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Contextualised, Memorable Training: A Strategy for Training Disciples in Papua New Guinea

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CONTEXTUALISED, MEMORABLE TRAINING: A STRATEGY FOR DEVELOPING DISCIPLES IN PAPUA NEW GUINEA

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CONTEXTUALISED, MEMORABLE TRAINING:
A STRATEGY FOR DEVELOPING DISCIPLES IN PAPUA NEW GUINEA

A MINISTRY TRAINING MANUAL
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SCHOOL OF THEOLOGY
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IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT
OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE
DOCTOR OF MINISTRY

BY
MICHAEI BULLARD
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ABSTRACT

Contextualised, Memorable Training:
A Strategy for Training Disciples in Papua New Guinea
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2018

The Christianisation of Papua New Guinea is a remarkable achievement in world mission. It has resulted in the vast majority of the population identifying themselves as Christians. There is, however, widespread recognition that many if not most of these believers have not progressed in their Christian journey since conversion and many have lapsed back into traditional beliefs and practices.

This project arises out of an invitation from the Melanesian Evangelical Churches of Christ to develop training that assists pastors and church leaders to improve discipleship outcomes for their people. In response to this invitation, the goal of the project was to equip church leaders in Papua New Guinea to develop disciples by providing a simple discipleship model that can be adapted for their local context.

Discipleship in the Gospels takes the form of a progressive journey to maturity rather than a single moment of conversion. Studies by Engel and Norton, and Willow Creek Community Church have reflected this through the creation of spiritual growth continua that describe several progressive stages on the journey to Christian maturity. This project examines such models and, coupled with biblical reflection and cultural insight, seeks to utilise them to create a spiritual growth continuum that is relevant for Melanesian believers.

This continuum forms the basis of a training experience that utilises stories, diagrams, and other oral learning methodologies. A transcript of the training experience including diagrams forms the final part of the project. An evaluation of the project and reflections on its effectiveness is also provided.

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PART ONE

MINISTRY CONTEXT
INTRODUCTION

The Melanesian Evangelical Churches of Christ (MECOC) consist of approximately two hundred village-based churches located in the Madang and East-Sepik provinces on the North-Eastern part of the main island of Papua New Guinea (PNG). The MECOC Churches began with the mission of the Australian Churches of Christ in 1958. The communities chosen for the initial mission work had no previous Christian contact. The churches have experienced the dynamics of the first three generations of Christianity since that time. In addition, the communities have experienced the opening up of their world to new horizons as the tribes of the area have experienced increasing levels of interaction with the world outside themselves.

This project will recount the history of the MECOC churches and outline the particular challenges the MECOC churches face in developing disciples. The aim will be to develop a model of spiritual growth that depicts the Christian faith as a progressive journey towards maturity rather than a decision made in a moment of time and thereby provide church leaders with a discipleship tool that can be adapted to help their people to progress along that journey. The training will seek to be sensitive to the cultural dynamics of the situation including the oral nature of learners in PNG. The project will seek to employ communication dynamics that involve learners and trainers in respectful partnership.

Churches of Christ missionaries have developed discipleship materials for believers in their transition from their traditional belief systems to their new life in Christ.
Short-term initiatives for training leaders and longer-term training initiatives, including several Bible school initiatives and the current training college have been developed. These efforts at training and development have made a positive impact and there are leaders throughout the churches today as a result. The Churches of Christ have largely succeeded in their goal of establishing viable indigenous churches in their area of work in PNG.

Despite these efforts and significant times of revival and growth, the churches are struggling to grow believers beyond conversion and towards maturity. Most believers in PNG could be described as having a "nominal" faith. Many who have had a conversion experience have slipped back from their confession of Christ into traditional animistic religious practices, are engaging in drinking alcohol, drug-taking, or sexual promiscuity, and are fearful of sorcery. These challenges are not unique to the MECOC churches and are exacerbated by the immense social changes occurring as the traditional peoples of PNG strive to find their place in the twenty-first century world.

The concept of partnership offers a hopeful way forward. This entails churches working together across cultures in their areas of comparative strength. Australian churches have highly developed theological resources. These are in high demand in PNG and churches regularly request assistance with training. If these can be offered to the churches in PNG in ways that are consultative, contextually appropriate, empowering, and enacted in ways that maintain rather than diminish the agency of learners, the potential of a fruitful training partnership exists.

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In **Part One**, this project will investigate the history and context of the MECOC churches. It will describe the initial mission movement from 1958, the early struggles with language, culture and environment, and the spread of the movement into adjacent areas. The focus will be on discerning the situation of believers today in PNG and in the MECOC area specifically.

In **Part Two**, the project will survey learning in three areas: Christian discipleship, pedagogy, and factors to be considered in semi-literate contexts. Relevant works in each area will be examined to discern key learning points for the ministry of training disciples. The combination of these learning points will be utilised, along with Scripture, to develop a model for the discipleship journey that is appropriate for a Melanesian context. Once developed, the model will be presented as a training experience that aims to help MECOC leaders adapt the model for their own context.

**Part Three** will present a transcript of a specific training experience that is centred on a journey of discipleship that emphasises the importance of believers moving beyond conversion and forward towards Christian maturity. Diagrams and stories will be utilised in the training experience in order to engage oral learners and model possible training strategies for MECOC church leaders. Participants will be invited to engage with the material and bring their own experiences and learning to the training experience. The hoped-for result is a discipleship training model that takes advantage of the expertise of the Australian Church, maintains the agency of learners in PNG, and allows MECOC church leaders to contextualise the model into their own context.

The training experience builds on the work done by missionaries in the past and on previous relationships and teaching experiences by the author. It was trialled in a
remote location in PNG during the early part of October 2017. Participants were drawn from the students at Gandep Bible College,\footnote{Gandep Bible College is located in the Middle-Ramu region and has approximately 8 students in each year group, a total of 24 students. Students live in a remote village-based campus, living as closely to ordinary village life as possible including growing their own food. They undertake a three-year program of studies. This is the path to church leadership for many of the local pastors.} and pastors from the Middle-Ramu\footnote{The Ramu River is a major river in PNG. The Middle-Ramu area covers a distance of approximately 640 km and has approximately 21 villages with MECOC churches along its length.} and Sogeram River MECOC churches.\footnote{The Sogeram River is a tributary of the Ramu. The Map shows villages with MECOC churches in the area.} Figure 1 (below) is a map showing the location of the region in PNG and the MECOC villages of the Middle-Ramu area. Participants undertook a four day live-in training experience at Tsumba village. The material from this project provided the curriculum for the first day of the training. The author presented the training, assisted by the Executive Minister of the MECOC churches, Jerry Yabru. Feedback and reflections on the training are included in the final chapter.

It is hoped that the training experience assists church leaders in their personal journeys of discipleship and also provides them with a model that can be adapted to the contexts of their language and people groups to enable them to better disciple their people. It is also hoped that aspects of the model will contribute to new ways forward for training in oral learning contexts for the MECOC communities and beyond.
Figure 1. Map of the MECOC Churches in the Middle-Ramu Area

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This map is a photograph taken from a map hanging in the MECOC office in Madang, PNG. It is produced by the Australian Churches of Christ.
CHAPTER 1

A FRESH FIELD

Over the past one hundred and thirty years there has been a remarkable Christianisation of the predominantly animistic, tribal and village-based communities throughout PNG. In 1980, John Barker stated that "85 per cent of Papua New Guineans declared themselves to be Christians." This Christianisation is recognised in the National Constitution that speaks of “the worthy customs and traditional wisdoms of our peoples,” and “the Christian principles that are ours now.”

At the beginning of the twentieth century PNG represented a huge challenge for Christian mission. Its physical location, climate, topography and Melanesian tribal heritage had combined to keep the population largely isolated from outside influence. Despite the activities of the colonial powers of Great Britain and Germany, and efforts by both Protestant and Catholic missions since 1847, vast areas of PNG were still unknown to outsiders even as late as the middle of the Twentieth Century. Christian military

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personnel who returned from PNG after the Second World War had encountered "stone age" peoples and cultures, and had remarked that PNG was still the "last great unknown" on Planet Earth.8

On September third, 1906, "control of British New Guinea [was] transferred to newly federated Australia and renamed Papua."9 After the Second World War, Australia took formal responsibility for the whole of PNG as a protectorate. This continued until 1975 when PNG achieved full recognition and independence as a nation.

The overall state of life for the rural people of PNG is shown by the position PNG occupies on the World Development Index. PNG is ranked 156 out of 187 countries, placing it in the category of "low human development."10 Recent discoveries of mineral wealth have resulted in increasing export income and this has resulted in some improvements in living standards. These gains, however, are mostly restricted to cities and towns with remote areas receiving little benefit. The "resource curse," so-called because nations with great natural resources often do not see economic and social

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development for most of their people, is evident in PNG. Government transparency is low, and allegations of corruption and misappropriation of funds are widespread.

The areas where MECOC churches exist are characterised by poor health and education outcomes. Infant and maternal mortality statistics are among the worst in the world. Health Centres and basic aid stations exist, some being run by government and others by church groups but their ability to effectively treat serious cases is limited. Travel to regional hospitals may require long distances by boat, road, or on foot, with poor health outcomes as a result. Promises to improve health and education outcomes have been made by Government, and various Non-Government Organisations (NGOs) have provided training and resources over many years. Despite these efforts, the remoteness of the area and continuing poor health and education infrastructure have

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13 Maternal mortality was recently (2010) given as 730 maternal deaths per 100,000 births. This compares with 8 per 100,000 in Australia, and for comparison, 40 per 100,000 in areas of Sub-Saharan Africa. This is the worst in the Pacific and among the highest in the world. Neonatal deaths were given as 29 deaths per 1000 births. See Chris Morgan, “Community Based Care at Birth – can it safely extend coverage in high mortality settings?” Policy Brief, 2011 (Compass: The Women’s and Children’s Knowledge Hub, 2011).

14 From first-hand observation, Health Centres or Aid Posts listed on government statistics as functional may or may not exist, and may or may not be attending to any patients. One Health Centre I have had personal involvement with had in 2013 been closed for 8 years to patients except for contraceptive assistance, despite having 3 Health Workers continually receiving salaries and medicines delivered every month. According to the statistics, this was a functioning health centre, but in reality, little health care was being delivered.

15 Evidence from personal visits and speaking to locals suggests that some schools that are claimed to be functioning have either been abandoned or staff are not present to conduct lessons. See “East Sepik Province,” n.d.
resulted in a population that faces disease, premature death, poor education outcomes, and little hope for social or economic advancement.

Initial mission efforts in PNG, beginning in 1847, faced the challenges of tropical diseases, cultural and language diversity, the rigours of heat and humidity, and hostile inhabitants. Various groups including the Catholics, London Missionary Society, Methodists, Lutherans, Anglicans, Seventh-Day Adventists, and the Liebenzell Evangelical Mission were established by 1920. Others, including the Unevangelised Fields Mission, Baptists, Assemblies of God, South Seas Evangelical Mission, Christian Brethren, Swiss Evangelical Brotherhood Mission, Nazarene Mission, Apostolic Church Mission, and New Tribes Mission had become established by the 1940's.

The early churches in PNG, though outwardly different from the European churches, were deeply influenced by their parent churches. In many cases the local churches closely imitated the mother churches: theology, clergy training, leadership structure, ministry styles, and even dress codes were passed on. "Melanesians were absorbed into church structures and traditions that were foreign to them, and they were also alienated from their traditional ways in religious experience and symbols." These early mission experiences could be characterised as colonial in their flavour; the missionaries were conscious of their "assets and, imbued with the desire to save the

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17 Ibid.
world, as a matter of course took charge" wherever they went. As was common with most mission efforts of the time, the gospel that was preached in PNG was "the gospel as it had been developed within 18th and 19th Century Europe." The worldview and cultures of the people were "not seriously considered in their evangelisation." In addition to this, denominationalism created loyalties and allegiances that exacerbated rather than diminished traditional divisions in Melanesian society.

Meanwhile, outside of PNG, the theological foundations of colonialism were being challenged. A watershed moment occurred at the World Missionary Conference in Tambaram in India in 1934. For the first time, it was articulated that the younger churches of the "mission lands" should possess equal status to the churches of the West. This opened the way for the development of a truly "world church" and for changes in mission practice. The thinking was further refined by Lesslie Newbigin who summarised the findings of the International Missionary Council held in 1958, stating that the age of "guardianship" of one church over another must be replaced by the concept of "mission in partnership."

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21 Ibid., 12.

22 Leana, “What Should the Melanesian Church of the Future Be Like?” 105.


This concept of partnership is a hopeful foundation for the relationship between churches of different lands and cultures. Partnership entails a sharing together in a common enterprise with each partner bringing particular strengths to the relationship. It is evident to people in PNG that the churches of the West have considerably greater material and educational resources than they do, and requests for training and other types of assistance are regularly made. These resources have been offered in the past, but often in ways that have diminished the agency of the local believers. A new type of partnership that does not diminish local agency is required.

The next stage of mission in PNG began after World War II. Japanese invasion and resistance by Allied forces had opened up new areas of PNG to outside influence. The interior regions of PNG including the Highlands with hundreds of remote tribes had begun to be contacted and evangelised. Groups to become established in this time included the Four Square movement, Christian Revival Crusade, and various other Pentecostal groups. Missionaries proliferated in PNG: in 1927 there were 531 missionaries in the country and by 1971 the number had increased to 3411 with more than 30 different denominations. Churches were extensively involved in education, health care and other development initiatives. As part of this movement, the Australian Churches of Christ began mission work in the lower Ramu area of the Madang Province in 1958.

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26 Ibid.

27 Ibid.
The Churches of Christ began in a location where "no major Protestant mission was working there and there were no schools or medical work." With the government wanting to provide education and medical care for the population yet having few resources to draw on, the missions offered a way to serve the people and bring development at little cost to the government budget. English language schools provided advancement for the people and so were warmly welcomed. Medical care was a focus but less quickly received because the population believed illness was due to sorcery and healing came via magic. Later, the population embraced medical assistance. In general, the Missions were welcomed to this part of PNG at this time and in a very real sense the gospel was carried into this area of PNG on the back of the social good that Christian missions could provide the people of PNG.

The area has great linguistic diversity. Most language groups at first contact had fewer than 4000 people and no written script though the trade language Tok Pisin (Melanesian Pidgin) was widely used. The life of the people was dominated by their belief in spirits. Magic and sorcery were important elements in the culture. People lived in a subsistence economy with hunting, slash-and-burn gardens, and sago from the swamps providing their main sources of food.

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29 Ibid., 97.

30 Ibid.

31 Ibid.
When the Churches of Christ began, they were planning for a church "50 years on." This would be a church that could "teach and evangelise its own youth and outside communities from within its own resources." It was planned that within three generations the mission would do itself out of a job and pass on authority and responsibility for the local work to the local people.

The initial work revolved around the establishment of the mission station. The station was essential for supporting the Australians in PNG and delivering the model of ministry to the people. This was the place missionaries would begin to interact with the local people, learn language and culture, offer medical, educational and developmental help, and begin the process of evangelisation. Once the station was established, the number of contacts would increase and surrounding villages would come within the scope of influence of the mission station. Soon, new churches would be planted in villages along local trade routes, often quite remote from the mission station.

The work steadily expanded. Frank Beale comments on the work six years after commencement; "We had the work firmly established in six villages . . . with schools in four of them. We built a saw-mill and an airstrip. A hospital had been started as well as outpost medical work at three other locations." By 1973 there were twelve Churches of Christ in PNG with over 500 members. In 1977 there were thirty-three churches. By the

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32 Ibid.
33 Ibid.
year 2000, there were around 100 churches and 6000 members.\textsuperscript{36} A 2012 report gave the number of churches as "200 churches."\textsuperscript{37} The vast majority of these were planted by "national Christians sharing the gospel with their relatives and friends."\textsuperscript{38}

The activities of the Churches of Christ mission movement in PNG were more contextualised than many of the previous missions in PNG. Communion elements quickly became coconut juice and coconut meat or sago. Many church ministries quickly passed to locals. Frank Beale, one half of the first team of missionaries, claimed that "the principles under which we operated were bearing fruit in so many ways."\textsuperscript{39} The strategic choices of the location of the mission stations meant that the work began among those who were willing, among those of different languages, and in places that were well connected along trade routes.

Church services were initially "staid affairs" conducted along similar lines to those in Australian Churches of Christ.\textsuperscript{40} Hymns, prayers, communion, and preaching all figured prominently. Other communication times happened around fires, from house to house, during work times, and this included many question and answer sessions.\textsuperscript{41}


\textsuperscript{38} Christenson, \textit{Ramu Woman}, 37.

\textsuperscript{39} Beale, \textit{Beginning a New Field}, 99.

\textsuperscript{40} Christenson, \textit{Ramu Woman}, 34.

\textsuperscript{41} Ibid., 38-39.
Churches of Christ had a theological foundation of lay participation and this meant the work was quickly passed on to local people. As more people became believers, leaders were identified and trained to be involved in church ministry and as members of evangelism and church planting teams. Later, a revival movement began, bringing "more meaningful and indigenous worship styles."\textsuperscript{42}

As local people began to share the gospel with those in their social and family networks, "people movements" occurred.\textsuperscript{43} The message went out beyond the reach of the mission stations to new regions and "many strong churches" were established.\textsuperscript{44} These churches in turn spread the message further. Missionaries went from being the drivers of the movement to being "advisers," with their new role being to "work in partnership with national church leaders."\textsuperscript{45} Rosalie Rofe wrote in 1990 that, "Brown feet have long replaced white ones in bringing the good news about Jesus to the as yet unreached people of this country."\textsuperscript{46}

With the theological foundation of lay participation, and the long-term plan for a self-sustaining local church, the training of locals in theology and ministry skills began early in the movement. In addition to many teaching sessions in local churches, leaders gathered in villages for "two-week Bible schools." Small Bible schools began in several

\textsuperscript{42} Ibid., 43.
\textsuperscript{43} In the terminology of Alan Tippett, the people movements that occurred among the Churches of Christ were not "nativist cult" nor "independent folk church" but "indigenous churches." See Alan R. Tippett, "Contemporary Departures from Traditional Christianity in Cross-Cultural Situations: A Melanesian Ethnohistorical Case Study," IJFM 30: Winter 2013, 173-176.
\textsuperscript{45} Bowes, \textit{Pain and Progress}, 103.
\textsuperscript{46} Rofe, "Coconuts, Wantoks and Revival", 103.
villages. Women were regularly included in the training and it was often the female missionaries conducting the training. This function later passed to locals. A Bible college that teaches a certificate course saw its first students graduate in 2003. This college continues to train students today, its trainers are indigenous, and it is a significant training path for many pastors in the movement today.

The Australian Churches of Christ have, as a result of their mission efforts and in partnership with others, seen the establishment of the movement of churches known as the MECOC churches. Evangelism, training and church planting began with the missionaries and were all passed on to local leaders. All of these are important realities in establishing an indigenous movement of churches.

Despite all the good mission work that has been done in the MECOC churches, there is a widespread realisation that the churches are struggling to develop disciples. Missiologist David Bosch makes the claim that "The entire Western missionary movement of the past three centuries emerged from the matrix of the Enlightenment." This does not invalidate the mission enterprise which he acknowledges to have been "a most remarkable exercise." It does, however, provoke reflection on how and why things have been done the way they have and provides an impetus for doing things differently in the future.

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49 Ibid.
Project Design

This project begins with the understanding that the church in PNG has been hindered by the focus of Christian preaching and church life on conversion rather than discipleship. This is widely acknowledged in literature and borne out by conversations with leaders of the MECOC churches. As a contribution to the strengthening of the church in PNG, this project attempts to re-cast response to the Christian gospel as a journey of discipleship rather than a moment of conversion.

I first become involved with the MECOC churches in 2010. Since then, they have asked me to assist by developing discipleship training for their pastors and leaders that complements the biblical training they receive at their Bible College. Early in this journey, I realised that many believers had experienced conversion but had not progressed in their discipleship journey. Though the circumstances are very different, I perceived there was a parallel with believers in the West, who similarly had been converted but lacked growth in discipleship. I began to examine the ways that Western churches were trying to re-invigorate a journey of discipleship and began to experiment with ways of training that would include stories and diagrams.

This project represents a further stage in the development of this training. It examines the particular challenges that Melanesian believers face in responding to the gospel message. Drawing on the "Engel scale"50 and "Move"51 study that represent Western attempts to re-cast the Christian life as a journey of discipleship rather than a

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moment of conversion, the project translates this to a Melanesian context by locating these challenges on a spiritual continuum that is suited to Melanesians. Key Scripture verses that address the challenges form the basis for biblical engagement at each stage of the continuum.

