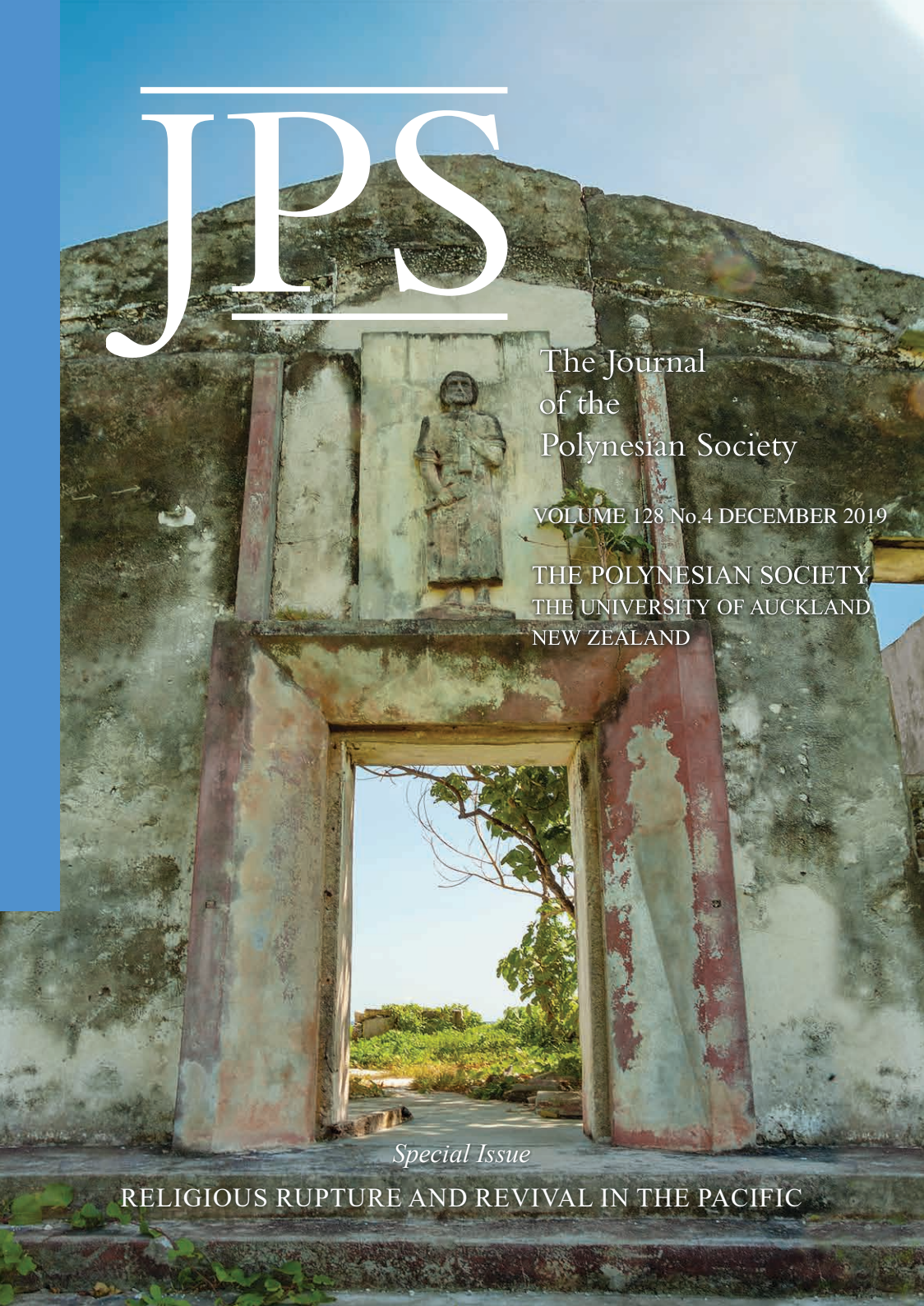

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RELIGIOUS RUPTURE AND REVIVAL IN THE PACIFIC

MELANESIA BURNING: RELIGIOUS REVOLUTION IN THE WESTERN PACIFIC

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ABSTRACT: In the history of Pacific Christianity, the explosion of revival activity within Melanesia during the 1970s remains an untold story. Within this regional spiritual upheaval, ecstatic Pentecostalist phenomena spread with unprecedented rapidity, intensity and geographical scope. As a result of these movements, Christianity assumed an importance in Melanesia in a way it never had before, as local congregations redefined their church life and spirituality over and against mission Christianity. This article documents a major branch of this regional revivalism. A detailed description of this series of interconnected movements transitions to an explanation of their success in terms of four factors: the mutual ramification of the revivals with political independence movements; the fact that despite being built on theologies of world breaking, the revivals dovetailed with traditional Melanesian religious experiences; the existence of interdenominational organisations that expedited the movement of people, practices and ideas across local, regional and national frontiers; and, finally, the personal dimensions of Melanesian revivalism, whereby the genesis, uptake and diffusion of revival movements often depended crucially upon the persuasive capabilities of influential Christian leaders in each society.

Keywords: Melanesia, Christianity, revivalism, Pentecostalism, Papua New Guinea, Solomon Islands, religion, South Seas Evangelical Church

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Beginning in the early 1970s and continuing for at least the next decade, Melanesia became the scene of intense Christian revival activity. This dramatic upsurge in the spiritual life of Melanesian Christians occurred with such rapidity, force and scope that Joel Robbins (2004a: 122) justifiably asks if it "might well be seen as something of a Melanesian 'great awakening'". As a direct result of this groundswell, Christianity assumed an importance in Melanesia that it never had before, as local congregations asserted their own Christian identities over and against the ideas and practices imposed upon them by missions (Barr 1983a; Ernst 2012).

