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MELANESIAN JOURNAL OF THEOLOGY

Journal of the Melanesian Association of Theological Schools

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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. Submissions should conform as much as possible to the journal style. This may be seen by consulting previous issues, and for more detail the Society of Biblical Literature Style Guide. The editor is also happy to provide advice on request.

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 by an editorial board.

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.

The journal is published semi-annually, normally in April and October. Articles may be submitted to the Editor at any time for consideration.

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EDITORIAL

I feel both grateful and apologetic with the appearance of this double issue of the *Melanesian Journal of Theology*. I am apologetic because there has now been something of a hiatus as the journal transitions editors. I took over in July 2018, but the last six months of last year became much busier than anticipated, and so the 2018 volume is only now just appearing. I apologise for its lateness. The plan is for the 2019 double issue to appear by the end of 2019, and from 2020, God willing, we will return to the rhythm of two issues per year.

But I also feel very grateful. First, I am grateful for the opportunity to be involved in this way with theological thought in Melanesia. Secondly, I am grateful for the sterling work done by my predecessor, Dr Scott Charlesworth. He set high standards for the journal and worked tirelessly with authors to enable their voices to appear in these pages. My gratitude, I am sure, is shared by the Melanesian Association of Theological Schools (MATS) community, whose journal this is. Readers will also note that we now have in place an editorial board, which brings together a range of skills and contexts and backgrounds in the service of the journal. The editor is able to work with the board to ensure that the journal continues to serve the theological community of Melanesia. Thirdly, then, I am grateful for the willingness of editorial board members to make their experience and skills available to the theological enterprise in this way.

Recently I re-read the editorial in the first ever issue of the *Melanesian Journal of Theology,* written back in 1985 by the first editor, John D'Arcy May. He wrote, expressing the hope that, "MJT could become an indispensable tool for theological discussion and research in the Pacific. We are still a long way from realising this vision. But the need for a community of theological discourse, a forum for critical collaboration in Melanesia is becoming urgent." The journal that began in 1985 has compiled an invaluable resource of theological reflection in and for Melanesia, that did not yet exist when May penned those words. But his words still speak into the context of 2019. There is still a need for "critical collaboration." The task remains "urgent" in the face of many challenges within both church and society. And it is no criticism of what has been achieved to say that we remain some

way from "realizing the vision" of excellent theological critique in the service of the church and the world of Melanesia—and beyond. In other words, this journal remains an important resource. I encourage the colleges and scholars of the theological schools of Melanesia to continue to make it their own.

In this double issue Thomas Davai supplies an account of the successful 2018 MATS conference at Pacific Adventist University. Since then, as this issue goes to press, another successful annual conference has been held at Christian Leaders' Training College near Banz, and an account of that conference will appear in the next issue.

Paul McGavin reflects on the Melanesian worldview and its approach to matters that might be described as "metaphysical." In doing so, he explains and explores epistemological matters. How might an appreciation of this worldview lead to good pastoral practice, he asks.

Two further articles then reflect in quite different ways on how an awareness of different epistemologies might inform the situation in Melanesia. Brandon Zimmerman writes on Aquinas and polygamy. At first glance, we do not naturally associate Aquinas with Melanesia, but in the hands of Zimmerman we find that Aquinas's late medieval understandings of marriage have the potential to speak into issues of marriage and family in Melanesia.

Also on the matter of marriage and family, this issue includes the first part of a two part article by Maxon Mani on the urgent question of marital violence and how Scripture relates to this question. In his article Mani argues for a Melanesian epistemology as a means both to describe and to respond to issues of power and gender relations. Part two will appear in the next issue of the journal.

Tim Meadowcroft

REPORT ON MATS 2018: INTERFAITH AND ECUMENCIAL DIALOGUE IN MELANESIA

Thomas Davai Jr
formerly of Pacific Adventist University

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

This conference report is based on the 2018 Melanesian Association of Theological Schools (MATS) annual conference that was hosted and organized by the School of Humanities, Education and Theology (SofHET) at the Pacific Adventist University (PAU), Koiari Park campus on 17–19 July, 2018.[1]

This conference report acknowledges God's faithful leading and valuable support from the conference major sponsor, SofHET of PAU, and co-sponsors, South Pacific Division of the Seventh-day Adventist Church (SPD), Papua New Guinea Union Mission of the Seventh-day Adventist Church (PNGUM), Sonoma Adventist College, and Sanitarium, Australia. PAU in partnership with other Seventh-day Adventist stakeholders provided funding for MATS 2018. Sanitarium Australia provided the healthy breakfast in accordance with the SDA health ministry; Sonoma College funded the flash drives where all the conference presentations were stored and distributed to each participant; and SPD and PNGUM funded the printing of the program and other advertising outputs.

This conference report is indebted to the commitment and dedication of the conference Organizing Committee, SofHET, PAU Administration and Academic Senate, Staff and Students, Support Services, DOSS Office and Student Services, Postgraduate Studies and Research Office, School of Health Sciences, MATS Executive Committee and friends, wantoks and families.

The conference convener was Dr Unia Api (Lecturer, SofHET, PAU) and co-convener/secretary was Thomas Davai Jr (at the time Lecturer,

[1] This report is an abbreviated form of the full conference report of the conference committee at PAU. The full version is available from the editor of *Melanesian Journal of Theology* on request.

SofHET, PAU) who also served on the conference Organizing Committee as chair and co-chair respectively. This conference report was prepared by the conference Editorial Task Group which is the sub-committee of the Organising Committee. This report also acknowledges the input of the conference co-convener/secretary who was also the chair of the editorial task group in putting together this conference report with the SofHET Dean, Dr Elisapesi Manson.

This conference report also acknowledges the conference keynote speakers and dozens of presenters from across Papua New Guinea and the Pacific including Fiji, Australia, and New Zealand, as well as more than one hundred and twenty participants who were engaged in the intensive three days of conference dialogue. Specifically the following institutions/organizations were represented:

- Pacific Adventist University
- Christian Leaders' Training College
- Catholic Theological Institute
- Rarongo Theological College
- Sonoma Adventist College
- Martin Luther Seminary
- Fulton Adventist College, Fiji
- Laidlaw College, New Zealand
- Salvation Army Officer Training College
- Central Papua Conference NCD and Eastern Highlands Simbu Mission of SDA
- Other ministerial educators, ministers, pastors, and laymen from PNG.

INTRODUCTION

MATS conference is the platform where the objectives of MATS may be realized. Theologians, philosophers, and post graduate students in Melanesia come together annually to present academic papers on certain cross-cutting issues faced by Melanesians and to foster cooperation and exchange of ideas so as to promote best practice in theological education in Melanesia. In addition, the MATS annual conferences seek to encourage high standards of biblical and theological scholarship, especially culturally relevant scholarship, amongst member schools, and to promote professional

development and scholarly publication. Since its conception, MATS annual conferences have proven that are an ideal venue for healthy inter-denominational dialogue. The 2018 conference focused on the theme "Inter-Faith and Ecumenical Dialogue in Melanesia."

The three-day conference comprised of six keynote presentations with two presentations per day for a duration of fifty minutes followed by ten minutes for questions. In addition, nine concurrent plenary sessions were facilitated during the conference with three speakers per session. The conference was structured to foster discussion and dialogue between participants around the conference theme. This was achieved by hosting small group discussions after each concurrent presentation and full group discussions after each keynote presentation. Each day of the conference also allotted one hour for lunch, and twenty minutes for morning and afternoon break to allow participants to continue their discussions after each session and promote collaboration and networking. Time was allocated at the end of each day for a group reflection on the day's discussions. The MATS annual general meeting was also held as the final session on the last day of the conference. This was followed by a final dinner, a chance to celebrate a successful conference.

KEYNOTE PRESENTATIONS

The conference was privileged to have three keynote speakers addressing the conference theme. The first speaker was Professor Daniel Shaw from Fuller Seminary, USA. Professor Shaw spoke on rituals as worship. He highlighted that there is a worldwide phenomenon as world religions interact. Professor Shaw noted that this interaction also affects relationships within Christianity. He emphasized that when dealing with religious expression we must by definition deal with "interfaith and ecumenical" dialogue and religious pluralism; it must be part of theological training in Melanesia.

Professor Shaw emphasized a historical approach to cross-cultural theologizing, and that culturally appropriate styles impact how people worship. According to Professor Shaw, appropriate worship is tied to appropriate ritual and ceremony, that makes sense for people in their context. Professor Shaw also stated that when Melanesians respond to rituals as worship, people must be allowed to develop a theology rooted in Scripture, guided by the Holy Spirit, and done by the church as a hermeneutical

community. Professor Shaw then emphasized that following this process will result in ministries of discipline, pastoring, teaching, and missioning.

The second speaker was Dr Limoni Manu who is currently a church pastor of the Seventh-day Adventist Church in New Zealand. Dr Manu is the first SDA Pacific Islander, of Tongan origin, to achieve a doctoral degree in historical and theological studies. He spoke on the dissident or fringe movements that have been an attribute of some community groups and religious organizations. He gave biblical examples emphasizing that even Israel, on her pilgrimage to Canaan, faced rebellion. He highlighted that individuals would usually rise, influence, and lead a following of people (see Num 11:1, 4–6, 10; Exod 12:38; Lev 24:10–11). Dr Manu also mentioned that Miriam and Aaron, siblings of Moses, murmured against him (Num 12:1–15). Others, like, Korah, Dathan, and Abiram, staged a public revolt (Num 16:1–50).

Dr Limoni highlighted that the struggles of Israel are no different to that experienced by Christian religions. He emphasized that the Seventh-day Adventist Church in Melanesia also battles with this issue. According to Dr Limoni, since Adventists came to the Pacific, a plethora of dissenting groups has risen within its ranks. Some vital questions he asked were: what underlying reasons do we have to explain this experience? Can we pick up a petal from history and offer solutions to the challenges faced in Melanesia?

The third speaker was Rev Bernard Siai. He has a wealth of experience as a result of his pastoral work in various roles including Chaplain of Wesley High School, Circuit Minister, Bishop United Church Papuan Islands Region, and the Moderator United Church, PNG. Rev Siai talked on church and globalization. By this he reiterated that the technological advances of "developed countries" are now demanding Melanesians to catch up with them. Doctrinal changes and value deconstructions in other parts of the world are influencing established Christian beliefs that we have held so long in our churches in Melanesia. The push by Western developed nations to be like them or to be like the rest of the world is stronger than ever before on us Melanesians. In spite of this, he emphasized that our global task is to reach the world with the love of Jesus.

According to Rev Siai, "any dialogue on Christian values is most important testimony of faith in the face of contemporary and changing society that is being challenged for its religious roots." Rev Siai emphasized that there is values deconstruction taking place. "Christian values have been altered, replaced, and watered down. There is values deconstruction taking

place." Siai questioned: "could we not call upon PNGCC to air our voice in defense of our faith and Christian values?" Rev Siai further elaborated that "at the same time Christians, we need to ask the question what are the positive and negatives about globalization that we need to be aware of."

Concurrent Presentations

The conference theme on "Inter-Faith and Ecumenical Dialogue in Melanesia" engaged various presenters on the topic concurrently. The presentations were clustered under biblical, theological, missiological, philosophical perspectives, and ministerial education.

Biblical Perspectives

Barrie Abel Jr (Sonoma) spoke on God and the birth of the need to dialogue by giving reference to the Garden of Eden (Gen 3:7–10, 21). Joseph Vnuk (CTI) discussed the language of faith as a language of dialogue from the heroes of faith of Hebrews 11. Joses Imona's (PAU) presentation was based on the Covenant Eschatology in the NT Apocalypse: A Platform for Ecumenical Dialogue which gave reference to Max L. Stackhouse's concluding remarks in his article, "The Moral Meanings of Covenant."

Tim Meadowcroft (Laidlaw) presented "Secularism, Psalm 104, and the Melanesian Context," in the light of Charles Taylor's analysis of secularism. He read Psalm 104 and considered the extent to which this hymn encourages a more secular form of belief and the extent to which it draws the reader back into a more enchanted age. According to Meadowcroft, to what extent does the biblical witness challenge aspects of the Melanesian worldview, and to what extent does it encourage the reader to affirm aspects of that worldview? And might this be helpful in understanding and navigating the tension between the global and the local, the modern and the pre-modern, characteristic of Melanesia?

Theological Perspectives

Modest Eligi (CTI) presented the Christian (Catholic) attitude on inter-faith dialogue emphasizing the efforts of the Universal Church and Papua New Guinea in particular in the dialogue with people of other faiths. Simon Davidson (Sonoma) explored the challenges and opportunities that will arise in ecumenical dialogue with religious movements that are non-Christian in

Melanesia. Sussie Stanley (Sonoma) argued that while Christianity takes Bible as the supreme guide of life and belief in Christ as Lord, there exist differences in doctrinal understanding among Christian churches.

Douglas Young (Mt Hagen) spoke on "Catholic and Adventist Dialogue in Melanesia." Young highlighted that the relationship between the Catholic Church and the Seventh Day Adventist Church in Papua New Guinea has been characterized by conflict and negative characterizations from both churches. This can be viewed as an "intractable" conflict. Both churches have the same position on ecumenical dialogue, that it can never mean compromise on fundamental aspects of biblical truth. Young explored the official or quasi-official stance towards ecumenism of each church, drawing on official or quasi-official statements, and the history of dialogue in Papua New Guinea. He indicated areas of agreement and difference and pointed to a way forward.

Thomas Davai Jr (PAU) discussed that SDA does not exist in isolation from other Christian communities, but looks at the positive ecumenism that fosters practical, on-the-ground, issue-oriented fellowship, and caring for other Christians. This is based on the biblical principle that our primary calling is to love God with our whole being and our neighbours as ourselves. Loren Poli (PAU) also highlighted that when discussing *sola scriptura* in inter-faith and ecumenical dialogues, the best method most biblical scholars suggest is the "historical grammatical" approach. It is only after one has understood better the historical context, dates, the original languages of the authors that one can apply the truths therein to our twenty-first century contexts. According to Poli, any method outside of this has led to the misapplication of the Scripture and what is sometimes branded as heresy by some.

George Paki (CPC) argued that when it comes to "Speaking in Tongues," Christianity is divided into two camps. One group thinks the gift is a heavenly language that serves as a sign of Spirit-baptism, while the other is of the opinion that the gift consists of an "earthly language" that is given for the purpose of evangelism. Peter Korave (PAU) spoke on an Investigation of Conflict Reconciliations in Seventh-day Adventist Churches in Papua New Guinea. According to Korave, in the realm of social conflicts, violence, and ethnic clashes, Melanesians continue to strive for peace and harmony through some form of reconciliation processes. These recon-

ciliation processes are crucial as they serve to mend social relationships and hold the society intact.

Missiological Perspectives

Rex Titus Alomon (Sonoma) through analysis of literary research, field observations, and interviews, highlighted principles of dialogue between missionary endeavours across denominational boundaries in Melanesia. William Longgar (CLTC) used two social concepts in his presentation: the "disentangling," which refers to cultural activities in which people attempt to resolve conflict, and their "tangled" relations; and the *talanoa*, which is a Tongan practice of storytelling with the purposes of facilitating mediation and conflict resolution. Unia Api (PAU) also demonstrated a case study of the Kamea story of doing a biblical theology of *gutpela sindaun* as relevant to inter-faith dialogue. Johnny Tango (Fulton) spoke on "Christianized or Civilized?" His presentation was a reflection of the early Christian missions in Melanesia (Solomons) from a "theo-anthropological framework," which enables a third generation Christian believer to review the accounts and eloquently respond to the question: civilized or Christianized? Emmanuel Som Yalamu (Martin Luther Seminary) spoke on "Decolonising Romans 12:9–21 in Search of a Sustainable Melanesian Hermeneutic of Community."

Philosophical Perspectives

Brandon Zimmerman's (CTI) presentation served to introduce Melanesian Christians to a debate among Western political philosophers about the role of religion in political dialogue.

Ministerial Education

Gairo Onagi (Rarongo) highlighted that there is a diminishing role of the churches in education in PNG. This was based on a case study in the United church of various policy developments by the state.

Elisapesi Manson's (PAU) presentation was based on "Enhancing Ministerial Training in Melanesia through an Alignment of Learning Outcomes to a National Qualification Framework." According to Manson, an institution-wide process of learning outcomes reconfiguration and alignment to the Papua New Guinea National Qualification Framework (PNGNQF) emerged as a worthwhile collaborative curriculum driven process. Manson

pointed out that this study investigated reflections from ministers, graduates, ministers in training, relevant employers, and stakeholders on the effectiveness of the ministerial training at Pacific Adventist University using qualitative approaches. According to Manson, both quantitative and qualitative data were collected using surveys and focus group interviews, and findings from the study informed the alignment of the ministerial training to the PNGNQF. Manson also highlighted that although the attempt to fully reflect the institutional graduate attributes in the alignment was challenging, it was achievable with enhanced ministerial training outcomes that are compatible in the broader context.

POSTGRADUATE THESIS PRESENTATIONS

MATS 2018 conference was also privileged to have postgraduate students present their theses at the conference. Sharon Botu's (CLTC) thesis was titled: "Discipleship among the Baptist Young people." According to Botu, lack of effective disciple making among the young people is believed to be one of the main impediments to growth of young Christians in Baptist churches today. According to her findings, many of the young people slowly drift away from the church because they are not trained and nurtured well in the ways of the Lord by someone who is mature.