Having developed a spiritual continuum for Melanesian believers, the project then considers how to best articulate such a model in ways that make sense to Melanesians and is memorable for oral learners. The result is a visual spiritual continuum that maps the spiritual journey as a series of stages depicted by animal figures. The transitions between the stages are also represented in diagrammatic form. As a further attempt to make the training accessible to locals, the project utilises stories in its presentation and invites locals to engage with the model and contribute to the training experience. Each stage of the training invites locals to invest in the model with their own stories and understandings of discipleship. Participants are also invited to create songs that capture the journey of discipleship and that can be easily passed on as they share the concepts with others.\footnote{The words of the songs are reproduced in Chapter 5 and a link for viewing is included there.}

The project culminates in the delivery of the training sessions in a PNG village context (Tsumba village) in October 2017. A transcript of the training is included, complete with the diagrams and stories that are used in the communication process. The project concludes with feedback from involved parties, reflections on its effectiveness, and a summary of what has worked well and what could be adjusted for further development of the training model.
PART TWO

THEOLOGICAL REFLECTION
CHAPTER 2
LITERATURE REVIEW

This review of literature examines works focused on three salient topics: Christian discipleship, pedagogy, and factors to be considered in semi-literate contexts. The purpose is to articulate a workable framework for a discipleship journey in PNG and thereby provide a model local church leaders can utilise to create their own training resources for their people.

Christian Discipleship

Michael Wilkins, in his book, *Following the Master: A Biblical Theology of Discipleship*, summarises his examination of published literature on discipleship and claims there has been a wide gap between works on discipleship in the scholarly and practical spheres. In his summary of discipleship from Ancient Greek, Roman, and Jewish cultures, he finds that discipleship “primarily involved commitment of an individual to a great master or leader.” It also entailed a commitment to the teachings and way of life of that master. Jesus called his disciples to personally follow him as

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54 Ibid., 79.
Master. He also called them to “devotion to the particular way of life that exemplifies the reign of God.”\textsuperscript{55} Another characteristic feature of Jesus's discipleship is its focus not primarily on right doctrine but on “apprenticeship to the work of the kingdom.”\textsuperscript{56}

It is common for works on discipleship to discern a series of stages that disciples go through on their journey to maturity.\textsuperscript{57} Wilkins identifies five stages that Jesus's disciples passed through on their journey of following him. The stages are based on key points along the journey of Jesus with his disciples and are significant because at each stage the relationship enters enter a new dynamic. Wilkins's analysis identifies that maturity for the disciples was not gained quickly or easily. Instead, we see Jesus working with the disciples to bring them to progressively greater levels of commitment and greater awareness of his task. Later, the task of discipling people would become their task.

Discipleship entered a new phase when Jesus left the earth. After the Ascension and Pentecost, followers of Jesus received their instruction and encouragement from several sources. They emulated the example and teachings of Jesus passed on to them by the example and teaching of his authoritative witnesses, later recorded in the New Testament writings. They received guidance and instruction through the Spirit, now residing in them. They also learned from one another in the community of the church.


\textsuperscript{56} Wilkins, \textit{Following the Master}, 79.

\textsuperscript{57} Wilkins is one example. See also Bill Hull, \textit{Jesus Christ, Disciplemaker} (Baker Books, 2004).
With Jesus gone, disciples would also of necessity become disciples of other disciples. Jesus's instruction to them to "make disciples" assumes this reality (Mt 28:19-20). Wilkins, however, cautions Christians today against using the term "disciple" to refer to relationships among believers, emphasising that the primary discipleship relationship is with Jesus.\textsuperscript{58} Hence, the goal of a human discipleship relationship is to assist a person as they grow in their relationship with Christ.

Wilkins also surveys the concept of discipleship from the patristic period and finds that, “Overall, discipleship was understood as the development of the Christian life.”\textsuperscript{59} He states, “Conversion is the point at which one becomes a disciple, but true disciples will continue to grow in discipleship.”\textsuperscript{60} Discipleship is a holistic concept, including in its scope “every area of life: secular and sacred, family and church, spiritual and material, intellectual and emotional.”\textsuperscript{61} Wilkins suggests that every disciple, as part of their discipleship, will be making other disciples. The underlying purpose in all ministry is always “to make disciples of Jesus in his way.”\textsuperscript{62} Thus, the making of disciples of Jesus is the central task of the church and all its activities should be directed towards this end.

\textsuperscript{58} Ibid., 274.
\textsuperscript{59} Ibid., 309.
\textsuperscript{60} Ibid., 310.
\textsuperscript{61} Ibid., 332.
\textsuperscript{62} Ibid., 346.
Mike Breen has written a series of books arising from his church leadership experience. Discipleship is a central feature of these books. Breen's emphasis is on making disciples who are on mission. He claims that what is needed is "a way of making and moving people so that, as we make disciples, we release them into their destiny of pushing into new Kingdom-frontier."⁶³

Breen highlights the importance of shared language in the creation of culture.⁶⁴ However, given Western culture has shifted from a literate culture to an "image-based culture,"⁶⁵ the language needed for creating culture must also be image-based. Thus, he takes the approach of "attaching the teachings of Jesus and Scripture to a few basic images."⁶⁶ Based on this, he has developed the language of Lifeshapes as the shared discipleship language of his movement. Lifeshapes is a "collection of eight shapes with each shape representing a foundational teaching of Jesus or principle from his life."⁶⁷ Breen states, "Each shape serves as a kind of portal or rabbit hole, with an endless number of Scripture passages, stories or practices attached."⁶⁸ Breen uses the shapes to capture important theological and practical aspects of the Christian faith. When recalled, the shapes and their theological content can be easily recalled for use in life or in

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⁶⁵ Ibid.

⁶⁶ Ibid.

⁶⁷ Ibid.

⁶⁸ Ibid.
discipling others. The Lifeshapes enabled his model of ministry to be easily transferable to others and thus replicable.

Breen's work suggests that simple and easily-reproducible teaching resources can contribute greatly to a growing discipleship movement. He demonstrates that diagrams can be an effective means of capturing and passing on learning, especially in a culture that utilises images to represent and store information. Breen's work, though done in a Western context, gives evidence of the positive impact a diagram-based shared discipleship language can have on a Christian movement. Such an approach holds great promise for the oral cultures of PNG.

Pedagogy

Much research has been done on how to enhance learning processes. The book *How Learning Works: Seven Research-Based Principles for Smart Teaching* surveys a vast quantity of education research and summarises it for the benefit of teachers. As the title suggests, seven principles were discovered and these principles have been found to "resonate across disciplines, institution types, and cultures." Whilst this should not encourage a "one size fits all" approach, it does hold out hope that the core elements of teaching and learning are transferable, at least to some degree, across cultures.

The first statement in the introduction lays out a foundational principle for teaching: "Learning results from what the student does and thinks and only from what the

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69 Susan A. Ambrose et al., *How Learning Works: Seven Research-Based Principles for Smart Teaching* (John Wiley & Sons, 2010).

student does and thinks. The teacher can advance learning only by influencing what the student does to learn."\textsuperscript{71} This highlights the importance of contextual training; the efforts of educators must be focused on creating environments that are focused primarily on what learners are receiving and learning, rather than on what is being taught.

The strength of this work is in the vast amount of literature that has been consulted and the relentless focus on what works for learners. The fact that the principles apply across cultures is significant for this project. The format the book takes of identifying a problem, presenting a principle, and applying a solution works for real world teaching situations and is technique worth applying when designing a learning experience.

Paulo Freire has investigated the dynamics of cross-cultural education at length.\textsuperscript{72} Freire claims that educators have often not been sensitive to indigenous contexts and concerns. On the whole, they have brought with them "an ideology of paternalism, social control, and non-reciprocity between 'experts' and 'helpees.'"\textsuperscript{73} Freire's approach involves a re-thinking of how assistance and development must occur. Rather than outsiders identifying problems and offering solutions, he proposes that whole populations must "problematize" their own concerns.\textsuperscript{74} This involves a population bringing to

\textsuperscript{71} Ibid., 1.


\textsuperscript{73} Denis Goulet, introduction to \textit{Education for Critical Consciousness}, by Paulo Freire (London: Continuum, 1973), x.

\textsuperscript{74} Ibid., ix.
consciousness their concerns and discovering the means of articulating them in order to generate "critical consciousness," and thereby "alter their relations with nature and social forces."\textsuperscript{75} In Freire's approach there must be collective discernment of the situation, collective reflection upon the problems, and collective planning and enactment of solutions.

Freire does not oppose knowledge or technical skill being offered by outsiders to those who do not have it. His concern is with the process by which this occurs and particularly in the avoidance of following the "prescriptions" of elites.\textsuperscript{76} The aim of those assisting from outside must be to "help men [sic] (and nations) help themselves, to place them in consciously critical confrontation with their problems, to make them the agents of their own recuperation."\textsuperscript{77} In this way, local people do not become spectators but remain immersed in the process of their own transformation. They remain as "subjects,"\textsuperscript{78} and their choices do not represent the expectations of others but contextualized solutions arrived at through communal engagement.

This implies that before any training experience occurs, a process of dialogue must take place whereby particular training needs are discerned in consultation with the

\textsuperscript{75} Ibid.

\textsuperscript{76} Freire, \textit{Education for Critical Consciousness}, 5.

\textsuperscript{77} Ibid., 12.

\textsuperscript{78} Freire uses the term "subject" to refer to human beings who remain active in the process of their own transformation. The opposite of being a subject is being an "object," one who is acted upon and who possesses no agency.
people. When solutions are arrived at, they must be "with the people and never for them or imposed on them." Unfortunately, in many cases people have ended up with borrowed solutions, "neither generated by a critical analysis of the context itself, nor adequately adapted to the context," and these solutions have proved "inoperative and unfruitful." By contrast, Freire describes the required training methodology as "dialogical, problem-posing, and conscientizing." Training must bring participants to a place of critical awareness of their situation and engage them in a process of seeking ways forward.

The pedagogic literature reviewed suggests this project must be approached with great cultural sensitivity, must be focused on the needs of learners, and must be careful at every stage to maintain the agency of the learners and thus honour them as human subjects. The concept of partnership is again helpful at this point. Trainers and learners ideally can work together to bring about solutions that arise from a dialogical process that can be owned by the learners and not imposed on them from outside.

Factors in Semi-Literate Contexts

Christian mission in the modern period has largely been conducted by people from Western nations who have not been fully aware of their deep commitment to a rational and literate understanding, expression, and communication of the Christian faith.

79 Freire, Education for Critical Consciousness, 139.
80 Ibid., 13 [italics original].
81 Ibid., 10.
82 Ibid., 140.
This has often resulted in the planting of churches that reflect the church of the mission-sending nation and remain removed from the culture of the people the church has been planted in. Today there is a growing awareness and body of literature focused on the importance of contextualisation and on the importance for effective ministry on non-literate forms of communication such as story, song, drama, art and ritual.

Frank Tucker, in his work *Intercultural Communication for Christian Ministry*, writes from “a desire to make Christ known to people of other cultures and subcultures without them having to adapt to another culture in the process.” Drawing on the work of Eugene Nida, he highlights the important place culture plays in our communication and the need for those who communicate cross-culturally to be aware of their own culture, the target culture, and biblical culture.

The greater the number and extent of the cultural divergences between two communicators, the more care needs to be taken so that misunderstandings can be avoided. Christian communication brings the added complexity of “Incarnational Presence,” and so “the lives, actions and words of the messenger” are therefore integral to the communication process. A messenger must be able to form significant relationships with people in the host culture for an Incarnational message to be effectively heard and understood. Issues such as submission to local authorities, not making use of privilege or

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84 Ibid., Preface.
86 Ibid.
status, food eaten, friendships and many other issues make significant contributions to the overall communication.\textsuperscript{87}

Christian communicators are therefore called upon to examine their styles and methods and to intentionally choose to act and communicate in ways that make sense to those they are communicating with. This challenge was taken up early in the Christian era with the Jerusalem Council meeting to discuss the response to Gentiles receiving the gospel (Acts 15). Their conclusion indicates that the gospel is “not to be identified with Jewish culture by implication nor closely identified with any culture, but needs to be expressed in culturally relevant ways in every culture.”\textsuperscript{88} Unfortunately there has been a tendency, particularly in the West, to assume that one’s theology is definitive and hence normative for all times and cultures.\textsuperscript{89}

In contrast to this, Tucker repeatedly refers to the gospel as “supra-cultural.”\textsuperscript{90} He means by this that it cannot be fully located in any culture and it offers prophetic critique to every culture. As the gospel is incarnated into different cultures, specific insights are gained that help other cultures see past their blind spots in relation to the gospel and the nature of God. Of course, with any incarnating of the gospel into culture there is the

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\textsuperscript{87} Ibid., Chapter 4. Tucker delves extensively into ways that relationships can be established, concluding that the Incarnational model as exhibited by Jesus and including relating in the activities of everyday life. He states “When we enter another culture we, like Jesus, should aim to adapt to the culture using the Incarnation as our model.” This will include; “moving into the local community … learning the history of the place … mastering the language … adapting to the culture and way of thinking of the people.”

\textsuperscript{88} Ibid., Chapter 9.

\textsuperscript{89} Ibid.

\textsuperscript{90} Ibid., Preface, Chapters 2, 6, 9, 10.
\end{flushright}
possibility of syncretism. In the long term, however, the incarnation of the gospel into many cultures guards against imperialism and furthers the potential of each culture to enrich the worldwide body of Christ and provide new insights into God’s nature and character. World mission, when done with cultural sensitivity, thus becomes a key driver in the reform of the church.

The advent of post-modernism in the West has resulted in Western society embracing new ways of thinking and being and hence mission to those who embrace a post-modern ethos has similarities to mission across a cultural divide. The West has entered a new phase of “secondary orality,” denoting a return to oral communication methods and a shift away from rationalism. This cultural shift has lessened the cultural distance between the “non-Western” person and the postmodern Western person. Hence there is now a greater transferability of communication methods between these cultures. This has coincided with the advent of digital technologies and has opened up new possibilities for cross-cultural communication of the gospel between the developed and developing world.

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91 Ibid., Chapter 10.
92 Ibid., Chapter 3.
93 Ibid., Chapter 1.
This theme of orality is explored in the work of Harry Box entitled, *Don’t Throw the Book at Them: Communicating the Christian Message to People Who Don’t Read*. He writes, “An estimated two-thirds of the world's people do not read, many because they have not learned to read, many because they can read but don't choose to.” This presents a strategic challenge to world mission because this group comprises “a high percentage of the non-Christian people of the world and also a high percentage of the unevangelized people of the world.” If the world is to be successfully evangelised, this group must be a strategic target for Christian mission.

Those who do not read or do not regularly use reading and writing as their means of communication are known as "oral communicators." Oral communication is at the heart of the human experience, being deeply connected to the experience of community and to traditional teaching on religion and social values. It is primarily through oral means that cultural obligations and values are stored and expressed. Poems, songs, stories, artifacts and other non-literate means of communication make up most of the cultural heritage of humanity. Yet, Western missionaries have often focused exclusively on literary communication methods and assumed these to be the best way to share the gospel with all cultures. By doing it this way, any sense of resonance between the local culture and the gospel is diminished and Christian mission must begin with no

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97 Box, *Don’t Throw the Book at Them*, Chapter 1.

98 Ibid.
foundation rather than building on pre-existing resonance that might exist with the cultural forms of the local people.

Deep cognitive processing differences exist between literate and oral communicators. "It is difficult for a literacy-oriented person to appreciate . . . the considerable amount of time, mental effort, and memorisation skill" involved in oral storytelling and traditional communication skills. Overall, there has been a profound lack of appreciation of oral cultures by literate cultures leading to various pressures to adopt literacy and the marginalisation of and refusal to endorse non-literate leaders. Both of these actions can contribute to a community losing touch with its cultural identity and to opportunities to work alongside traditional culture being lost.

This highlights the need for Christian communicators to recognise the significance of oral communication and the role traditional communicators play in community life. Box suggests a number of strategies that educators can utilise in training programs to reflect this including treating non-literate learners as adults, encouraging participation not just in the learning sessions but in planning and evaluation of programs, consideration of cultural time-frames, contextualisation of course content, using communication forms that are appropriate, and providing materials that are structured for remembrance.

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99 Ibid., Chapter 2.

100 Ibid., Chapter 7.

101 Ibid.
The development of a new appreciation of oral communication does not mean that literacy is to be discouraged. It must be recognised, however, that the coming of literacy changes the way people think and changes the society itself. The author suggests that an ideal literacy development program is one where "people are becoming literate without losing orality!"\textsuperscript{102} This would mean "Oral communication forms are not ignored or put aside but utilized in a literacy program."\textsuperscript{103} Box has been influenced by Paulo Freire and claims that "education is not for the purpose of adapting people and pressing them into a predetermined mould. Rather it is to promote dignity and integrity, and to make people aware that they have the power to create their own culture and mould their own history."\textsuperscript{104}

Box calls for a new approach from literate communicators towards oral learners. Literacy is not a requirement for Christian conversion nor for Christian maturity, nor for Christian leadership. Rather than automatically incorporating literacy development programs into mission strategies, missionaries need to appreciate oral communication forms and begin to utilise them.\textsuperscript{105} Western missionaries must recognise that the literate approach is not necessarily the best starting point and can be a hindrance to communities of oral learners accepting the gospel and growing as disciples.

\textsuperscript{102} Ibid., Chapter 8.
\textsuperscript{103} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{104} Ibid., Chapter 8. Box cites both Freire's \textit{Education for Critical Consciousness} and \textit{Pedagogy of the Oppressed} in this chapter.
\textsuperscript{105} Ibid.
It is widely recognised that Christian mission is now "from everywhere to everywhere"\textsuperscript{106} and no longer has a defining centre. This holds great possibilities for mission to oral cultures as missionaries begin to question cultural assumptions about how the gospel is to be communicated. The possibility of a new era of mission which is more highly receptor-sensitive is exciting. There also exists the potential for oral communicators to have a profound impact on world mission, introducing other cultures to the gospel and speaking back into Western cultures that are now in an era of secondary orality.

One particularly significant factor in oral communication is the use of story. Rick Sessoms has written the book, \textit{Leading with Story: Cultivating Christ-centred Leaders in a Storycentric Generation}.\textsuperscript{107} His analysis of oral communication draws similar conclusions to that of Box. He also claims that most of the world (80 percent in his estimation) are oral learners, yet points out that “more than 90 percent of Christian workers still use a literacy-based approach to communicate.”\textsuperscript{108}

Widespread literacy has brought great progress in the world with resulting improvements in quality of life, educational opportunities, health outcomes, democracy and social security.\textsuperscript{109} There is, however, a dark side to these advances. It has resulted in


\textsuperscript{108} Ibid., Introduction.

\textsuperscript{109} Ibid., Chapter 2.
an over-reliance on the left-side of the brain with a resulting diminishment of emotions, experience, and metaphor. Through the pervasive influence of the printed word and the focus on linear logic and rationalism, literacy has changed the way we think. "Printing has led to restructuring our imagination and our belief systems" including our view of the gospel.\(^{110}\) In cultures based on linear reasoning, biblical content has been reduced to propositions with the result that the gospel has been "compressed for efficiency."\(^{111}\) These factors combine to "hinder the church's effectiveness among the 80 per cent of people . . . who are storycentric learners."\(^{112}\)

Recently, however, a shift has been taking place and there is a growing awareness that "Most people around the world, including a growing population in the West, do not learn well through abstract concepts. They prefer to learn through story."\(^{113}\) Sessoms claims that "Research clearly shows that teaching factual, conceptual and tacit information is more effectively and efficiently achieved through material formed into story structure."\(^{114}\) He also claims that "Story . . . enhances one's capacity for literacy, improves all modes of human thinking, and increases comprehension."\(^{115}\) This should not surprise us given that the Bible's overall form and much of its material is story-based.

\(^{110}\) Ibid.

\(^{111}\) Ibid.

\(^{112}\) Ibid.

\(^{113}\) Ibid., Chapter 1.

\(^{114}\) Ibid., Chapter 2.

\(^{115}\) Ibid.
The forms stories take more closely match the way our minds naturally process information. Sessoms states, "Story engages our minds, alters our worldview, touches our lives, and leads to action."\textsuperscript{116}

Contemporary Christian ministry must face the dilemma that the vast majority of people, particularly unreached people, are oral learners but the vast majority of training has been and is currently being done using literate methodologies. The challenge for trainers is to begin to understand oral learning and adapt training styles to fit with oral learners. This project attempts to make some progress towards this end.

\textsuperscript{116} Ibid., Chapter 3.
CHAPTER 3
A SPIRITUAL GROWTH MODEL FOR MELANESIANS

This chapter investigates models of discipleship from the Bible and contemporary contexts in order to discern and articulate a spiritual growth continuum that can assist leaders in the MECOC churches of PNG to provide better discipleship training to the members of their churches.

Adequate Response to the Gospel

Dallas Willard claims that in contemporary Western Christianity, the good news for all creation has been replaced by "gospels of sin management."\(^\text{117}\) Instead of the goal being the complete transformation of the human person, the focus of the gospel has been reduced to a faith that centres on "forgiveness alone."\(^\text{118}\) The transformative process of discipleship that is evident in the Gospel narratives has been reduced to a "barcode"


\(^{118}\) Ibid., 36. Though Willard focuses on the implications of the sin-management gospel on the theological right and the left, I will deal only with the right as this is the major problem in PNG.
scanner version of the gospel that makes entry to heaven the central issue. According to Willard, “justification has taken the place of regeneration, or new life.”

This narrowed gospel has been the foundation of most of the mission work throughout the world in the past two centuries. In PNG the result has been "a superficial Christianity of the majority without a radical transformation of basic values and beliefs." Nominalism is widespread. Pastors in the MECOC region readily describe members of their congregations as “believers but not disciples.”