Here I focus upon a main branch of this overall regional upheaval, namely, a series of interconnected revival movements which occurred within conservative evangelical churches across Solomon Islands and Papua New Guinea in the early 1970s. Many localised expressions of the wider movement have been documented (e.g., Batley 1998; Burt 1994; Flannery 1983–1984;

Griffiths 1977; Kale 1985; Robbins 2004a; Robin 1981, 1982; Tuzin 1989, 1997). But as yet, no researcher has assembled these pieces into the broader story of which they are, in fact, a part, despite allusions to its existence (Barr 1983a: 112; Douglas 2001: 623). My paper thus positively responds to Barker's challenge that "if the Anthropology of Christianity is to be truly inclusive, it needs not only better ethnographies of rural communities but studies focused upon regional associations and networks" (2012: 77).

Of the individual revivals that together made up the overall movement I am focusing on, none were identical. However, most shared certain recurrent phenomena: a deep conviction of sin and associated repentance; the repudiation of, and deliverance from, traditional *qua* Satanic spirit beings and forces; healings; glossolalia, or speaking in unknown tongues; visions, dreams and prophecy; and episodes of collective shaking and crying. These phenomena fit comfortably within theological definitions of revival, referred to alternatively as "spiritual awakening", "evangelical awakening" or "spiritual revival" (Lovelace 1979; Orr 1976). Furthermore, practices such as healings, casting out evil spirits, speaking in tongues, and visions, dreams and prophecy are collectively known as *charismata*, or "gifts of the Holy Spirit", components of the revivals which are also the leading features of institutionalised, denominational Pentecostalism, where they are received through "baptism in the Holy Spirit".

But it would be inaccurate to claim that the Melanesian revivals duplicated these theological models. Indeed, my article illuminates a distinctly Melanesian form of revivalism and Pentecostalism. In an important article, Barr (1983a: 110) shows how many of the phenomena reported during this time did not appear *de novo* as a result of revivalism, but rather formed integral components of indigenous religious traditions. To understand them simply as generic aspects of revival or Pentecostalism, then, is to overlook that Melanesians had these existing forms of religiosity and spirituality from which to help build new forms of Christianity. My discussion also shows how the revivals were uniquely Melanesian not only in their religious dimensions but also in how they grew out of a particular regional history which imbued them with a distinct political ethos.