Samuel Natina's (PAU) thesis was based on "Moral Holiness in Leviticus." In his presentation, Natina argued that moral holiness/purity cannot be overlooked in Leviticus 1–15. According to Natina, Moral holiness is the fundamental principle that runs through chapters 1–15. That is, moral purity is obtained in the presence of God through transference of sin to the owner of impurities. Holiness is the result of ritual transference of sin through the sacrifices of animals.

Henao Mea's (PAU) thesis title was "Preservation of Scripture: A Theological Reflection on the Evidence of Preservation by Textual Variants." Mea highlighted the theory of preservation of the Scriptures, and the issue in the theory of preservation is to identify what was preserved: the text and text-type or the content? According to Mea, while the idea of a preservation of Scripture may not be popular and to some degree restricted to the text of the New Testament, the fact remains that the Bible, Old and the New Testament, has been preserved in a divine manner so as not to be corrupted.

Albert Tauli's (Rarongo) thesis title was "Enhancing of Human Resources Development in Church Growth." The key question in Tauli's the-

sis was, "how can the churches or the ecumenical body of churches unite in sharing their human resources *in nation-building*?" Tauli also agreed that interfaith and ecumenical dialogue in Melanesian can be primarily about resource sharing in order to play a greater role to effect changes in the development of people lives.

Jack Takali's (Rarongo) thesis title was "Unity in Diversity: Sustenance of Our Melanesian Spiritual Heritage." The paper explored Christian unity in diversity in order to understand the Melanesian spiritual heritage which enables the joy of independence, flexibility, and diversity. Takali conducted a case study in the United Church in Papua New Guinea in order to understand the unity in diversity in the wider Melanesian faith communities. His research identified cracks in this unity to be shifting towards a more individualistic Western worldview. He elaborated that it is vital to sustain and uphold this unique Melanesian Christian identity.

Herea Vagi's (Rarongo) thesis title was "Leadership Crises a Hindrance to Unity and the Growth of the Churches in Melanesia." Vagi's paper highlights a few major factors to leadership crisis, such as abuse of power and authority in decision making, lack of pastoral knowledge, lack of administration skills in the church, and that these are affecting unity and growth of the church. These are affecting the growth and development of the church in her pastoral and administrative functions.

Conference Evaluation and Review

An evaluation form was distributed to all participants during the final session of the conference for each participant to review the conference and submit to the organisers for analysis. A comprehensive analysis is available in the full version of this report, available on application to the editor of the *Melanesian Journal of Theology*.

Conclusion

In summary, this report commends the Conference Organisation Committee from the School of Humanities, Education and Theology at Pacific Adventist University for effectively organising a conference that brought together more than 120 participants for an engaging dialogue on critical theological themes within the Melanesian context, and for building longlasting collaboration and networking with fellow theological educators. The report

commends all the keynote speakers for committing their valuable times to share their expertise with the conference participants, and also thanks all concurrent presenters.

The 2018 annual general meeting conducted during the last session of the conference highlighted the critical role of MATS as an agent to foster scholarly dialogue for theologians and post-graduate students with possibilities to build trust and flexibility and effective working relationships in a multi-denominational and multi-level context. In addition, the annual general meeting provided an opportunity for the constitution to be reviewed, and it was stressed that MATS should continue to work on its accreditation function, to develop and manage its own finances, and to continue to improve its journal for a quality and wider readership. It was also voted that MATS 2019 will be hosted by the Christian Leaders' Training College (CLTC).

This report concludes with gratefulness and thanks for how the Lord led the 2018 conference and with confidence that the objectives of the conference were truly achieved. To God be the glory!

MALE-CENTRIC BIBLICAL LITERATURE AND MARITAL VIOLENCE: READING THROUGH MELANESIAN INTERPRETIVE LENSES
Part 1

Maxon Mani
Christian Leaders' Training College

Abstract

It is explicit, biblical literature is male-centric and its implications on male-female power relations are seen as leading to marital violence. This two part article examines the male-centric biblical literature through Melanesian interpretive lenses. The article proposes the Melanesian concept of *Nem* as one way of interpreting the male-centric biblical literature. *Nem* plays a central role in the male-centric socio-cultural power structures and values that order male-female power relations in Melanesia. Since *Nem* fills this vital role in enabling us to understand male-female power relations in Melanesia, the article investigates whether *Nem* played any comparable role in biblical times. Particularly, it explores whether *Nem*, as a Melanesian hermeneutical tool, can help interpret biblical literature that gives preference to men over women. It examines the Hebrew term *Shem* in relation to *Nem* and argues that the concept of *Shem/Nem* can bring fresh understanding of the male-centric biblical literature and its authors. It examines Jesus's response to the concept of *Nem* in the New Testament, and recommends Jesus's emphasis on "service" as an ideal power relational concept in male-female power relations.

Key Words

Nem, marital violence, big-man, big-name, male-centric, biblical literature, Melanesia, *Shem*

INTRODUCTION

This two part article discusses the male-centric biblical literature and its implications for male-female power relations that lead to violence against women. More specifically the discussion proposes the Melanesian concept

of *Nem* as one way of interpreting and understanding the male-centric language of the Scriptures.

The article will be presented in two parts. The first part, presented in this issue, examines the Melanesian concept of *Nem* and how this relates to male-female power relations in Melanesia. It argues that men's desire to gain *Nem* for themselves and their society underlies the unequal male-female power relations that lead to violence against women. Since *Nem* fills this vital role in enabling us to understand male-female power relations in Melanesia, part one investigates whether *Nem* played any comparable role in biblical times. Particularly, it explores whether *Nem*, as a Melanesian hermeneutical tool, can help interpret biblical literature that gives preference to men over women.

The second part of the article examines the Old Testament male-centric literature in relation to *Nem*. More specifically, it examines the Hebrew term *Shem* in relation to *Nem* and argues that the concept of *Shem/Nem* can bring fresh understanding of the male-centric biblical literature and its authors. Second, the article examines Jesus's response to the concept of *Nem* in the New Testament. More specifically, it examines Jesus's emphasis on "service" as an ideal power relational concept in human relationships. It argues that power relations in human relationships, especially between women and men are not for dominating the women, rather they are a means to serve one another, specifically to serve women.

THE CONCEPT OF *NEM* AS A MELANESIAN INTERPRETIVE LENS

The first section defines the concept and examines its communal and personal aspects which affect male-female power relations.

DEFINING THE CONCEPT

The concept of *Nem na Namba*, Neo-Melanesian Pidgin terms, can be literally translated as "Name and Number." They represent much more than identifications like one's appellation or one's numerical placing as they typically would in English. Instead, these terms represent a concept which is equivalent to the idea of one's social status and honour which is similar to honour and shame values of the Mediterranean societies.[2] It designates

[2] For examples on the Mediterranean values of honour and shame, how these values ordered their social life and relationships, see Pierre Bourdieu, "The Sentiment of Honour in Kabyle

one's standing or value or one's achieved or bestowed position in the society. It is also associated with the idea of *bik-man* or *bik-nem*, which can be translated as "big-man" and "big-name" in English. They describe achieved status equivalent to the idea of honour.[3]

Basically, the main characteristic of the concept of *Nem* is the public recognition of one's social standing. It comes in one of two ways. It could be inherited from the family or clan at birth or along with the naming rite (see further below) or it could be conferred based on one's achievements (see further below). By its very nature both the inherited and achieved standing may be either gained or lost in the perpetual challenge for public recognition. Since the group is so important for the identity of a Melanesian person (see further below), it is critical to recognize that a person's status comes primarily from group recognition. It is a public matter. When someone's achievement is recognized by the group, the result is a new social status. With this status follows the expectation that one must continually demonstrate one's success in public activities.[4] In this case the interaction between men is always characterized by competition with others for recognition. Such social interaction often takes the form of challenge and re-

Society," in *Honour and Shame: The Values of Mediterranean Society*, ed. Jean G. Peristiany (London: Weidenfeld and Nicholson, 1966), 191–241; Jean G. Peristiany, ed., *Honour and Shame: The Values of Mediterranean Society* (London: Weidenfeld and Nicholson, 1966); Julian Pitt-Rivers, "Honour," in *International Encyclopaedia of the Social Sciences*, 2nd ed. (New York: Macmillan, 1968), 503–11; Julian Pitt-Rivers, "Honour and Social Status," in *Honour and Shame*, 19–77, reprinted in Julian Pitt-Rivers, *The Fate of Shechem or the Politics of Sex: Essays in the Anthropology of the Mediterranean* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1977), 1–41; David D. Gilmore, "Honour, Honesty, Shame: Male Status in Contemporary Andalusia," in *Honour and Shame and the Unity of the Mediterranean*, ed. David D. Gilmore, American Anthropological Association Special Publication 22 (Washington, DC: American Anthropological Association, 1987), 90–103.

[3] For more on these Melanesian terms and other related terms, see Frederick Steinbauer, *Neo-Melanesian Dictionary* (Madang: Kristen, 1969).

[4] For example, see Marshall D. Sahlins, "Poor Man, Rich Man, Big-Man, Chief: Political Types in Melanesia and Polynesia," *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 5 (1965): 285–303; Donald Tuzin, "Politics, Power, and Divine Artistry in Ilahita," *Anthropological Quarterly* 51 (1978): 60–67; Bronwen Douglas, "Rank, Power, Authority: A Reassessment of Traditional Leadership in South Pacific Societies" *Journal of Pacific History* 14 (1979): 2–27; Maurice Godelier, *The Making of Great Men: Male Domination and Power among the New Guinea Baruya* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1986); Maurice Godelier and Marilyn Strathern, eds., *Big Men and Great Men: Personification of Power in Melanesia* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991).

sponse. Characteristically, it is about male-male power challenges. Such power relational interaction between men takes the form of challenge through ceremonial exchanges, warfare, and other symbolic gestures.[5]

However, although the primary dynamic is male to male, there is often an impact on women. Although women are innocent participants, they are the main victims. For instance, the practice of polygamy, in addition to reasons like sexual satisfaction, expanding of one's alliances, and the supply of labour to produce valuables for practices like *Moka*,[6] is based on male-male power challenge. Here men acquire more wives, and at times forcefully, for the benefit of men's economic ability to measure up to a challenge, to overpower a challenger, or to keep a challenger indebted to him in a ceremonial exchange.[7] The practice of bride-price, in addition to economic gain or to reciprocate with the bride's family, also demonstrates the economic prowess of the groom's family and tribe, lest other men challenge the groom and his tribe for not being manly. In like manner, male roles in society are regarded as superior to female gender roles and as such women are treated as inferiors and servants for the male quest for *Nem*. Not only that, even to serve a woman is regarded as a sign of inferiority, men's greatest fear.[8]

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[5] For example, see, Bronislaw Malinowski, *Argonauts of the Western Pacific* (New York: E. P. Dutton and Company, 1961); Andrew Strathern, *The Rope of Moka: Big Men and Ceremonial Exchange in Mt Hagen, New Guinea*, Cambridge Studies in Social Anthropology (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1971); Annette B. Weiner, *Inalienable Possessions* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1992); Anthony Forge, "The Golden Fleece," *Mankind* 7 (1972): 527–40.

[6] *Moka* is a local vernacular term (*Melpa* language of Western Highlands Province of Papua New Guinea) that describes a ceremonial exchange in which pigs and shell wealth are amassed to compete in the male-male wealth exchange competition. See Strathern, *The Rope of Moka*.

[7] Some other ceremonial exchanges are those of yam cultures mostly practised in the Sepik region and the Milne Bay Province of Papua New Guinea. For more on this practice, see Weiner, *Inalienable Possessions*; Forge, "The Golden Fleece."

[8]For more examples on socio-cultural values and the influence of the concept of *Nem* on social structures and social relationships, see Malinowski, *Argonauts of the Western Pacific*; Weiner, *Inalienable Possessions*; Strathern, *The Rope of Moka*; Marilyn Strathern, *Women in Between: Female Roles in a Male World: Mount Hagen, New Guinea* (London: Seminar Press, 1972); Marilyn Strathern, "Introduction," in *Occasional Papers* 18 (Port Moresby: Law Reform Commission of Papua New Guinea, 1985), 1–13; Marilyn Strathern, ed., *Dealing with Inequality: Analysing Gender Relations in Melanesia and Beyond* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1987); Marilyn Strathern, *The Gender of the Gift: Problems with Women and Problems with Society in Melanesia* (Berkeley: University of California

Anthropologists, like Anthony Forge, have observed and described this male-male interaction as a form of male egalitarianism.[9] He asserted that, "in egalitarian New Guinea society it is only the men who are equal in the sense of being at least potentially the same or identical. Women are different ... the differences are those of complementarity; men and women are interdependent but are in no sense the same or symmetrical and cannot be identical."[10] Forge's observation paints a picture that equality is based on sameness or on what is identical. This assertion denotes that there is inequality between man and woman based on their difference, but they complement each other in their difference.

Forge's argument is significant; however, his assertion may be based on liberal political philosophy that may isolate the women's part in the total practice of the concept he described as egalitarianism.[11] Margaret Jolly, on the other hand, argued that the much talked about egalitarianism in Melanesia is only an illusion. She asserts that the dominant idiom of equality used to describe equality in Melanesia has been that of Western liberal political philosophy. She contended that in particular the protracted discussions based on the idea of "big-man" use the concept of egalitarianism in this way. Thus, as with most "western liberal thought, the canonical conception of the political individual or citizen is male."[12] So long as the ideals of egalitarianism in Melanesia are understood in terms of that liberal philosophy and not based on the intrinsic human worth, equality is only a daydream.[13] Jolly's argument must be respected, but in opposing the liberal political approach to egalitarianism in Melanesia, she introduces yet another issue,

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Press, 1988); Gabriele Sturzenhofecker, *Times Enmeshed: Gender, Space, and History among the Duna of Papua New Guinea* (Standford: Standford University Press, 1998).

[9] See Forge, "The Golden Fleece," 527–40; Lisette Josephides, *The Production of Inequality: Gender and Exchange among the Kewa* (London: Tavistock, 1985); Margaret Jolly, "The Chimera of Equality in Melanesia," *Mankind* 17 (1987): 168–83; Godelier, *The Making of Great Men*; James Flanagan, "The Cultural Construction of Equality on the New Guinea Highlands' Fringe," in *Rules, Decisions, and Inequality in Egalitarian Societies*, ed. James G. Flanagan and Steve Rayner (Aldershot: Avebury, 1988), 164–80; James Flanagan, "Hierarchy in Simple 'Egalitarian' Societies,' in *Rules, Decisions, and Inequality in Egalitarian Societies*, 1–19.

[10] Forge, "The Golden Fleece," 536.

[11] See Annette B. Weiner, *Women of Value, Men of Renown* (Saint Lucia: University of Queensland Press, 1977), 228–29.

[12] Jolly, "The Chimera of Equality in Melanesia," 168.

[13] Jolly, "The Chimera of Equality in Melanesia," 168–83.

equality based on an individual autonomy which may be problematic in a community-centred society like Melanesia.[14]

Forge and Jolly's observations make two important claims about the concept of *Nem*. First, Forge sees the event of male-male challenge for honour and status among men as a challenge of equals and he describes the practice as egalitarianism. Second, Jolly, on the other hand, recognises the way in which egalitarianism is discussed in Melanesian studies and suggests that there is no egalitarianism where intrinsic human worth is not recognised. Their arguments both deal with human relationships. Yet, Melanesian egalitarianism is based not on inherent human value, but on male-male power challenge, a challenge in which women are innocent participants and may become the victims.

In Melanesia, egalitarianism unfortunately may not mean equality to Melanesians in the sense of individual autonomy based on an inherent value as is understood from the Western world (Jolly), rather it is based on power relationships between males who share the same or identical opportunities (Forge).[15] It describes the concept of power challenge among men. As Geoffrey White described, with a few notable exceptions, "Melanesian societies do not exhibit marked forms of hierarchy in ranking, inherited titles, chiefly etiquette, and so forth".[16] Although the diversity of the region makes generalization impossible, an important feature of most indigenous PNG communities is adherence to egalitarian values that see power dependent on networks of exchange and personal reputation built up over time. This aspect of social organization is associated with consensus-style decision-making rather than reliance on positions of authority or elite status.[17] This consensus style is summed up in the concept of *Nem*. It is a symbol of power competition among men in a competitive environment, and men must continually demonstrate their success in public activities.

[14] For problems associated with introducing individual autonomy in Melanesia, see Joel Robins, "Equality as a Value: Ideology in Dumont, Melanesia and the West Social Analysis," *The International Journal of Social and Cultural Practice* 36 (1994): 21–70; Andre Beteille, "Individualism and Equality," *Current Anthropology* 27 (1986): 124–34; Marilyn Strathern, "Introduction," 7–10.

[15] See Robins, "Equality as a Value"; Beteille, "Individualism and Equality"; Strathern, "Introduction," 4–8.

[16] Geoffrey White, "Indigenous Governance in Melanesia," *State, Society and Governance in Melanesia*, (ANU discussion paper, 2007), 6.

[17] White, "Indigenous Governance in Melanesia," 1–16.