This is a logical outcome of a gospel focused on conversion and with little emphasis on discipleship. The gospel as preached by Europeans in PNG has resulted in a dearth of mature disciples. Despite the best efforts of missionaries there is a profound need for the development of more effective means of discipleship in the churches of PNG.

In contrast to a gospel focused on forgiveness and instantaneous conversion, the Gospel narratives present a model of response to Jesus that involves a person in a whole-

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119 Ibid., 36-38.
120 Ibid., 42 [Italics original].
123 From conversations on previous visits, the majority of leaders identify this issue as highly significant for their congregation.
of-life transformation that involves commitment to Jesus as master, devotion to his teachings and way of life, and apprenticeship to the work of the kingdom.\textsuperscript{126}

Transformation of believers in PNG will require a type of discipleship training that mirrors this. Conversion, properly understood, must involve more than theological assent to the concept that "Jesus is Lord" and engage followers of Jesus in a sustained transformational journey where they are, in culturally appropriate ways, "guided, instructed and helped by him in every aspect of their lives."\textsuperscript{127}

Jesus knew that he would only be present on Earth for a limited time so he made the training of his disciples a priority. Before he left he gave them the instruction to "Make disciples." (Mt 28:20). This assumes that the disciple-making process that Jesus undertook with them is replicable by them in others. This sets the pattern for Christian ministry: Discipleship in the way of Jesus is normal for the Christian life. It is the means by which human lives are rebuilt from their fallen state so that human beings are not only redeemed but also restored to their full human potential.

A Discipleship Journey for Melanesians

Ewan Stilwell has outlined what an adequate biblical response to the gospel looks like for Melanesians in his article, "Towards a Melanesian Theology of Conversion."\textsuperscript{128} Stilwell centres his analysis of Melanesian conversion around the concept of "turning." He sees four aspects of turning; turning-from, turning-to, turning-into, and turning-for.

\textsuperscript{126} Wilkins, \textit{Following the Master}, 49-79.

\textsuperscript{127} Willard, \textit{Divine Conspiracy}, 273.

Each of these aspects contributes to an understanding of the spiritual journey of Melanesians and is a significant factor for them in what it means to be a growing Christian.

The turning-from aspect involves a shift in primary allegiance that is manifested in the forsaking of specific realities. In Melanesia, these include the concept of kago (the good life), the clan (putting family first), mana (access to spiritual power), and retributive justice (an eye for an eye). The gospel challenges each of these, not by obliterating the aspects of life they relate to, but by demanding that a disciple re-centre each around Jesus and his teachings. A conversion-focused gospel may provoke an initial change in allegiance in these areas but this is not sustained. This is evidenced by the re-appearing of old allegiances among those claiming Christian conversion.

The turning-to aspect refers to what is taken on in conversion. Melanesians are readily impressed with manifestations of spiritual power and their lives are filled with rituals to gain access to such power. The understanding of God as the ultimate spiritual power and of Jesus as the unique mediator of this power is an important shift in the Melanesian world-view. The turning-to a God who is personal, transcendent, and not able to be manipulated by ritual is a key challenge for Melanesian believers. One aspect of this is the relief from the fear of the other spirits. Many can testify of a time in their life when such a turning-to occurred but this was not sustained in the face of the power of sorcery.

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129 Ibid., 31.
130 Ibid., 35-36.
and the allure of healing, fertility or prosperity that is seen to be possible via a return to traditional rituals.

R. Daniel Shaw and William R. Burrows in the work *Traditional Ritual as Christian Worship* explore and give examples of the positive benefits that can be gained by continuing to utilise cultural forms such as rituals as expressions of Christian worship. By banning these cultural expressions, missionaries may have unwittingly been excluding most of life from being impacted by the gospel. These rituals represent deeply ingrained expressions of how the world works and how people find meaning in life. If the gospel is to impact a culture, it must penetrate the world-view of that culture in deep and pervasive ways. This is not best achieved by obliterating the ways in which that world-view is expressed but rather by seeking to understand the meaning of ritual and looking for ways in which these rituals express human struggles and hopes and the search for ultimate meaning. The concept of hybridity, the emergence of specific cultural forms of Christian worship that reflect the cultural expressions of a particular people, offers helpful ways forward. Though this project will not focus on this, it represents a future avenue of exploration and a next stage of development of the project, particularly as specific people-groups explore how the concepts of discipleship expressed in this project interact with their traditional beliefs, customs and rituals.

The turning-into aspect of conversion has particular challenges in Melanesian society given that the *wantok* (tribal language-based clan) system is so strong. Despite the incredible social security and sense-of-belonging benefits the *wantok* system brings to

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Melanesia, local believers often speak of the struggle in following Christ when family loyalties and expectations are so strong. Baptism signifies an initiation into a new relationship with all other peoples and creates a new value system whereby all people are equal (Gal 3:28). It is unfortunate that church involvement, rather than promoting this new common humanity across family groups, instead has taken the form of allegiance to specific denominations. This has led to "discord within families, clans and villages" and acts to reinforce the traditional idea of separation between peoples.

Turning-for refers to the outworking of conversion via mission to the world. This can be problematic because "mission beyond the borders of one's own group is alien to the Melanesian mind." The new concept of the Sovereign God, however, transcends the local spirits and their domains and the public nature of the gospel overcomes the secrecy of the ritual: this is good news for the whole world. It may require a transcending of clan allegiance, a leaving of country, and suffering for the sake of those outside your immediate clan. These are all things that are difficult to imagine in a traditional Melanesian worldview.

This analysis of conversion in Melanesia reveals that a Melanesian worldview presents people with particular discipleship challenges. Stilwell sums up conversion as "a

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132 Ibid., 39-41.
134 Stilwell, "Conversion," 41.
135 Ibid., 42.
process of worldview change.” Preaching that is centred on a moment of conversion may help to open up new visions of what life in Christ is like and may help define what needs to be turned away from but without a sustained journey of discipleship it will not be able to fuel a shift in worldview and lifestyle over time. If Christian preaching excludes those aspects of life that relate to ancestors, spirits and ritual, Melanesians may see Christian faith as irrelevant to most of their lives. A gospel for Melanesia, as for all people, must address the whole of life. Response to that gospel must be envisaged as a journey that takes place over time towards the goal of Christian maturity and, ideally, includes specific reflection on how key elements of the gospel can be expressed in ways that resonate with local cultural forms.

Analysis of Christian discipleship from a biblical perspective supports an approach to discipleship training that is focused on transformation of the whole of life, is undertaken over time, is punctuated by stages, and is focused on the attainment of spiritual maturity. Through such a process of discipleship, Jesus reproduces his essential character and lifestyle in his followers. It is to be expected that those who follow him will continue with the same approach.

Adapting the Engel Scale for PNG

Various attempts have been made to create models that describe the journey of disciples to spiritual maturity. James Engel and Wilbert Norton developed the "Engel

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136 Ibid., 43.

137 This aspect of worldview change is addressed in this project through the goal of personal transformation. The issue of cultural forms has been addressed to some extent through the use of image and story. Further stages of the development of the training are needed to better appreciate local cultural forms and investigate how these could be utilised to increase the level of contextualisation of the project.
scale" that describes a person's journey from possessing no knowledge of God through conversion to growing as a Christian to maturity including the ability to reproduce. The Engel scale had a dual focus; to "reach people with the Good News and to build them in the faith." This mapping of the spiritual journey both before and after conversion helped Christian leaders to see the whole spiritual journey, to discern where a community or an individual was most likely placed on the journey, and to plan strategies for moving people further along the journey. Engel and Norton presented an analysis of God’s role and the communicator’s role in each step of the journey alongside the scale. The model describes how God acts and how human beings respond in the process of making disciples. The scale has been modified many times with additions of theological terms and the emotional states of people and is regularly referenced in discussions of spiritual growth.

Willow Creek Community Church undertook a large study of spiritual growth and created a spiritual continuum that represents the journey of people from "Exploring Christ" to "Christ-centred." Both the Willow Creek model and the Engel scale depict response to the gospel as an extended journey towards maturity rather than a decision in a

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138 Engel and Norton, *What’s Gone Wrong with the Harvest*, 45. The scale from this publication is reproduced in Appendix 1.

139 Ibid., 13.


moment of time. By mapping the journey of discipleship in this way, conversion is put in its proper place as the moment of entry into Christian life. The significance of the earlier and later stages of the journey are re-captured and the task of making disciples takes on a broader and more comprehensive scope.

Both the Engel scale and Willow Creek continuum can be seen as attempts to shift the emphasis of response to the gospel from the receiving of forgiveness to a journey of life-change. They both describe stages that are helpful in identifying where people are at on this journey. Spiritual growth is represented by the progressive movement through the stages described in each model. Models such as these help church leaders to identify where their people are at on the journey. This enables them to discern what teachings or activities will help move people to the next stage. Engel and Norton identified the key activities that advance people through the stages as proclamation, persuasion, follow-up and cultivation.\textsuperscript{142} Willow Creek identified three broad movements between stages that consisted of building the foundation of spiritual beliefs and attitudes, developing a routine of spiritual practices, and replacing secular self-centredness with Christ-like self-sacrifice.\textsuperscript{143}

This project seeks to adapt the Engel scale to the PNG context. To do this, two important factors on the nature of gospel presentation in PNG must be addressed. The first is the fact that underlying each traditional PNG culture is a worldview that includes spirits, ancestors, rituals and ceremonies which help give meaning to life in all its aspects.

\textsuperscript{142} Engel and Norton, \textit{What's Gone Wrong with the Harvest?} 45.

\textsuperscript{143} Hawkins and Parkinson, \textit{Move}, Chapter 1.
By not adequately addressing the "excluded middle," the narrow Western gospel quickly exhausted its applicability to life in the Melanesian world, resulting in much of life in Melanesia untouched by Christian teaching, despite extensive Christianisation.  

The second factor that must be addressed is the conversion focus of gospel preaching in PNG. This meant that once some form of conversion was experienced, there was little to offer the converts. The combination of these two factors meant that the gospel did not fully penetrate the worldview of the people in PNG, nor was there a sustained means of fostering growth. Preaching and church attendance, along with other church based activities, did not form a comprehensive enough framework to facilitate a shift in worldview and behaviour. Believers thus returned to traditional practices and beliefs that gave meaning to their lives, often doing these in secret so the missionaries would not disapprove. Others simply stagnated and took on outward forms of Christianity such as church attendance without a vital relationship with Christ to propel them forward in their spiritual journey.

This project will not focus on examining local cultural rituals and practices and their impact on the discipleship journey, except as brought up by locals. It will, however, address the aspect of sustaining the journey of discipleship via the development of a discipleship continuum that can act as a guide for the spiritual journey of Melanesians. A future stage of this project is envisaged whereby the spiritual continuum is explored in the context of each local MECOC cultural group’s rituals, customs and beliefs in order to, as far as is possible, develop training that is as sensitive as possible to local culture.

An Engel-type scale provides the framework for a sustained journey of discipleship. There is somewhere for converts to go and somewhere for leaders to direct them. Because most people in PNG have experienced some form of Christian conversion but have not progressed to maturity, the creation of a continuum that depicts the Christian life as a sustained journey that begins with but moves beyond conversion is an important contribution to discipleship in PNG. This project will label those who have begun but not progressed on their spiritual journey as "stalled" along the way. Being stalled, they need to re-start their journey and an important factor in this is the realisation that there is a journey they must make.145

Engel and Norton formulated their scale to help church leaders in the North American context see that evangelism was not simply the sharing of a gospel message but part of a process whereby a person journeyed in their understanding towards receiving Christ. Their primary focus was on the stages of the journey before conversion.146 For leaders of churches in PNG, the key problem is the lack of spiritual progress once some form of conversion has occurred. Thus, the stages of the journey after conversion are the most salient and therefore the project will focus on getting people re-started who have already made a faith commitment and help them to grow towards Christian maturity. This

145 Ibid. I use "stalled" in the sense that the Willow Creek analysis uses it. It is not that the journey is over, nor that people have abandoned it, it is that growth has come to a halt and needs a shift in emphasis to get it restarted.

146 Engel and Norton, What's Gone Wrong with the Harvest? 45. This is demonstrated by the scale before conversion having seven significant points and very specific terminology attached, and the scale after conversion having only five, with only brief descriptions. In fact, after conversion, the categories of "God's role," "Communicator's role," and "Man's response" all end in an arrow pointing to "eternity." It is as if nobody is really sure what maturity actually looks like. See Appendix 1 for a reproduction of the Engel Scale.
project will not specifically focus on the "excluded middle" but will reflect on the need for further development on this area as the training is developed in new stages.

Stages in the Journey to Spiritual Maturity for Melanesians

The following table (Table 1) outlines four stages that describe the spiritual journey to maturity for Melanesian people. Contrary to the original Engel scale, there is greater emphasis on the stages after conversion. Whilst accurate figures for remote villages are difficult to obtain, these stages were presented to the pastors of Tsumba village in the Middle-Ramu area. They were then asked to evaluate the population of their village according to these stages.\(^{147}\) Table 1 records the results. Sixty other MECOC leaders were present and indicated their agreement that the results were indicative of the situation in their communities.

Table 1. Analysis of spiritual maturity in Tsumba village

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Stage</th>
<th>Description of Stage</th>
<th>No. of people</th>
<th>% of people</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Not Christians</td>
<td>70</td>
<td>39%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Christians, attending church but not growing</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>56%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Growing Christians (some evidence of changed life, spiritual practices such as prayer and bible reading, some serving)</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Mature Believers (transformed Christians committed to serving and mission)</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Totals</strong></td>
<td><strong>179</strong></td>
<td><strong>100%</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The most striking features of this data are the high proportion of people in the second stage, "Christians, not growing" (56%), and the extremely low number of people

\(^{147}\) Pastor Tom and Pastor Sophia are well-respected and long term pastors from Tsumba. They provided these figures for their village in October 2017.
who are considered to be either "Growing Christians" (3%) or "Mature Believers" (2%). This is consistent with observations of high rates of nominalism in PNG: there are many who consider themselves to be Christians but who have not grown beyond their initial conversion experience. These people may be involved in church attendance but they are not growing as disciples and their spiritual journey has stalled.\textsuperscript{148}

These results are consistent with what might be expected if a conversion-focused gospel has been proclaimed and discipleship not emphasised. Conversion of some sort has been experienced but little progress towards maturity has ensued. Church leaders in PNG face this type of scenario in working with those in their congregations and communities. This tool can be used by church leaders to help discern what proportion of their people is located at each stage of the journey to maturity. Discerning this information helps church leaders plan where the focus of their work needs to be and guides them towards appropriate strategies that can assist in moving people towards maturity.

The results confirm the need for a re-imagining of response to the gospel as a sustained journey towards maturity rather than a momentary receiving of forgiveness. Seeing the whole journey of maturity mapped out from unbeliever to mature believer can have an impact on people at all stages of the journey. It alerts those who are not yet Christians that they have a journey to begin. It also challenges those who are already Christians to grow as disciples because they clearly have further to go on their journey.

\textsuperscript{148} Hawkins and Parkinson, \textit{Move}, Chapter 10.
The categories used for the survey in Tsumba village are simple categories that measure progress on a spiritual continuum in a way that is helpful for the PNG context. The four categories correspond to four stages on the journey to spiritual maturity: non-Christian, Christians but not growing, Growing Christians, and Mature Christians. Figure 1 depicts an Engel-type scale for Melanesian people using these categories. The moment of conversion occurs between the first and second stages, as indicated by the cross.

![Diagram of Engel scale with categories and percentages](image)

**Figure 2. A model of the stages of the journey to maturity for Melanesians**

Representing Discipleship Stages in Diagram Form

The Engel scale as it was originally articulated focused on a rational journey towards conversion and then beyond that to spiritual maturity. This is indicated by the use of cognitively-focused terms such as "Awareness of Fundamentals of the Gospel," "Grasp of Implications," and "Decision."\(^{149}\) Forward progress was measured along a spiritual continuum that was represented by a numerical scale. Though this lays out the logic of forward movement, this linear, rational and abstract approach creates difficulties for Melanesians to grasp and utilise.

\(^{149}\) Engel and Norton, *What's Gone Wrong with the Harvest?* 45.
The abstract representation was designed for and works well in cultures accustomed to numerical measurement and linear progression. A concrete representation of this progression is more fitting for a Melanesian context. One possibility is the use of animal symbols to represent the spiritual stages. Depictions of animals are used throughout PNG in symbolic ways. The bird of paradise is the national symbol, and crocodile and shark are used symbolically in the East Sepik province. Many tribes have a totem animal symbol that represents desirable characteristics for tribal members.

Symbolic representations of animals, plants and natural features are also used in PNG for didactic purposes. Symbolic wooden storyboards from the village of Kambot (in the MECOC area) use depictions of people, animals and everyday life to, "teach myth to youth." This utilisation of images for didactic purposes indicates that a visual symbolic representation is an appropriate way to communicate information designed to instruct believers about their spiritual journey.


The representing of a story in diagram form initially appears problematic in that a diagram can seem to "sit static on the page, denying all temporal contingencies". A story is, contrary to this, a dynamic reality. This problem is overcome, however, when it is considered that diagrams, when drawn by hand, do not appear as finished products but are constructed over time. This temporality in the construction of the diagram creates the possibility that, if the scenes of a story can be captured in the component parts of a diagram, the drawing of the diagram will, as each component is added, function as a scene-by-scene re-telling of the original story. Thus, a diagram can become the basis for a dynamic storytelling experience.

Such a storytelling experience begins with a theological story to be told that can be encoded in the form of a diagram. The journey to maturity for a believer with its stages and complications creates a natural story form. Each stage of the journey constitutes a scene in the story and can be represented by a symbolic animal. As a person overcomes the challenges that the stages present, they move forward in their journey to the next stage which is represented by a different animal.

The animal representations of the stages and the transitions between the stages can be captured in a diagram that represents the journey to spiritual maturity. The diagram can then be drawn scene-by-scene as the training unfolds. The storyteller can pause at each stage and at other times to enable the audience to allow reflection on what has been said, to ask questions, and to allow contributions from participants. Because it is an unfolding story, the conclusion has not yet been revealed and so mystery and tension...
can be maintained in the audience via the conflict that is introduced at each stage of the story. This helps to sustain interest in the material being presented and thus increases the receptivity of the participants to learning. As the final features of the diagram are drawn, the conclusion of the story comes into view. This creates the possibility of a sustained immersion into the story.

As the participants interact with the story they are invited to explore the theology and practicalities of the stages in the discipleship process. It should be expected that the greater the extent to which the model of the discipleship journey corresponds with their own experiences, the greater their sense of resonance with the model will be. However, points of difference between the model and their experience can also be opportunities for reflection and learning. Where the model does not reflect their experiences it can be recognised and adjusted. Even if it was rejected outright, this could still be a good outcome as it would provoke the participants to better understand their own Melanesian journey of discipleship by helping them define what it does not look like and assisting them to come to critical awareness of their situation and the problems they face in that situation and would like solved.\footnote{The point here is that the learning experience is not dependent solely on a good model but also on the experiences and interactions of the participants. Paul Freire's ideal of a "problem-posing" education is realised as the participants engage with the model and either resonate with the problems posed there, or reject it and come up with their own specific problems to solve. In either case, the learners have problematized their situation. This idea is developed in Freire, \textit{Pedagogy of the Oppressed}, Chapter 2.} This means local leaders are free to adapt the model as best fits their context.

Figure 2 below places an animal symbol in each stage to represent the spiritual characteristics of a person at that stage of the journey. The use of animal symbols avoids
the abstraction of numbers and aims to capture important features of each stage in the animal symbol. The progressive journey is tracked in the story via the transformation from one type of animal to another. The reason for choosing the specific animals to represent each stage will be explained as the model is developed and is open to adaptation by local leaders.

Figure 3. Model of the spiritual journey expressed in animal symbols

Diagrams Capture Information and Aid Memory

When people view completed diagrams they look to explain the diagram by utilising "stories as a means of making sense of dynamic visual representations." A viewer will instinctively break down a diagram into component parts and create or recall stories to describe the relationship between those parts. Viewers attempt to re-tell the sequence of events that is represented in the diagram and will place themselves in the re-


156 Elizabeth de Freitas, "Diagram as Story," 27.
telling when and where appropriate by "positioning the narrator through point of view and voice." A diagram that depicts a story can thereby act as a powerful prompt to remember, re-experience, and re-tell the story embedded in its construction.

This analysis reveals that stories and diagrams can function in symbiotic ways. Important theological truths can be captured in story form. The logic of the story can then be encoded in the components of a diagram. A learner who is present at the unfolding of such a theological story-diagram will experience the logic of the story that the diagram conveys. If opportunities for reflection, discussion, and contribution are given as the story unfolds, participants can deeply engage with the story and through that reflection and discussion come to a greater critical awareness of their own situation. Later, when the diagram is remembered and reflected upon, a person can re-access the story and its theological truths. Viewing the diagram can thus trigger a re-experiencing of the entire learning experience. Not only will the story behind the diagram be remembered but the contributions and interactions provided by other participants will be accessed in the retelling since these experiences have been captured in the diagram as the training has unfolded. Contextual understandings provided by the participants are thus freighted into and carried forward in the diagram in the minds of the participants.