I begin by describing this branch of Melanesian revivalism, structuring the discussion according to the temporal and geographical trajectory of the overall movement. I then explain revivalism's spread in terms of four factors. Firstly, I want to think about the revivals as movements of religious independence. As I show, revivalism struck just as Melanesian countries were approaching political independence, and I see the processes as mutually ramifying, especially in light of the fact that one of the key aspects of revival was to appropriate control of Christian cosmology and worship from foreign missionaries. There is also a range of movements with a similar ethos that

occurred in both the Solomon Islands and Papua New Guinea that I think provide an important historical backdrop for what occurred.

The second key factor is that the revivals, despite embodying a theology of world breaking and rupture (Meyer 1998; Robbins 2004b), nonetheless established themselves across a cultural region whose societies had pre-existing traditions of spirit possession and ecstatic behaviour, as alluded to above in relation to Barr (1983a). Through highlighting this synergy my work joins a growing body of studies that seek to move beyond understandings of evangelical and Pentecostal Christianity as traditions of rupture and explore the elements of cultural and cosmological continuity that may exist within such transformative contexts (Anderson 2018; Marshall 2016).

A third factor I underscore is the denominational and interdenominational institutions and relationships that fostered the flow of people and ideas within and between Solomon Islands and Papua New Guinea. Without the relationships that existed between certain individuals and churches, as well as the existence of institutions that welcomed theologically similar Christians from throughout the region, the revivals would never have started. My discussion focuses particularly on the networks of both the Christian Leaders' Training College (CLTC) in Banz, Papua New Guinea, and the South Seas Evangelical Church (SSEC) as the filaments through which the spark of revival spread.

A final element in accounting for the success of the revivals in reshaping local Christianity was the influence of Christian leaders who catalysed change in their respective home areas. These were Christian leaders, both men and women, who were able to claim privileged access to and knowledge of the Holy Spirit and who could then forcefully communicate to their communities a range of directives for remaking their societies in line with the Holy Spirit's intentions. Some of these stories, such as that of Diyos of Eliptamin, are already known to anthropology (Lohmann 2007). But there are many other individuals who were crucially involved in this historically significant event whose identities remain obscured.

REVIVAL

Making Fire in Solomon Islands

The major branch of Melanesian revivalism that I describe in this article began in 1970 with a major upsurge in the spiritual life of SSEC congregations on the island of Malaita, Solomon Islands. The majority of sources that have documented the Malaitan revival (for example, Burt 1994: 241; Garrett 1997: 363; Griffiths 1977; Orr 1976: 197; Strachan 1984) attribute its origin to the evangelistic crusades held throughout Solomon Islands in July and August 1970 by the Māori evangelist Muri Thompson, who was joined by two other Māori men, John Pipi, a noted singer, and Rex Tito, a guitarist.

Anticipation for Thompson's visit was high following an April 1970 letter that went out from the South Seas Evangelical Mission (SSEM, the parent mission body) to all SSEC pastors representing nearly 300 local churches that read:

> Muri Thompson, a Maori evangelist from New Zealand, will be here for a number of crusades during July and August … Have your people pray every day … Now is the time to start praying. What should we pray for? Revival, a mighty pouring out of God's Holy Spirit upon His people so that people from all churches and missions will be eternally built up in Christ. (Griffiths 1977: 170)

Beginning in Honiara, for the first month of his visit Thompson and his team held revival meetings throughout different parts of the country, but did not manage to produce the desired breakthrough. In August he arrived at Malaita, the main stronghold of the SSEC. Thompson and his entourage made their way to the One Pusu Bible School, where he was the invited speaker at the annual Mission's Field Conference, attended by local and foreign Christian leaders and missionaries. It was here that the atmosphere of Thompson's crusades began to exhibit a greater intensity. In response to Thompson's preaching, which "called down the 'fire' of the Holy Spirit" (Garrett 1997: 363), participants at the conference began to speak in tongues, publicly repent their sins and cast out evil spirits, all of which occurred alongside episodes of crying and fainting. Following the conference, a missionary at One Pusu reported that

> for the last five weeks we have not had a regular school. Lectures have been interrupted simply by the Spirit taking over … One of our own missionaries has reported to New Zealand that Muri Thompson has introduced Pentecostalism. All I can say is that we need more of it and quickly. (as cited in Garrett 1997: 363)

