabric of society according to their gifts is crucial for the full development of the person and of the society. Equality also means that each person's vote is of equal value and that no one should be subject to unjust discrimination, either by way of favouritism (nepotism, bias) or prejudice (bigotry, intolerance). The advent of the Emmanuel is, therefore, the one and "ultimate foundation of the radical equality and brotherhood among all people, regardless of their race, nation, sex, origin, culture, or class."[15] The *Cate-*

[11] Catholic News Agency, "In a book foreword, Pope Francis calls corruption 'a cancer'" n.p. [cited 31 August 2017]. Online: http://www.catholicnewsagency.com/news/for-pope-francis-corruption-is-a-cancer-to-society-98381/.

[12] Preamble to the *Constitution of the Independent State of Papua New Guinea* [cited 31 August 2017]. Online: http://www.parliament.gov.pg/images/misc/PNG-CONSTITUTION.pdf.

[13] "The injustice of certain situations cries out for God's attention. Lacking the bare necessities of life, whole nations are under the thumb of others; they cannot act on their own initiative; they cannot exercise personal responsibility; they cannot work toward a higher degree of cultural refinement or a greater participation in social and public life" (*Populorum Progressio*, Art. 30).

[14] http://www.parliament.gov.pg/uploads/acts/14A-40.pdf. Note that meetings of the Board are open to the public (VI.21.1)

[15] *Compendium of the Social Doctrine of the Church*, no. 144 [cited 1 September 2017]. Online:
http://www.vatican.va/roman_curia/pontifical_councils/justpeace/documents/rc_pc_justpeace_doc_20060526_compendio-dott-soc_en.html.

*chism of the Catholic Church*, citing the Vatican II document *Gaudium et Spes* (29.2), also asserts that the equality of men and women "rests essentially on their dignity as persons and the rights that flow from it."[16] This dignity is based on their being created in the image of the one God and their being redeemed by the sacrifice of Christ. This fundamental equality is also the basis for their participation in "the same divine beatitude"[17] and in decisions that affect their lives (see texts using the image of the body to describe the church: Rom 12:5; 1 Cor 12:27). Subsidiarity (the individual, the family, and the community precede the State), though not directly mentioned in *Populorum Progressio*, is closely linked with the principle of participation, in that decisions should be made at the lowest "level" possible (Mark 6:30–56 is often cited as an illustration of this). Although as much social activity and decision-making as possible should be decentralized to (or claimed by) the village or clan level, it is also true to say that structures and relationships such as the *wantok* system that work well at the village or clan level cannot be successfully transposed to a higher or "national" level.[18]

## THE IDEAL

The ideal presented by Catholic social teaching is Integral Human Development. This is the recognition of the innate dignity of the human person and the pursuit of the common good.[19] There are natural law arguments for both these principles (as human rights).[20] We are primarily guided by sa-

[16] *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, no. 1935 [cited 1 September 2017]. Online: http://www.vatican.va/archive/ENG0015/__P6P.HTM.

[17] *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, no. 1394 [cited 1 September 2017]. Online: http://www.vatican.va/archive/ENG0015/__P6P.HTM.

[18] A. Murray, *Thinking about Political Things: An Aristotelian Approach to Pacific Life* (Adelaide: ATF Theology, 2016), 26.

[19] Other related principles are solidarity (as in the Golden Rule: Matt 7:12; John 3:16), the universal destination of all created goods (based on the 7th commandment, Thou shalt not steal: Exod 20:15; Deut 5:19; Matt 19:18; see *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, nos. 2401–2406), and the preferential option for the poor (as in the whole Bible, but note 1 Sam 2:8 above and Matt 25; see *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, nos. 2448–2449).

[20] P. Lee and R.P. George, "The Nature and Basis of Human Dignity," *Ratio Juris: An International Journal of Jurisprudence and Philosophy of Law* 21 (2008): 173–93; J. Goyette, "On the Transcendence of the Political Common Good: Aquinas Versus the New Natural Law Theory," *The National Catholic Bioethics Quarterly* (Spring, 2013): 133–

cred Scripture which affirms that the human person is created in the image and likeness of God, and that the obligation to love one's neighbour is non-negotiable except in its practical working out, which is the proper domain of politics. How we are to love our neighbour through decision-making about the allocation of resources, budgets, education, health and social programs is the stuff of politics. One hopes and expects that these decisions are made for the benefit of all in the context of the common good rather than for the benefit of a ruling elite.