The Importance of a Story Framework

Melanesian society is on the whole "a culture of oral stories." There is great diversity in story form among the hundreds of tribal cultures in PNG and the story form is

157 Ibid.

a primary means by which important information and values are captured and conveyed in oral cultures. This strongly suggests that Christian teaching, if it is to be received into Melanesian culture, needs to be conveyed in the form of a story.

"Sung Tales from the Papua New Guinea Highlands"\textsuperscript{159} is a work that describes how poetry, stories and songs relay cultural information and values among particular peoples of PNG. Some of these tales speak of the journey of boys to mature manhood with the overcoming of obstacles and struggles along the way.\textsuperscript{160} When "Sung Tales" are shared in PNG cultures, they are not seen as cultural artefacts that must be maintained without change but are adapted to address contemporary concerns.\textsuperscript{161} Pre-existing plots and character types are often adapted to "bring the genre into the contemporary world."\textsuperscript{162} Examples of this include adapting traditional stories for "presenting the Christian gospel and for settings of Christian liturgy."\textsuperscript{163} Traditional story forms are thus not seen by locals to be restricted to specific traditional purposes but are seen as flexible and may be adapted for communicating various messages including discipleship training.

In order to utilise the power of story in a training context, the way that stories form and alter our worldviews needs to be understood. Narratives "create (fictional)
worlds in which human beings exist and interact within life-worlds that are almost the same as the real world."\textsuperscript{164} If the characters and situations that occur in the story are seen to be true-to-life and the events and relationships plausible, aspects of the worldview the story gives witness to are likely to be embraced by the hearers. In this way, stories impact the beliefs and values of people by inviting and persuading them to adopt the view of the world embodied in the story.

The structure of a story can make it more interesting to hearers and engage them at deeper levels. Robert McKee refers to the "law of conflict" as the key factor in the persuasiveness of a story. He claims that "nothing moves forward in a story except through conflict."\textsuperscript{165} He describes an ideal story as one where characters experience "progressive complications," which results in them facing and overcoming conflict against forces of antagonism.\textsuperscript{166} This ideal story pattern is well suited to telling the story of believers on a journey to maturity. It thus has the potential to be told in a deeply engaging way with progressive complications emerging in the story as barriers to progress presented at each stage of the discipleship journey.

By creating a story-world the storyteller invites hearers to encounter life as the story-world portrays it. The story-world created in this project includes the challenges that emerge on a believer's journey to maturity that can be overcome by appropriate

\textsuperscript{164} Monika Fludernik, \textit{An Introduction to Narratology}, trans. from German by Patricia Hausler-Greenfield and Monika Fludernik, (Routledge; New York, 2009), 0.


\textsuperscript{166} Ibid., 181.
response to the call to follow Jesus at each stage. If this story-world, the spiritual barriers that emerge within it, and the means of overcoming them seem plausible to the hearers then they will be open to framing their own spiritual journey in the same way and thereby accepting the progressive call to discipleship that the story presents. The story-world thus has the potential to impact the thoughts, feelings and ultimately the actions of the hearers.

Based on this analysis, the strategy that will be adopted in this project is to firstly discern and articulate a spiritual growth continuum for Melanesians. Secondly, it will involve expressing this spiritual growth continuum in the form of several transitions from one representative animal type to another. Thirdly, it will involve creating a diagram-based framework into which the spiritual growth continuum and its representative animals can be placed. Fourthly, it will involve opportunities for MECOC leaders to reflect on, question or re-design the story or the framework as it unfolds.

A Model of Spiritual Growth for Melanesians

Thom Rainer and Eric Geiger claim that an effective church must have "a simple discipleship process." If a spiritual growth continuum that accurately reflects the experiences of Melanesian people can be discerned, this can be used as a model that describes a simple discipleship process that helps church leaders guide their people towards effective discipleship. The concepts discussed in this chapter lay the foundations for such a process. Church leaders can use the stages as a basis for planning ministry strategies that will help people progress on their journey to maturity. Based on this logic, and drawing on the survey results from Tsumba village given in Figure 1, a simple

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"Engel" scale can be constructed that proposes a helpful spiritual continuum for Melanesian people, takes the form of a journey, unfolds in the form of a story, provides meaningful animal representations of each stage, and invites reflection and contributions from locals at each stage of the process.

Rationale for the Choice of Animal Symbols

The proposed Engel scale for Melanesians takes the form of a series of animal symbols. The choice of the symbols is an important factor in this project. Relevance theory suggests that information is relevant to an individual when it "connects with background information he (sic) has available to yield conclusions that matter to him (sic); by answering a question he (sic) has in mind, improving his (sic) knowledge on a certain topic, settling a doubt, confirming a suspicion, or correcting a mistaken impression."\(^{168}\) In using animal symbols, there is the potential that hearers will infer unintended meanings because cultural associations already exist with these animals. If these associations are strong, relevance theory suggests an interpreter may stop looking for possible meanings once a degree of relevance has been attained. For example, in areas of the Sepik River, because the fish is an important cultural symbol due to its importance in community rituals,\(^ {169}\) the use of the fish as a symbol may result in hearers ceasing their exploration of meaning soon after the fish symbol is introduced or in non-intended meanings being inferred by associating the fish symbol with the fish ritual.


\(^{169}\) See Donald E. McGregor, *The Fish and the Cross* (Melanesian Institute for Pastoral and Socio-Economic Service, Goroka, Rev. Ed. 1982).
Conversely, strong cultural associations may exist whereby background knowledge could be utilised to assist hearers to infer meanings that would result in great cognitive effect. Lack of awareness of these associations could hinder the project from creating maximum relevance for hearers. The project will utilise the animal symbols of fish, sheep, chicken, pig and sugar-glider. In discussions with Jerry Yabru who was raised in the Ramu River area, he is not aware of any obvious negative links with community cultural usages that would preclude using these animals as symbols. The fish and chicken play a significant role in village life in the area and have done for centuries.\textsuperscript{170} Several species of sugar glider are present in the northern parts of PNG.\textsuperscript{171} The pig has significance in many local cultures in connection with cultural rituals and is held in high positive regard. Its utilisation as a symbol of Christian commitment has the potential to build on positive cultural associations. Jerry Yabru states that "many cultures use pigs for sacrifices and payment for brides and land payment…it has big value."\textsuperscript{172} The use of the sheep as an image does not relate directly to the local culture but to the Christian teaching that the audience is quite familiar with.

The potential of hearers to infer unintended and unhelpful meanings from the animal symbols does exist. The context of the training experience, however, lessens the chance that this will occur. The audience members are Christian leaders who expect to receive Christian discipleship training. The animal symbols are being used to describe

\textsuperscript{170} Fish are endemic. Chickens have been present in PNG, and part of village cultural life, for two to three thousand years. See A.R. Quartermaine, "Non-Commercial Poultry Production in Papua New Guinea" Asian-Aus. J. Anim. Sci. 13 Supplement July 2000: 304.

\textsuperscript{171} Gliders are used for bush-meat or sometimes as pets.

\textsuperscript{172} Personal conversation with Jerry Yabru via Facebook Messenger, 28/05/2018.
stages in the journey of Christian discipleship. Biblical material and stories of Christian experience relevant to the stage of Christian maturity being discussed are presented to hearers as each animal symbol is introduced. The diagrams physically locate the animal symbols as part of a spiritual continuum and are visibly present as soon as they are drawn. Previous training experiences where similar animal symbols have been used in other MECOC areas has not resulted in confusion or a perceived lack of relevance but in a sense that the training has been "relevant and at our level." The potential for the training to be insufficiently aware of contextual factors does exist, however, and this will be reflected on in the final chapter.

The fish symbol is chosen to represent those who are not yet believers. This symbol links with the usage of the fish in the Gospel narratives. When Jesus called Peter and Andrew in Mark 1:17, he said, "Follow me, and I will make you fish for people." There is an association of those who are the objects of mission with fishing. Also, in Matthew 13:47, Jesus describes the kingdom of heaven like the letting down of a net that "caught all kinds of fish." Again, the association exists between fish and the evangelistic task. These associations remind people that those who are not yet believers need to be reached, or "caught." In the discipleship journey, the image of the fish will be used to represent the stage of spiritual growth before a person becomes a Christian. In the MECOC areas, every village has a connection with the water and fishing is a part of life.

The sheep is chosen to represent those who are believers. Jesus told his disciples in John 10:14 that, "I am the good shepherd. I know my sheep and my sheep know me."

173 Conversations with Jerry Yabru and personal feedback from MECOC leaders.
In the Gospels, and elsewhere in the Bible, the term sheep is associated with identity as the people of God. This derives from Old Testament references such as Psalm 74:1 ("the sheep of your pasture"), Psalm 78:15 ("he brought his people out like a flock"), Psalm 79:13 ("We are your people, the sheep of your pasture"), and numerous other references. Despite sheep not being native to PNG, most people are aware of them via the biblical references and the colonial link with Australia. The sheep is thus a symbol that can be utilised to represent those who have become Christians.¹⁷⁴

With most believers being nominal or stalled on their spiritual journey, there is a need for further stages to distinguish those who have had some form of conversion experience but have experienced little change or growth in their lives from those who are growing spiritually. The chicken laying an egg is chosen to represent those who are believers and who have taken steps towards spiritual maturity. Chickens and eggs are a long-standing and staple food source throughout PNG. God's plan for people is not simply to "accept Jesus" in a conversion experience, important though this is in the early stages of the Christian journey. The goal is for people to journey beyond a conversion experience and to grow to maturity as believers.

The label of chicken is derived from a story adapted for the PNG context. A village wants to host a feast for its chief. They ask the animals to make a contribution. When the chicken is asked, it squats down and lays an egg as its contribution. This image of the chicken laying an egg represents a person who has begun the journey of making a

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¹⁷⁴ The sheep is not a local animal and so there is no danger of subverting local beliefs. The danger comes in the possible lack of relevance with the symbol of the sheep. In a highly Christianised culture it is a symbol that makes sense to most.
contribution to the cause of the kingdom, someone who has progressed at least partially towards spiritual maturity.

The final stage is labelled as the pig stage. Those who have made significant progress in their spiritual journey are in this category. They are mature believers. The label of pig is derived from the second half of the previous story. After asking the chicken to make a contribution, the pig is then asked. The pig is nervous. The pig responds by affirming the chicken's contribution, but realises that for it to make a contribution it must give its life. The pig is an appropriate animal to represent spiritual maturity in PNG as it is highly prized, used in wedding and land transactions, and is regularly the animal killed for feasting or ritual use.

I have chosen these labels based on the spiritual growth continuum and the link between the nature of each stage and certain characteristics of each animals. Local leaders must be able to adjust these symbols as they see fit if the training is truly to be contextualised.\textsuperscript{175} The theological reasons for the labelling of the stages will be further elaborated in the next chapter. The following table (Table 2) summarises the features of each stage, their labels, the percentage of people in each stage, the description of each stage, the reason for the animal symbol of that stage being chosen, and the visual representation of each stage.

\textsuperscript{175} This issue is important for future development of the training. See the final chapter for reflections.
Table 2. Discipleship Stages for Melanesians

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Pre-Christian</td>
<td>Christian</td>
<td>Growing</td>
<td>Mature</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Seen by local people as not Christian</td>
<td>39%</td>
<td>52%</td>
<td>3%</td>
<td>2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conversion experience plus early stages of spiritual growth</td>
<td>Seen by local people as Christian, conversion but little evidence of discipleship</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Significant spiritual growth and commitment to service and mission</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FISH</td>
<td><strong>Mk 1:17</strong> &quot;Follow me and I will make you fish for people.&quot;</td>
<td><strong>Sheep</strong></td>
<td><strong>Chicken</strong></td>
<td><strong>Pig</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mt 13:47 &quot;The kingdom of heaven is like a net that caught all kinds of fish.&quot;</td>
<td><strong>John 10:14</strong> &quot;I am the good shepherd. I know my sheep and my sheep know me.&quot;</td>
<td>Story of the feast for the chief; the chicken contributes an egg.</td>
<td>Story of the feast for the chief; the pig must give up his life.</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
CHAPTER 4
PLANNING THE TRAINING EXPERIENCE

Creating Movement between the Stages

Once the stages of a discipleship journey for Melanesians have been discerned, strategies to move people through these stages must be formulated. The Willow Creek Move study highlights the importance of a stage-based analysis of spiritual growth and exhorts church leaders towards "understanding what needs to happen for these people to move across the spiritual continuum."\(^{176}\) To move people through the four stages that have been identified (fish, sheep, chicken, and pig), three key transitions must be negotiated. Just as the animal symbols are used to represent the stages of discipleship, symbols to represent the transitions between the stages will also be used.

First Transition: Fish to Sheep

The first transition is from unbeliever to believer, from fish to sheep. It involves a person responding in faith to the good news. The second transition is from believer to growing believer, from sheep to chicken, or early discipleship growth. The third transition is from a growing believer to a mature believer, from chicken to pig, or later

discipleship growth. There are many biblical metaphors and teachings that could contribute to an understanding of how these transitions could be negotiated and it is not the aim of this project to be exhaustive in this regard but to offer a helpful map of the stages of the spiritual journey and suggestions of how people might be moved through those stages. The model can be adapted and filled with other materials as needed once the basic approach has been established.

For a person to shift from the fish to the sheep stage, they must come to an appreciation of the work of atonement that Jesus has accomplished on the Cross. As Paul suggests in 1Cor 15:3, the death for our sins, burial, and resurrection of Jesus are of "first importance." The New Testament presents various metaphors that describe this work including: forgiveness, propitiation, expiation, redemption, and reconciliation. Different cultures will resonate with these metaphors depending on the plausibility structure of their belief system. It is thus important to find a way of expressing the work of Christ on the Cross that is helpful for people from PNG.

For this project, the key Scripture that will be used to teach about the atoning work of Christ is Ephesians 2:11-22. This section ends with a picture of the Jews and Gentiles rising together to become a "holy temple in the Lord" (Eph 2:21). This is an intentional metaphor that guides the interpretation of the chapter. The section begins by

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178 This metaphor of the Jew and Gentile rising to become the "holy temple in the Lord" I feel has been missed in interpretive history and acts as a confirmation that Ephesians 2:14 "the dividing wall of hostility" is referring to the balustrade or dividing wall that excludes Gentiles from entering beyond the outer Court of the Temple. Chapter 2 of Ephesians makes very good sense when read in this way.
referring to the conflict between Jews (the circumcision) and the Gentiles (the uncircumcision). The Gentiles are said to be "separate from Christ," "excluded from citizenship in Israel," "foreigners to the covenants of promise," and "without hope and without God in the world" (Eph 2:11-12). The good news for the Gentiles is the blood of Christ has enabled a shift in proximity for them. They were "far" and have now become "near" through the blood of Christ (Eph 2:13).

In the Temple in Jerusalem, a "dividing wall" existed that prevented the Gentiles from drawing near to God. This wall is the physical representation of the constituting of the Jews as a separate people via the giving of the law. According to the regulations of this law, access to God was given to Jews but not to Gentiles. This was highlighted to Temple visitors by the clear declaration that "warned Gentiles not to pass the balustrade into the inner court of the Temple." The Temple thus embodied in its construction and its regulations the separation that existed between Jews and Gentiles, and clearly communicated the lack of full access to God afforded to the Gentiles.

The blood of Christ has now overcome this separation by destroying this wall (v. 14), forever changing the way in which human beings gain access to God. In Christ, the two (i.e., Jew and Gentile) have been made one (v. 14). Both have been reconciled to God through his Cross (v. 16). Both now have access to the Father by the One Spirit (v. 18). The result of this incredible work is that the Gentiles are no longer "aliens and strangers," but "fellow citizens with the saints and members of the household of God" (v.

19). This uniting of Jew and Gentile into one and the reconciliation of both groups to God via the blood of Christ heralds a new era for all humanity. The Temple will no longer consist of a stone building in Jerusalem that excludes most of humanity from worship but will be a holy sanctuary made up of followers of Jesus from all nations.

For people in PNG, the presentation of the work of Christ given by Paul in Ephesians two has numerous points of resonance. The linking of the state of being "dead in trespasses and sins" (Eph 2:1), with the work of spiritual powers (Eph 2:2) is particularly salient to people who have come from cultures and traditions deeply imbued with the fear and domination of the spirits. It comes as no surprise to learn that the evil Spirit is at work in holding humanity in bondage.

The situation of the Gentiles is described as being "without Christ," "alienated from the commonwealth of Israel," "strangers to the covenant of promise," and "far off" (Eph 2:12-13). The relative isolation of the tribes of PNG up until the Twentieth Century and long distance from the land of Israel highlights the impossibility of a person from PNG accessing the God that was being revealed in Israel. It was also not until the Twentieth Century that the Christian gospel began to significantly impact PNG. Both of these factors contribute to the sense of resonance that PNG people have of being "without Christ" prior to evangelisation.

Ephesians 2 presents a stark contrast between the former way of life of the recipients and their new life in Christ. This resonates with the history of the peoples of PNG who can readily look back to the past time as a time of darkness, often citing a brutal history with cannibalism and tribal fighting before the time that the gospel came to
their world. Whilst care must be taken not to identify the coming of European influence as the coming of Christ, the contrast in Ephesians between the former times and the present is relatable by people in PNG. The stark contrast Paul paints in Ephesians sits well with the stark contrast between life in PNG before the gospel came and the life that is now possible in Christ.

Paul presents the blood of Christ as the means by which those who were far off are brought near to God (Eph 2:13). In Melanesian cultures, the killing of a sacrificial animal "represents a kind of destruction or expenditure of its capital value in the interest of presenting its body and life force to the world of spirit power." Thus, the obtaining of the benefits of forgiveness and favour in relationship with the Creator via the presentation of a sacrifice is highly plausible to Melanesians and goes some way to explaining the rapid acceptance of the Christian good news throughout Melanesia, especially as presented in a transactional form such as conversion-focused preaching.

Paul presents the Cross of Christ not only as the means of access to the Father but also as the means of uniting of all believers, regardless of their wantok or tribal origin. This is a powerful expression of good news for the Melanesian context, providing not only the possibility and challenge of an individual journey of drawing near to God but also the possibility and challenge to transcend all tribal loyalties and join a fellowship where all those who are reconciled through Christ to the Father become one united people.

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Ephesians 2 presents the good news in a way that is both highly resonant with and challenging to Melanesian concerns. The transition from the fish stage to the sheep stage will, therefore, be represented by an image of the Cross of Jesus and be communicated using Ephesians 2. It will also be linked with a metaphorical journey into the Temple and the removal of the wall of division that kept Gentiles from gaining access to God.\textsuperscript{181}

Figure 4. The Transition from Fish to Sheep via the Cross of Christ

Second Transition: Sheep to Chicken

Through their believing response to the Cross of Christ, a person enters the sheep stage of spiritual development. Most people in PNG are in this stage, having become believers but not having grown significantly beyond this. Given this reality, the challenges for church leaders are to cast a vision of further stages to grow into and to articulate how growth into these stages can occur. As Stilwell's analysis has expounded, there are significant issues that must be let go of by believers in PNG and significant issues that must be taken on.\textsuperscript{182}

\textsuperscript{181} See Figure 5.

Paul uses the metaphors of "putting off" and "putting on" to instruct believers on living the Christian life (Eph 4:17-32). The comparison again is to their former life as the "Gentiles" and the spiritual futility, darkness and ignorance of that existence (Eph 4:17-18). The things to be put off include "putting away falsehood" (v. 25), not indulging in anger (v. 26-27), not stealing (v. 28), not indulging in corrupt speech (v. 29), and not "grieving the Holy Spirit" which is achieved by putting away all bitterness, wrath, anger, clamour and slander (v. 30-31). These ways of living are not consistent with their Christian confession and must be left behind.

Every culture faces challenges in accepting and incarnating the gospel. As Stilwell has suggested, Melanesians struggle with kago (the good life), the clan (Putting family first), mana (access to spiritual power), and retributive justice (an eye for an eye). Paul's instructions assume there are significant areas of attitude, behaviour and culture that must be transformed if believers are to grow in their faith. His instructions to "put off" these things can include the things listed in Ephesians as well as the specific struggles Stilwell has identified that Melanesians are confronted with by the call to follow the way of Jesus.

Paul refers to "the way you learned Christ" (Eph 2:20). Clearly, he assumes that the believers would have received some sort of discipleship instruction which involved them "putting off your old self which belongs to your former manner of life and is corrupt through deceitful desires" (Eph 4:20-22). This, however, cannot be assumed among believers in PNG. Many of them may have had a conversion experience but not

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183 Ibid.
had adequate instruction in defining what an appropriate Christian lifestyle looks like. It is important, therefore, that appropriate response to the gospel be recast as a journey to maturity over time. A significant part of this journey is the continual putting off old ways and taking on new perspectives and behaviours.

The positive aspect of the teaching is the "putting on" of the new self. This is associated with "being renewed in the spirit of your minds" (Eph 4:23), and includes significant shifts in thinking and attitude. Paul outlines some specifics such as "speaking the truth with your neighbour" (v. 26), "not sinning when angry" (v. 27), "working to share with those in need" (v. 28), "speaking in ways that impart grace to the hearers" (v. 29), and "being kind, tender-hearted and forgiving towards one another" (v. 32). These are significant aspects of human transformation and go beyond the ability of an individual to monitor his or her personal behaviour. Some form of intentional discipleship process and accountability is required. Paul has referred to leaders (apostles, prophets, evangelists and pastor-teachers) who are given to the church by Christ to assist with the maturing process of the body (Eph 4:11-16). A key aim of this training is to empower pastors and church leaders to understand the journey to maturity and thereby encourage believers to pursue it.