THE COLLECTIVE ASPECT OF THE CONCEPT OF *NEM*

The communal aspect of the concept of *Nem* begins with the naming rite. A naming rite is an indispensable link to different types of kinship structural systems, values, and relationships. It defines and identifies an individual's place and responsibility to uphold the values of a society and to defend the honour and status of that society. It means one's social behaviour within and without the society must adhere to the status of the name one bears, and one must seek to defend the past and to build on it in collaboration with the community. The naming rite is therefore a connection between the past and the present and between the community and the individual. It describes a set of relationships and obligations bestowed upon each member of a society to uphold in relationship to one another. It endows individuals with the right to challenge and be challenged. Such relationships are linked through a naming rite and the succession of a common name that all must defend.[18] For example, Ward H. Goodenough observed that for the Lakalai peoples of West New Britain in PNG, the naming rite emphasizes one's place in a procreational chain or in formally structured kin and social relationships. He concluded that the Lakalai naming practices and forms of address function as a counterbalance to the effect that the workings of the social system tend otherwise to give the people's images of themselves and others.[19]

[18] For some of the earliest anthropological manuscripts or literature that did some preliminary work on Pacific Island peoples and their cultures between mid-1800s into the 1930s see, Robert Codrington, *The Melanesians: Studies in their Anthropology and Folklore* (London: Oxford University Press, 1891); George Turner, *Nineteen Years in Polynesia*, (London: John Snow, 1861); Boyle T. Somerville, "Ethnographical Notes on New Georgia, Solomon Islands," *Journal of the Royal Anthropological Institute* 26 (1897): 357–412; Basil Thomson, *The Fijians: A Study in the Decay of Custom* (London: Macmillan, 1908); W. G. Ivens, *Melanesians of the South-East Solomon Islands* (London: Kegan Paul, Trench and Trubner, 1927); Bronislaw Malinowski, *The Sexual Life of Savages* (London: Routledge, 1929); Margaret Mead, *Sex and Temperament in Three Primitive Societies* (New York: Morrow, 1935). These and other early literature on the Pacific peoples prior to 1960s may or may not directly deal with social structures or the concept of *Nem* but they have influenced anthropological work in the 1950s and onwards. Some of the work that will be referred to in this discussion may have stemmed from this earlier work.

[19] Ward H. Goodenough, "Personal Names and Modes of Address in Two Oceanic Societies," in C*ontext and Meaning in Cultural Anthropology*, ed. Melford E. Spiro (New York: Free Press, 1965), 265–76. See also Ward H. Goodenough, "Property, Kin, and Community on Truk," in *Yale University Publications in Anthropology* 46 (London: Yale

Rolf Kuschel, looking at Bellona peoples of the Solomon Islands,[20] said the concept of name is a significant factor in the social structuring of the peoples. Name carries social responsibilities both to the living and dead (ancestors) and is value laden and must be closely guarded against any behaviour that brings disrepute to the name.[21] Lamont Lindstrom, speaking about the Tannaese of Vanuatu, observes that the constitution of kinship groups and the definition of social personalities depend on the concept of name. This gives an individual his or her position within the social order that is conferred through the name rather than by the occurrence and genealogical facts of birth. This reliance on name rather than on descent kinship permits the continuing, successful reproduction of not just a single hero-like figure as is characteristic of the hierarchy of a rank system of kinship, but complexly interrelated sets of kinsmen and women who collectively uphold the name of a given society.[22] James West Turner concluded on his observation of Matailobau people's naming concept in Fiji, that, while the living members of the kinship group are identified with their ancestors as a general category, a name is a special bond with specific ancestors. Despite the fundamental social transformations that were occurring during the period in which it took shape, the current system of naming in Matailobau asserts the link to the past and to the ancestors who play a role in providing or withholding prosperity and well-being. The ancestors are made present in their names and in the persons of their descendants who bear them. The concept of name also asserts continuity by identifying persons in relation to their children and grandchildren, that is, with respect to specific descendants rather than ancestors. Individual identity is socially important but muted by a naming system that stresses social identity or status. By identifying with the past through the naming process within the social structural kinship system the people of Matailobau embed their present in their past.[23]

University Press, 1951); Felix M. Keesing, *Cultural Anthropology: The Science of Custom* (New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1958); Raymond Firth, *Human Types* (Westport: Greenwood, 1938), reprinted in 1983.

[20] Bellona Island of the Solomon Islands is located on the border between Melanesian and Polynesian Islands.

[21] Rolf Kuschel, "Cultural Reflection on Bellonese Personal Names," *Journal of the Polynesian Society* 97 (1988): 49–70.

[22] Lamont Lindstrom, "Personal Names and Social Reproduction on Tanna, Vanuatu," *Journal of the Polynesian Society* 94 (1985): 27–47.

[23] James West Turner, "Some Reflections on the Significance of Name in Matailobau, Fiji," *Journal of the Polynesian Society* 100 (1991): 7–24.

Observations by Goodenough, Kuschel, Lindstrom, and Turner emphasise the connection between the communal and the individual aspects of *Nem* through the naming rite. The concept of *Nem* as social status becomes the key either to fulfilling the potential and expectations of the name received, or by failing to honour the name given, shame and dishonour comes to the tribe. The naming process sets the stage, but it is the concern for *Nem* as status to be achieved which maintains and develops the potential inherent in the name received.

THE PERSONAL ASPECT OF THE CONCEPT OF *NEM*

The individual aspect of the concept of *Nem* as a status is based on the idea that all males in a society are equal and thus have the equal right to compete for their standing in the society. This is what anthropologists described as Melanesian egalitarianism.[24] Kinship structural systems, values, and practices, either in socio-political, socio-religious, or socio-economic spheres, are structured in a way that gives every male equal opportunity to manoeuvre to gain *Nem* for himself and for his family and tribe. This involves competing with other men within and without the society which this discussion describes as male-male power challenge. This individual aspect of the concept of *Nem* can be equated with what anthropologists describe as the concepts of big-man, great-man, rich-man, and poor-man. These descriptive titles portray the personification of the individual aspect of the concept of *Nem* and paint a picture of male-male power challenge.[25]

For instance, Marshall D. Sahlins in a comparative analysis of Polynesians and Melanesians in an article entitled "Poor Man, Rich Man, Big-Man, Chief: Political Types in Melanesia and Polynesia," claimed that there is opposition between the competitive and egalitarian socio-political structural systems of Melanesia and the stratified rank-based systems of

[24] See Forge, "The Golden Fleece"; Josephides, *The Production of Inequality,* 24–34.

[25] See Sahlins, "Poor Man, Rich Man, Big-Man, Chief"; Donald Tuzin, *The Ilahita Arapesh: Dimensions of Unity* (Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1976). See also Tuzin, "Social Control and the Tambaran in the Sepik," in *Contention and Dispute,* ed. Arnold L. Epstein (Canberra: Australian National University Press, 1974), 317–44; Tuzin, "Politics, Power, and Divine Artistry in Ilahita"; Bronwen Douglas, "Rank, Power, Authority: A Reassessment of Traditional Leadership in South Pacific Societies," *Journal of Pacific History* 14 (1979): 2–27; Maurice Godelier and Marilyn Strathern, eds., *Big Men and Great Men: Personification of Power in Melanesia* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991).

Polynesia. He identified two social forms associated with leadership structural systems, the big-man, who acquired a big-name through factional politics, and the manipulation of reciprocal exchange relationships, and the chief, whose social identity or status is derived from the hierarchy of ranks at birth.[26]

Maurice Godelier and Marilyn Strathern's edited work, *Big Men and Great Men: Personification of Power in Melanesia* considers the typology between the "big-men and the great-men."[27] This volume works at two levels. First, the contributors look at the mutual patterning of leadership, kinship, social ideology, and exchange in a wide range of Melanesian societies. The main concern of this part is the evaluation of the widely accepted categorisation of Melanesian leadership and political orders of "big-men, great-men and chiefs."[28] Second, the contributors present a case study of the chasm between sociological and cultural orientation that permeates Melanesian anthropology. Generally, these authors propose "big-manship as a particular conjunction of kinship and economy, such that things and persons substitute for each other in a range of transactions that especially includes bride-price."[29] That is, material things transacted in exchange for women and the reproduction of kinsmen and women.[30] They assert that through these competitive ceremonial exchanges "big-men" create their social identity or status. By contrast, "great-men" do not acquire their social status through the managed circulation of accumulated wealth. They emerge instead where public life turns on "ritual initiations," where marriage involves "exchange of women," and "where warfare similarly prescribes the balanced exchange of homicides." Accordingly, the typological distinction between "big-men and great-men entails a difference between logics of social reproduction, and it is these alternative logics rather than

[26] Sahlins, "Poor Man, Rich Man, Big-Man, Chief."

[27] Strathern, "Introduction," in *Big Men and Great Men: Personification of Power in Melanesia*, 1.

[28] See Pierre Lemonnier, "From Great Men to Big Men: Peace, Substitution, and Competition in the Highlands of New Guinea," in *Big Men and Great Men: Personification of Power in Melanesia,* 7. For further reading on the first type of big men and great men typology in this book see pages 5–156.

[29] Strathern, "Introduction," in *Big Men and Great Men,* 1.

[30] See Strathern, "Introduction," in *Big Men and Great Men,* 1–3.

the figures of prominent men themselves that properly merit comparative treatment."[31]

From a socio-religious perspective, Donald Tuzin, in *The Ilahita Arapesh: Dimensions of Unity*, pointed to the close connection between socio-political power structures of the peoples and the initiatory rites that place men in classified groups. He claimed that in the East Sepik Ilahita community, initiated men claim the power to punish violation of societal rules, control hunting and gardening, and uphold regulations that govern communal survival and prosperity.[32]

On the other hand, Karen J. Brison argued that scholars' depictions of a Melanesian big-man as a selfish individualist who makes his name by building complex networks of debt and clientage which allow him to call pigs and shell valuables from his followers at the right moment to vanquish his rivals with an impressive transaction of material wealth, are questionable. Against this notion, in her observation of the Kwanga peoples of East Sepik Province of PNG, she argued that to many Melanesians, big-men are primarily "men of talk" who keep their communities in order and protect them from harm and from enemies through their oratory skills. Thus, there is a close association between leaders and oratory skills, power of words that pronounce and invite war or power of words that can bring peace and harmony or even make and break reputations or destroy or restore relationships.[33]

Brison is pointing to one of the important aspects of big-manship mostly overlooked. However, like others she can also be accused of only painting a picture of an individualist sucking in everyone under his influence to vanquish his challengers. She seems to neglect the importance of the interrelatedness of talk to socio-economic and socio-religious spheres of influence in the socio-structural systems of the people.

Critics of Sahlins argued that his observation of the political types in the Pacific region demonstrates a superficial regional categorisation of the peoples and their socio-political structures: Melanesia or Polynesia. One central observation against Sahlins is that even the so-called Melanesian region

[31] See Strathern, "Introduction," in *Big Men and Great Men*, 1–3. Here Strathern gives a good summary of the book in the introductory to the book.

[32] See Tuzin, *The Ilahita Arapesh*; Tuzin, "Social Control and the Tambaran in the Sepik"; Tuzin, "Politics, Power, and Divine Artistry in Ilahita."

[33] Karen J. Brison, *Just Talk: Gossip, Meetings and Power in a Papua New Guinea Village* (Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1992).

is diverse in itself and general categorisation is a misrepresentation. For instance, Bronwen Douglas and others like Ann Chowning and Margaret Jolly stress that the ideal types simply did not capture real variation. More particularly, Douglas suggested that there was a need to separate rank, power, and authority and that the dynamic interplay between ascription and achievement needed to be studied more closely in a range of societies.[34]

Nicholas Thomas perhaps was the most critical of Sahlins's analysis of the political types in the Pacific region. He argued that Sahlins has persistently characterized particular social groups in Polynesia and Melanesia in terms of the presence or absence of some kind of centralization or hierarchy. He contended that circularities were developed such that Polynesia explicates hierarchy, while the category of Melanesian egalitarianism has been defined in part simply in terms of the absence of Polynesian features such as chiefs and stratification. Thomas asserted that this amounted to overt racism with the notion that Polynesians are more advanced culturally than Melanesians. He further stated that, while a great deal of systematic analysis of particular societies has taken place, there is a larger level of characterization at which the identification of a society as Polynesian is meaningful. Because ethnological and evolutionary categories are compounded, political variation at the larger regional level has been recognized only in relation to a unidimensional continuum between localized egalitarianism and chiefdoms or proto-states. The exercise of characterization has thus collapsed into one of typology. Although much sophistication has emerged in ethnographic studies, this has somehow not been translated into a more subtle multilinear view of regional political forms. The development of Western thought concerning Pacific societies appears to have been constrained by the categories of those who initiated it. [35]

Robert J. Foster, reviewing Godelier and Strathern's edited volume, argued that this volume neither validates nor refutes Godelier's comparison of big-men and great-men. Instead, most of the fourteen papers bend and stretch his typology; some virtually dissolve it. Put differently, the papers explore the limits and exploit the potential of the big-men/great-men con-

[34] Douglas, "Rank, Power, Authority." For further reading, see Ann Chowning, "Leadership in Melanesia," *Journal of Pacific History* 14 (1979): 66–84; Jolly, "The Chimera of Equality in Melanesia."

[35] Nicholas Thomas, "The Force of Ethnology: Origins and Significance of Melanesian Polynesian Division," *Current Anthropology* 30 (1989), 27–41.

trast, but do not propose an alternative.[36] John Barker commenting on the same volume said, certainly, it would address the most glaring absence in the collection but the lack of attention to recent history fails the work. He said several authors asserted that capitalism favours the big-men over the great-men, but provided only a few anecdotes. Thus, after hundreds of pages of often dense ethnographic detail and critique, it is odd indeed to see the big-man stereotype applied so casually.[37]

Critiques by Brison, Douglas, Thomas, Foster, and Barker must be considered. They have pointed to some ethnographic issues that need specific attention. They also pointed to categorisation issues that may be of interest to some scholars—specifically Sahlins's critics—particularly Thomas's argument on superficial delimitations and stereotypes for the sake of justification of a certain type of political structure over the other. There can be no quarrel with Thomas's brief analysis of antecedents of the tenet of the cultural advance of Polynesia over Melanesia or with his conclusion that the delineation of major ethnic subdivisions suited a discipline obsessed with human types and racial distributions in search of a hierarchical framework for the evolution of humanity. However, Sahlins's general framework on the Melanesia/Polynesia distinction is still an appropriate working sociocultural contrast. There is no need to avoid the basic equation: Melanesian big-manship and Polynesian chiefdoms. Maybe we do need to explore ethnographic variations more closely with a range of societies in these regions, as Douglas pointed out.

To put it differently, in a society like Melanesia where there are no dichotomies between socio-political, socio-economic, or socio-religious categories, the endeavour to divide and address will probably have little bearing on the result. Although the critics have identified important other links that make up the whole, they have also fallen into the same error which they critiqued. They too have fallen short of identifying how the parts they chart out in their findings hold and pull together as one whole. We suggest that the one theme that holds all together is the concept of *Nem*. Social institutions, like the naming customs, set a contextual stage for seeking leadership, but it is the communal expectation and tribally driven longings to up-

[36] Robert J. Foster, Review of *Big-Men and Great-Men*, in *The Contemporary Pacific* 4 (1993–1994): 179–99.
[37] John Barker, Review of *Big-Men and Great-Men*, in *Pacific Affairs* 66 (1993–94): 621–23.

hold the *Nem* that shape the behaviour and create the ambition which enable a person to gain the *Nem* and to maintain leadership status and honour. Thus, the collective and the personal aspects of *Nem* influence the way one seeks to become a big-man or great-man or rich-man or, in failure, a poor-man. Not as a selfish individualist as Brinson pointed out, rather in collaboration and in association with the society. Individual leadership or seeking to become a big-man or a great-man, therefore, not only portrays one's personal status but in that personal achievement the society's *Nem* is represented.

CONCLUSION

This is significant because in Melanesian societies, though individuality is supported, it is mostly muted by the importance of collective social identity. Moreover, this is critical to understanding male-male power challenge, a challenge in which women play the innocent role of being economists in traditional societies, because their work makes the economy work, since the society expects them to create wealth for ceremonial exchanges.[38] For example, they are expected to bear children and raise them, raise pigs, and gather shell wealth and other valuables for ceremonial exchanges like *Moka*, as discussed earlier. In a way the communal and the personal role of *Nem* has a huge impact on male-female power relationships, especially for the women. Women have a dual role of supporting their husbands and their husband's community's *Nem* as well as supporting their brothers and their birth family's *Nem*. Hence, women face a tension because they have to build up the *Nem* of their husbands as well as their brother's *Nem* and identity. One way through which women build up their brothers and birth family's *Nem* is through bride wealth exchanged at their marriage. As Weiner shows in *Inalienable Possessions*, the wife brings into the marriage, and creates through her work as a wife, both material and non-material wealth to develop and contribute to upholding both her husband's *Nem* and her brother's *Nem*.[39]

The concept of *Nem* therefore is a significant contextual factor contributing to violence against women in PNG. These and other factors make

[38] For example, see Weiner, *Inalienable Possessions*, 23–43. See also Malinowski, *Argonauts of the Western Pacific*; Mervin J. Meggitt, "Male-Female Relationships in the Highlands of Australia New Guinea," *American Anthropologist* 66 (1964): 204–24.
[39] Weiner, *Inalienable Possessions*, 23–43.

Nem a key factor in the family structures and values in the society. Thus, for understanding Melanesian sociocultural power structures and sociocultural values and practices like gender role and bride-price that endorse men over women, *Nem* plays a central role. As shown in relation to leadership generally, *Nem* orchestrates the way sociocultural power structures and sociocultural values and practices are administered. Thus, in the endeavour to address unequal male-female power relations that lead to violence against women, one should consider examining and addressing the concept of *Nem* as a central contextual factor contributing to violence against women.

Hence, it is significant to examine the Hebrew term *Shem* as *Nem* and its impact on male-male power dynamics in the biblical literature, and its effect on violence against women, from a Melanesian perspective. Particularly, *Nem*, as a Melanesian hermeneutical tool, can potentially help interpret biblical literature that gives preference to men over women. This will be taken up in the second part of the article in a subsequent issue of *Melanesian Journal of Theology*.