Thompson's crusades continued up the west coast of Malaita, where his meetings produced similar results. Events reached fever pitch at Kobiloko on the northeast coast of Malaita during a meeting held on Sunday morning, 23 August (Burt 1994: 241; Griffiths 1977: 172). Here revival broke out within a group of 600 lay Christians who had come to see Thompson and Pipi preach (by this time Rex Tito had left the team after contracting malaria in south Malaita). Catalysed by Pipi's singing (Griffiths 1977: 173), the Holy Spirit diffused throughout the congregation, moving those in attendance to receive visions, speak in tongues, confess sins and past grievances and expel evil forces disturbing the church. Thompson's team subsequently held meetings in several other villages throughout Malaita, sometimes attended by over 2,000 in large, open-air gatherings, all of which produced miraculous outpourings of the Holy Spirit.

The above represents the received narrative of the Malaitan revival as told by the SSEM and other scholars to have documented it. This version of events is largely accurate; however, it overlooks some critically important facts. In particular it does not acknowledge the visit to Malaita from 16 June to 2 August (thus immediately preceding the One Pusu conference where Thompson preached) by John Pasterkamp, a Dutch Pentecostal pastor based in Rabaul, Papua New Guinea (Pasterkamp, letter to the editor in *Pacific Islands Monthly*, January 1971, p. 123). Pasterkamp had been invited to Solomon Islands by Roy and Margaret Latter, a couple living on neighbouring Tulagi, who explained in their letter that they had been approached by a group of SSEC men from Malaita eager to learn about baptism in the Holy Spirit and the associated spiritual gifts; in other words, Pentecostalism. After spending ten fruitful days with the group on Tulagi, Pasterkamp was taken by Arnon Sau to his village of Kakara, on the northwest coast of Malaita. Every morning, Pasterkamp gave the local SSEC congregation there a dose of Pentecostalism, teaching them how to receive the Holy Spirit. This teaching set in motion a groundswell of spiritual excitement and energy the likes of which SSEC congregations throughout Malaita had been praying for over several months, if not years. According to Pasterkamp (unpublished newsletter, 20 October 1970), within a week, around 100 members of the Kakara church began experiencing visions of Jesus, speaking and singing in tongues, casting out "demons", performing miraculous feats of healing and crying profusely during confession. Pentecostalism had unlocked the door to revival and was essentially acting as its delivery system. Of crucial importance is also that a group from Kakara, all of whom had become conversant in charismatic phenomena, would become part of the team accompanying Thompson around Malaita during the crusades and who, we must assume, played an important part in promoting this form of religiosity within the revivals.

Although not acknowledged within accounts of the Malaitan revival, the Kakara eruption, jointly orchestrated by Pasterkamp and SSEC leaders from Malaita, was the embryo from which the greater Malaitan revival grew. After months of concerted prayer, congregations were primed and ready for revival, and it was the spark of Pentecostalism that eventually ignited the flame. Once it had broken out, the powerful surge in spiritual activity that started in Kakara was picked up and amplified within the context of the subsequent Malaitan crusades from the time of the SSEM/SSEC conference in One Pusu onwards. Furthermore, the Pentecostalist flavour of the revivals provided the theological and ritual blueprint that SSEC churches would eventually adopt over the ensuing years.

While revival was felt most strongly in Malaita, immediately following Thompson's departure teams of SSEC Christians who had experienced the movement's force fanned out across the country, initiating similar revivals in many communities. While the full extent of the SSEC revival in Solomon

Islands is not yet clear, the fire certainly spread rapidly, with one SSEM missionary estimating that it had touched the lives of over 10,000 people within the first three months and that, writing in 1971, "the movement continues unabated on Malaita and is extending to other islands" (George Strachan, letter to the editor in *Pacific Islands Monthly*, January 1971, pp. 119–23). Such estimates obviously need to be assessed against the religious enthusiasms of their authors, but they nonetheless call attention to the popular uptake of the movement.