The transition to the next discipleship stage will, therefore, involve a focus on "putting off" and "putting on." The teaching of Paul in Ephesians 4 is clear that this is required. Just as the image of the Cross captures Paul's teaching in Ephesians 2:11-22 on the work of Christ in reconciling Jew and Gentile to God in Christ, an image is required
at this point that captures the requirement of believer to "put off" the old self and "put on" the new self in their transition to the next stage of spiritual development.

The sugar-glider is a small possum-like creature that lives in the forests of PNG and has a membrane of skin between its front and rear legs. It is known locally as liklik capul i gat wing. Its normal behaviour is to leap off a tree, stretch out its legs and, using the skin between its front and rear legs like a wing, glide a long way to its next destination where it grasps a new tree and begins to feed on the fruit from that tree. The "letting go" of the first tree in order to "take hold" of the next tree is an image that has the potential to capture the dynamic of "putting off" and "putting on" required in the Christian life.

The sugar-glider will be used to represent the tension believers face who are seeking to move forward in their journey but who have not let go of old ways. A sugar-glider who seeks to grab a new tree without letting go of the old tree depicts a person who is stuck between two realities. The story of a sugar-glider and its inability to either let go or take on (put off or put on) will be the symbol for the transition from the sheep stage to the chicken stage (See Figure 4 below). When this is communicated in the training experience, it will depict that, as with the sugar-glider, a believer must put off some things from the former life and take on some things that represent the new life in Christ in order to grow towards spiritual maturity.

184 The sugar glider is endemic to the forests of PNG, including those of the Ramu area.
Figure 5. The Transition from Fish to Sheep via Putting off and Putting on.

Third Transition: Chicken to Pig

The third transition is from the believer who has some degree of spiritual growth to a believer who is mature. Maturity is the goal of the discipleship process and is mentioned in passages such as Ephesians 4:13, "until we attain to maturity," Colossians 1:28, "To present everyone mature in Christ," and Hebrews 6:1, "Let us go on to maturity." In each case the Greek word for maturity involves either the noun or verb related to the word telos, indicating that a final goal of completeness is in view. Whilst this end goal is theoretical in this lifetime, strategies to attempt to reach the goal are implied in the texts.

The journey of Jesus with his disciples indicates that he challenged them to head towards such a stage of maturity. In Matthew 16:13-20, Jesus asks his disciples who people perceive him to be. He is said to be "John the Baptist, Elijah, Jeremiah or one of the prophets." When asked for his opinion, Simon Peter identifies Jesus as "the Christ,

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the son of the Living God." Jesus affirms this response, and states that this is not information that Peter has gained "from flesh and blood" but from the Father in heaven. This confession of Peter marks a shift in the gospel story. Jesus now knows that Peter knows who he is. Peter is now receiving spiritual truth from the Father. Knowing this, Jesus will now focus on the Cross, something he has not revealed to them before this time.

Verse 21 explicitly declares, "From that time on Jesus began to show his disciples that he must go to Jerusalem and suffer many things." The fact that this is a new teaching is confirmed by Peter's response: Peter rebukes Jesus. Peter had not heard this teaching before and disagreed with the direction that Jesus was now intending to go. Jesus strongly opposes Peter by rebuking him in return, even going to the extent of calling him "Satan." This interaction is the turning point in the Gospels of Matthew and Mark. In Luke's Gospel the transition is marked by the words, "he set his face to go to Jerusalem" (Luke 9:51), and in John's Gospel by the interaction with the Greeks (John 12:26). In each case, at around this point in the Gospels, the focus shifts away from following Jesus through the towns and cities of Israel to following him to Jerusalem and inevitable suffering.

In Matthew's Gospel, the announcement that Jesus is going to Jerusalem to suffer and die is followed by Jesus making it explicit that the same calling will be given to each of his followers. Just as Jesus will bear the Cross in Jerusalem, so his followers must also pick up their own cross. Jesus makes it clear that his followers must let go of the control of their lives, even if this means their death. In doing this they will, however, end up finding life. This is a call to follow him into inevitable suffering. Linked with the call is
also the promise of fruitfulness: the "saving of one's life" (Matt 16:25), the "bearing of much fruit" (John 12:24), and being "honoured by the Father" (John 12:26).

The call of Jesus to this greater level of commitment comes to the disciples after they have journeyed with him for a significant amount of time. They have already left their homes and businesses to follow him. They have been growing by listening to his teachings. They have seen his works and have assisted him in ministry tasks. They have no doubt had to "put off" some former practices and "put on" some new ones. They have already at this point become good "chickens." But they still have further to go. This call to follow Jesus regardless of the cost represents the call to a new level of commitment.

This new discipleship stage that Jesus has introduced to his followers will be represented on the Engel scale for Melanesians as the final stage, the pig stage. The pig had to give its life to make a contribution. This parallels the commitment that Jesus asks of his followers at this stage. The transition from the chicken to the pig stage is thus marked by the shift in commitment Jesus asks of his followers in Matthew chapter sixteen and its parallels. Just as he is to carry a Cross in Jerusalem, so they must pick up their own Cross and follow him. The use of the pig as an image of commitment to Jesus works well in PNG cultures because of the "multiple ways in which they stand for, or substitute for, or can be exchanged for rights over, persons in social relationships."  

The stages and transitions on the visual Engel scale can now be represented in their final form. Figure 3 below depicts the four stages and the three transitions between the stages. Chapter 5 will describe how the scale will be communicated to the participants.

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186 Strathern and Stewart. Introduction.
in the training experience. The rest of this chapter will focus on placing the scale within an immersive story-framework and discuss important pedagogical issues for training in PNG.

![Figure 6. Stages and transitions of a visual Engel scale for PNG](image)

Creating a Story Framework for the Training

The visual Engel scale depicted in Figure 3 above will be communicated using various stories and other teaching methodologies. A story-telling version of a parallel narrative, specifically a tandem narrative, will be utilised to help the journey of a believer to maturity make sense to the participants. In this technique a parallel story runs alongside the main story. It assists in expressing the story's emphases by creating a concrete physical journey alongside the abstract spiritual journey of discipleship. It also provides a means of creating conflict that can then be transferred to the main story. This

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helps to maintain engagement among the participants and increases the memorability of the training experience.

The journey into the Temple in Jerusalem provides a potential tandem narrative to the journey along the Engel scale depicted above in Figure 3. In the Temple there are four basic "rooms" or stages that represent progressively closer access to the presence of God in the Most Holy Place. As each stage is entered a barrier to entering the next stage emerges. This parallels the barrier to entering the next stage of the spiritual journey to maturity for a disciple. Both stories have four stages and three transitions between the stages.

The journey into the Temple is, of course, being used in a metaphorical way. However, it is also a real physical journey, and so as such is a concrete reality. Worship in the time of the New Testament is not dependent on race or ethnicity nor are there restrictions to access based on being part of a priestly or high-priestly caste. Care must thus be taken not to represent the stages of the journey of discipleship as somehow the "secret meaning" conveyed by the stages in the Temple. The intention in this project is to use them not as an allegory but rather as a parallel story, though there are allegorical elements involved. The Tok Pisin term tok piksa (picture talk) is used to refer to

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188 The Tok Pisin terms tok hait, tok baksait, or tok bokis are used to refer to a message that is secret or hidden and to be kept from outsiders. If the stages of the Temple were to be used as an allegory to reveal previously hidden meanings, then these terms could be used. The term tok piksa on the other hand is a more general term for a parable or metaphor. The use of tok piksa is consistent with the journey into the Temple not being an allegory but an extended metaphor. See the discussion in Bambi B. Schieffelin, "Tok Bokis, Tok Piksa: Translating Parables" in Naomi Nagy, Miriam Meyerhoff, Gillian Sankoff, Social Lives in Language-Sociolinguistics and Multilingual Speech Communities: Celebrating the Work of Gillian Sankoff (Amsterdam: John Benjamins Publishing, 2008), 121-124.

189 An example of this approach is C.S. Lewis in his Chronicles of Narnia. Though others saw it as allegorical, Lewis denied that his Chronicles of Narnia was strictly allegorical. His rationale was that, rather than seeking to create an allegory, after he created the imaginary world of Narnia, he then
parables and metaphors and this term is broad enough to encompass the journey into the Temple as an extended metaphor of the journey to maturity of a disciple.

The rooms encountered on the journey into the Temple create potential diagrammatic spaces into which the spiritual dynamics of each stage of discipleship can be represented via the animal symbols. The physical journeying through the rooms parallels the spiritual journeying between stages, creating a diagrammatic physicality to the spiritual journey that is being described. The physical structure of the Temple as it is mapped out helps hearers keep track of the progress of the journey as it unfolds. Each stage of entry into the Temple presents a barrier that requires a particular qualification in order to progress to the next stage. This parallels the spiritual challenges to growing to the next stage of discipleship. The journey into the Temple also has a forward looking logic with a definite final goal which parallels the journey to the final stage of maturity for the believer. For these reasons, the journey into the Temple provides a helpful parallel to the story of a Melanesian believer's journey to maturity and provides an over-arching story framework for the training experience.

Moving Forward with Parallel Stories

Robert McKee describes the classic story plot as consisting of "an active protagonist who struggles against primarily external forces of antagonism to pursue his or her desire."190 The narrative of a journey into the Temple will be called Story One. It runs

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190 McKee, *Story*, 45.
parallel to the journey on the discipleship stages which will be called Story Two. The active protagonist in Story One is a person from PNG who wants to achieve intimate worship with God in the Old Testament period. Story One is informed by the Old Testament worship regulations which will be retained as accurately as possible.¹⁹¹ This includes worship centred on Jerusalem and barriers firstly to Gentiles, then to non-priests, and finally to anyone who is not a High-Priest.¹⁹²

In Story One the realisation quickly comes that Gentiles are forbidden to enter beyond the outer court. Conflict emerges at this point and the impossible nature of the challenge is revealed. If further progress in the journey is to be achieved, something must give. It is a tragedy to travel such a long way by land and sea, and then to be refused entry. The conflict at this point of the story is tragic and intense. Figure 4 below shows a training structure using the tandem narratives of the Temple Journey (Story One), the Believers Journey (Story Two), and the Changing of Animal Symbols (Story Three).


¹⁹² There is also a barrier to women but this is not considered in this project.
In Figure 4, the conflict that has been created in Scene One of Story One by the inability of a Gentile to obtain further access to the Temple is transferred across to the parallel Story Two. Scene One of Story Two does not therefore begin in a conflict-neutral state but is already charged with the unresolved conflict transferred across from Story One. When Scene One of Story Two is introduced it piggy-backs on the transferred conflict, creating a massive need to resolve the lingering conflict. The conflict-charged atmosphere helps drive Scene One of Story Two towards the resolution of its conflict. In Scene One of Story Two, the protagonist who is in a state of being "far" from God (Eph 2:13a) must take the step of responding to the Cross and receive the salvation on offer in order to be "brought near by the blood of Christ" (Eph 2:13b). The conflict that could not
be resolved in Story One has been transferred to Story Two and is there resolved by the protagonist's conversion.

The rules of Story One make it impossible for a Gentile to enter further than the outer Court (these rules are given by the historical situation of the Temple). But in Story Two a person can, by responding to the gospel, draw near and gain access to the Father. In fact, in Story Two, the dividing wall that prevented Gentile access to God has been "destroyed" (Eph 2:14). The conflict that was raised in Story One (the physical impossibility of Gentile entry to the Temple) has been resolved in Story Two. Story Three records this resolution of conflict as the transformation from a fish to a sheep. Though this is physically impossible, the rules of Story Three are different and these sorts of transformations are possible. This transformation is then fed back into Story One where the sheep now represents the person who has become a believer.

In shifting back to Story One, the statement can simply be made that, in Old Testament terms, the person who has become a believer in Story Two is now one of God's people and thus would be allowed into the Court of the Jews: it is as if they have become a Jew. The unresolvable conflict of a Gentile moving beyond the outer court has been circumvented through the shift to a tandem narrative where the conflict has found resolution through the blood of Jesus and the destruction of the wall of division. The

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193 McKee, Story, 53, states that, "Consistent reality, therefore, means an internally consistent world, true to itself." Each story-world must have consistent rules. Hence, here in Story One, the rule is that the existing rules of Temple-worship must be adhered to; a Gentile cannot enter the Temple under any circumstances. However, in Story Two, the gospel makes it possible for those who are far from God to draw near, thus resolving the conflict that has been raised. The conflict is raised and heightened in Story One. It is resolved in Story Two. It is tracked in Story Three.
overall result is that Scene Two begins in Story One with the protagonist firmly established within the next stage of entry into the Temple, ready to discover the next complication in the Story.

The overarching plot in each Story is the Archplot and deals primarily with external conflicts. Story One raises these external conflicts in the form of restrictions of access to the Temple stages. Within the Archplot of a story are the Miniplots. A Miniplot deals with the struggles of a protagonist "within his [sic] own thoughts and feelings, conscious or unconscious." Story Two will be explored in much more detail and the Miniplots within it will be explored extensively through the reading of Scripture, reflection and discussion. It is in Story Two that the intricacies of Christian conversion and growth in a Melanesian setting will surface and be explored. The point here is not to focus on the allegorical relationship between the stories but to allow Story One to surface the conflict evident in the restrictions of access to the stages of entry to the temple and then shift to Story Two for the exploration of the conflict as it occurs in the journey of a believer to maturity.

The shift to Story 3 enables the progress of the story to be tracked and discipleship language to be provided through the progressive use of the animal symbols. The words: fish, sheep, chicken, and pig will come to be filled with discipleship-related ideas and concepts. The transformation from one animal type to another will capture the

194 Ibid., 48.
195 Ibid. McKee's capitalisation has been retained.
theological and practical realities behind the transitions between the stages of discipleship both as given by the presenter and as discussed among the participants.

Matching the stages of discipleship with the progressive stages of entering into the Temple provides the discipleship journey with a tandem story that is leading towards a final stage for its conclusion. Such a model appears complex but is designed to function like a movie storyboard, bringing elements of the presentation into such an order that facilitates the creating and resolving of tension throughout the presentation. Story One creates impossible conflict that, paradoxically, acts to move the story forward via the shift to Story Two and the resolution of conflict via the theological responses of conversion, discipleship growth, and deep commitment. Figure 5 below maps out the entire training structure and shows the utilisation of three tandem stories each with four scenes and three transitions. The key points of shifting between the stories is shown, and key scriptures that are to be read and reflected on at each stage indicated. Chapter 5 reveals how this structure is worked through in the presentation of the training.
Figure 8. Schematic map of training experience

Means of Transition

Key Scripture

Ephesians 4:17-32
"Put off the old self."
"Put on the new self."

"No longer live as Gentiles."

Ephesians 2:11-22
FORMERLY...
Separate, excluded, foreigners, far away. BUT NOW IN CHRIST...
Brought near by his blood.
Peace made, reconciled, access to the Father.
Two groups made one, dividing wall destroyed;
Through him near by his blood."

Story 1
(Temple Journey)

Scene 1a
Pre-Christian
 arose.
Christian, some
Growth
Christian, none
Scene 3a
Growth
Christian, no
Scene 2b
Growing

Scene 1b
Conversion
Achieved
Scene 1
Court of Gentiles
Scene 2
Pre-Christian
Desires to Worship.

Scene 3

Scene 4
Mature Christian

Scene 4
Most Holy Place
Scene 3
Holy Place
Scene 2
Christian, no
Growth
Christian, some
Scene 3a
Growth
Christian, none
Scene 2b
Growing

Story 2
(Deleever's Journey)

Scene 2

Story 3
(Animal Symbols)

Scene 3

Scene 1
Pedagogical Strategies for Training in PNG

Paulo Freire critiques traditional models of education in developing contexts as being "anti-dialogical." Pre-packaged solutions from Western nations have been delivered in training contexts in developing nations without sufficient consideration of local concerns. Theology, for example, has often been taught in a western-style lecture approach. This has resulted in locals ending up with borrowed solutions that were "neither generated by a critical analysis of the context itself, nor adequately adapted to the context." These solutions have proved "inoperative and unfruitful." 

In contrast to this, Freire proposes training that is "dialogical, problem-posing, and conscientizing." This requires a deep level of engagement with locals on issues they have identified as problematic for them. Training must be done in ways that equip locals to critically analyse their own situation and discover and implement appropriate solutions. This ideal educative context Freire calls "education for liberation." In this dialogical form of education, the educator and educatee are united as "subjects in the

196 Freire, Education for Critical Consciousness, 178.


198 Freire, Education for Critical Consciousness, 10.

199 Ibid.

200 Ibid., 140.

201 Goulet, Introduction to Education for Critical Consciousness, x.

202 Freire, Education for Critical Consciousness, 18.
knowing process." This project seeks to take Freire's ideals for a training context seriously.

The Problem Identified: MECOC Churches Request Assistance

There is extensive agreement among church leaders in PNG that more effective methods for training disciples are required. This is confirmed by the high rates of nominalism and extensive elaborations on this in Christian literature arising from PNG. Assessment among MECOC churches of the state of discipleship also confirms this situation. The invitation from MECOC churches to the Australian church to conduct discipleship and leadership training confirms the local resonance with the problems and the desire for outside help in finding solutions. The problem of the lack of progress in discipleship has been identified by locals and they are seeking assistance to address the problem.

Benefits of Training "from the Outside"

The outsider from a Western context has the advantage of a broader view of the world church. There is information and there are stories from other places that church leaders in PNG do not ordinarily have access to. The issue of discipleship training has been identified as a key challenge in many places around the world. Various solutions

203 Ibid.
204 Kero, "Nominalism," 57-88, summarises this information.
205 The survey in Tsumba village confirms this.
206 Appendix three reproduces a letter of invitation from the MECOC churches.
have been offered and trialled. These situations have the potential to provide insight for church leaders in PNG.

Examination of biblical materials has revealed the disciples of Jesus passed through several progressive stages of development.\textsuperscript{207} The idea of stages is also frequently utilised as a foundation for thinking about discipleship in different cultural settings.\textsuperscript{208} Thus, it would seem a good foundation on which to build a discipleship training experience in PNG. However, it is the local factors and situation that will determine how the spiritual journey is articulated and what steps are needed to positively influence believers in PNG to grow towards maturity.

Maintaining Agency of Locals

Freire's requirement that educators and students become united as "subjects in the knowing process"\textsuperscript{209} requires that the discipleship model that is to be presented not be "pre-packaged," or "complete," but instead be structured to facilitate a dialog around the lived experience of discipleship in PNG. The previous chapter described the theoretical contextual considerations needed for the adaptation of the Engel scale for PNG. Further steps in contextualisation must be taken in the training experience itself. Locals must be able to critically engage with the material and how it should be adapted for use in their context.

\textsuperscript{207} See Wilkins, \textit{Following the Master}, 84-107.

\textsuperscript{208} The Engel Scale and the Willow Creek material, though developed in the United States, are both now utilised in numerous cultural contexts.

\textsuperscript{209} Freire, \textit{Education for Critical Consciousness}, 180.
Becoming a "subject in the knowing process," as Freire describes it, requires that the educator approach the task with humility and vulnerability. It is possible that the training materials have misdiagnosed the problem, have poorly understood local culture, or have too readily assumed that principles discovered in other contexts are transferable. The educator will only finally discover whether and how the materials are relevant to locals as the training event unfolds. In this way, educator and educatee are both on journeys of discovery.

Creating Space for Local Contributions

Duane Elmer warns against serving others “from our own frame of reference.”210 Discussions about contextualisation frequently assume the perspective of an individual missionary considering how the biblical message must firstly be interpreted and then communicated in order to make sense in a target culture. The focus is on the presenter and their role in the work. To contextualise is often described as an active-voiced activity done to passive-voiced recipients. This presents contextualisation as a one-way process that is dependent on the dedication, godliness and skills of the missionary.

Contrary to this, the process of contextualisation cannot be complete until the response of locals to the message has been heard and contributions from locals have been integrated into the content of the training. Locals are, after all, the experts on their own world-view. As Paul Hiebert instructs, "We need to involve people in evaluating their own cultures in the light of new truth . . . . They know their old culture better than we do and are in a better position to critique it and live transformed lives within it . . . they are

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the ones who make decisions as they grow spiritually through learning discernment and applying scriptural teachings to their own lives.”^211 In light of this, it is essential that discipleship training be done in ways that integrate local concerns and contributions into the training experience and create contexts where questioning, disagreeing with and altering the training material to suit local needs is acceptable.

Making Training Memorable

The previous chapter outlined the reasons for and process of reducing the spiritual journey to four key stages and the logic of representing them as animal symbols. These stages have been derived from research on the stages of spiritual development and adapted through ongoing conversations with locals for the PNG context. As each stage of the journey is revealed in the training experience, locals are invited to reflect on, identify with, and critique the model. In addition to diagrams being more easily remembered than text,^212 they are less specific and more flexible. Thus, although the model represents a spiritual continuum that has been externally arrived at, the diagrams within it have the potential to take on the participatory learning of the training experience and to be adapted to suit the local setting.