AQUINAS ON POLYGAMY

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Abstract

In this paper, I will present Thomas Aquinas's discussion of whether polygamy is contrary to the natural law. My goal is to give Christians living and ministering in Papua New Guinea conceptual tools for thinking about polygamy and the Christian understanding of marriage. In Papua New Guinea today pre-Christian marriage practices still exist, and there is some confusion among Christians regarding whether polygamy is contrary to Christianity, especially since there are many examples of polygamy in the Old Testament. First, I explain in detail Aquinas's teaching that God's law for creatures manifests in nature (natural law) and that this natural law should be the basis for the human laws of a community. Humans sometimes err in understanding or applying the natural law, so God has revealed the divine law through Scripture in order to guide us to him and to correct human error. Second, I cover Aquinas's explanations of the natural purposes of marriage, and his judgment that polygamy partially agrees with the natural law regarding marriage and partially disagrees. By contrast, monogamy fully agrees with our rational and social nature. Third, I discuss Aquinas's belief that Scripture reveals God's original plan for marriage, and that in Christianity marriage becomes a sacrament signifying the relationship between Christ and the Church. Aquinas presents a number of arguments for why polygamy is incompatible with Christianity. No Christian should be a polygamist, and all polygamists have excluded Christ from the life of their family.[1]

Key Words

Marriage, polygamy, natural law, sacramental theology, Catholic moral theology, Thomas Aquinas, sexual ethics

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[1] This article is a revised version of a paper delivered at the Melanesian Association of Theological Schools 2017 conference, entitled "Church and Politics," held at the Catholic Theological Institute, Port Moresby, Papua New Guinea on 10–13 July. I thank the participants for comments on the paper, and I am grateful to Angus Brook for comments on an earlier draft.

INTRODUCTION

Why should twenty-first century Melanesians care about what Thomas Aquinas, writing in thirteenth century Europe, had to say about marriage? There are four reasons. First, many Christians with an interest in philosophy and historical theology consider Aquinas to be a model for Christian thinkers, because Aquinas was convinced that right reason and Christian truth are always in harmony. For Aquinas, Christians need not fear advances in science or philosophy, but should strive to use secular learning to better understand and defend the teachings of the Christian faith.[2] Second, while Aquinas is often regarded as the greatest medieval philosopher, he was a theologian by profession, and so his work is a synthesis of philosophical and biblical arguments. Insofar as human nature and Scripture do not change, his arguments remain relevant. Third, Aquinas himself lived before the modern era, so some of his ideas resonate better with non-western cultures than with the modern West. In particular, some parts of his teaching on the purpose of marriage fit in well with the traditional understanding of marriage in the Highlands of Papua New Guinea (PNG). Fourth, Aquinas is well aware that many Old Testament patriarchs and kings had multiple wives and that polygamy is the norm in certain cultures;[3] therefore, Aquinas does not simply condemn polygamy, but tries to understand the manner in which polygamy partially agrees with and partially disagrees with human nature. Aquinas's basic position is that polygamy may have been permissi-

[2] In the Catholic Church, Aquinas was put forward as a model for theologians by Pope Leo XIII, a recommendation repeated by John Paul II. See Pope Leo XIII, *Aeterni Patris* (Vatican City: Libreria Editrice Vaticana, 1879). Online: http://w2.vatican.va/content/leo-xiii/en/encyclicals/documents/hf_l-xiii_enc_04081879_aeterni-patris.html. Pope John Paul II, *Fides et Ratio* (Vatican City: Libreria Editrice Vaticana, 1998), Chap. 4, §43–45. Online: http://w2.vatican.va/content/john-paul-ii/en/encyclicals/documents/hf_jp-ii_enc_14091998_fides-et-ratio.html.

[3] Thomas Aquinas, *Summa Theologica* (ST), trans. English Dominican Fathers (New York: Benziger Bros., 1947) III, Suppl., q. 65, a. 1, obj. and ad 1–2, and ad 8; a. 2, sed contra and corpus; and a. 5. Thomas's work is divided into questions (a general topic), which are in turn divided into articles (a specific question about that topic), which are composed of objections (arguments for positions against Thomas's own, indicated by "obj."), sed contra (support for Thomas's position), corpus (Thomas's position), and replies to the objections (Thomas's responses to the objections, indicated by "ad"). The entire *Summa* is available in English translation at https://www.ccel.org/ccel/aquinas/ summa.html.

ble in some circumstances and cultures in the past, but is completely incompatible with Christian marriage.

In this paper, I will present my own synthesis of Aquinas's discussion of polygamy and marriage from his works, with a focus on the *Summa Theologiae*. My goal is to give Christians living and ministering in PNG conceptual tools for thinking about polygamy and the Christian understanding of marriage. My presentation is selective. Aspects of Aquinas's thought which I disagree with or find unhelpful will generally be passed over in silence. I do not endorse all of Aquinas's teaching on sexual ethics and male-female relations, but I find the material I present here at least plausible, unless otherwise noted. The way he analyses polygamy is essentially correct. From my own experience of living in PNG as a Catholic missionary, I observe that traditional pre-Christian understandings and practices of marriage exist side by side with outward profession of faith in Jesus Christ. In the Catholic Church, this has created a difficult pastoral situation in which many Catholics never receive the sacrament of marriage and some even practice polygamy. In the Catholic tradition, adults practicing polygamy are still members of the Church, but are not permitted to receive the Eucharist. In general, my impression is that a large number of Melanesian Christians do not understand why polygamy is wrong.[4] This paper is my small contribution to this pastoral and catechetical problem, which is faced by all the churches in Melanesia who wish to uphold the Christian understanding of marriage.

A Note on Sources

Before presenting Aquinas's thoughts on polygamy, I must note a methodological problem. The *Summa Theologiae* ("the whole of theology") is Aquinas's systematic introduction to Christian truth. The first part of the *Summa* explains God's creation and governance of the world. The second part argues that all humans seek to be in union with God, and either draw towards God through good acts or move away from God through wicked acts. The third and final part covers salvation and how God makes it possible for us to be in union with him. Aquinas covers the mystery of the incarnation, the sacraments, the resurrection of the dead , and the final judgment.

[4] These claims are based on the unpublished research work of my undergraduate students, Daniel Sakias and Solomon Bom, who studied the ways in which marriage problems keep Catholics from actively practising their faith, and on my conversations with estranged first wives of polygamous husbands.

The section on the incarnation and part of the section on the sacraments were completed before Aquinas died in 1274. His secretary and students, perhaps working from Aquinas's outline, constructed a Supplement to the *Summa Theologiae* after his death which completed Aquinas's project. They put together excerpts from Aquinas's discussions of the sacraments and the next life from his *Commentary on Peter Lombard's Sentences*, which was Aquinas's first work of systematic theology, written in 1252–54 as part of the requirements for becoming a Master in Theology.[5] While the Supplement may not express his mature thought on the sacrament of marriage (which we will never know), because the Supplement contains Aquinas's most detailed and accessible discussion of polygamy, it will be the main source for this article. The discrepancies between the *Summa Theologiae* and the *Sentences Commentary* will not affect my main argument. I will also draw upon Aquinas's discussions of marriage in his *Summa Contra Gentiles*, written in 1259–65, which is a more concise summary of Christian truth.[6]

Questions 41–68 of the Supplement discuss marriage and question 65 discusses polygamy. In q. 65, a. 1, Aquinas asks "whether it is against the natural law to have several wives?" His answer consists of a careful examination of the natural meaning of marriage and of the Christian sacramental meaning of marriage. In what follows, Aquinas's understanding of natural law,[7] his application of natural law to polygamy, his understanding of marriage as a sacrament, and his sacramental and scriptural arguments against polygamy will be discussed in order.

[5] See Jean-Pierre Torrell, *Saint Thomas Aquinas*, Vol. I: *The Person and His Work*, rev. ed., trans. Robert Royal (Washington, DC: The Catholic University of America Press, 2005), 39–45 and 332–33, for further detail about the *Sentences Commentary*.

[6] See *Summa Contra Gentiles* (*SCG*) III, trans. Vernon Bourke (New York: Hanover House, 1955–57), chap. 122. Online: http://dhspriory.org/thomas/ContraGentiles.htm. The arguments in this work simply focus on why polygamy and polyandry (a wife with many husbands) are wrong. Aquinas's *Commentary on the Sentences* has the same discussion of polygamy as the Supplement, but is not available in English translation. Aquinas also discusses polygamy in some of his biblical commentaries.

[7] *ST* III, Suppl. Q. 65, a. 1 begins with a lengthy discussion of natural law. I will unpack this discussion with material from the "Treatise on Law" in *ST* I–II, even though the original background for q. 65, a. 1 would have been in the *Sentences Commentary*.

NATURAL LAW

According to Aquinas's discussion of law in *Summa Theologiae* I–II, qq. 90–108,[8] a law is "an ordinance of reason for the common good, made by him who has care of the community, and promulgated."[9] In other words, a law is a public directive on how to act which originates from the understanding and reasoning of a proper authority. The purpose of law is to direct individual members of the community towards the common good, which is the flourishing of the whole community both corporately and individually.[10] This flourishing is similar to the Melanesian ideal of *gutpela sinduan*. Aquinas recognizes four kinds of law: eternal, natural, human, and divine.

As a Christian, but also as a philosopher, Aquinas believes that God is the eternal creator and ruler of the universe.[11] God creates all things according to a divine design, similar to the way in which an architect first formulates a plan for a house in his mind, a plan that governs the building of the house and according to which the finished house is judged. The Creator can also be compared to a statesman who formulates a constitution which orders and calls into being a political community and which serves as a standard for judging the behaviour of the community and the justice of the laws that the community makes.[12] God's design is the plan according to which the whole universe was created, against which all creatures are judged, and by which God directs all the actions of creatures.[13] Since God is eternal, Aquinas calls the design in God's mind the eternal law.

Just as a built house expresses the plan of the house that is in its maker's mind, the nature of every creature is an image of God's design for that kind of creature. All creatures have certain purposeful properties that follow from their nature: fire is hot and burns upwards, cats grow fur in order to

[8] Q. 90 explains what a law is in general. Q. 91 summarizes the eternal, natural, human, and divine law. The first three are then discussed in more depth in qq. 93–94 and 95–97 respectively. The rest of the treatise is on divine law, as revealed in the Old and New Testaments.

[9] *ST* I–II, q. 90, a. 4.

[10] *ST* I–II, q. 90, a. 2.

[11] See *ST* I, q. 2, a. 3 for arguments for God's existence; qq. 44–45 for arguments for creation; and qq. 103–105 for God's providential rule over all.

[12] Aquinas gives both examples briefly in *ST* I–II, q. 91, a. 1.

[13] *ST* I–II, q. 91, a. 1. Aquinas is quite firm that God's providence rules infallibly over all creatures. See *ST* I, q. 22.

stay warm, plants grow leaves in order to collect sunlight. There are certain things that are naturally good and naturally bad for each kind of creature. For example, air is bad for fish but good for mammals; milkweed is poisonous to humans but good for monarch caterpillars. Aquinas believes that God has imprinted within the nature of creatures inclinations that direct them towards what is good and away from what is bad.[14] For example, the continuation of a species is good, and all living things naturally seek to reproduce. Animals do not learn how to conceive, bear, and care for children; rather they are directed towards the behaviours appropriate to them by their nature. Thus, salmon swim up river to their spawning grounds, birds build their nests, and spiders spin egg cases in accordance with God's design for them, the eternal law. To build nests for the sake of its young is natural for an eagle , and to do otherwise would be against its nature. "God imprints on the whole of nature the principles of its proper actions."[15] Thomas calls these innate inclinations within creatures the natural law, for these inclinations direct creatures to accomplish what is good for them in the natural order.

Humans also have these inclinations for what is naturally good and away from what is naturally bad. Unlike animals, humans are also able to reflect upon their own nature and thereby reach an understanding of what is naturally good and bad for humans. Thus, Aquinas says that humans have a two-fold participation in the eternal law. First, like all creatures, we have natural inclinations to what is good for humans and to actions that achieve that good. Second, we naturally understand certain things and activities as good, and we consciously direct our behavior to the good. Thereby, we become "provident" for ourselves and others.[16] Regarding the second point, Aquinas teaches that humans act according to practical reasoning, through which we articulate and then follow basic principles for individual actions. The most basic principle is that "good is to be done and pursued, and evil is to be avoided."[17] All humans naturally and consciously seek what they perceive to be good and avoid what they perceive to be evil. Furthermore, our natural inclinations guide us to what is good and bad for humans, on the basis of which we formulate principles that govern our actions. For exam-

[14] *ST* I–II, q. 91, a. 2.
[15] *ST* I–II, q. 93, a. 5.
[16] *ST* I–II, q. 91, a. 3; q. 93, a. 6.
[17] *ST* I–II, q. 94, a. 2.

ple, like all animals, humans naturally desire to reproduce, and so we naturally recognize the relationships and materials needed for reproduction and the raising of children as good, and what hinders or makes reproduction and the raising of children impossible as evil. Likewise, we naturally recognize that living in community with other humans is good, and so we understand that actions which destroy community life such as lying and stealing are evil.[18] Our natural understandings of good and evil act as basic principles or precepts that guide our behaviour, such that Aquinas calls them the natural law. Due to our rational powers, the natural law exists more properly as a law within the human mind, whereas in animals the natural law is only present unconsciously in their instincts. The natural law supports what helps humans to achieve the good and opposes what hinders our achievement of the good.

Unlike animals, which unreflectively follow their inclinations, humans consciously understand what is naturally good and bad and choose how to act, with the result that humans are able to act contrary to the natural law. We can perform acts that are contrary to our rational natures and which deprive ourselves and others of happiness. For example, meat naturally satisfies our hunger and eating meat correctly results in health, but eating meat incorrectly, by being gluttonous, results in sickness. Those who violate the natural law ultimately harm themselves. Aquinas, however, does not think that we simply will to do what we know to be evil. Rather, when we do wrong, we will to achieve something that is good in general, but in a way that is wrong. For example, in a developed society, one needs money in order to secure the material goods necessary for life. Therefore, money is good, but, at the same time, stealing undermines the trust and security needed for communal living and so is wrong. The bank robber chooses to break the natural law in order to gain something that is good. For Aquinas, almost all wrong-doing is based on the false principle that the end justifies the means.[19]

Furthermore, since humans are rational animals, our rationality transforms the inclinations and actions we share with animals such that actions

[18] *ST* I–II, q. 94, a. 2. Unfortunately Aquinas merely sketches the connection between natural inclination, natural understanding of good and bad, and our articulation of the precepts of natural law. His examples are quite brief.

[19] These comments are inspired by *ST* II.1, qq. 6–21, on human action. Aquinas's own investigations of human freedom, what makes an action wrong, and why we choose what is wrong are far too detailed for me to summarize here.

that would be natural for animals are often irrational and, therefore, unnatural for humans. For example, animals, lacking any sense of property, cannot steal but take what they can for survival. On the other hand, humans, who survive by altering their environment through their labour, understand what property is and have a basic understanding that stealing is wrong, though the nature of property differs in different cultures.[20] Our rational nature transforms the desires which we have in common with animals and is the source of uniquely humanly desires, such as the desires for truth and for the divine. To intentionally act in a manner that prevents a human act from accomplishing its natural purpose is to act against the natural law.[21] For example, the purpose of speech is to share our ideas with each other; therefore, lying is against the natural purpose of speech and so is against the natural law.[22] Also, eating is for the sake of the health of the body and so gluttony, which destroys the health of the body, is against the natural law and wrong.[23]

When humans live together in community, they create human laws and develop customs that apply the natural law to their own particular circumstances and set in place punishments for violating the law. Aquinas will often explain the creation of human laws in terms of the application of the general principles of the natural law to the particular circumstances of human life which often involve conflicting factors.[24] For example, humans naturally understand that killing other humans is bad, but human laws will determine for that community exactly which kinds of killing are wrong, what the punishment for the wrong kinds of killing should be (jail time, execution, compensation, and so forth), and what can be done when the natural law seems to make conflicting demands regarding human life. For

[20] *ST* II–II, q. 65, a. 1 says that it is natural for humans to possess external things. A. 2, ad 2 explains that the details of private property are created by human law.
[21] *ST* III, Suppl., q. 65, a. 1.
[22] *ST* I, q. 110, a. 3.
[23] A further aspect of our rational nature is that humans can choose to not satisfy a natural desire for certain lower goods in order to achieve a higher good. Thus, for example, a hermit may give up the good of human society and a priest may give up the good of the married life in order to better satisfy his or her desire for God. A consideration of celibacy is important and relevant to this discussion, but is beyond the scope of this paper. However, see *ST* II-II, q. 152, a. 2 on why virginity is lawful, and my own "Plato's Argument for Celibacy," *Australasian Catholic Record* 92 (2015): 473–81, for an attempt to reconcile celibacy and the desire for reproduction.
[24] *ST* I–II, q. 91, a. 3; q. 95, a. 2.

example, if I am attacked, my desire for self-preservation seems to be at odds with respect for my attacker's life, but most law codes allow one to kill in self-defense. These laws can be explicitly formulated by the leaders of the community, and/or they can be found in the customary practices of the people.[25]

Human laws and customs can also be in error. Just as individual humans make errors in speculative reasoning (for example, a mistake in a maths problem), so too can individual humans and communities make mistakes in practical reasoning. Obviously those in power can simply legislate in their own self-interest against the common good, as for example when the white people in South Africa and the American South developed law codes to subjugate black people. In these cases, such laws are unjust and have no moral force.[26] Conversely, a community may genuinely think that certain practices follow from the natural law and so develop human laws and customs that support them. Aquinas argues that the basic principles of the natural law cannot be ignored, but their application to actual life can go awry. A community may simply not think through what the natural law requires of them regarding a certain behavior, or a community's practical reasoning may be dulled through vice so that it refuses to apply natural law to a certain situation.[27] Just as humankind's power to engage in speculative reasoning develops over time (as seen in the historical progress of the sciences), so too does humankind's moral reasoning develop over time, such that the political institutions developed by an older generation may come to be seen as deficient and unjust by future generations. Thus, Aquinas teaches that it is natural for human laws and customs to progress and become more accurate reflections of the natural law.[28]

[25] See *ST* I–II, q. 90, a. 3, on formulating laws and q. 97, aa. 2–3 on custom as law. In the latter, Aquinas suggests that customs can actually be more rational than written laws, as it can become customary to not follow an impractical or unjust law. Thus, custom sometimes corrects poor laws.