At a recent round table discussion involving most of the Public Service Commissioners of the Pacific, the topic discussed was "values based leadership". One commissioner asked what values are and can they vary? The response was that there are universal values, but their implementation and the priorities given to them may vary according to the cultural context. Several cited their nature as a Christian country (e.g., Cook Islands, Vanuatu) driven by Christian values. But no one was very specific about what those Christian values might be beyond "honesty". One made the point that Christian values create good leaders, as distinct from appointed leaders discovering values after the fact. The values identified as guides for the PNG Public Service are integrity, accountability, wisdom, respect, and honesty.

## THE CONVERSION: FAITH SEEKING UNDERSTANDING

How do we get from where we are to where we want to be, that is, from a political life characterized by corruption to one based on the dignity of the human person and the common good?

1. We must work and witness together to present the ideal vision of the innate dignity of the human person and the consequent human rights (to life, self-determination, natural justice, etc.) so as to provide an environment of responsibility, accountability and mutual respect in which corruption cannot flourish. Currently the churches are not effectively united or organized in their efforts to improve good governance.[21] I note

155. Online: https://thomasaquinas.edu/sites/default/files/pdf/goyette-transcendence-political-common-good.pdf.

[21] V. Hauck, A. Mandie-Filer, and J. Bolger, *Ringing the Church Bell: The Role of Churches in Governance and Public Performance in Papua New Guinea* (Discussion Paper No. 57E; Maastricht: European Centre for Development Policy Management, January

that very recently the Joint Declaration of the Doctrine of Justification, already endorsed by the Lutheran, Roman Catholic and Methodist churches, has been endorsed by the Reformed Churches with the proviso that "the Statement of Association should emphasize the connection between justification and justice as a Reformed contribution to future ecumenical dialogue on the understanding of justification".[22] As we grow in our common understandings, we must also grow in our common work for justice. Pope Francis also calls for cooperation among churches, religions, and people of good will to overcome the cancer of corruption. We already have a good foundation in an agreed statement or policy on development and on gender.[23]

2. We must also witness to good governance in our churches and institutions. Our own positive witness is far more effective than complaining about corruption at the national level when we are fully aware of weaknesses in our own institutions.[24] Here too we have a good foundation in our cooperation in Church Partnership Program (CPP) on governance and leadership training.

3. Thus, within our churches and in our teaching and preaching about leadership and good governance, we should stress the servant leadership model as seen in the Scriptures but also, not surprisingly, in good management.[25] We have to move from the Big Man model to Servant leadership in the service of the common good. Someone who wants to serve will be a good leader, but someone who wants to lead will not be a good servant. The church as the body of Christ does not want political

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2005) [cited 1 September 2017]. Online: http://unpan1.un.org/intradoc/groups/ public/documents/apcity/unpan023626.pdf.

[22] World Communion of Reformed Churches, "JDDJ Association" n.p. [cited 1 September 2017]. Online: http://wcrc.ch/jddj.

[23] PNG Church Partnership Program, "Theology of Development Statement: "PNG Church Partnership Program Theology of Development Statement," *Catalyst* 46.1 (2016): 56–59.

[24] See, e.g., P.A. Tanda, "An Analytical Evaluation of the Effects of the Wantok System in the South Sea Evangelical Church of PNG," *Melanesian Journal of Theology* 27.1 (2011): 6–39.

[25] See R.K. Greenleaf, *The Servant as Leader* (rev. ed.; Indianapolis: Robert K. Greenleaf Center, 1991).

power but wants to serve, and so can exert a strong moral power on political leadership, in the style of Jesus himself.

4. Christians should engage in political life by running for elected office in ethical ways, by participating in consultative processes such as the Consultative Implementation and Monitoring Council where possible, and by serving on government boards and panels. It is far better to be in the room where the decisions are being made than to be on the outside looking in.

## CONCLUSION

Whatever the causes and roots of our current social, economic, and political situation in PNG, a fundamental issue that requires the healing power of the gospel is corruption in every situation or level of society. The Word of God has much to say and our theological reflection on the Word since the time of the apostles gives us the resources with which to bring truth to power. This is best done if, with due respect to and acknowledgement of our diversity, we can speak and witness with a common voice.