In approaching the training task in this way, contextualisation is taken to a new level. During the training experience, the diagram of the Temple stages and the animal symbols that represent the stages will be placed on the blackboard. As discussion about

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the stages and the transitions between them take place, the animal symbols and the
overall diagram capture and store the new perspectives that are being offered by locals as
they interact. In the minds of the participants, the animal symbols will come to represent
not only what the trainer has shared, but also what the group has contributed. The
diagram will thus capture not only the logic and dynamics of the spiritual growth to
maturity for Melanesians according to the best efforts of the trainer but will also represent
the contextualised adaptations shared among the participants. Changes suggested by
participants can be considered and the model adjusted as needed. This learning gained
during the sessions is freighted into the diagram and thus has the potential to continue
after the training experience as participants reflect on their learning or communicate
about it with one another.

The use of the journey into the Temple as a framework for the journey to maturity
provides both an underlying logic for forward progress and a reminder of the stages of
discipleship. The correspondence of the Temple stages to the discipleship stages
reinforces the order of the stages and the barriers that must be overcome at each stage. It
also has the incidental benefit of helping the believers understand the basic layout of the
Temple and the experience of worship in the Old Testament. The metaphorical use of the
journey into the Temple helps to remind the believers that the Temple was a preparatory
stage in God's unfolding plan of revealing himself to the nations through Israel. Now in
Christ, as Gentiles under the New Covenant, the door is open for all nations to fully
access God's presence.

213 The capacity of diagrams to capture and store information is expressed in Mike Breen's
The “notes” that will be given out during the training consist of the finished diagram of the spiritual continuum that can be added to or altered by locals as they engage in the journey (See Appendix Two). The way the notes (i.e., the diagrams) are presented conveys the message that local contributions are significant. Presenting extensive textual notes has the potential to undermine this message. The nature of the training and of the notes communicates that stories and local perspectives are not incidental and entertaining extras but an integral part of the theological experience. When the training is complete, any notes that are taken by participants will add to their visual record of the training that can help them to re-access their experience as they reflect on the diagram.

The training experience also has the potential to create shared language around discipleship: fish, sheep, chicken, pig, the cross of Jesus, sugar-glider, and the cross of the believer can become symbols with specific and rich meaning invested in them. These can be used to aid discussion and reflection around the discipleship journey and adapted by locals to their context.

Conclusion

This chapter has described the steps people take as they progress through the stages of discipleship represented by the fish, sheep, chicken and pig. The specific transitions between the stages involve a conversion response (symbolised by the Cross of Jesus), a "putting off and putting on" response (symbolised by the story of the sugar-glider), and a "laying down of life" response (symbolised by the cross Jesus asks each believer to carry).
The presentation of the material using a tandem narrative enables conflict to be created and transferred into the main story. This increases interest in the story and provides forward movement through this conflict. A third parallel narrative acts to capture and store the transitions through the animal stages.
PART THREE

THE TRAINING DELIVERED
CHAPTER 5

TRANSCRIPT OF THE TRAINING²¹⁴

The Goal and Methodology of this Chapter

This chapter describes the training experience as delivered, including stories and diagrams. The teaching is given in first person, as a transcript, as spoken to the participants. Pauses for interactions, questions, and discussion are indicated. Words with particular significance in stories are underlined for emphasis. The diagrams appear gradually on a blackboard in coloured chalk at the front of the building, usually in a village church. At times the board is turned over to draw on the other side so that the main diagram can be added to gradually and diagrams related to other stories can be drawn individually.

The combination of text and images is a feature of "narrative visualisation" which is an increasingly common means of providing room for "interactivity within the context of a structured narrative."²¹⁵ In this training the text component is the biblical text as read

²¹⁴ This chapter is a record of an oral presentation. Some literary conventions have therefore been adjusted in order to maintain more of the "feel" of a training experience. Diagrams appear throughout the chapter. Many times they are small additions to a previous diagram rather than a new diagram. Commas are more regularly used to indicate pauses in speech. Some words are underlined for emphasis.


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by participants in Tok Pisin and labels used on the board in conjunction with the drawing of the diagrams. Interaction among the participants is intentionally allowed for at many points in the presentation and may occur at any time. From early research into this type of presentation, "data stories appear to be most effective when they have constrained interaction at various checkpoints within a narrative, allowing the user to explore the data without veering too far from the intended narrative." Thus, whilst complete and open interactivity is possible, effective story-telling suggests that interactivity is best at strategic points where the narrative pauses. Such points are indicated in the transcript.

The aim of the presentation is to provide an immersive story experience in a presentation that lasts about four hours. The diagram unfolds over this time and provides a means of tracking where the training is up to. From experience, there will be significant times of interaction around questions that are raised by the material. In addition, questions about how this material relates to previous training and how it can be utilised in a local-church setting are likely to be asked. By the end of the day, the animal symbols are likely to be used as a discipleship language: e.g. "How many pigs have you got in your church?"

This presentation is intended for the first day of a four-day training experience. It is followed up on the second and third day by training on leadership that builds on the diagrams presented here. Following this, the final day of training focuses on topics of interest to the participants including spiritual warfare, freedom from sorcery, and other

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216 Ibid., 1147.
aspects of practical discipleship. All of these aspects of training are at various stages of development along similar lines.

Scene One: Gentiles have a Barrier to Worship

Living in this area of Papua New Guinea, in fact, in many areas of Papua New Guinea, you have very easy access to worship. Almost every village has its own church. Anyone who wants to can, on a Sunday, or at times when meetings are on during the week, participate in worship. You can walk there. You can come inside. There are no barriers to stop you from being able to worship God. It's great!

Living in this area of Papua New Guinea, however, isn't always easy. What happens, for example, if you have a school in your village, or a health centre? You're very lucky, right! But if you've got a teacher, or a health worker and it comes time for them to get their pay. Can they just go to the bank in the village? No, there are no banks in the village. How far away is the nearest bank? From here in Tsumba, the nearest bank is in Bogia; about 4 hours on the boat and another 2 hours in the car. For some of you who come from further away, it's a journey of several days. So, when a government worker wants to go to the bank, there's a huge distance. It costs a lot of money to go to the bank to pick up your pay. In fact, most of your pay can be used up just in paying for the boat fees and the PMV (bus) fees. So, you have easy access to worship, but not easy access to the bank.

I want you now to think back to the times before the white man came to PNG. Some of you are old enough to remember those times. In the 1940's you had soldiers come. In the 1950's you had the missionaries come. But I want you to go back before those times. Before Christianity came to PNG. In fact, let's go further back still. Let's go
back to the time of the Old Testament. Many, many generations ago, when your forefathers lived on these rivers.

It's easy for you to now worship the Christian God through Jesus. But, think back to those times. How did people worship God? What sort of ceremonies and rituals did you have to do to make contact with or make peace with spirits? [Leave room for responses].

Ok. In Papua New Guinea, every tribe had its own way of honouring the ancestors, of appeasing the spirits, of gaining access to spiritual power. There are many rituals and customs around worship in PNG. But, do you think all of these practices were seeking to worship the God we read about in the Bible? [Leave room for responses].

I think most of us, as leaders in the church, would say that there is a difference between seeking God in way your ancestors in PNG did, and seeking the God that we read about in the Bible. That's also true for my ancestors. I'm not Jewish, and my ancestors worshipped God in rituals and customs in Europe. But, whatever background we come from, we now believe that God was doing something special in the nation of Israel, and that he had specially chosen this nation so that he could reveal himself to all nations. Most of us would agree with that, right? [Leave room for responses].

Ok, now, we live in PNG, and we have lots of methods and ways to worship, but not an easy way to access the bank. Let's imagine someone from Papua New Guinea, back in the time of the Old Testament, who heard something about the God of Israel and wanted to worship this God. What would a person have to do to worship this God? [Responses].
When we read the Old Testament, we see that God set up a Tabernacle. In order to worship properly, people would come from all over Israel, go up to Jerusalem (it's in the mountains), and bring their sacrifices, hear the singers, and experience the presence of the Great Creator God. Later, the Tabernacle, which was a tent, became a stone building. People continued to come to worship at the festivals at least three times per year.

That's all very good. But, it was difficult for those who lived a long way from the Temple to worship regularly. And, the further away you lived, the more difficult it was to worship. How difficult would it have been for someone from PNG to worship this God!

But, let's imagine someone does. They are very fit. Strong legs and strong body (pick an audience member to represent the person - they act out the journey). They begin by sailing down the Ramu River (act it out), out into the ocean (act it out). From there, they sail towards the sunset until they hit Malaysia. From there, they go overland. Over mountains, through rivers. Through India, then Iran. Across deserts. How long do you think the journey would take? [Responses].

Finally, they make it to the land of Israel. They can't speak the language, but they manage to let people know they want to worship at the Temple in Jerusalem (act it out). They get directions; "Go up into the hills. Follow the road. You'll see the city on the hill."

As you walk, the city finally it comes into sight. It's a great walled city. It's very different than the houses in PNG. A city made of big stones. The person goes through the city gate (act it out), and they see a large building on the hill. This is the Temple. They walk up the great staircase to the outer wall. It's tall. It's high. It's impressive. There are guards and soldiers walking around.
There are people, many people, wandering around. Family groups. There are people leading animals; sheep and goats, and doves. It's noisy. People are buying and selling. Finally, there is the great gate into the Temple. You go inside. You can hear the distant sounds of music. You can smell something; is it a barbecue? As you move into the outer area of the Temple you see people from many different cultures and nations. Egyptians. Arabs. Greeks. Romans. Many nations. No-one else is there from PNG, but you are proud that you have come to represent your people.

So this is it! This is the Temple! It's fantastic. There's so much going on. After a while you start to think you'd like to investigate further. You want to offer a sacrifice to the Great God. You want to hear the singers and bow down in worship. So, you look around to see where the sacrifices are being offered. You see a wall. There are gaps in the wall, and people are moving into and out of the next area of the Temple through these gaps. You move forward. "I'll just go through one of those gaps," you say to yourself.

But as you come to the gap, a Temple guard steps towards you and says, "What are you doing here? You don't look Jewish!"

"I'm from Papua New Guinea," you say, rather proudly.

"Where's that?" says the Guard.

"I've travelled a long way to be here: on rivers, seas, over mountains, through deserts. I've come to worship the Great Creator God."

"That's impressive," says the Guard. "But, if you're not Jewish, you can't come past this point. See that sign on the wall; it says that if you go past this point as a non-Jew, you will be responsible for your own death." As he says that, the guard pats the sword he has against his side.
"What?" you say, "But I've come so far."

"Those are the rules," says the Guard.

Now, let's think about this situation. You're from PNG. You've come so far to worship this Great Creator God. And when you finally get there, you're turned away.

"If you listen carefully, you'll be able to overhear the music and singing," says the Guard. He continues, "And if your nose is sensitive, you can smell the burnt offering. But, unfortunately, this is as close as you're ever going to get to worshipping God. I'm sorry."

Now, let's think about that epic journey. Travelling all that way over land and sea, to come so close to the worship experience. But to be faced with a wall you can't go past. How does it feel? What response to you have to this? [Take responses].

The Old Testament tells us that God was working in a special way in Israel. And that the other nations did have a place in worship. In fact there's a whole area on the outside part of the Temple that is set aside for them called the Court of the Gentiles. But, there was a wall that kept non-Jewish people from going any closer than that. Only Jewish people could go inside that wall and get closer to where the worship events and sacrifices were happening. Oh, there was a place to give your offering that was for sure. But that’s it. The wall prevented you from going any further. It was a barrier to all the other nations: Papua New Guineans, Australians, Americans, and Indonesians: anyone who was not Jewish was not allowed beyond that wall. You could only get so close to worshipping this Great Creator God. It's great that the other nations did have a place at the Temple. They were welcome to observe. But they couldn't get any closer than the wall. They were kept on the outside. And that is what it was like for thousands of years.
I'm going to draw what the Temple looked like. In fact, I'm going to use this journey to the Temple to represent the journey of a person who wants to worship God. So, we've talked about how people from many nations come to worship at Jerusalem. In the diagram I'm going to draw on the board (Figure 6), a person may come to the Temple from any nation and enter the Court of the Gentiles (*ples blong arapela lain*).  

![Diagram](image)

**Figure 9. Entering the Court of the Gentiles**

So, you've entered the Temple area but, as we see, there's a barrier in front of you. All the people from other nations who come into the Temple area eventually realise that only the Jews can go through the barrier. If you're not Jewish, you have to remain in the outer court, the Court of the Gentiles. You can go no further. As an outsider, a Gentile, you cannot be part of the people of God. You cannot enter into worship in the same way.

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217 I’ve used the terms for the Temple rooms and courts given to me by the locals in conversation. The locals use *rum holi* and *rum holi tru* whereas the Tok Pisin bible uses *rum tambu* and *rum tambu tru*. *Ples blong arapela lain* and *Ples blong Juda* are the terms locals gave to me in discussions around the content of the training. I suspect this is related to the terms used by missionaries before the *Tok Pisin* bible was available.
that the Jews could. In the Old Testament, Jews had special access, and Gentiles did not. What do you think and feel when you see that reality? [Open for response].

Now, we have to realise that the Temple was not a simple building. It was not like a hall with only one large room inside, so that once you're in, that's it. The Temple is a bit like the MECOC churches. Most of the MECOC churches are not just a single room. At the front, there is a wall. Most people come into the church, but, usually, those who are organising the worship for the day go inside the smaller room [move visually to this area]. The Temple is like that. Just like on the diagram, there is more than one room inside.

In the Old Testament, the Gentiles (Australians, Papua New Guineans, all except Jews) could only get so far. But, this changes in the New Testament. What I'm going to do from here on is to use the journey into the Temple as a picture of a person's journey of becoming closer to God, of following Jesus. It's a picture of the journey of a disciple.

Now, in the Old Testament, the temple was a building made of stone, and those from other nations weren't allowed past the wall. Only the Jews were allowed in. But, in the New Testament, things are different. In the New Testament, we're not talking about a stone building anymore. But, we are still talking about a journey. It's a journey we take when we believe in Jesus. Through Jesus, all nations are invited to worship and draw near.

I'm going to draw a picture here in this part of the Temple. I'm going to rub off the person, and replace them with an animal. The animal will represent the person, a person who is a Gentile, who is able to come this far but no further into the Temple. But which animal should it be? Which animal would represent a person who cannot come near to
God? When I think about some of the things that Jesus said, I remember that he talked about his disciples going to reach people who did not yet know God. What animal did he speak of when he talked about reaching out to people? He said go and catch the . . . [fish] (wait for responses). Yes, the fish. He promised to make his disciples into those who could catch fish, and the fish they caught would be people. Let's draw a fish on the diagram in this part of the Temple (Figure 7).

![Diagram with text: Ples blong arapela lain](image)

**Figure 10. The fish represents the Gentiles**

So, in our training today, the fish represents the person who cannot go beyond the wall. In the Old Testament, it was the Gentiles. But who might that be in the New Testament. Someone who cannot draw near to God [wait for response]. Ok, it's those who are not yet Christians. So, the fish symbols stands for someone who is not yet a Christian. If you think about your village situation, can you identify anyone who would fit into the "fish" category? [Allow responses].

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First Scripture: Ephesians 2:11-22

Let's read Ephesians 2:11-13 together (read in Tok Pisin). What does it say there about the condition of all the other nations before God? It uses the words "separate," "excluded from citizenship," and "foreigners to the covenants of promise." As a result, people were "without hope and without God in the world." That's a very negative view of the other nations. But Paul is telling us this because he wants to emphasise that, in the Old Testament, the other nations did not have access to God like the Jews did. They were "far away" from God, and Ephesians 2:1 (read in Tok Pisin) has told us that they were "dead in transgressions." This is not just people from Papua New Guinea, but Australians, and all other nations. It emphasises to us that the Jews had a special access to God that none of the other nations had in that time.

Paul then says that things have changed since that time. Let's read verse 13 together in Tok Pisin (read). Through Jesus and his blood the other nations are now "brought near." Things have changed. Through Jesus, the situation of the Old Testament no longer applies. Through Jesus, people from all nations can approach God; they are no longer "far away" but have been "brought near" by his blood.

So, in the New Testament, moving ahead on our journey means being brought near to God through the blood of Jesus. So, what happens on our diagram? The fish is in the outer court. But, if the fish is to go further, it must go past the wall. This could not happen in the Old Testament, there is a wall that prevents it. But we see from Ephesians 2:14, (read in Tok Pisin) that it's what Jesus does on the cross, through his blood, that people who don't know God (the fish) can draw near to God.
So, on our diagram, the fish can only move to the next stage if something happens to the wall. So, I'm going to put a Cross below the wall. What Jesus does on the cross, in the shedding of his blood, by his sacrifice, gives us access to draw near to God. Let's see what that looks like on the diagram (Figure 8).

![Diagram]

Figure 11. The cross provides access.

Through faith in Jesus, based on what he's done, a fish (a person who is far from God) can move beyond the wall. The person can draw near to God. They can become one of his people, part of God's family. That's great news!

In fact, as we read Ephesians 2:14-18, we see that God has done an amazing thing (read in Tok Pisin). What's happened to the wall? God has destroyed it; the barrier is down. In the New Testament, God has broken down the barrier that kept the Gentiles out. Now, both Jews and Gentiles can draw near to God, as brothers and sisters. We both (all nations) have access to the Father through One Spirit. Can you see how exciting this is? There is no longer a sign that excludes people from God's presence. Anyone, from any nation, can come, and through Jesus and his blood, draw near to God, and become part of...
God's family. Let's break open the wall by rubbing some off (line becomes dotted on board). Is that good news for the people of PNG? [Allow responses].

Scene Two: The Court of the Jews

Once a person responds to the gospel by putting their trust in Jesus, they cross the barrier and become part of God's family. Many people in PNG have crossed this barrier. They have heard the good news of Jesus, and they have believed. They were fish. But they've been caught. Now they've come into a new place in the Temple. They've gone through the wall, into another area, and they're now closer to the God they want to worship. Does this make sense to you? [Allow for responses].

And, just as we represented those who did not yet know God as fish, there is another animal we can use to represent those who have, through Jesus, come to know God. I wonder what that animal might be. Jesus described his people by a particular name. He told them that, "You are my . . . [sheep]." [Allow responses]. Right. Jesus said, "You are my sheep." Let's see what it looks like on the diagram (Figure 9).

![Diagram showing fish and sheep symbols]

**Figure 12. The sheep represents the believer**
That's a pretty amazing change: a fish has become a sheep. And when you think about it, it's a pretty amazing change from a person who is far from God to be able to draw near to God. They've gone from someone who is not part of God's family to someone who is part of God's family. God has done this, through the blood of Jesus.

In the Old Testament, this next area of the Temple had a name. The Court of the Gentiles is outside. Once you come inside the wall, you are in the Court of the Jews (*Ples blong Juda*).

Let's talk about what it looks like for a person who is a fish to become a sheep. That's the arrow here (point to arrow from the fish to the sheep). What do we call this process in *Tok Pisin* when a person who is not a Christian becomes a Christian? [Allow responses]. Right, we do *evangelism*. And people experience *repentance* and *conversion*.

How many of you as leaders in your churches have seen some fish become sheep lately? What have you seen happen? What methods or Scriptures or stories have you used to help people who were fish understand what Jesus has done for them? [Allow responses, draw out as much as possible the contributions of the evangelists, their methods and passion. Basically, they have the floor! These contributions will now be incorporated in the neural pathways of the participants so that in their memory the fish to sheep transition will include the local contributions. This will then hopefully inform their future praxis].

Ok, what you've just described is what it looks like for fish to become sheep in PNG, in the Ramu river area. It looks a little bit different everywhere in the world. But, God moves in the lives of people, and he uses people who are willing to share their faith, to help people who are fish become sheep. When you think about a fish becoming a
sheep, remember what's been talked about here today. We can learn from some of the things that others have said have worked for them?

A vision for maturity not just conversion: baby bonus story

Now, isn't it great that people become part of God's family? But I'd like to tell you a story at this point. It's a story about my life in Australia. You see, Australia is a big country. A very big country. And, there are not that many people in Australia. And, in the past few years the government has been worried about the falling birth rate; not many babies are being born. Very different than in PNG, right?

Anyway, a few years ago the Australian government decided to offer some money to women who had a baby. It was great. It was called, "the baby bonus." Every women who had a baby would be given some money to help pay for the costs of the baby. A great idea. And, the number of babies being born increased.

But, something else happened that the government did not expect. There were some very young girls, as young as twelve, who thought, "I'd like to have the money for having a baby." And there were some men who thought, "I'd like to have the money for having a baby." So, they got these young girls pregnant. And, so there were some very young girls having babies, just so they could get the money.218

It's a bit sad, right; having a baby, just for the money. And having no vision or desire to see that baby grow and develop. Wanting a baby to be born, but not thinking about what it would be like for it to grow, having no vision for the future for that child.