Fire in the Papua New Guinea Highlands

The Christian Leaders' Training College (CLTC), situated in Banz, in the highlands of Papua New Guinea, regularly received students from the SSEC. Those that were already present at CLTC when the revival broke in 1970 were fully aware of these events and shared the story with their colleagues, but in subsequent years students started arriving from the midst of the Malaitan upheaval, many of whom had a profound influence on the thinking of their Papua New Guinean counterparts. Of particular interest is that in 1973, as the revival spread throughout the Solomon Islands, several SSEC pastors who had directly participated in the 1970 explosion travelled to CLTC to undertake a Senior Pastors training course. While at the college, these SSEC pastors shared their experiences of the Malaitan revival with their classmates and teachers, contributing to a sense of urgency that something similar should also occur in Papua New Guinea. As a result of this growing expectation, several outreach meetings were planned for the SSEC contingent to visit their classmates' home communities, many of which were already in the early stages of revival.

The first excursion by the SSEC pastors into the Western Highlands Province took them to Engan communities within the Lumusa and Baiyer River Baptist Churches where they had been invited to interpret preliminary signs of spiritual awakening that had appeared in the village of Kembotapusa, namely, a woman trembling in response to the powerful preaching of a local CLTC student named Opa Miki (Cramb and Kolo 1983; Kale 1985; Sanders 1978: 114). Within a matter of days, this bodily shaking had spread to others in the congregation who, in addition, began crying profusely and confessing their sins. Upon their arrival, the SSEC group entered into dialogue with local pastors concerning the nature of events and quickly came to the conclusion that a revival was breaking. Over the next two weeks, the pastors travelled throughout the wider network of churches, providing similar advice, instruction and encouragement to local pastors and congregations about the spiritual upheavals beginning to emerge. Revival proliferated within these churches, with congregation members experiencing a deep conviction of sin, crying and bodily shaking (Cramb and Kolo 1983: 94). It seems that some

also spoke in tongues but that this was not as prominent as trembling, which became the hallmark of the Engan movement. Before long, revivalism was filtering through the capillaries of the broader Western Highlands Baptist Union (WHBU), which at the time had 151 congregations (Cramb and Kolo 1983). Visits by the Solomon Islands pastors then followed in 1973–1974 to Evangelical Church of Papua (ECP) congregations around Lake Kutubu, Southern Highlands Province (Robin 1981; Sanders 1978: 120), which again set in motion further local revivals in the surrounding area, particularly within Huli congregations around Tari and Homa (see also Barr 1983b).

From the available evidence it appears that the SSEC pastors did not start these highlands revivals in the same way as they had in Malaita but rather actively shaped and moulded local movements that had an origin and impetus of their own. Notwithstanding, their influence was crucial in facilitating the spread of revivalism. Firstly, they definitively labelled the local movements as "revival", a designation familiar to the evangelical Engan congregations and which was readily accepted as the official name. As well as giving the movement a name, the SSEC pastors also likely played a key role in consolidating the Pentecostalist theological framework employed to interpret the range of phenomena that was occurring (cf. Kale 1985: 63–64); the dreams, visions, trembling, crying and healings that occurred were, just as they had been in Malaita only a few years earlier, a sign of the baptism in the Holy Spirit and a return to the Day of Pentecost described in Acts 2.

Other revivals occurring during this time throughout the highlands were sparked by students whose time at CLTC had overlapped with SSEC Christians but who had independently orchestrated revival in their home areas. In the Southern Highlands, Agiru Gewaria and Hedai Urulu, both of whom had been students at CLTC between 1970 and 1972, initiated revivals within the Brethren/Christian Mission in Many Lands (CMML) churches in the Tari and Koroba areas, respectively, during 1975–1976. Also, in 1977 at the Duranmin Bible College, Diyos Wapnok precipitated a charismatic revival that swept through the entire Min region over the next four to five years (Bennett and Smith 1983; Jorgensen 1996, 2007; Lohmann 2007; Robbins 2001). Especially noteworthy within this movement was the role played by *spirit meri* who, as female mediums of the Holy Spirit, directed a totalistic reorganisation of society in Christian terms (Jorgensen 2007). Diyos attended CLTC from 1970 until 1972 and was not, therefore, present at the college for the visit of the senior pastors, though there is a good possibility he met them at later annual meetings of the Evangelical Alliance. Nonetheless, during these years he interacted closely with other SSEC students who had both heard of and directly experienced the events that unfolded in Malaita, exchanges that strongly shaped his ideas and motivations for a revival in the Min area, as recorded by Lohmann (2007: 134).