[26] See *ST* I–II, q. 90, a. 2 and q. 96, a. 4, on unjust laws.

[27] See *ST* I–II, q. 93, a. 6; q. 94, aa. 4–6; and q. 97, a. 1, on the difficulty of making human laws and the common reasons for failure. The laws and customs that one grows up with shape one's apprehension of the moral law, so that a community can be blind to the fact that a behaviour violates the natural law. Thomas offers as examples the acceptance of stealing among certain Germanic tribes and of homosexuality among the ancient pagans.

[28] *ST* I–II, q. 97, a. 1. In a. 2, Thomas, however, advises caution in changing the law, since much of the force of law comes from custom and habit. The law should only be changed when the benefit is clear.

Because of the natural limitations and fallibility of humans in expressing and enacting the requirements of the natural law, God has also revealed the divine law in the Bible. The divine law is a standard that corrects mistakes in human law, addresses moral issues that human law cannot touch (such as impure thinking), and directs us towards right relations with God.[29] Just as our understanding of the natural law progresses over time, so too does the revelation of the divine law and the human understanding of the divine law.[30] According to Aquinas, the Old Testament law was directed towards humans at an earlier stage of moral, intellectual, and spiritual development. Even though the Old Testament law and the New Testament law have the same goals – directing humanity towards its flourishing, promoting righteous action, and simply encouraging people to behave lawfully – the provisions of the Old Testament law tend be earthly and imperfect in comparison to New Testament law.[31] This is not to say that the Old Testament law is bad, but simply that it is imperfect in comparison with New Testament law, just as an essay by a university student may be quite good in itself, but imperfect in comparison to an essay by a scholar. Therefore, practices permitted by the Old Testament may have to be abolished or modified in the light of the New Testament revelation.[32] Similarly, human laws and customs

[29] See *ST* I–II, q. 91, a. 4, on the limitations of human law which are overcome by the divine law. Aquinas also says that the goal of human law is to bring peace to the human community, whereas the divine law directs us to everlasting happiness.

[30] Thomas mentions in *ST* I–II, q. 106, a. 4 that the understanding and enactment of the divine law varies in regard to different places, times, and persons. Thomas, however, believes that the Apostles enacted the divine law as perfectly as possible. I do not know if Aquinas explicitly recognized that Christian doctrine develops over time, which is the current official teaching of the Catholic Church. See the following notes for the progression of divine revelation.

[31] *ST* I–II, q. 91, a. 5. See also q. 98, a. 1; q. 98, a. 2, ad 1–2; q. 107, a. 1, corpus and ad 2. Aquinas is extremely interested in the relationship between the Old and New Law, so these are only representative texts. Aquinas insists that there is only one divine law, given imperfectly to the Jews and then perfectly in Jesus Christ.

[32] Aquinas divides the Old Law into moral precepts which indicate clearly what is good and bad for humans to do, ceremonial precepts which indicate how God is to be worshipped, and judicial precepts which make up the Jewish human law (e.g., what to do when someone steals). The moral precepts are eternally valid, but are clarified and intensified by Christ. The ceremonial precepts are abolished (*ST* I–II, q. 103, aa. 3–4). The judicial precepts can be adopted as the human law of a community, but are no longer binding in themselves (q. 104, a. 4). See q. 107, a. 2, for a summary of how the New Law fulfills the Old, and q. 108, a. 3, with the replies for examples of Christ's clarifications of the moral precepts.

may be revealed by the New Testament Law to have erred in their application or understanding of the natural law, such that they must be replaced or modified.[33]

NATURAL LAW AND POLYGAMY

In *ST* III, Supplement, q. 65, a. 1, Aquinas applies these distinctions between natural law, human law, and divine law to the question of "whether it is against the natural law to have several wives?" Aquinas understands that judging whether polygamy is against the natural law is difficult because many societies have accepted polygamy and many societies still practice polygamy.[34] Many of the Old Testament patriarchs and kings also had multiple wives. Were they wrong to do so?

In Supplement, q. 41, a. 1, Aquinas argues that humans are naturally inclined to marriage, meaning that marriage is a good which the natural law directs us towards and protects. There are two reasons that marriage is naturally good for humans.[35] The first reason is that the natural purpose of the sexual act is production of offspring and all living things naturally desire to reproduce. Human offspring require extensive education and development until they are able to live on their own. Therefore, performing the act, whose natural consequence is conceiving a child (i.e., having sex), naturally obliges the sexual partners to stay together to raise the child by establishing a stable home for themselves and their offspring. For Aquinas, to perform the sexual act simply for pleasure is to act against the natural law, because then the man and woman are treating the production of offspring as

[33] That the divine law is meant to correct human law is most clearly stated in *ST* I–II, q. 99, a. 2, ad 2. According to q. 100, a. 1, all of the moral precepts of the Old Law are in agreement with the natural law, though it may have been nearly impossible to clearly articulate them through natural reason alone. In *SCG* III, chap. 123, §7, Aquinas specifically mentions divine law as clarifying the natural law regarding marriage.

[34] In addition to the references given in note 3, it is probable that Aquinas was aware of polygamy in Islamic societies. Though *Reasons For The Faith Against Muslim Objections* does not explicitly mention polygamy, in chap. 7, lectio 1, §1000, of his *Commentary on 1 Corinthians*, trans. F. Larcher and D. Keating. Online: http://dhspriory.org/thomas/SS1Cor.htm, he claims that Muslims and Jews imagine that after the resurrection they will receive many wives. In *SCG* III, chap. 124, §4 and 6, Aquinas mentions what experience has shown regarding polygamy, though he may be referring to historical testimony.

[35] I note that Aquinas thinks there is nothing specifically Christian about these natural reasons for marriage, since Aquinas himself takes them from Aristotle. *ST* III, Suppl. q. 41, a. 1 references Aristotle, *Ethics* bk. VIII, chap. 11–12.

an accident or unwanted consequence of sex, whereas reproduction is the very purpose of sex. To conceive a child and not take care of it is an irrational act contrary to the natural law.[36] Given the time, materials, and educational opportunities needed for the successful raising of children, marriage is the human way of fulfilling the desire to reproduce, which is common to all animals but carried out by each animal in a manner appropriate to its species.[37]

Moreover, Aquinas strongly believes that a human child will best be cared for by his biological parents, and that marriage ensures that a child's parents are known. It is unjust to the child for his potential parents to engage in sexual activity that leaves his paternity or his upbringing uncertain.[38] "Hence human nature rebels against an indeterminate union of the sexes and demands that a man should be united to a determinate woman and should abide with her a long time or even for a whole lifetime."[39] Therefore, marriage is the only appropriate setting for sex, and one should only engage in sexual activity if one is willing to raise the possible offspring with one's spouse. The first natural purpose of human sex is the

[36] See *ST* I–II, q. 154, a. 1, on sinful behaviors that are against the nature of the human sexual act. See q. 154, a. 1 and *SCG* III, chap. 122, on why fornication—sex outside of marriage—is wrong.

[37] *ST* III, Suppl. q. 41, a.1; q. 65, a. 1, ad 4; q. 65, a. 3; and *SCG* III, chap. 122, §6 say that pairing for life is not natural in animals in which the young are able to quickly take care of themselves or in which the mother is capable of carrying for the young herself. By contrast, pairing for life is natural for some birds who must care for the offspring together!

[38] *ST* III, Suppl. q. 41, a. 1: "Now a child cannot be brought up and instructed unless it have certain and definite parents, and this would not be the case unless there were a tie between the man and a definite woman and it is in this that matrimony consists." Q. 62, a. 4 says that the adultery of the husband and wife are equally sins against the marriage relationship, but the adultery of the wife is a worse sin against the child because it confuses the paternity. Q. 65, a. 4, says that fornication is a mortal sin because it "destroys the due relations of the parent with the offspring that is nature's aim in sexual intercourse." Likewise, Aquinas in q. 65, a. 1, reply to ad contrary 8 and *Summa Contra Gentiles* III, q. 124, §1–2, says that polyandry is completely against natural law and has never been accepted in any society, because in polyandry it is unknown which man is to care for the child. Aquinas here seems bound by his own culture in which men had almost all the political and economic power. I note that polyandry was practiced in some eastern cultures.

[39] *ST* I–II, q. 154, a. 2. Aquinas also has several arguments for why marriage is naturally indissolvable. See *SCG* III, chap. 123, for the clearest presentation. In *ST* III, Suppl., q. 67, a. 1, he argues that divorce is against the natural law.

prodution of healthy, educated, virtuous, and loved human beings,[40] and marriage is the natural means to this end.

The second natural reason for marriage is that human beings are naturally social, for humans are "not self-sufficient in all things concerning life."[41] Aquinas follows Aristotle in teaching that humans cannot be fully happy without friendship and community life. Even when a human is mature and no longer needs care and education, she cannot flourish on her own, for our rational abilities are only fully developed when we live in community. No human can reinvent the full wealth of human learning, and Aquinas notes that humans simply enjoy talking to each other. Furthermore, people have different gifts and interests, and community life is easier and happier when people are allowed to specialize and then share the products of their work with each other.[42] Furthermore, Aquinas believes that there are naturally certain tasks that men are better at than women and others that women are better at than men.[43] Therefore, when a man and a woman establish a family together, their abilities complement each other, and thus enable them to live a richer and happier life together.[44] In Supplement, q. 49, a. 1, obj. 2, Aquinas summarizes with approval Aristotle's analysis in *Nicomachean Ethics* VIII.12, that "the friendship between husband and wife is natural, and includes the virtuous, the useful, and the pleasant." For Aristotle,

[40] I thank Angus Brook for help with this formulation (personal communication). *ST* III, Suppl. q. 41, a. 1 says that parents provide existence, nourishment, and education to their children. See also q. 47, a. 2, ad 1.

[41] *ST* III, suppl., q. 41, a. 1.

[42] These last few lines are a summary of chapter 1 of Aquinas, *On Kingship*, trans. G. Phelan, rev. I.T. Eischmann (Toronto: Pontifical Institute for Medieval Studies, 1947). Online: http://dhspriory.org/thomas/DeRegno.htm. *On Kingship* is a recasting of Aristotle's arguments in *Politics* I.1 for why humans naturally create communities.

[43] Notoriously, Aquinas considers that a man would be better helped in all activities by another man except in procreation and family life: "we may say that woman was made chiefly in order to be man's helpmate in relation to the offspring, whereas the man was not made for this purpose" (q. 44, a. 2, ad 2). Aquinas explicitly denies that Eve was made to help Adam in works other than procreation in *ST* I, q. 92, a. 1, and he repeats this in q. 98, a. 2, sed contra. This sexism is also found in Aquinas's presentation of the first reason for marriage, for he thinks that women generally lack the developed reason and physical strength to successfully raise children by themselves. I in no way support Aquinas's theory of gender inequality, but I believe that his arguments for marriage can be disentangled from his thought on gender.

[44] *ST* III, supp., q. 41, a. 1: The secondary end of marriage "is the mutual services which married persons render one another in household matters."

friendships are based on utility (e.g., you are friends with your business partners), on pleasure (e.g., you are friends with those you play sports with), and on virtue (e.g., you are friends with someone because he or she is a good person). A good marriage is based on utility, pleasure, and virtue. Aquinas, in fact, goes beyond Aristotle by suggesting that marriage is the "greatest friendship" since the husband and wife are united together in the sexual act and "the partnership of the whole range of domestic activity."[45]

For Aquinas, marriage is the foundation of the household, the first and most basic human society, through which humans can acquire the basic necessities of life and achieve a degree of self-sufficiency. In this regard, the traditional Melanesian understanding of the household may be closer to the medieval and ancient view than contemporary Western practice. By domestic activities, Aquinas probably has in mind the management of productive activities such as weaving and farming and caring for livestock and sevants, just as the Melanesian husband and wife traditionally work together to keep gardens, raise pigs, and care for and direct their dependents. The husband and wife form the foundation of the basic unit of communal life. Following Aristotle, Aquinas teaches that families unite to form villages, villages unite to form cities (which includes all the territory that supports the city), and cities unite to form a kingdom.[46] Each higher level of community provides greater material security and further opportunities for our rational capacities. In sum, marriage is not merely a private affair, but is intimately connected to fulfilling humanity's rational and social nature.[47] The marriage relationship is to be the greatest earthly friendship because it is the foundation for the household – the "society set up according to nature

[45] *SCG* III, chap. 123, §6. The friendship of spouses is only mentioned in passing in the Supplement (e.g. q. 41, a. 2). It is a pity that Aquinas did not live to give his full thoughts on marriage in the *Summa Theologiae*, for the discussion of marriage in *Summa Contra Gentiles* stresses the friendship of the spouses in a way that the material from the *Sentences Commentary* does not.

[46] Aquinas, *On Kingship* I, chap. 2, §14. In this text, Aquinas mentions province as the highest community. In *ST* I–II, q. 40, he interchanges province with kingdom. Unlike Aristotle, but like Plato (*Laws* III), Aquinas recognizes that a city by itself is not sufficient for protection against political enemies. A kingdom or league of cities is required.

[47] The social dimension of marriage is one basis for Aquinas's opposition to consanguous marriages (marriage of people related by blood). In *ST* III, Suppl. q. 54, a. 3, he writes that "the accidental end of marriage is the binding together of mankind and the extension of friendship," and there is no extension of friendship when kin marry (see also a. 4).

for everyday life."[48] Marriage itself is a partial fulfillment of our natural desire to live in community and is the basis for the further fulfillment of that desire. To merely want to sleep with someone and not to live with him or her is contrary to the social nature of humanity, and thus is against the natural law.[49] In fornication, one treats the other as an object or tool for pleasure and not as a person with whom to enter into friendship.

Aquinas's sexual ethics may initially come across as impersonal, namely that sex and marriage are only for procreation.[50] Aquinas, however, speaks from a biological point of view when explaining the natural end of sex, which is also the first end of marriage. As seen above, the proper human context for sex is the friendship between the spouses and the establishment of the household, the most basic human community. In the marriage relationship, a sexual partner is neither a tool for pleasure nor a tool for offspring, but is a friend for life.[51] Marriage itself is a "certain inseparable union of souls, by which husband and wife are pledged by a bond of mutual affection."[52] Through sexual intercourse, this union is perfected (consummated), such that "the joining of husband and wife by matrimony is the greatest of all joinings, since it is a joining of soul and body."[53] Therefore, Aquinas's teaching on sex and marriage are consistent with the Catholic Church's current teaching that marriage "is by its nature ordered toward the good of the spouses and the procreation and education of off-

[48] Aquinas, *Commentary on Aristotle's Politics*, trans. E.L. Fortin and P.D. O'Neill, book 1, chapter 1, lectio 1, §26. Online: http://dhspriory.org/thomas/Politics.htm. The household is composed of three relationships: husband and wife, parents and children, and master and servant. Both Aquinas and Aristotle make it clear that the role of the wife and of the servants are different in nature, though, unfortunately, some of Aquinas's arguments for the difference show his sexism. Wives have their own authority over children and servants.

[49] Thus, Aquinas, *ST* III, suppl., q. 65, a. 3, says that it is wrong to keep a concubine because then the sexual act is being done for pleasure alone and not for the sake of the offspring or to establish a family. A. 5 implies that a man wrongs a concubine by not treating her as a partner in "the community of works necessary for life."

[50] Aquinas has an unfortunate tendency to focus only on procreation when explaining why fornication is wrong in *SCG* III, chap. 122 and *ST* I–II, q. 154, a. 2.

[51] When arguing for the indissolvability of marriage in *SCG* III, chap. 123, and against polygamy and bigamy in *ST* III, Suppl., qq. 65–66, Aquinas is often concerned that the man will use a woman and not treat her as an equally human partner in the marriage relationship.

[52] *ST* III, q. 29, a. 2.

[53] *ST* III, Suppl., q. 44, a. 2, ad 3.

spring."[54] In other words, due to our rational natures, human sex has the twofold purposes of uniting a married couple together and generating children. Marriage is an indissolvable friendship which exists for the sake of that union and its natural product – the children. Therefore the two natural goods of marriage are well-raised children and faithful friendship between the husband and wife.[55] To these two natural purposes for marriage, Aquinas adds a supernatural or sacramental one, namely that marriage between Christians has the goal of signifying the mystical relationship between Christ and the Church, following Paul in Ephesians 5 and John in Rev19:9 and 21:2.[56] I will further discuss this specifically Christian purpose in the next section.