Thinking about that story, I wonder if, as church leaders, we've been a bit like that. We like to preach the gospel. We like to see people at Crusades getting saved. It's

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218 Twelve is young to have a baby, even in remote PNG.
great to see people respond to the gospel. And we've spent lots of time and money on this, both in Australia and in PNG. Now, that's probably a good thing. But, I wonder have we been so keen to see people be born again, to begin a faith journey, that we've not put enough time and attention to what happens after they become Christians. We've wanted new Christians to be born. But, we've not invested the time and energy to help them grow to maturity. Does anyone relate to that story? Do you think it could be true of how we've done evangelism in the past? [Allow responses].

I want to ask you as church leaders whether you feel that there are people in your churches who have been fish, and have become sheep, but they have never grown at all beyond that. Do you have any Christians in your churches who believe in Jesus, but who have not made any progress in their Christian lives? Is that sort of thing a problem in PNG? [Allow for responses].

Scene Three: Spiritual Growth and Serving

When we consider the diagram, if you think about the Temple, is the journey into the Court of the Jews the closest that a person can get to God? Is this the most that worship can be? Could there be more in store if someone could get closer? [Ask for responses].

The journey into the Temple doesn't stop when you get past the first wall. Beyond that wall there is another area. Just like a child that is born needs to grow and develop by eating, and exercising and eventually becomes an adult, so, a new Christian has a journey to maturity. There is another barrier that can be moved through. You can see it in the next stage of the diagram (Figure 10).
Figure 13. Into the Holy Place

The next stage of the journey into the Temple is the Holy Place (*Rum Holi*). This is where the priests participate in the worship by serving the people. That was how it worked in the Old Testament. Only priests could go into the next stage of the Temple. Of course, the journey to maturity for a believer in the New Testament is different, there are not the same restrictions. But the stages of entry into the Temple can act as guide.

Let me ask you as church leaders; how does someone who has become a believer begin to grow in their faith? Are there things they should do? Are there things they need to leave behind? How do you help people begin to grow as Christians? [Responses].

Ok, I think we recognise there are things that can be done. In previous times that I've visited PNG, I've asked the leaders how many people in their churches have been fish, and how many sheep. I've been surprised by the answers. Now, let me ask the leaders of Tsumba church. How many people are there in Tsumba village? [Answer = 179]. How many of those would you say were fish (not Christians)? [Answer = 70]. How many of those would you say were sheep (Christians, but not moving forward in their
journey? [Answer = 100]. Wow, that's amazing. Out of 179 people, you're saying 100 are Christians who have not grown in their faith? They're sheep, but they haven't moved on from there? I wonder, for all you other leaders from other villages and regions, does this look a bit like your church? [Responses affirmed similar results from other villages]. Do you have some fish and many sheep who have not grown in their faith? [Responses were very positive].

So, if I'm hearing you correctly, there are many sheep; people who have become believers, but few have grown beyond this. Ok, this means that the transition to the next stage is very important. We've talked about the sort of things you have done to help believers grow to maturity [recount responses of bible reading, prayer, serving etc.]. Obviously, this is a big issue in PNG. Let's explore what the next stage might look like.

Story: the Sugar-glider (putting off and putting on)

To talk about the next stage I want to talk to you about the sugar-glider. We have them in Australia: little possums with skin between their legs that enables them to leap off a tree and glide a long way to catch onto another tree. Do you have them in PNG? Yes? They're called liklik kapul i gat wing (little possum with wings). We've talked about fish and sheep. And we've talked about how fish become sheep; through the blood of Jesus the fish draw near, the wall is removed, they put their trust in God, receive the good news, and are transformed into sheep.

Now, one day there was a sugar-glider. This sugar-glider had been enjoying the pawpaws that were on the tree he sat on. He looked across and saw that there was a tree nearby that had some really nice mangoes.
"Wow, look at those mangoes. I'd do anything to get one of those," he said. And he thought about how far the mango tree was away. Now, normally, a sugar-glider can jump off one tree, stretch out his wings, and glide all the way to the next tree (draw line from pawpaw tree to mango tree, see Figure 11). But to do that he has to let go of the tree he is on.

But, this sugar-glider was thinking about how much he liked the pawpaws. He couldn't face letting go of the pawpaw tree. "I know," he said, "I'll crawl to the edge of the pawpaw tree, then I'll be able to stretch the branches of the pawpaw tree out towards the mango tree, reach out and grab some mangoes off the mango tree, and I won't have to let go of the pawpaw tree. I'll have both pawpaws and mangoes for dinner tonight." So he crawled up and out, to the very last branch at the edge of the pawpaw tree. And he looked over at the mango tree. "Yum," he said, "I'm going to get some mangoes." He began to push the branches towards the mango tree. Closer and closer he got. He could see the mangoes; he was reaching out to grab them.

But it was a little further than he thought. So he thought to himself, "I'll just grab the closest leaves of the mango tree, then I'll pull the branches over, and I'll be able to get some mangoes." So he stretched. And he reached. And finally, he caught hold of a leaf. When he did, the branch came towards him, and bent down. He was closer to the mangoes. But, he knew he was in trouble. You see, he thought he could hold onto the pawpaw, and reach out and grab the mangoes, and go back to the pawpaw tree. But, he found himself at the end of the pawpaw, and at the end of the mango. And, the branches had bent over. And he could feel the tension. The pawpaw tree was pulling him back to it. The mango tree was pulling him over to it. He hung there, one tree pulling one way, one
tree pulling another. He was being stretched apart. "Ahhh," he said, "I didn't think this was going to happen."

Let's draw what was happening to the sugar-glider (Figure 11 below).

![Diagram of a sugar-glider pulling two trees](image)

**Figure 14. The sugar-glider's choice**

We all know that becoming a Christian is a great thing. A fish becomes a sheep; let's celebrate. But, we know that this is just the beginning of the journey. Jesus wants his followers to learn to be like him, and to serve him. And I think that journey is a bit like what the sugar-glider experiences. He wants to keep eating the fruit from the tree he's been living on. And he also wants the fruit of the tree he can see in the distance. So what happens? Instead of letting go of one tree and gliding over to the new tree, he crawls down, and reaches out, not letting go of the old tree, and tries to grab the new tree. So, he ends up stuck in the middle, feeling torn between what he has had, the old life, and what he can see now, the new life. And for many people, the Christian life is a bit like that.

Does that make sense to you? Do you see some Christians who want this new life, but can't let go of the old? Is that a problem with the Christians in your church? Have they become sheep, but not moved on to grow any further? Have they been unable to give up
some things of the old life? And perhaps they have not been able to take on the things of
the new life? [Pause to discuss].

Let's think about some teachings from the Bible. [Read Ephesians 4:17-24]. Can
you see what Paul is saying here? We must no longer live as the Gentiles do. We must
not hold onto the fruit of the life we used to live. In verse 22, Paul instructs us to "Put off
your old self," which is corrupt, and to "Put on the new self," by being made new in the
attitude of your minds.

Can you see there is a putting off and also a putting on? There is a letting go of
the old, and taking on the new. The sugar-glider has the ability to glide a long way
between the trees. But, to do this, he has to let go of the tree he is on, aim himself at the
tree he wants to get to, let go, and jump. His wings are made to help him glide, and he
can glide a long way. And when he reaches the new tree, with all the new fruit, he
reaches out and catches a branch. And so, what he's meant to do is let go of the tree he is
on, take a big leap, and glide over to the new tree. If he does this, he can enjoy all the
new fruit. He can eat all the mangoes he wants.

But what happened to our sugar-glider here? He wanted the new fruit, a new life.
But, he didn't let go of the old. He held on (gesturing towards the parts of the diagram).
He thought he could have both the old and the new. But Paul tells us, we have to let go of
the old in order to be able to take on the new. Our sugar-glider is going to be stretched
apart, or if he lets go, he's going to fall to the ground. He's forgotten that God gave him
wings to make the leap. He can't hold onto the old tree and enjoy life there, and also grab
the new tree, and enjoy that too.
I wonder if that's a bit like us. We stay as sheep. We don't make much forward progress in the Christian life. We may have tried to take on the new, but we haven't let go of the old yet? Can you relate to this in PNG? [Responses].

Every culture experiences challenges to spiritual growth, things that people have to let go of if they are going to grow as Christians. In Melanesian culture, there are some things that can be a hindrance to our growth. I want to list some now, and see if you feel they have an impact on the ability of Christians in PNG to grow in their faith.

Clan rivalry (Wantok system): do you think that loyalty to family and clan sometimes stops people from being obedient to Jesus? How might the loyalty to family or clan hold a person back from growing in their spiritual life? [Allow for responses]. How does this apply to our lives today? [Explore stories and allow responses].

Spiritual Power: do you think that in PNG there is a temptation to continue to rely on the spirits, or be afraid of the sorcerers? Can you identify any situations or people in your experience where this has been problem? How does this apply to our villages and our lives? [Allow responses].

The good life: do you think that some people in PNG are too concerned with being well-fed, and having a good house and garden, and plenty of pigs, to bother with following Jesus? What has that looked like in your experience of people? What does it do to a person's spiritual life? Do you think it stops people from being able to follow Jesus? [Allow for and record responses].

Retribution: do you think that the strong desire for justice in PNG culture, the strong sense that when someone has done something wrong they must be punished or must give payback, can be something that stops people from being able to follow Jesus?
Do you have any examples of people where this has happened? Tell us the story. [Allow for responses]. What sort of things does Jesus say to us that tell us we have to put off some of our old ways of getting justice? [Allow responses].

Let's go back to the picture of our sugar-glider. Think about all these issues: clan rivalry (Wantok issues), spiritual power (sorcery and witchcraft), the good life (wealth and significance), and retribution (demand for revenge or compensation). Does the sugar-glider help us see the struggle it can be? Let's talk about Paul's teaching of "putting off the old person" and "putting on the new person" in light of this. Any comments? [Allow responses]. Do you think a person could possibly get stuck here on their journey? Is anyone specifically addressing these issues with people in your village? How are you helping them to move forward? What strategies might you adopt? [Allow responses].
Figure 15. Specifics of Putting-off and Putting-on

We see that there is a need for new practices and new attitudes. But if those new practices and attitudes are going to result in changed behaviour, there's a need to let go of the old attitudes and practices. It seems that, in PNG, many people have become Christians. They have believed in the salvation provided for them by Jesus on the Cross. They have believed he rose from the dead. But, they have never grown beyond the sheep stage of belief. The sugar-glider story gives us a picture of the need for people to let go of old attitudes and practices and take on new attitudes and practices if we are going to grow. Sometimes this is difficult. There can be tension. You might feel stretched between the two trees. [Any comments here from people].

**Things to let go of.**
- Clan rivalry (wantok system)
- Spiritual power (sorcery, ancestors)
- The good life
- Payback (retributive justice)
- Eph 4 - impurity, lust, lying, stealing,
  unwholesome talk, bitterness, rage, anger,
  brawling, slander, malice

**Things to take on.**
- Church community, generosity
- Bible study, Prayer
- Contentedness, Service
- Forgiving friends and enemies
- Eph 4 - speak truthfully to neighbour, dealing with anger, diligent work, sharing with those in need, kindness, compassion, forgiveness
As church leaders, part of our role is to help people let go of the old and take on the new. This comes through our teaching. It also comes through our example; we have to be people who are growing in our Christian lives. Some of you are experienced pastors and leaders. What strategies are you using to help people make the leap from the old to the new? [Allow for responses]. How are you training your people in bible study, prayer, and service? [Allow for responses]. When you see this diagram, think about the shift from the old to the new, and the sugar-glider's struggle if it can't let go of the old and take on the new. We have to help our people let go of the old ways, and take on the new ways!

Scene Three: Growing Believers

The sugar-glider story has helped us see how important it is for Christians to grow in their faith by letting go of the old and taking on the new. The fish have become sheep by believing in Jesus. Do you remember the cross? Do you remember how we are brought near through the blood of Jesus? Do you remember the wall that has been broken down to allow all nations to become God's people? It's a wonderful thing to become part of God's family. But, like a newborn baby born into a family, there comes a time to grow! The sheep must move on. The sugar-glider shows us an important strategy for helping us move on.

In the Old Testament Temple, the next stage is reserved for the priests. It is called the Holy Place (Rum Holi). The ordinary believers could not enter this area. Only the priests who were serving the people were allowed to enter. They would perform the sacrifices and offerings for the people. There was no way anyone who was not a priest could enter beyond the Court of the Jews. But, in the New Testament, we are not following that pattern exactly: we don't have priests in the same way. We are on a
journey of drawing near to God. The next stage of our journey is the growth beyond simple belief in Jesus to growing in that belief and beginning to behave like Jesus. It's the journey of letting go of old things and taking on new things.

We're going to label the next stage with another animal symbol. The sugar-glider story shows us the process of growth that helps us transition to the next stage. But, I'm going to tell another story that will help us label the next stage with a different animal symbol.

Story to Label Stage Three (Chicken)

Imagine a village, it's a large village, and their chief has served them well for twenty years. The villagers are very happy. They have prospered under the reign of this chief. So, they decide to honour the chief by holding a great party. Everyone in the village is asked to make a contribution to the feast; they grow fruit, sweet potatoes, and all sorts of good food for the occasion. The villages then go to the animals around the village to ask them what they can contribute. The first animal they go to is the chicken.

"Chicken," they say, "what contribution can you make to the great feast for the chief?" The chicken puts its wing to its beak, deep in thought. It then realises it has something to give. Right there, before them all, the chicken squats down, strains a bit, squawks, and out comes an egg. "Here's is my contribution to the feast." The villages are delighted, "Thank you chicken, you have made a great contribution."

One of the key factors in growing as a Christian is making a contribution. Learning to serve others and God is an important step. It's part of letting go of old ways and taking on new ways. So, the chicken represents the person who is on the journey of growth. This person is letting go of the old and taking on the new. And, an important part
of this is beginning to offer their time and energy to serve others. The chicken represents this new stage of growth. The person is growing, and beginning to make a contribution. Let's see what it looks like on the diagram.

![Diagram showing stages of growth](image)

**Figure 16. Labelling stage three**

We now have a progression of stages that correspond to the first three stages of entry into the Temple. A fish (non-believer) comes to believe in Jesus and becomes a sheep. A sheep (a believer) begins to let go of the old life and take on the new (like the sugar-glider), and begins to make a contribution to God's kingdom. The believer begins to transform into a chicken (a growing Christian). It can be a long process and it results in a believer who is growing in their new life to be like Christ, and is making a contribution, like the chicken laying the egg.

As you consider your church and village, I wonder how many of the sheep are in the process of becoming chickens. We've already talked about some strategies that we use to help that process. The sugar-glider helps us to see what the change from the sheep...
to the chicken must involve. Again, we've talked about some of the things that sheep need to let go of if they are to become chickens. Tell me what you're thinking [allow for comments, reflections].

Jesus spent plenty of time with his disciples. If we consider their journey with him, we can see that they hear his teaching and have a desire to follow him. They are his flock, his sheep. As they follow him, they hear more of his teaching. Along the way he challenges them. They let go of some unhelpful attitudes towards children (they didn't think them worthy to spend time with Jesus), some selfish ambition (James and John wanted to be first), and were challenged that if they were to follow Jesus they might face situations where they were without shelter and dependent on others for their food. They were feeding on his teachings. They saw him pray and asked him to teach them to pray (Luke 11:1). They became involved in helping Jesus in his work of proclaiming God's kingdom (Mark 6:7). They had become, over their time of serving him, good chickens. They were growing in their faith as they followed him.

Scene Four: the Most Holy Place

On our journey into the Temple, you might have realised that we have not yet reached the final stage. I wonder if you know what the final stage is called. Beyond the room where the priests serve, there is one final room. It's the last stage of entry into the Temple, for it is here that the Ark of the Covenant sat. To the Jews, it represented the presence of God. This God was so holy that only one person, the High Priest, was able to enter this area, and only once per year, and only with blood to atone for his own sins and the sins of the people. This last stage was called the Most Holy Place (*Rum Holi Tru*).
A disciple's spiritual journey has a final stage also. So far, the growing Christian has become a chicken. They have put their faith in him. They have let go of some unhelpful attitudes and behaviours. They have taken on new beliefs and values as his followers. They have begun to engage in spiritual practices such as prayer, bible reading and have started to make a contribution by serving others. These are all good things. But one final stage remains.

Figure 17. The Most Holy Place

So, even though we've talked about the believer drawing near to God, and then letting go of the old life and taking on the new and beginning to serve by making a contribution, there is still another stage in the journey. The disciples were good chickens. And after following Jesus for quite a while, perhaps two and a half years, Jesus presents them with a new teaching, something he had not yet revealed. It would be a teaching that would define for them and for all believers what the final stage of the journey would look like.
Let's pick up the story in Matthew 16:13-20 (read in Tok Pisin). Ok, in this story, Jesus finds out that people have various ideas about who he is. When he asks the disciples, however, Peter is able to identify him as "the Christ, the son of the living God." No-one else was offering this answer. But when Jesus hears this answer, he responds by affirming that Peter is right, and that this information has come directly from the Father.

What does this signify? It means that Peter (and the other disciples) has begun to correctly discern who Jesus is. This has come to him from the Father. This is proof that Peter is beginning to hear from God (along with the others). It marks a significant shift. It may be true that the whole purpose of the journey up until this point is for the disciples to make the transition from having their own opinions about Jesus (human opinions) to discerning God's opinion. They now know who Jesus is, and it is an accurate knowledge, drawn from the Father.

This marks a shift. Jesus now knows that they know who he is. And he knows they are hearing from the Father. As soon as this happens, Jesus begins a new teaching. We read, "From that time on, Jesus began to explain to his disciples that he must go to Jerusalem." (Mt 16:21). There's a very strong emphasis, in English, and in Tok Pisin, that this is the beginning of a time of new teaching. It is fascinating to observe that Jesus has not said this before. He has not told them what the outcome of his ministry will be. But now, after Peter's confession, Jesus begins to reveal the next stage of the journey to them. We see this also in Mark Chapters Eight, Nine and Ten, and each Gospel has this shift towards the Cross at this point in the story. This is the point where the story changes and the goal of his ministry and of his training of his disciples comes into view.
In the rest of verse 21, Jesus explains what will happen to him, including his being killed. Peter is surprised at this. He rebukes Jesus in verse 22. This is another indication just how surprising this information was to him. He had not signed up for this. He did not anticipate this direction. But then, in one of the harshest things Jesus ever said, he tells Peter to, "Get behind me Satan." Peter, if he resists Jesus at this point, is a stumbling block. He is not thinking about the things of God, but merely human things. Though Peter has heard from the Father about Jesus's identity as Messiah, he has to let go of what he thinks that means. Jesus now begins to explain to his disciples what it means for him to be the Messiah.

He has already told them of his death in verse 21. Now, he states that preparedness to die is not just the outcome for him, but for all of his followers. There will be a Cross for Jesus. But not only for him; there will also be a cross for each of his followers. This carrying of the cross will become the picture of what it means to follow Jesus. It will become the model for all of his followers. The attitude of renouncing the world and taking upon oneself the consequences of living as a servant of God, whatever those consequences may be, is to be the mark of those who follow Jesus in his way. This must become more important to the disciple of Jesus than any form of personal gain, reputation or even personal safety.

Ok, let's now think about what this means for us. Can anyone identify with this journey? Have you had a time in your life when you experienced something similar? Has the cost of following Jesus been seen in your life or the lives of the people you lead? What does it cost to completely follow Jesus? [Allow time to share stories].
When we look at the diagram, we see the first Cross we encountered, the cross that enabled the fish to become a sheep. This was the Cross that Jesus died on. Through the sacrifice of Jesus, by his blood, our sins are forgiven and we become part of God's family. We can enter through the barrier. And in fact, the barrier is destroyed and all nations now approach God in the same way. We can all access God's presence through Jesus.

Then we faced the challenge of growing as a Christian. And we found that, like the sugar-glider, we had to let go of some things from our old life if we were to take on the things of the new life (gesturing to diagram). And if we can do that, and go on doing that, we end up growing as Christians, and making a contribution as chickens. So now, we're at the point where we can label our last stage of the journey into the Temple. Fish, then sheep, then chicken, and then what?

Labelling the Final Stage: Village Feast Story 2 (Pig)

Let's think back to the feast that was being prepared for the chief that had served the village for 20 years. Remember what happened? The people all prepared something for the feast. Then the chicken was asked. What did it do? It laid an egg; a wonderful contribution.

The villagers then went to visit the pig. They explained the situation. All the people had contributed. The chicken had contributed. And now they were asking the pig. The pig listened carefully. But, as the pig listened, the villagers could see that the pig had started to sweat. He had started to tremble.

"What's wrong, pig?" asked the concerned villagers, "Don't you want to make a contribution for the feast? The chicken gave a great contribution."
"Oh, I love the chief. And I'd love to make a contribution," said the pig. He went on slowly, "But for me, it's not just a contribution. You have to realise; this is going to cost me my life." The villages looked at one another and understood. Far from being unwilling, the pig was facing up to the reality that he would be making the greatest contribution of all.

And with that story, we are able to identify an animal that can represent the final stage of our journey of spiritual growth. Jesus told his followers that they must follow him, and that they must take up their cross. This journey would be one of sacrifice. The pig, in giving up his life for the feast, was making a similar commitment, and hence becomes the symbol of the final stage of the journey. Let's see what it looks like on our diagram. We can now draw the second Cross. This cross is the cross that each believer is called to pick up and carry for Jesus (See Figure 15). And the pig, in the choice to make a contribution to the feast, is the animal that represents a complete dedication and commitment to the task.