The Cup Runneth Over: Revival in the Papua New Guinea Lowlands

The Solomon Islands–based SSEM (the parent mission body to the SSEC) had established a presence in Papua New Guinea in 1949, when it set up a mission at Brugam, within the Maprik region, East Sepik Province. The SSEM PNG's work in this area (SSEM PNG became SSEC PNG in 1973), particularly around Ilahita, was a crucial platform from which revivalism emerged. In mid-1972, a team of four SSEC pastors fresh from "an experience of God's reviving power among their own people" visited SSEM churches throughout the Sepik, catalysing spiritual awakenings (Garrett 1997: 363; Griffiths 1977: 199–200). Then, following a lull in revivalist activity, a second wave of revivalism swept through the Ilahita area in 1976, again as a direct influence of SSEC Christians with experience of the Malaitan eruption. An Ilahita man called Barnabas Ke'in (Griffiths 1977) or Banabas Kain (Tuzin 1997) was visited in Wewak hospital by Jezreel Filoa, a Malaitan SSEM missionary who had worked in Papua New Guinea for 13 years, both before and after studying at CLTC from 1965 until 1968. Filoa, who had witnessed the events of 1972, discussed revival at length with Ke'in during his convalescence. When Ke'in arrived in Ilahita in June 1976, the revival flourished, lasting at least into the early 1980s. As reported by Tuzin in *The Cassowary's Revenge* (1997), the Ilahita revival caused widespread cultural destruction as well as a major rift in the community between those who supported revival and those who opposed it.

Of likely significance in helping to explain the genesis of the Sepik revivals is the presence within the immediate Maprik region of the Assemblies of God (AOG) church, a Pentecostal denomination that had arrived in the area in 1948, one year before the SSEM. To concentrate efforts, the churches had entered into a comity agreement, dividing the surrounding territories up into respective spheres of influence (Gallagher and Gallagher 2019). Operating in such close proximity to each other, a cross-pollination of ideas and practices would have been inevitable, such that prior to the arrival and influence of the SSEC leaders from Malaita, SSEM/SSEC congregations in the Sepik would already have been at least aware of, if not conversant in, Pentecostalist doctrine and worship.

At least two other local revivals that took place in lowland Papua New Guinea during the 1970s and 1980s were direct outgrowths of the work done at CLTC by SSEC Christians. More specifically, these wider radiations occurred as CLTC students influenced by SSEC Christians travelled home to start their own charismatic movements. The first of these took place within the Australian Churches of Christ (ACC) congregations in and around Bunapas, on the Ramu River, Madang Province, as described by Batley (1998), while the second was a sustained period of revivalism that occurred in the late 1970s and early 1980s among the Kieta circuit of the United Church, Bougainville (Garrett 1997: 351; Taruna 1983).

WHAT MAKES A FIRE BURN?

Colonial History

The series of interconnected revivals that took place in the 1970s can be seen as religious independence movements that emerged from a deeper history of Melanesian social movements which strove, in various ways, for liberation from colonial oppression. A crucial consequence of the revival was for Melanesians to take control of Christian worship and church organisation from missionaries and to thereby define a new, localised Christian identity in relation to the exogenous institution of the mission. With the direct, unmediated access to the Holy Spirit afforded to them by their Pentecostal-styled revivalism, Melanesians no longer needed outsider missionaries to tell them how to run their religious lives; they could now do it themselves. Indeed, the revival was not simply a change in worship and ideology, it was a change in religious rule (for some examples, see Burt 1994: 242; Robbins 2001; 2004a: 127; Tuzin 1997: 18).