In sum, Aquinas in *Summa Theologiae* III, Supplement, q. 65, a. 1, considers whether polygamy is contrary to the purpose of marriage according to three viewpoints: first, insofar as humans are animals who seek to reproduce and raise offspring; second, insofar as humans are rational animals who seek a community of love and support; third, insofar as humans are Christians seeking union with Christ. An act is completely against the natural law if it makes the achieving of the natural end impossible, or it is partially against natural law if it makes the achieving of the end difficult or unlikely.[57] Aquinas judges that polygamy is not contrary to the first natural purpose of marriage, because a man, with the proper cultural and community support, is able to care for multiple wives and their offspring. The par-

[54] *The Catechism of the Catholic Church* (Homebush: St. Pauls, 1994), §1601 and repeated throughout. This teaching is often referred to as the unitive and procreative significance of the sexual act. Aquinas normally emphasizes the procreative aspect of sex and marriage, whereas the *Catechism* tends to list the good of spouses first.

[55] These goods are summarized in *ST* III, Suppl., q. 49, a. 2 and q. 65, a. 1, and *Summa Contra Gentiles* IV, trans. C.J. O'Neil (New York: Hanover House, 1955–57), chap. 78. Online http://dhspriory.org/thomas/Contra Gentiles.htm.

[56] In *ST* III, suppl., q. 65, a. 1, Aquinas simply writes that marriage between believers has the goal of signifying Christ and the Church. He does not give scriptural references, but Jesus himself compares the Kingdom of God to a wedding feast and himself to the bridegroom, an image developed by Paul and also used by John.

[57] To use a perhaps infamous example, according to Aquinas homosexual sex is completely contrary to the natural law because procreation is impossible, whereas fornication is partially against the natural law because it makes the natural ends of marriage—the successful raising of children and friendship of spouses—unlikely to take place (see *ST* I–II, q. 154, a. 1).

entage of such children is clear and the children can be cared for adequately.[58]

Aquinas argues that polygamy is against the second natural purpose of marriage, because it is nearly impossible for the husband, wives, and children to all come together into a single harmonious community. Rather, the husband's attention will be divided between the different wives and their children, and the relationships between them all will be imperfect. Furthermore, the wives will be jealous that they must share their husband with each other. Instead of a husband and wife forming one household and one community, a husband and many wives will tend to form overlapping households and a divided community. That polygamy causes a divided community can be observed in the traditional PNG Highlands practice of men living with each other in a Man's House and each man building a separate house for each wife, so that husbands and wives did not actually engage in daily living together.[59] The imperfect community that polygamy causes is very clearly seen in the Bible in the hostile relations between Sarah and Hagar, between Jacob's wives and sons, between Hannah and Elkannah and Penninah, and between the children of king David. Perhaps treating the Old Testament as a source of case studies for polygamy, Aquinas judges that it "is contrary to good behavior for one man to have several wives, for the result of this is discord in domestic society, as is evident from experience."[60]

In his discussion of polygamy in *Summa Contra Gentiles*, Aquinas adds that polygamy is against the friendship proper to marriage. In a polygamous marriage each wife is bound to her husband for the necessities of life and for the education of her children and for sexual fidelity, but the husband is

[58] In contrast, as mentioned above, Aquinas argues in *ST* III, suppl., q. 65, a. 1, ad 8, that polyandry is completely against the first purpose of marriage because the wife will continue to have sexual relations with her husbands while she is pregnant, thereby jeopardizing the health of the foetus, and because the husbands, not knowing whether they are the father of any child, will refuse to help raise the child. Thus, from Aquinas's cultural conditioned viewpoint, polyandry makes it impossible, in principle, for the child to be raised well.

[59] This observation is based on my visits to cultural centres in Banz, Jiwaka and Wabag, Enga, and from conversations with anthropologists in PNG.

[60] *SCG* III, chap. 124, §6. It is possible that Aquinas is speaking from some knowledge of Dominican contacts with Muslim lands or from irregular arrangements of mistresses or concubines in his own society. I note from my conversations with doctors at Kudjup Nazarene Hospital in Jiwaka that a large percentage of trauma cases are caused by domestic violence between polygamous spouses.

not so bound to any of his wives. The husband materially benefits from the work of all his wives, uses all to procure children for himself, and is not sexually faithful to any one of them. Therefore, the friendship between a wife and a polygamous husband "will not be equal on both sides." So, the friendship of the wife with the husband "will not be free, but servile in some way."[61] Therefore, Aquinas concludes "among husbands having plural wives, the wives have a status like that of servants," which he again claims "is corroborated by experience."[62]

There is still some love and support between spouses in polygamy,[63] and presumably divided households can still serve as a basis for the political community, which is why certain cultures have accepted polygamy. Aquinas argues, however, that monogamy more perfectly satisfies our social nature, produces a deeper friendship between spouses, and results in a united household and a more peaceful community. Therefore, polygamy is partially against the natural law, because it is partially contrary to the second natural purpose of marriage. It is more rational and human to be monogamous.[64] Aquinas even claims, for humans, "that one female is for one male is a consequence of natural instinct."[65]

Marriage as a Sacrament

In considering polygamy with respect to the specifically Christian purpose of marriage, it is necessary to explain Aquinas's teaching on marriage as a

[61] *SCG* III, chap. 124, §5.
[62] *SCG* III, chap. 124, §4
[63] *ST* III, Suppl., q. 65, a. 2, ad 5, argues that there is still some faith between polygamous spouses.
[64] In *ST* III, Suppl., q. 65, a. 1, Aquinas considers polygamy to be in agreement with the primary end of marriage and partially opposed to the secondary end of marriage, which is friendship between the wife and husband. In contrast, polyandry is against the primary end of marriage (because men will not raise children of unknown paternity) and the secondary end of marriage (because men will not agree to share the same woman with each other). In *SCG* III, chap. 124, he sets out why both polyandry and polygamy are against the nature of human sexual relations, arguing that husbands and wives must be held to the same moral standard for marital fidelity as each other. In other words, if it is wrong for a woman to have several sexual partners, it is also wrong for a man to have several sexual partners, even if the unions are sanctioned by human customs.
[65] *SCG* III, chap. 124, §1. Aquinas argues for this conclusion based on the nature of sexual desire, and on the natural need for both parents to be involved in raising the offspring (*SCG* III, chap. 124, §3; *ST* III, Suppl., q. 65, a. 1, ad 4).

sacrament. I will do this in four steps, bridging this section and the next. First, what is a sacrament? Second, how is marriage a sacrament? Third, can a polygamous marriage be a sacrament? Fourth, what is the relationship between the natural and sacramental understandings of marriage? In his explanations of what a sacrament is and how marriage is a sacrament, Aquinas was systematizing the Christian understanding of sacraments and marriage of his time, an understanding more or less common to Eastern and Western Christians. In the Reformation, many Protestant groups challenged and rejected these understandings, whereas the Catholic Church and the Orthodox Churches have maintained them. It would, however, be anachronistic to place our denominational labels on Aquinas's ideas, so I will simply present Aquinas's understanding of Christian marriage, accepting that many Protestants would disagree with him. Even if one rejects that Christian marriage is a sacrament in the Catholic sense, I judge that most Christians will agree with Aquinas that Christian marriage is intended to be an image of the relationship between Christ and the Church, such that his teachings on Christian marriage remain relevant.

Aquinas defines a sacrament as a "sanctifying remedy against sin offered to man under sensible signs."[66] A sacrament is a religious rite which signifies some aspect of the mystery of the Incarnation.[67] During the rite, material things act as an instrument for God's grace, such that a human is sanctified by God through the material.[68] As the Catholic Church currently teaches, sacraments are "efficacious signs of grace."[69] A sacrament is not simply a physical sign of a concurrent spiritual action or a memorial of

[66] *ST* III, supp., q. 42, a. 1. I warn my readers that I am not a trained theologian and that my explanation of a sacrament combines together material from *ST* III and the Supplement, even though the former represents some of the last work of Aquinas and the latter some of the first work.

[67] *ST* III, q. 60, a. 3: "Consequently a sacrament is a sign that is both a reminder of the past, i.e. the passion of Christ; and an indication of that which is effected in us by Christ's passion, i.e. grace; and a prognostic, that is, a foretelling of future glory."

[68] *ST* III, q. 60, a. 1: "[N]one but God can cause grace: since grace is nothing else than a participated likeness of the Divine Nature." Sacraments only effect the salvation they signify as instruments used by God. A. 2 says that all sacraments derive their power by the grace that God gives through the incarnation. In q. 62, a. 2 (cf. ad 3), Aquinas strongly argues that since God is the principle agent of a sacrament, only he can initiate a sacrament; therefore, God, and not the institutional church, is the founder of the sacraments.

[69] *Catechism of the Catholic Church,* §248. Aquinas affirms that sacraments effect the grace that they signify in *ST* III, q. 62, a. 1, ad 1.

what God has done, rather it is a means by which God is present in our lives and by which we enter into the life of Christ. For example, the waters of baptism not only symbolize our participation in the death and resurrection of Christ but are the means by which we participate in these spiritual realities. It is through the physical waters that God sanctifies the soul of the new believer, and it is through the act of baptism that the believer enters into the mystical body of Christ. Grace is our participation in the life of God and the sacraments are material instruments of that participation.

Why and how is marriage a sacrament? Aquinas believes that his Latin Bible tells him that marriage is a sacrament. For him, Eph 5:32 reads "*Sacramentum hoc magnum est: ego autem dico in Christo et in ecclesia* ("This is a great sacrament; but I speak in Christ and in the Church").[70] Aquinas straightforwardly interprets this verse as meaning that from the viewpoint of the Christian faith, marriage is a sacrament, according to the full meaning of sacrament in Aquinas's own day. Aquinas knew no Greek and had different exegetical methods than we do today. Is his reading of this passage at all plausible? Now, the Latin *sacramentum* translates the Greek μυστήριον (*mystērion*). In secular Greek, μυστήριον meant both a secret religious rite and the mysteries about the divine symbolized or revealed in that rite. In Paul's letters, μυστήριον generally refers to the content of divine revelation, especially the highest teachings about God, Christ, and salvation.[71] Eph 5:22–33 explains the relationship between a Christian husband and wife by comparing it to that between Christ and the Church, but at the same time the marital relationship is used to illumine the relation of Christ to the Church. Paul interprets the description of the physical union of husband and wife in Gen 2:24 as a sign of the spiritual union between Christ and the Church. Just as a man nourishes and cherishes his own flesh,

[70] Quoted by Aquinas in *SCG*, bk IV, chap. 78. Aquinas also appeals to this passage in *ST* III, q. 61, a. 2, obj. 3; q. 65, a. 2; and Suppl., q. 42, a. 1, sed contra. I have checked the Latin against the Vulgate: Iohannes Wordsworth and Henricus Iulianus White, eds., *Nouum Testamentum Latine*, 2nd ed., (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1911). Cf. τὸ μυστήριον τοῦτο μέγα ἐστίν, ἐγὼ δὲ λέγω εἰς Χριστὸν καὶ εἰς τὴν ἐκκλησίαν.

[71] See Gerhard Kittel (ed.), *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament*, trans. Geoffrey W. Bromiley (Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans, 1967), s.v. μυστήριον; 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; 2nd ed. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1979), s.v. μυστήριον; and Henry George Liddell and Robert Scott, *A Greek–English Lexicon*, rev. Henry Stuart Jones (Oxford: Clarendon, 1968), s.v. μυστήριον.

so should a husband nourish and cherish his wife, so does Christ nourish and cherish the Church. Therefore, it is perfectly plausible to interpret Paul as teaching that Christian marriage "is the symbol of a sacred reality, namely, the union of Christ and the Church."[72] Aquinas, however, is also reading the original sense of religious rite back into μυστήριον, whereas Paul seems to use the word to mean symbol of a divine mystery, but obviously marriage is a religious ritual. Therefore, Aquinas's claim that his understanding of Christian marriage is biblical is at least plausible.[73]

Regardless of what one may think of Aquinas's reading of Ephesians, according to him, in Christian marriage, when a Christian man and a women freely consent to beget and raise children and to establish a common life together, God works through their consent to unite the married couple together, body and soul (Eph 5:31). The couple themselves are the material causes of the sacraments. Through his grace, God establishes an indissolvable personal union between the husband and wife, a union which is the foundation for their begetting and raising of children and for their common Christian life. The personal union between the husband and wife is a sign of the present and future union between Christ and Church, and is also the unity of the Body of Christ as lived out in their life together.[74] The family

[72] Aquinas's *Commentary on Ephesians*, trans. M.L. Lamb (Albany, NY: Magi Books, 1966), chapter 5, lectio 10. Online: http://dhspriory.org/thomas/SSEph.htm. The online edition gives the Greek and the Latin. Kittel, *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament*, vol. IV, p. 823 wishes to restrict μυστήριον's reference to the quotation of Gen 2:24 and not apply it to marriage itself, but this is disingenuous since Paul (like Jesus in Matt 19:3–9) interprets Gen 2:24 as a description of marriage. If Paul is saying that this verse applies to the mystery of Christ and the Church, then he must mean that marriage is a sign of a sacred reality.

[73] Pheme Perkins, "The Letter to the Galatians," in *The New Interpreter's Bible,* vol XI (Nashville, Abingdon Press, 2000), 451–52, mentions that certain gnostic sects that had their own view of marriage as a sacrament and would quote Ephesians in support of their view. I am inclined to conjecture that the gnostics were distorting an original Christian understanding of marriage as a sanctifying sign rather than to suppose that the gnostics were the first to treat marriage as a sacrament.

[74] This paragraph is a slight expansion and combination of *ST* III, Suppl., q. 42, a. 1 (with replies) and q. 45, a. 1. In precise terms, the expressed consent of the couple is the form of the sacrament, the couple is the matter, and the effect is the personal bond between them, a bond which images Christ and the Church. For Aquinas, following Augustine, the chief remedial effect of marriage is that sex can take place without sin, thereby removing the manner in which sin has tainted human sexual activity and desire ever since the first sin (cf. q. 42, a. 3). In *SCG* IV, chap. 78, Aquinas speaks more positively of Christian marriage as

manifests the mystical Body of Christ; the husband gives himself completely to the wife as Christ gave himself completely to the Church, and the wife gives herself to her husband as Christians offer their whole persons to Christ.[75] Christian family life is a participation in the life of Christ and is thus a means of God's grace to the family members.

Sacramental and Scriptural Arguments Against Polygamy

In Supplement, q. 65, a. 1, Aquinas teaches that polygamy is entirely against the sacramental nature of marriage. Just as there is one Christ, so there is one Church, his Body. Consequently, "the sacrament of marriage signifies the union of Christ with the Church, which is the union of one with one."[76] As Aquinas explains in more detail in *Summa Contra Gentiles,*

> the union of Christ and the Church is a union of one to one to be held forever. . . . [M]atrimony as a sacrament of the Church is a union of one man to one woman to be held indivisibly, and this is included in the faithfulness by which the man and wife are bound to one another.[77]

Polygamy destroys the ability of marriage to signify and manifest the Body of Christ.[78] Polygamy institutionalizes the marital infidelity of the husband, therefore a polygamous marriage cannot signify the faithfulness of Christ to the Church or of the Church to Christ. Polygamy disrupts the personal bond of the husband and wife, for how can the husband give himself completely, body and soul, to two or more women simultaneously? If a Christian man takes a second wife, the Christian character of his first mar-

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bestowing a grace whereby the spouses, precisely as physically united, are included in the union of Christ and the Church.

[75] This sentence is based more on John Paul II, *Theology of the Body: Human Love in the Divine Plan* (Boston: Pauline, 1997), who emphasizes the mutal submission of spouses to each other, than on Aquinas, who focuses, unfortunately, on the submission of the wife to the husband. See Mary Healy, *Men and Women Are from Eden: A Study Guide to John Paul II's Theology of the Body* (Cincinnati: Servant, 2005), 79–90, for a summary of the Pope's interpretation of Ephesians 5 with references to his works.

[76] *ST* III, Suppl., q. 66, a. 1. Here Aquinas says that having plural de facto spouses or even having spouses serially destroys the sacramental character of marriage.

[77] *SCG* IV, chap. 78, §5.

[78] Aquinas seems to find this point extremely obvious. In q. 65, a. 1, he simply says that polygamy "removes altogether . . .the signification of Christ and the Church."

riage is destroyed. His relationships with his wives are unredeemed, because these relationships cannot conform to the spiritual reality of Christ and the Church, the reality of which Christian marriage is a symbol. By practicing polygamy, a Christian man refuses to allow his family life to be a participation in the life of Christ, such that his most intimate human relationships conform to the pattern of the world and not to the pattern of Christ.

A general principle in Aquinas's thought is that grace perfects nature.[79] Therefore, Christianity does not destroy a non-Christian society's marital practices, rather sacramental marriage purifies, perfects, and affirms what is naturally good about marriage. There are reasons based on the natural law for the wrongness of fornication, the indissolvability of marriage, and for monogamy; but, according to Aquinas, certain societies have permitted sexual relations simply for pleasure,[80] legalized divorce in order to prevent violence against unwanted wives,[81] and have practiced polygamy because polygamy encourages human procreation.[82] Conversely, the Christian, sacramental vision of marriage as one man and one woman for life is how marriage was designed by God. According to Aquinas, Scripture reveals to us the divine law, which is God's original plan for humanity (the eternal law) expressed to us in a direct and understandable manner. As explained above, divine law thus purifies our understanding and application of the natural law and corrects mistakes that societies have made in their human laws and customs.[83] For example, Aquinas notes that some societies do not charge a husband who kills an adulterous wife with murder, whereas Aquinas says that according to Scripture wife-murder is never lawful and that

[79] See, e.g., *Commentary on Boethius*'s *De Trinitate*, trans. R.E. Brenan (New York: Herder, 1946), q. 2, a. 3 and *ST* I, q. 1, a. 8, ad 2.