![Diagram of the completed stage of spiritual growth](image)

**Figure 18. The completed diagram**
And so we have now completed our journey. We've passed through all the stages of worship in the Temple: Court of the Gentiles, Court of the Jews, the Holy Place, and now the Most Holy Place. This is the culmination of the worship experience of Israel. For the disciple of Jesus, we've passed through all the stages: the fish stage (unbeliever), the sheep stage (believers who become part of God's family), the chicken stage (believers on a journey of letting go of the old ways and taking on the new), and the pig stage (believers who are laying down their lives in costly service and mission).

Now we're going to receive our handouts (See Appendix Two). This is our "notes." You'll notice the diagram we've been talking about. Hopefully that diagram means a lot to you now. And, when you look at that diagram, not only do you see what's there, but you see it in light of all we've talked about. Your fellow leaders and pastors have all made great contributions to the training. Those contributions are now captured in the diagram and are in your memory. As you think about this training, not only will you remember what I told you about what the animals mean and what the stages mean, you'll also remember what your fellow pastors and leaders have said.

When Jesus calls a person to follow him, it's not just about believing the message of the gospel, trusting in the blood of Jesus for forgiveness, receiving a place in God's family and with it, a sense of eternal security. That is all wonderful and we can celebrate when a person trusts in Jesus. But it's the first step on a longer journey. After we've put our trust in Jesus, it's time to begin the process of growth; of letting go of all those things in our own lives (and in our culture) that stand in the way of us becoming like Jesus. And, taking on the new things that Jesus places before us as his disciples. There are many
things we must learn. God's ways are not our ways, and we will spend our lives learning what his ways are and growing in them.

The final destination is a big challenge. Jesus gave this challenge to his disciples and said that anyone who wants to follow him must deny themselves, take up their cross and follow. When we go home from this training and our families ask us what was the training about, we can tell them we were learning how to be pigs. God wants us all to be pigs; those who follow Jesus in serving God the great chief by denying themselves, taking up their cross and following.

A Call to Leadership and Service

I first taught about discipleship as a journey through these stages in 2012 in Yamen Village. The teaching has been adjusted quite a lot since then. But, I remember the first question someone asked after the diagram was completed on the board. The question was, "Where does the pig go now?" It's a very good question. For when a person has come to the point of surrendering their life to Jesus, what's next for them? Do they relax and take it easy, as if they have now reached some sort of spiritual retirement?

Far from it! The first time I got that question, I was thinking on my feet. I realised, "Of course, this is not the end." And I began to draw a line from the pig, back to the chicken (See Figure 16). Those who are mature in their faith can help others to come to the same point. I then drew a line back to the sheep. Those who are mature in their faith can help others to begin a journey of growth. I drew a line back to the fish. For some of those who are mature, it will involve going to another place and beginning a new church; that's the line off to the right. Those who are mature in their faith can help people
understand who Jesus is and what he has done to reconcile us to God. Becoming a pig doesn't mean sitting back and doing nothing. Laying down your life for Jesus means taking up his mission to serve others on their journey. That is an essential part of the journey.

Figure 19. The pig serves

Many of you here today are pastors and church leaders. This is your journey. You are involved in helping others: fish, sheep, and chickens, and even pigs, to grow. Some of you may even see yourselves in the line going off to the right; starting new churches or mission works in places where there is no church. But, of course, it's very difficult to help someone grow if you are not at a stage beyond where they are at. A fish can't really help a chicken. A sheep can't help a pig. We can only share with others about the journey we have had with Jesus. Do you think that's right? [Receive responses].
We did some research with the church at Tsumba to discover how many people were in each category. We ended up with the numbers at seventy fish, one-hundred sheep, five chickens and four pigs. When we got those results, it was a bit discouraging that there were so few who had moved beyond the sheep stage. But, this is reality in PNG, as you know. Now, let's do the same thing for your village. Underneath each of the stages, choose a number. You might have a lot of sheep. You might have a lot of fish, or chickens, or pigs. [Give time for consideration and discussion of responses].

That's why it's so important that church leaders are on the journey to maturity. My understanding is that you spend some time and energy each year on planning to preach the good news and have people become Christians. That is wonderful. If you were to think through how you might spend that time, energy and money based on this diagram, where do you think it might be best spent in your village? [Receive responses].

If this diagram does represent the journey from non-believer to mature believer in PNG, then it makes sense that we should be spending our time and money, not just on changing fish into sheep, but also on changing sheep into chickens and then into pigs.

Using the Diagram as a Ministry Planning Tool

The first time we see a diagram like this, it can be quite challenging. We might realise that we should spend quite a bit more time focused on growing as a Christian ourselves. If we are called to be pigs, then let's get on and become pigs. Let us become mature Christians. The writer to the Hebrews says; "Let us lay aside every weight and the sin that clings so closely, and let us run the race marked out for us with perseverance, fixing our eyes on Jesus, the author and perfector of faith" (Heb 12:1-2).
A third way the diagram can be used is by church leaders as a planning tool. Think about your church and village. You should be able to put people into categories based on which stage of the journey they are at. Who are the fish? Who are the sheep? Who are the chickens and the pigs? And if you know who the people are in each stage, and you know the sort of challenges people in that stage face, you should be able to come up with some strategies to make contact and influence the people so that they can move to the next stage. You may find that you would like to gather a group of people who are attending church but are being held back by things in their lives they can't seem to overcome. Gather the people, share the stories. Let them know about the sugar glider and the challenge to let go of some old things. Read and study Ephesians 4 together. Give them some specific things to take on in their lives. Support them as they seek to do this.

Some of you are experienced church leaders and pastors. You have been leading for many years. Other leaders and pastors look up to you. They listen to what you say. You can help them, using this diagram, or adapting this diagram for your local setting, and sharing what you know about the process of discipleship to be able to help others on their journey as pastors and leaders. You can become a trainer of leaders. Help them identify which people in their village fit at each stage of the discipleship journey. Talk through the strategies you might use in these situations. Ask them what cultural stories and rituals might help people grasp the concepts at each stage of the journey. Support them as they come up with ideas and strategies to help people advance in their spiritual journey.
Song-writing

Participants were given a song-writing opportunity on the last day of the training. They divided into four groups and were charged during the afternoon with writing a song that summed up the discipleship journey they had learned about and discussed. The songs are reproduced below. The performances are available for viewing on Youtube.\textsuperscript{219}

Translations were provided by a Tok Pisin speaker in Perth, though several phrases were unclear. The songs accurately record the substance of the discipleship journey that was presented, focusing particularly on the nature of discipleship, the journey through the animal stages, with particular emphasis on the pig stage and the requirement to lay down one's life to become a mature disciple. The level of engagement in the song-writing indicated it was an activity that the participants enjoyed and benefited from.

**Song 1 – Redim Long Givim Laip** (Ready to Give your Life)

\begin{quote}
Kisim strong long sori tru long god, Long pasim long prei wantaim
(Receiving strength from the mercy of God, in the ways of praying together)
\end{quote}

\begin{quote}
Save long win nau kisim pis nau mekim ol i kamap sipsip
(Know the spirit now catch the fish and make them all into sheep).
\end{quote}

\begin{quote}
Wokman I mas _____ nau senesim long kamap kakaruk
(A worker must _____ now change into a chicken).
\end{quote}

\begin{quote}
Tisim ol nau kamap pik nau yu redim long givim laip blong yu
(Teach them all to become pigs now you're ready to give your life).
\end{quote}

**Song 2 – Taim Wantaim God** (Time with God)

\begin{quote}
Taim wantaim God, em i pawaful *3
(Time with God is powerful)
\end{quote}

\begin{quote}
Em i helpim mi, mekim pis i kamap sipsip
(He helps me, making fish become sheep)
\end{quote}

\textsuperscript{219} The performances are viewable on https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Jn1jdcfzFRA
Time with God is powerful

He changes me, making sheep become chickens

Time with God is powerful

He strengthens me, making chickens become pigs

Time with God helps me

He helps me, making fish become sheep

Time with God, I will give my life

You want to be a true disciple?

If you want to be a true disciple, you have to work hard.

Turning fish into sheep, turning sheep into chickens.

Turning chickens into pigs, now lose your life completely.

In the calling of God.
Song 4 – *Kamap Disaipel Tru* (Become a True Disciple)

*Yumi mas wok gut wantaim long kamap disaipel tru*
(We must work together well to become true disciples).

*Mekim pis i kamap sipsip, mekim sipsip i kamap kakaruk*
(Make the fish become a sheep, make the sheep become a chicken).

*Mekim kakaruk i kamap pik, mekim wok long gaden ___*
(Make the chicken become a pig, working in his garden ___).

*Insait bilong singaut bilong god.*
(In the calling of God).
Chapter 6

EVALUATION AND SUMMARY

The training was undertaken in October 2017 in Tsumba village in the Middle-Ramu area, with 70 participants from villages in the Lower Ramu, Middle Ramu and Sogeram MECOC regions, including several students from Gandep Bible College. This discipleship training formed the first day's curriculum with two days of leadership training flowing from this and one day of other training on the topics of freedom from fear of sorcery and family relationships. The subsequent training utilised similar principles in the design and delivery of the training.

Feedback from Executive Minister

MECOC Executive Minister Jerry Yabru gave feedback the form of individual Facebook Messenger text and several phone conversations. The questions in those texts are reproduced in Appendix four along with the responses. The feedback indicates that the training was well received and effectively communicated the need for an approach to the Christian life that emphasises a journey in discipleship.

The statistics from Tsumba village were seen by most participants to be representative of the movement generally. It is possible that this analysis is representative of more than the MECOC churches and may have extensive applicability elsewhere in
PNG. Plans are underway for further follow-up for the leaders at the training in the form of regional workshops focused on how to utilise the training as a planning process in a local church.

One of the comments indicated a desire for more discussion in small groups. This aspect of the training could be included as the training is shared in smaller contexts in individual villages or groups could be formed during the training experience to facilitate discussion and interaction. Follow-up training in villages and smaller regions will include this approach.

Concluding Reflections

The project addressed the prevalence of nominalism and the lack of discipleship growth in the MECOC churches of PNG. The project did this by presenting the necessary response to the gospel as a prolonged journey of discipleship rather than simply a moment of conversion. This was achieved by creating a visual Engel-type scale for Melanesians that describes key challenges at crucial points along the discipleship journey. This has been readily understood by participants and the language of discipleship in the form of animal symbols has created categories of discipleship growth that may assist leaders in planning teaching and training activities for their people.

The projected has made some attempt to make the training contextual and memorable through its design and delivery. The simplicity and memorability of the training have been to a large extent achieved through the use of Scripture, simple diagrams and associated stories. Taken together, the diagrams, stories and Scripture have created a language for discipleship that can be shared and adapted by participants. The songs written by participants indicated the substance of the training has been understood.
and they have grasped the stages, their meanings, and the progressive nature of discipleship through these stages.

The transition from fish to sheep was readily understood by the participants. This was not new information but a depiction of the experience of conversion that they are very familiar with. The use of Ephesians 2 resonates with situation of believers in PNG in relation to the Old Testament. The progressive stages of entry into the Temple created a model that emphasised spiritual growth beyond conversion. This was essential given the background of a conversion-focused gospel.

Participants resonated with the results of the survey in Tsumba village that indicated very few believers had progressed in their discipleship journey. This supported the need for further stages of growth. The picture of the sugar-glider being stuck between the trees elicited laughter and a sense of identification that their people can be seen to be in a similar place. The greatest resonance, however, occurred when it was revealed that the final stage of discipleship would be labelled as the pig stage. This seemed to make sense to all, due largely to the familiarity the participants have with the pig as an animal of great significance in their cultures.

The contextualisation of the training is the most difficult area to assess. Though the aim was to avoid paternalistic models of pedagogy, the project has introduced non-contextual elements into the training experience and the author has done most of the up-front component of the training, albeit with significant times of sharing from locals. Though post-training reflections from MECOC church leaders have been very positive, the project would have benefitted by the addition of an extra stage of development where more extensive discussions could have been had with key leaders on what animal or other
symbols would have been best to use to represent the key theological issues around each stage of the discipleship journey and how the journey relates to aspects of each local culture that make up the MECOC churches.

I envisage a further stage of development of the training. I believe that depicting the journey of discipleship in diagram form, with the use of animal symbols and the utilisation of a story framework is a helpful approach given the frequent use of animal symbols and stories throughout PNG. Participants have responded positively to representing the discipleship journey in this way. The project now needs further investigation of local beliefs and customs to discern the most resonant ways to express the issues and challenges of spiritual growth in each specific cultural group. Taking this into account means the training presented in this project must be seen as a significant though incomplete addressing of the discipleship issues of the MECOC churches. The project presents a helpful way of expressing the generic journey of discipleship in a way that does make sense for Melanesian culture as a whole. Further contextualisation for particular local cultures is required.

The use of the journey into the Temple as a parallel story seemed to help the participants and provided support for the idea of a staged journey of discipleship. This sits well with the analysis of the Gospel accounts that indicate the disciples moved through several stages on their journey to maturity. The barrier at each stage of Temple entry acts as natural complication in the discipleship journey. This provides a natural story form and creates helpful divisions in the training where the problems at each stage of the journey can be raised, discussed, and solutions found. These aspects of the training
seemed to work well and helped provide a narrative framework for the discipleship journey.

The next stage of the development of the training will require further conversations with leaders to investigate how each of the constituent MECOC cultural groups resonates with the animal symbols and what words, images, stories, rituals, or practices in their cultures could be used to communicate or embody the types of spiritual growth the training envisages. This may result in re-design of the training for specific contexts. This training would then be delivered by locals in each cultural setting. Though this would slow down the ability of the model to impact pastors and leaders in the MECOC movement, it has the potential to significantly deepen its impact on specific groups of people. It also requires more time on the ground to research the cultural realities involved.

The project has taken the approach that story forms are to some degree universal. Robert McKee’s work on stories in film scripts has been derived from an extensive study of films and novels in the Western context. His analysis of stories, however, accords with that of the vast majority of story analysts. Katherine Nelson, for example, claims that the agent / goal structure with causal sequence has been noted by “every writer on narrative for the last 2,500 years.”220 Patrick Hogan, having studied stories and literature in many traditions, goes so far as to say that, "our aspirations and emotions are fundamentally the same, no matter where we were born or what we look like, and the stories we admire and

preserve, stories about these aspirations and emotions, are most often mere variations on a handful of shared patterns.”

Despite this universal appeal of stories, care must be taken that when using stories for communication that they resonate with local concerns and worldviews. I have told numerous stories in the training, some of which relate to my life in Australia. Participants have indicated their resonance with the stories through understanding of the humour and asking questions afterwards. The resonance with the stories could have been taken to a deeper level by using stories from the cultures or by linking stories with aspects of culture such as important festivals and beliefs.

The model presented in the project provides local pastors with a way to understand the discipleship journey that helps them identify where their people are at on that journey. Knowing this, they are better placed to be able to take action that can assist their people on the spiritual journey. In this sense the model acts as an analytical tool to assist leaders in their work of developing disciples. Pastors and leaders have known that they should preach and teach the bible, pray with people, visit the sick etc. However, they readily recognise that they have not been given clear models in their pastoral training to enable them recognise where people are at in their discipleship journey nor do they have a clear sense of how to help them in their journey. This model has the potential to help leaders by giving them a framework that can assist them communicate the journey-like nature of discipleship to their people. It also helps them locate where a person is at on their journey and plan activities they can encourage each person or group to do that will

\[221\] Ibid., 16.
assist them to move forward at each stage of their journey. A believer who has not progressed in discipleship will, for example, need to consider what aspects of their former lives they may need to "put off" and what attitudes and practices they may need to "put on" if they are to progress on their journey. Knowing this, pastors can plan specific teaching or training sessions and engage in specific conversations or form groups to address these issues using various biblical or other materials.

The project represents a response to a request for assistance in the area of discipleship training from a group of churches in PNG to the Australian church. This concluding reflection highlights both the advantages of utilising external training personnel, concepts and techniques, and the care that is needed when such training is designed and delivered. It is hoped that this project can be revised and built upon, specifically by further investigating and utilising the cultural specifics of the lives of the people in the MECOC areas. This could be of greater assistance to the MECOC churches and hopefully beyond this to other churches in PNG.
APPENDIX One

Modified Engel Scale

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>GOD'S ROLE</th>
<th>COMMUNICATOR'S ROLE</th>
<th>MAN'S RESPONSE</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>General Revelation</td>
<td>Proclamation</td>
<td>-8 Awareness of Supreme Being but no Effective Knowledge of Gospel</td>
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<td>Conviction</td>
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<td>-7 Initial Awareness of Gospel</td>
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<td>-6 Awareness of Fundamentals of Gospel</td>
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<td>-5 Grasp of Implications of Gospel</td>
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<td>-4 Positive attitude Toward Gospel</td>
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<td>-3 Personal Problem Recognition</td>
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<td>-2 DECISION TO ACT</td>
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<td></td>
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<td>-1 Repentance and Faith in Christ</td>
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<thead>
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<th>REGENERATION</th>
<th>NEW CREATURE</th>
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<td>Sanctification</td>
<td>Follow-up</td>
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<td>Cultivation</td>
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ETERNITY
APPENDIX Two

Handout for Participants

**Efesus 2:12-13**
na long dispela taim yupela i stap longwe long Krais. Yupela i stap ausait long lain bilong Israel. God i bin mekim promis na i givim kontrak long ol lain Israel, na yupela i stap ausait long dispela lain. Yupela i stap long dispela graun, na i no gat wanpela gupela samting i stap bilong yupela i wetim i kamap bihain. Na yupela i no save long God. Bipo yupela i stap longwe tru. Tasol nau blut bilong Krais i bringim yupela i kam, na yupela i pas wantaim Krais Jisas na yupela i stap klostu tru long God.

**Efesus 4:22-24**
Bipo yupela tu i bin wokabaut long pasin bilong olpela man, em pasin bilong giaman na bel i kira long mekim ol samting nogut, na em pasin i bringim man i go long rot bilong bagarap. Tasol nau yupela i mas rausim dispela olpela pasin na lingting bilong yupela i mas kamap nupela. Yupela i mas kamap ol nupela manmeri, em ol manmeri God i mekim ol i kamap nupela na ol i stap olsem God yet, long wanem, pasin bilong ol i stretpela olgeta na I holi tru.

**Metuy 16:24-26**
Na Jisas i tokim ol disaipel bilong en olsem, “Sapos wanpela man i laik bihainim mi, orait em i mas daunim laik bilong em yet, na em i mas karim diwai kros bilong en na bihainim mi. Long wanem, sapos wanpela man i laik hollimpas laip bilong em yet, laip bilong en bai i lus. Tasol sapos wanpela man i ting long mi na i lusim laip bilong en, em bai i kisim laip bilong en. Sapos wanpela man i kisim olgeta samting bilong graun, tasol laip bilong em yet i lus, orait dispela olgeta samting bai i helpim em olsem wanem? Bai man i givim wanem pe bilong baim bek laip bilong en?”
APPENDIX Three

Letter of Invitation

Pastor Michael Bullard
Senior Pastor
Riverton Baptist Church
P.O BOX 3048
Shelley, 6148
Western Australia

March 21, 2016.

Dear Pastor Mike,

RE: An Invitation Letter:

We are pleased to invite you to conduct leadership training for our pastors and church leaders in Madang, Madang Province, Mt Hagen and Yamen Village in the Angoram District, East Sepik Province from May 1st – 15th 2016.

We appreciate the last trips you have made which have really impacted our church leaders and pastors along the Keram River. We have testimonies from the people which received these training saying they have assisted them in serving the people in the remote areas.

We are now looking forward to your coming to assist us again by providing such needed skills training to our church leaders.

Yours faithfully,

Yabru Jerry.

CEO. Melanesian Evangelical Church of Christ
APPENDIX Four

Feedback from MECOC Executive Minister

1. How many people attended the training?
   70 plus participants.

2. What positions or situations were those who attended the training in?
   30 pastors.
   20 church leaders
   10 women
   10 Christians (locals from Tsumba village without leadership roles)

3. What MECOC areas did those who attended the training come from?
   Sogeram area.
   Gokto/Aiome area
   Chungribu area
   Middle Keram area.
   Lower Ramu area.

4. Were there leaders of the regions in attendance?
   10 regional leaders attended.

5. In the training, we surveyed the Tsumba leaders and found in the 4 different groups
   these numbers; the fish (39%), the sheep (56%), the chicken (3%), and the pig (2%)?
   Do you think this represents more than just Tsumba village? Is this situation similar in
   other village?
   Yes, in almost every village church it's the same.

6. Do you have any suggestions for how the training could be improved?
   More time should be given to small group discussions.

7. What comments have you received from the participants about the training?
   Most pastors and regions made positive comments about the training.
   Along the lines of, "through the teaching I haven't really done well in completing the
   discipling process."
   Their churches are full of sheep. They were challenged to work with sheep to move
   them forward.

8. What suggestions do you have for following up the training?
   Follow up workshops should be done in each area to see & encourage pastors and
   church leaders that they are following the discipling and training others to disciple
   others, so the discipling process happens in all ministries in the local church.
BIBLIOGRAPHY