This declaration of religious independence emerged out of a particular set of historical conditions. Consider first the crucial fact that the place where the revival started in Malaita, the village of Kobiloko, was the same village of Kwaisulia, one of the co-founders of the Remnant Church, an SSEM breakaway movement that formed in the 1950s (Burt 1983; 1994: 241). As described by Burt, "the goal of the Remnant Church is 'spiritual freedom' under a church independent of the state" (1994: 211). This image of theocratic rule, whereby followers acknowledged only the authority of God's government, law and tax, importantly led to a rejection of colonial government taxes as well as the government census (Burt 1983), an act of resistance that ultimately led to many adherents being imprisoned. As Burt notes (1983: 334), the Remnant Church "falls within a long tradition of such movements in Malaita", referring to the Maasina Rule Movement of the 1940s, which marshalled both indigenous and exogenous cultural resources in the pursuit of "political autonomy under spiritual authority" (Burt 1994: 201; see also Keesing 1978, 1979). Furthermore, as Akin shows in his wonderfully detailed account of Maasina Rule (2013: 180–86), the established SSEM church network acted as "ready integrative structures" for the island-wide movement and, of considerable importance, "SSEM members virtually melded their church with the movement" (p. 180). I argue that through these inextricable connections, the Malaitan revival inherited the anti-colonial drive towards self-determination and autonomy of Maasina Rule and the Remnant Church and sought to achieve in the realm of spirituality and worship what those earlier movements had attempted in the political and governmental sphere. This is powerfully exemplified by the fact that the Pentecostalist emphases of the Malaitan SSEC revival went directly against the staunchly anti-Pentecostal theology of the conservative SSEM.

The colonial era in Papua New Guinea produced similar political-religious movements that were disparagingly grouped by the administration under the label "cargo cults". The cargo movements that emerged in New Guinean societies as a result of their contact with European colonial powers were distinguished from the Remnant Church and Maasina Rule by their emphasis upon manufactured goods and commodities, but all were essentially alike in that they were assertions for control over the new social order imposed upon them. Indeed, as Lawrence famously argued for the Madang area, the cargo movement "may be regarded as, in the long run, a rudimentary form of revolutionary 'nationalism'—the people's first experiment in completely renewing the world order and achieving independence from European rule" (1964: 222), a view also shared by Worsley in his appraisal of cargo movements as based on an "anti-authoritarian attitude" (1957: 226) and taking the form of "a proto-nationalist political party" (p. 192; see also Lindstrom 1993: 49–50).

What we can see is that prior to the emergence of the revival movement there were, across both Solomon Islands and Papua New Guinea, social movements that sought to break free of colonial domination (often by reimagining their structures) through ritual and religious means. The fact that some of these movements occurred in the same places where the revival was most intense suggests that they were an important background for revivalism, which expedited the transition from mission (colonial) to locally orchestrated Christian worship and organisation.

As the fire of revival spread throughout the 1970s, there were, of course, concurrent movements for political change that I would argue also buttressed the movement. Indeed, as this series of revivals in many cases marked a claim for religious independence and a shift in religious rule, then the coincidence of their rapid spread throughout Melanesia with movements towards formal political independence can be taken as mutually ramifying. Papua New Guinea obtained self-governance in 1973, the same year the SSEC senior pastors arrived at CLTC, and then became fully independent in 1975, as this branch of Melanesian revivalism was in full swing. Solomon Islands, too, also achieved national independence in 1978, as local revivalism was continuing to work its way outwards from Malaita through neighbouring islands. Melanesians were taking the final steps towards self-governance and national independence at the same time as they were also dismantling missionary control of their Christian lives within the overall revival movement.

Cultural Tradition

Revivals also depended for their rapid growth upon an existing repertoire of spiritual entities and experiences that they synergised with, albeit through a process of reimagination. These strong elements of continuity, however, must be set against the profound cultural changes that the revivals brought about. The culturally destructive aspects of evangelical and Pentecostal Christianity are very well known to anthropologists, with two prominent descriptions being that these kinds of Christianity are "a culture against culture" (Dombrowski 2001) and also that Pentecostals in particular invariably pursue "an unabashed and uncompromising onslaught against their local cultures" (Casanova 2001: 437; see also Meyer 1998; Robbins 2011). The revivals precipitated far-reaching cultural and religious destruction wherever they took hold, for example, among the Telefolmin (Jorgensen 2007: 116), the Ilahita Arapesh (Griffiths 1977: 200; Tuzin 1997: 32), Solomon Islands (Burt 1994: 264), and the Enga Baptist churches first visited by the SSEC pastors in 1973 (Barr 1983a: 114).