[80] *ST* III, suppl., q. 65, a. 4, ad 1: "Among the Gentiles the natural law was obscured in many points: and consequently they did not think it wrong to have intercourse with a concubine, and in many cases practiced fornication as though it were lawful."

[81] *ST* III, Suppl., q. 67, a. 3

[82] *ST* III, Suppl., q. 65, a. 2. Aquinas says that polygamy was allowed among the patriarchs in order to physically build up the people of God. He does not speculate on other goods that could come through polygamy such as lifelong security for women and the possibiltiy of marriage for women in a society in which constant tribal war would reduce the male population.

[83] The relation of divine law to the other forms of law is explained in *ST* I–II, q. 91, a. 4.

such a husband will have to answer to God, no matter what his culture.[84] Divine law instructs us how to live a truly human life as images of God who is love. It guides us towards right relations with God and our fellow humans. In general, the divine law calls us to live according to a higher moral standard than the natural law clearly reveals.

Aquinas gives a number of reasons why polygamy is against the divine law and is thus absolutely contrary to the Christian faith. First, Scripture itself says of the husband and wife that "they shall be two in one flesh" (Gen 2:24), which is repeated by Jesus Christ (Matt 19:5) and Paul (Eph 5:31). Thus the original plan for marriage is one man and one woman becoming one flesh, not a man somehow being one flesh with multiple women.[85] Second, Paul writes in 1 Cor 7:2–4 that the body of the wife is no longer her own but belongs to her husband and the body of the husband is no longer his own but belongs to the wife. They have given themselves bodily to each other, and they have a responsiblity to physically love each other. Therefore, once a man is married, he is no longer free to give his body to another woman, for his body belongs to his wife. Therefore, when a husband tries to marry a second wife he is stealing from his first wife and violating her conjugal rights.[86] Third, "Do not to another what you would not have done to yourself" is a command of the natural law which is expressed in Tobit 4:15 and then restated positively by Christ: "Do to others as you would have them do to you" (Mt 7:12, Lk 6:31). But if a man is not willing to share his wife with another man, then it is not right for him to expect her to share her husband with other women. A polygamist is unjust in expecting his wives to be faithful to him while being unfaithful to them.[87]

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[84] *ST* III, Suppl., q. 60, a. 1. Being Italian, Aquinas may be thinking of traditional Roman culture in which the male head of the household had the power of life and death over its members.

[85] *ST* III, Suppl., q. 65, sed contra 1.

[86] *ST* III, Suppl., sed contra 2. The paying of the marriage debt is discussed at length in q. 64.

[87] *ST* III, Suppl., sed contra 3. In q. 49, a. 2, Aquinas says that one of the natural goods of marriage is the faith between the husband and the wife, which he tends to define from the viewpoint of the man: "whereby a man has intercourse with his wife and with no other woman." This faith is a part of justice, namely keeping one's promises. This faith is presumably destroyed by polygamy, so that a polygamous marriage is naturally less good than monogamy.

What about the Old Testament patriarchs? As explained above, Aquinas believes that both the Torah and the revelation of God in Jesus Christ are the divine law; however, the old law is related to the new law as the imperfect is to the perfect. Thus, "Now, marriage was at no time a perfect state until the law of Christ came."[88] Just as the revelation of God in the Old Testament is incomplete in comparison with the full revelation of God in the Incarnation, so too the Old Testament reveals an imperfect knowledge of human nature, which is clarified and corrected by the New Testament.[89] Therefore, though the patriarchs and kings knew that Gen 2:24 says that a man and his wife are joined together and become one flesh, it was not fully understood that God's original plan for marriage was incompatible with divorce until Christ clarified that Gen 2:24 means that marriage is naturally indissolvable (Matt 19:1–10). Likewise, Gen 2:24 was not understood to be incompatible with polygamy until Paul explained the sacramental nature of Christian marriage in Ephesians 5, which was reinforced by the wedding imagery in Revelation. God permitted polygamy among his chosen people during the time of partial and incomplete revelation,[90] but, according to Aquinas, the New Testament reveals that husbands and wives are equal to each other in their marriage rights, such that polygamy, which advantages the husband over the wife is no longer allowed.[91] "But when that which is perfect has come, then that which is partial will be done away" (1 Cor 13:10). Therefore, with the coming of Christ, the people of God are no longer permitted to practice divorce or polygamy.[92]

[88] Aquinas, *Explanation of the Ten Commandments*, trans. Joseph B. Collins, Online: https://dhspriory.org/thomas/ english/TenCommandments.htm, article 8.

[89] See *ST* I–II, q. 91, a. 5, and q. 107, a. 1–2.

[90] Aquinas discusses whether polygamy was ever lawful in *ST* III, suppl., q. 65, a. 2. His own answer is not based on the ignorance of the patriarchs, but that God gave them an exemption from the full force of the natural law. Aquinas defends the thesis that the patriarchs, David, and Solomon were morally righteous and holy men. Therefore, it is difficult for him to admit that they sinned and suffered from ignorance, even though such a view of the Old Testament heroes is perfectly compatible with his understanding of the relation between the Old and New Law.

[91] As I noted earlier, Aquinas's commitment to the equality of the spouses in regards to marriage rights and fidelity seems to become more pronounced in his later works. In his *Explanation of the Ten Commandments*, a. 8, he references Paul's discussion of marriage in 1 Cor 4:2–4 as revealing that the origin of Eve from Adam's side signifies the equality of spouses within the marriage relationship, an equality that the Jews did not recognize or practice.

[92] See *ST* III, Suppl., q. 65, a. 2, ad 4 on polygamy, and q. 67, a. 2, ad 3 on divorce.

CONCLUSION

For Thomas Aquinas, polygamy is disallowed by a full understanding of the natural law regarding marriage, because polygamy makes it difficult for the husband and wives to maintain a harmonious and unified household and because the wives tend to be reduced to a servile status. Conversely, polygamy can be consistent with the natural human inclination to have and care for offspring, which is why certain cultures adapted it. Divine revelation, however, shows that monogamy more perfectly fulfills humanity's rational and social nature. Polygamy destroys the sacramental nature of Christian marriage, is contrary to God's original plan for marriage, and breaks Jesus's Golden Rule by being unfair to the wife and denying her conjugal rights. Therefore, no Christian should be a polygamist, and all polygamists have excluded Christ from their marriages.

Likewise, Christians of all cultures must turn from unredeemed and imperfect marriage arrangements – whether polygamy, or common law marriage, or concubinage, or cohabitation – and embrace the sacramental marriage of the New Covenant. In *Summa Contra Gentiles,* Aquinas teaches that the divine law regarding marriage corrects "those who state that fornication is not a sin" (cohabitation),[93] "the custom of those who dismiss their wives" (divorce),[94] "the custom of those having several wives" (polygamy),[95] and "the custom of those who practice carnal relations with their relatives" (consanguous marriage).[96] From Aquinas's examples and explanations, we can draw the exhortation to be open to the ways in which the Gospel challenges and corrects the laws and customs of our own society. Perhaps due to sin or ignorance, our society is mistaken about what is natural and best for humans. In such circumstances, I say, let us no longer live as the non-believers do, but as children of the light.

[93] *SCG* III, chap. 122, §12,
[94] *SCG* III, chap. 123, §10.
[95] *SCG* III, chap. 124, §8.
[96] *SCG* III, chap. 125, §9. In these four chapters, Aquinas argues that these practices are contrary to the nature of human sexual relations, and then he concludes by quoting Scripture passages.

EPISTEMOLOGY AND PASTORAL PRACTICE: APPLICATIONS IN MELANESIAN CONTEXTS

Paul Anthony McGavin

Abstract

The paper treats how we know what we know, epistemology, engaging physical and meta-physical domains in congruence with Melanesian worldviews. The paper thus embraces "what we experience" – phenomena – in both physical and meta-physical realms, leading to a phenomenological approach to "how we know what we know. This entails (1) appreciation of the proper domains for understanding the physical world using the methods of the physical sciences and social sciences, and (2) appreciation of the proper domains for understanding metaphysical worlds. Encounter involving physical and metaphysical as in "The Word became flesh" provides the schema for integrating epistemology with pastoral practice.[1]

Keywords

holistic worldview, instrumental worldview, epistemology, physical and metaphysical domains, pastoral practice, Melanesia

I want to open this paper in an unusual way—by a brief autobiographical recount that I believe will illuminate my topic:

> The year was 1974, the locality, Bacau in the then Portuguese Timor. The setting a quaint and cheap colonial era hotel, and the time was in the depth of the night. I recall no dreaming as I awakened somewhat suddenly with a sense of a presence; a presence the nature of which was unclear to me, but was uninvited and vaguely sordid. In my mind I used an Australian slang idiom, "Nick off!" In using this idiom, I remain unclear of any consciousness that "Nick" can be slang for the Devil (usually, "Old Nick"). What followed was alarming. I felt that I had a devil on my back (although I was lying on my back). I can't re-

[1] The paper was prepared for presentation at the 2018 Annual Conference of the Melanesian Association of Theological Schools (MATS) at the Pacific Adventist University, Port Moresby. I wish to thank Brandon Zimmerman of Catholic Theological Institute, Bomana, and the referees and editor of this journal for their assistance in sharpening this article.

> member whether there was an odour, but I have never lost the sense that I was under *assault*. My response was to try to cross myself. I found that I could not move my right arm. After further struggling, I decided to try to say the name *Jesus* (whether in my head only, or articulated, I am now unsure). It was an intense struggle to do so, and eventually I was able to say *Jesus*. Immediately, the sense of capture moved away. I regained mobility, and I crossed myself. I don't remember what I next did, although I eventually went back to sleep.

My title includes "epistemology," a term deriving from *epistemē*, Greek for knowledge, and implying the how and what we know. The second term comes from Latin for pasture in the grazing of animals and the herdsman or shepherd who leads the herd or the flock, with allusion to putting into practice Jesus's saying, "I am the good shepherd" (John 10:11).[2] The particular autobiographical incident was chosen to evoke a Melanesian religious context, where physical and metaphysical worlds are typically fused, and where indigenous religions tend to represent metaphysical encounters as malevolent, and in response involve ritual protective strategies.[3]

Clarifying these remarks, I am using the phrase "physical worlds" to indicate whatever we engage through our usual senses, and using the term "metaphysical worlds" to indicate such things that are engaged through ways that do not seem to involve our usual senses. I am using the term "worlds" in an all-encompassing sense like we imply when using the more technical term "phenomena" (meaning "those which are noticed or engaged"). Thus, we can speak of physical phenomena, meaning things that we engage through our usual senses (like all our everyday activities, or like using an instrument to measure the humidity levels in the air). We can also speak of metaphysical phenomena, meaning things that seem to operate outside the usual senses (such as wordless prayer, abstract thoughts, and a sense of a presence that seems not to draw upon senses such as sight or hearing). The term "malevolent" derives from Latin for evil or harmful, in

[2] All Scripture quotations are from the RSV.

[3] As soon as the word "tend" is used it necessarily evokes a different perspective. The spontaneous rise of cargo cults is an example where ritual performances evoke spiritual powers to bring material blessing. See, for example, the section on "Wishing and Explaining the Extraordinary" in G. W. Trompf, *Payback: the Logic of Retribution in Melanesian Religions* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994), 269–71. The manners of obverse dealing—with the malevolent—are more difficult to generalise as they are various in patterning across Melanesian cultures. Trompf gives Wahgi examples of sorcerers challenging malevolent powers in respect of various sicknesses (pp. 136–39).

contrast to "benevolent" (such as a "guardian angel"). Thus, to speak of physical and metaphysical worlds as being "fused" indicates a collapsing of sharp differentiation between these different natures of encounter, so that they in a manner of speaking "overlap." This perspective could be named as a "holistic" engagement with material and spiritual phenomena.

INTERPRETING THE AUTOBIOGRAPHICAL INCIDENT

At the time of this incident, I had little formal sense of epistemology, and limited comprehension of two pervasive errors of theology and of our manner of conducting our lives. One is the error that we fall into when we think that of ourselves we can do what is good and make ourselves acceptable to God (what is termed "Pelagianism").[4] The other pervasive error is what we fall into when we think that it is what we know that is the basis of our living a spiritual life and being acceptable to God (what is termed "Gnosticism").[5] When our thinking and acting are outside grace, our thoughts and actions are Pelagian; and where our thinking and action draws upon our understanding, and the "what we know" becomes a substitute for faith, then our thoughts and actions are gnostic. Of course, this manner of typifying is somewhat crude, but to avoid errors in theology and in our manner of conducting our lives, grace and faith must take priority over what we do (our acts or enactments) and priority over our understandings.[6]

I suppose that evil spirits and the devil were formal categories in my worldview, but I did not have any pervasive sense of a malevolent meta-

[4] The term derives from Pelagius, a fourth-century monk who was presenting spiritual and everyday exercises as effectual means for salvation in a manner that diminished the role of grace in human salvation.

[5] This term derives from the Greek word for "knowledge," and involves the notion that we are saved by our knowing in a cognitive sense of knowledge.

[6] This dichotomy is sharply made by the present Roman Pontiff in terms of neo-pelagianism and neo-gnosticism in his Letter to Bishops, *Placuit Deo* (February 2018), and again in his Apostolic Exhortation, *Gaudete et Exsultate* (signed 19 March 2018 and published in April 2018). I was overseas when the Letter was published and only read it after completing this paper; the Exhortation was published after the completion of this paper. That is, the emphasis that I make seems to be my own recognition that was independent of these reinforcements from the Magisterium. Some recent commentators on *Gaudete et Exsultate* argue a misuse of the term "gnostic" on the grounds that it originally referred to esoteric religious knowledge. Such criticism fails to recognise that terms evolve in their usage. If I were to pretend that I have a better standing before God because my religious knowledge far exceeds my students, this in contemporary usage would be gnosticism.

physical world. Then, as now, my worldview predominantly locates malice in the human person and in human society as is captured by the words, "… each person is tempted when he is lured and enticed by his own desire" (Jas 1:14). Yet, although in a day-to-day sense this was and remains my worldview, the astonishing thing for me – and still astonishing so many years later – is just how sharply this incident has formed my life and ministry. And I say this in the face of the fact that this is the first time that I have committed this event to public writing, and the first time that I have spoken about it publicly.

I of course understand that events, our understanding of events, and the ways that we respond (our enactions) occur in complex contexts that include a present, a past, and a future. And my response in this event at some level encompassed a worldview conveyed in the apostolic memory of Jesus's words, "Now is the judgement of this world, now shall the ruler of this world be cast out" (Jn 12:31). My point of emphasis, however, is that the continuing force of this event in terms of the how and what we know resides not firstly in cognition nor firstly in my enaction (not firstly in my knowledge or understanding, nor firstly in my acted responses). If this were otherwise, my enactions would entail a life and ministry that is Pelagian. If this were otherwise, my cognitions would entail a life and ministry that is gnostic. Rather, the continuing force of that event was and remains an encounter. In formal terms, the event was phenomenological, with phenomenology understood in peculiarly Christian terms that are most profoundly captured in John 1:14, "And the word became flesh," and as the writer of the first epistle of John writes, "That which we have seen and heard we proclaim to you" (1 John 1:3).

The will to make the Sign of the Cross was not first rooted in Gnosticism, nor first rooted in Pelagianism. The will to make an action of faith with the Sign of the Cross was first rooted incarnationally, because the bodily manual action was a claim on the life-saving and life-giving work of God in the Passion of Jesus Christ. The enduring force of that event was and is an encounter. In formal terms, it was phenomenological. And that encounter was complex. The encounter was multi-layered involving past, present, and future contexts, and fused elements that were physical and

metaphysical. And that encounter sharpened in an enduring way my overarching paradigm for the how and what we know.[7]

HOLISTIC PERSPECTIVE INVOLVING PHYSICAL AND METAPHYSICAL WORLDVIEWS

Why have I so laboured this? And why and how does this labouring relate to epistemology and pastoral practice in Melanesian contexts? I need again to clarify some terms before using them. When I say "restrictive," I mean that the line of enquiry is approached with sharply defined borders that require a particular manner of thinking. When I say "rationalist," I mean a line of reasoning that begins with something sharply defined (begins with a "premise") that becomes the basis for tight reasoning of consequences (with "syllogistic" reasoning). When I say "reductive," I mean a line of reasoning that, so to speak, dissects what is being considered, and examines the parts, and then reassembles the parts. Such a manner of approach differs from looking at what is examined as a whole, looking holistically, with a holistic perspective that encompasses both physical and metaphysical understandings.

By so clarifying these terms, it becomes clearer that my laboured recount of that encounter was presented as basis for a shift in our perception of epistemology away from the restrictive rationalist and reductive cognitive approach that since the late classical period of Greece has largely dominated philosophical epistemology and theological epistemology across the Christian era. An example of this is the Ship of Theseus exercise that is typical of the mindset in what is now termed Analytical Philosophy.[8] Before proceeding, in explanation, Analytical Philosophy treats words as having defined meanings ("denotative" only meanings, and not also "connotative" meanings)[9] that capture the supposed factuality of that which is exam-

[7] By "paradigm" I mean the overarching perspective by which I understood my knowing and my acting as a person and as a Christian.

[8] For a technical discussion, see David Rose et al, eds., *The Ship of Theseus Puzzle: Oxford Studies in Experimental Philosophy 3* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2019). For a simpler summary of the Ship of Theseus exercise, see. Online: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ship_of_Theseus.

[9] The terms "denote" and "connote" may be clarified by thinking of the way "cool" has been introduced from the USA into the language of popular media and popular usage to mean "I like" or "with-it/fashionable." This is a "connotative" meaning, and is a metaphor of a meta-

ined, and where reasoning proceeds tightly from premises through consequences (reasoning regarded as being syllogistically valid) to supposedly sure defined conclusions. Such an approach reads language only in its denotative sense and attempts to shed multiplicity of perceptions and ambiguity to generate "valid" conclusions.

A mindset that is Christian does not restrictively operate in this manner, because Christian thinking understands the human person in terms that are both somatic and spiritual. The term "flesh," when properly understood in Christian and Jewish perspectives, encompasses the whole person: body (*somata*), mind (*nous*), and spirit (*pneuma*).[10] Similarly, when properly understood in Christian terms, the created order encompasses physical and metaphysical.

I again need to explain some terms that I am about to use. Typically, when we use the term "scientific" we mean understanding that is built on a system of understanding that may be verified in fieldwork or in experiments or in quantitative data analysis. So, for example, the development of hydrocarbon resources in Papua New Guinea depends upon complex scientific understandings and competencies. These include—to take just two examples—geological understanding of the earth's surface and experience in geological exploration, and engineering understanding and experience in engineering design and implementation. With understandings such as these, it is possible to have an "instrumental worldview" that allows the identification of hydrocarbon resources, and the engineering constructions necessary to transform hydrocarbon resources into marketable products. That is, just as one uses an axe to cut wood and, say, construct a house, one needs complex scientific understandings for complex uses of hydrocarbon resources. Whether the instrument is an axe used for forming a wooden object, or complex scientific understandings and competencies that enable us to transform hydrocarbon resources into marketable products, we are dealing with instruments (some simple, some complex, and some complex sets of instrumentality).

It follows that an instrumental worldview is a worldview that enables people to transform resources in ways that make the resource or resources

phor on the "denotative" meaning of "cool," which is, the temperature as measured on an objective scale below what would be judged as average or warm.

[10] The terms in brackets give the Greek equivalents of body, mind, and spirit for a holistic understanding of the human person.

more useful to them and more valued (enables people to "add value"). As a man of advanced scientific education, I of course understand the proper and necessary domain of an instrumental worldview that is natural in a physicalist sense. The profound mistake is to separate that proper and necessary domain of viewing ourselves and the world in ways that fail to encompass metaphysical domains. Such a separation or cleft in worldview is strange from Melanesian perspectives, where physical *and* metaphysical worldviews form a whole.[11]

SUSTAINING PROPER DOMAINS FOR POSITIVIST INSTRUMENTAL WORLDVIEWS

I have in my heading just introduced another term, "positivist," by which I mean an approach that starts out with something or some things supposedly known with certainty, and follows through with processes that are understood with certainty, and results in an outcome (a conclusion or a product) that is known in its specification. In the physical sciences hydrocarbon industry example, one would need all such specifications to capture natural gas, to transport it, and to process it for shipping. Such knowledge and expertise are necessary to that particular activity (what I call a "domain," i.e., an area of activity or doing). I do not wish to be heard as disparaging positivist and reductive methods of how and what we know in their proper domains.[12] For example, lacking the rudiments of natural science understandings of the earth surface and of the movement of tectonic plates allows misattributions of causality that give rise to awry epistemologies and mis-

[11] Over the years I have read somewhat across Melanesian anthropological literatures and write from about fifty years off-and-on on-ground experience, but it is convenient again to quote Trompf, *Payback*. He speaks of the reciprocity in Melanesian life and in Melanesian cultic understandings, and remarks, "A totality is at stake; and to pass decisions over any complex of reciprocity as 'this part is purely economic' and 'that part is religious', and other components as 'political' or 'secular', only bring scissors to the seamless fabric of traditional society" (p. 105); and, again, "The traditional inseparability of religion and the pursuit of prosperity still pertain…" (p. 241).

[12] Just to reinforce the way that I here use "domain," one can think of the clearing of forest and the digging of deep drainage trenches as a men's domain, and the building of mounds for crop drainage and the tending and harvesting of crops and allocating what is grown for feeding the household and/or feeding pigs as women's domain. Such understandings of domains necessarily involve shifts with cultural and technological changes, and thus we should understand "domains" both in technological and in cultural terms and in material and spiritual terms.

conceived pastoral practices. This is so in any cultural context, but especially so in Melanesian cultural contexts, where there often are weak or even negligible appreciations of the autonomy and lawfulness of natural phenomena.[13] Another, and human sciences example, is the significance of roads and communications that act as market supply chains to add value to local agricultural products that in turn instrumentally act to give access to non-local products such as health and educational services.

Within the biblical literatures – and particularly alluding to the Genesis creation narrative – there are the rudiments of lawful and normative understandings[14] with the revelatory text depicting the created order as lawful and purposeful and with humanity set in a relation of dominion and stewardship within the created order. The rudiments of such inductive[15] approaches within revelatory texts[16] are also found in the New Testament, as, for example, where Our Lord makes recourse to what is noticed by the senses and his call to acute observation as seen in the text, "When you see the south wind blowing, you say, 'There will be a scorching heat', and it happens" (Luke 12:55). In the human realm, one can notice reference to natural law observations that take normative significance for human con-

[13] A recent example was the local mis-recognition of causation in Southern Highlands experience of natural law shifts in tectonic plates experienced as earthquake destructions, and failure to recognise that human behaviours did not have a direct causality in that tragic experience.

[14] By "normative," I mean that which we take or set-up as the standard by which we make our judgements." So, for example, the Scriptures convey a sense that humanity is set over the rest of the created natural order, but not simply in a sense of doing as they please with and within the natural order, but with a sense of having responsibilities of stewardship for the natural order. Such a perspective, then, provides a standard or a norm by which we may judge human activities as being in accord with the created order or discordant with the created order.

[15] I say "inductive" here, because from close readings of the sacred texts we can come to understand the sweep of the normative structure of Scripture and the role of humans as stewards in creation. That is, we can come to this normative understanding from the process of attentiveness to the textual witness, rather than a premise as a starting point in approaching the biblical texts. The latter method would be "deductive," while the method that I favour is "inductive," that is, we learn from the sacred text, rather than impose our premises upon the sacred text.

[16] "Revelatory text" refers to the ascribing of the biblical text as not simply a creation of human culture, but as a revealing by the Creator, as revelation, and thus revelatory. That is not to deny that the revelatory texts are not also human texts; they could not be otherwise, as they are in human language.

duct, as seen, for example, in texts referring to the matrimonial bond: "But from the beginning of creation, 'God made them male and female' " (Mark 10:6; Gen 1:27).

SUSTAINING DOMAINS OF PHYSICAL AND METAPHYSICAL WORLDVIEWS THAT RECOGNISE INHERENT NORMATIVE CHARACTER

My own normative perspective in what I above referred to as the "human realm" emphasises an inherent or "natural law" approach[17] in contradistinction to a "deontic law" approach.[18] In the present context I need to forgo amplification of this phenomenological approach in recognising normative structures.[19] Let me simply say that an observational method as applied to the human realm allows one to discern what is functional for the good order of human society and allows one to discern much that is dysfunctional in the conduct of persons and of human societies. I do not simply speak of dysfunctionality in normative perceptions and conduct in my own Australian society, nor do I simply speak of dysfunctionality in normative perceptions and conduct in Melanesian societies. But I do emphasise the essentiality of our having a widely observant perspective[20] in respect of both physical and human realms in order that our how and what we know may be ac-

[17] In saying "inherent" approach, I mean that which is in the nature of the phenomena described (whether physical and/or metaphysical), rather than an approach involving a prior way that is attributed to the phenomena that are being engaged or observed. So, for example, I view monogamy as inherent to a natural law understanding of human society, and I would not so understand polygamy or polyandry (multiple wives or multiple husbands). That is, I find this monogamy example to be inherent to human nature, rather than imposed upon human nature.

[18] "Deontic" derives from the Greek to refer to obligation. For example, "Thou shalt have no other gods but me" (Exod 20:3) is an obligation (is presented deontically). But that there is one God only and that humans should acknowledge only the One God may be derived inductively from the fact that the created order is an order (that is, it is lawful) and the created order displays a unity that leads one to view it as the work of a single Creator. The natural law approach that I am favouring gives emphasis to the inherent nature of the created order, rather than a divine or human imposition upon the created order and upon human conduct.

[19] I have already explained what I mean by a phenomenological approach, and in the present context it means an approach that derives from observation, for example, observing the dysfunctional character of polygamy or polyandry.

[20] Here "widely observant" does not mean observing deontic norms (thou shalt; thou shalt not), and, instead, means what has been noticed by careful observations that are both close and varied.

curate. In the sentence just stated, "physical realm" might be restrictively construed as according to positivist scientific method, and similarly "human realms" might be construed in analogous positivist social science terms. I need to reinforce that my language needs to be understood in a perspective captured in my earlier usage where I made *holistic* reference to worldviews embracing both the physical and metaphysical. As I suggested above, such encompassing physical and metaphysical perspectives take added significance in contexts where this holistic perspective is especially culturally congruent, as in Melanesian cultures.

The difference that I am arguing in such perspectives is the adducing[21] a natural law lawfulness that encompasses the physical, the social, and the metaphysical; this leads to worldviews that are not simply descriptive,[22] but are also normative. Such holistic worldviews are strategically and structurally[23] located in Sacred Scripture. Across five days of the Genesis creation narrative, the text includes the ascription "good," and for the sixth day makes the ascription "very good." Please do not hear me as invoking a fundamentalist reading of the sacred text. But do read me as claiming for the created order – physical and metaphysical – an orderliness, a lawfulness that entails an inherent normative character. Turning to the New Testament narrative and schema, this is a divine action of restoration ("God was in Christ …," 2 Cor 5:19), a divine action of restoration of persons and of human society or human societies that encompasses a restoration of the whole of the natural order ("Behold, I make all things new," Rev 21:5). This restoration entails ecclesial action[24] in the ongoing restorative process

[21] The term "adducing" is a cognate of "inducting" or "inductive," as already discussed.

[22] "Descriptive" simply involves noting the way things are, while "normative" also embraces the way things should be" as indicated by induced norms.

[23] By "strategically," I mean that the location in Scripture is patterned in a way that builds a structure of understanding, leading to a shaping or structuring of behaviour or understanding. Further, such behaviours may be named as strategic because such behaviours act to bring about something desired or some desired understanding of and approach to life. For example, the Cross in the New Testament is the essential structure on which the whole understanding of the redemptive work of God in Christ is proclaimed. That is, the New Testament is structured around the fact of the Cross and the understanding of the Passion of Our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. Without this structure, the New Testament would be incoherent.

[24] By "ecclesial action," I mean the life, ministry, and witness of the Christian faithful, the church, *ecclesia* in Greek.

of bringing about normative integrity[25] that is understood in an encompassing sense of natural order. Such is the life and missionary activity of the Church of God to engage the actions of making "good."

ATTENTIVE EPISTEMOLOGY AND PASTORAL PRACTICE INVOLVING INSIGHTFULNESS

I need now to return this exposition to our understanding of epistemology – the how we know and what we know – and its relevance to pastoral practice. My opening autobiographical event evidently engaged large and complex contexts to induce the incarnational action of making the Sign of the Cross. This implies that I accept the complex enculturation processes that are involved in imparting "the mind of the Scriptures."[26] My aim in this presentation is to induce recognitions and enactions that our how and what we know have to be widely-based and to involve what I have termed encounter.

Perhaps the starting point of a Clinical Pastoral Education (CPE) approach to pastoral formation provides one example of such a widely-based encounter, in that the foundation of CPE education is to cultivate observation, and especially listening[27] – observation and listening that is not a projection of the worldview of the person supposedly acting pastorally. Of course, the person acting pastorally will bring both implicit and explicit worldviews. But the pastoral attention has first to engage not the worldview of the person acting pastorally, but where the person who is being engaged is "at"—with that "at" understood contextually in a present sense, in a past sense, in a future sense, in culturally-situated senses, and in physical and metaphysical senses. It is attention of this kind that can lead to a how we know and a what we know that is epistemologically sound[28] in that it ad-

[25] Where there is "integrity," a manner of action fits together or forms a unity (an integer), as opposed to being a set of disparate manners of action. Thus, does the whole of life becomes Christian.

[26] By "enculturation processes" I mean that our how and what we understand and what we do engages the culture in which we are formed, or cultural processes, and thus entails enculturation.

[27] There are many available manuals on CPE. A recent one is G. J. Hilsman, *How to Get the Most Out of Clinical Pastoral Education: A CPE Primer* (London: Jessica Kingsley, 2018).

[28] I use the word "sound" here in the sense that it is not simply cogent syllogistically (philosophers might say "valid"), but is also consistent with phenomenological observation, consistent with our real-world and culturally contextual experience.

dresses not firstly ourselves, but the person or persons with whom we are being attentive.

THE TEST OF SOUND EPISTEMOLOGY AND SOUND PASTORAL PRACTICE

The "You should do as I have done unto you" was implicitly present in the personal anecdote with which I opened this paper. I gave a holistic account of oppression that was both physical and metaphysical, and a holistic response in the signing of the Cross and calling the holy name of Jesus that was both physical and metaphysical. I recounted an encounter that taught me to align my own responses and actions with the actions of God. Across the years the lessons of that crucial event have led me closely to observe both physical and metaphysical realms. This has involved respecting proper physical domains – such as may be learned from positivist scientific understandings of phenomena – to observe proper spiritual domains, such as are learned in the grace of the Holy Spirit. But also this has involved learnings of the overlay of physical and metaphysical phenomena in human domains, where the goodness and flourishing of human life is seen in an overlaying of material and spiritual welfare. Such human flourishing calls for acute and comprehensive attention, an accurate phenomenological attention to human life as encountered both personally and socially. Such attention leads to accurate understanding of what and how we know – to an astute epistemology.

In Melanesian contexts learning from a phenomenological approach increases the accuracy of what we know and how we know, and a holistic phenomenological approach that embraces both physical and metaphysical realms is more attuned to Melanesian cultural life. Such an astute holistic epistemology forms the ground for our working with Melanesians in ways that divert a projection of ourselves upon persons and societies in our pastoral actions. This enables us better to discern "where they are at," and better to place those discernments in holistic contexts. Such discernments are not only descriptive; they also engage normative understandings, in that they also engage better understanding of possible pathways to assist persons and communities to move toward what is good or what is better. In brief, this perspective presents a pastoral practice that is epistemologically sound and that involves engagements that lead persons toward what is the leading principle in Christian pastoral practice.

It is this encompassing perspective of epistemology that should inform our pastoral action, our pastoral practice. This may sound subtle and complicated. But it is less so where our approach involves patient encounters that move toward insightfulness, which in turn issues in prudent and faithful pastoral action.

I have a rather simple test of whether the how and the what of that insightfulness and implementation is good. That simple test is to notice whether the pastoral engagement leads toward phenomenological encounters that manifest the "fruits of the [Holy] Spirit" (Gal 5:22–23): love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control. We may discern the soundness of our epistemologies by noticing whether the consequent enactions conform to the dominical charge to the church, "I have given you an example, that you also should do as I have done unto you" (John 13:15) and "Go, and do likewise" (Luke 10:37).

It follows that where we are unable to observe the "fruits of the spirit" in the one engaged in pastoral enaction, and where we are unable to observe the signs of human flourishing both in the physical and metaphysical realms,[29] we may ask, "Has this person really attended to the how we know and the what we know in a learning manner?" And further, "Is this person really putting into action such how we know and what we know? Is our encounter one of authentic epistemology in action and implementation?" Where we are looking at the action and implementation as encountered we may ask: does this have the traits of the Gospel? Does this show forth the fruits of the Gospel? Do we see the authentic human freedom that the Gospel brings? The heartland of the Gospel is, "For freedom, Christ has set us free!" (Gal 5:1). Where we instead see a not-listening, a not-seeing, an imposition of deontic law, a lack of compassion, a lack of mercy, there we are seeing a disjunction in epistemology and pastoral practice.[30]

[29] Alternatively, in material and spiritual realms.

[30] In re-reading Bernard Lonergan, *Method in Theology* (London: Darton, Longman & Todd, 1975), I notice a sentence that captures the conclusion to which this paper leads: "Religious experience spontaneously manifests itself in changed attitudes, in the harvest of the Spirit that is love, joy, peace, kindness, goodness, fidelity, gentleness, and self-control…" (p. 108). Lonergan seems here to be speaking of experience in the sense that I have treated encounter; and in speaking of religious experience, he seems to be treating it as an opening-up that may lead to "spontaneous manifestation in changed attitudes."

Conclusion

My opening personal anecdote closed with my sense of release from capture and the regaining of mobility. In a scriptural text sense, this was an encounter involving the truth, "For freedom, Christ has set us free" (Gal 5:1). Across many years, I have held that sense of freedom in Christ. This leads to the thrust of this article. Pastoral practice that assists release and moving forward for persons and for communities is a manner of working that proposes an exercise of freedom and mobility that is both physical and metaphysical, and is understood holistically. This involves reckonings of the topography and the pathways for human actions that engage accurate and phenomenological epistemology and engage the action of grace in pastoral practice and in the responses and moving forward by those whom we seek to assist in our pastoral practice.