But more recent approaches within Pentecostal studies in particular have argued that in addition to making a radical break with the past, Pentecostalism often incorporates existing religious and cultural material. According to Anderson (2018), this occurs in two main ways: firstly, traditional practices, spirits, ideas and experiences are, either deliberately or unconsciously, brought into Pentecostalism yet reimagined in Christian terms (see also Marshall 2016 on "resonant rupture"); or, universal Pentecostal religious forms are given new meanings through the encounter with a local cultural context (2018: 1–2). Here I focus upon the first of these processes.

The ecstatic phenomena that are associated with Pentecostal revivalism are nothing new to Melanesia, forming integral aspects of traditional religious experience across the region (Barr 1983a: 109). The continuation of these traditional customs under new Christian terms of reference was an important part of why revivalism spread so quickly. Again, Burt's work among the Kwara'ae in Malaita is exemplary. He writes how while the revival of 1970 "forms part of the worldwide 'charismatic' or 'pentecostal' movement and Kwara'ae trace it back to the Pentecost, it also draws upon their traditional religious culture. People 'convict' by the Holy Spirit in the same way that their ancestors were possessed or inspired by ghosts, and the experience (Kwara'ae *ta'elia*) with its physical sensations of trembling and glowing is said to be similar in either case" (1994: 241). Similarly, a local observer of the revivals within the Enga Baptist church around the Baiyer River area remarked upon the similarity between the "dog-men" who would "sniff out" unconfessed sin and traditional techniques of ascertaining wrongdoing (Cramb and Kolo 1983: 100). Kale's analysis of the Engan

revivals also makes this point emphatically (1985: 61–66), and also suggests potential links to the pre-Christian sun shaker cult described by Meggitt (1973). Jorgensen's account of the Telefolmin revival underscores how the *spirit meri* at the centre of the movement experienced "recurrent episodes of shaking that are virtually identical to bouts of hysteria experienced by others both before and after the advent of *Rebaibal*" (2007: 116), but that these were taken "as evidence of the Holy Spirit" (p. 120). These are just a handful of examples that show how existing indigenous traditions of spirit possession and divination acted as an important experiential source from which revivals drew for understandings of the Holy Spirit and its work. It is highly important to note, though, that this "continuity" is also discontinuity, in that the experiences were understood in Christian terms. In other words, this was a uniquely Melanesian version of Pentecostalism and Christian revival.

Indigenous performative repertoires were also marshalled as an outlet for revivalist fervour. In numerous societies across the region, revivals compelled people to spontaneously compose new music and song that was couched mainly in traditional performative idioms. Among the Oksapmin people, Ian Flatters (pers. comm., 31 August 2010), the resident missionary at the time the revival struck around 1980, observed how:

> All of a sudden, people who could not sing could sing … with revival they could sing the roof off, so to speak. They instantaneously produced songs about God, their growth as Christians, important dates, etc. New songs and praise and worship just came to them. Revival brought real life and vitality to the church. It gave the church a sense of its own local identity. They were able to move away from the missionary imposed structure as far as singing, clapping, dancing, and whatever they did in a service.

The Oksapmin people employed their traditional performative repertoire to capture this new burst of creative energy, including their handheld drums (*walon*) and decorative shells (*tiambel*), as well as singing and dancing styles (for more, see Macdonald 2019). Utilising traditional expressive culture within the context of the revival was also noted in the Enga Baptist church (Barr 1983a: 115; Smith and Hitchen 1975), the Evangelical Church of Papua around Lake Kutubu (Sanders 1978: 120) and the United Church in Huli areas (Barr 1983b: 149). This process, taken together with the absorption of spiritual traditions mentioned above, clearly shows how the rapid spread of this major branch of Melanesian revivalism in the 1970s has to be understood in relationship with the existing cultural frameworks with which it synergised, even if only to reimagine them.

Spreading the Fire: Institutions and Relationships

The spread of revivalism across national and cultural barriers depended upon a network of interdenominational relationships and institutions within which people, ideas and practices freely circulated. Through illuminating the centrality of these configurations I follow Barker's appeal for more anthropological studies of Christianity that focus upon "regional associations and networks" (2012: 77).

Two institutions stand out as particularly important crucibles for revival: the SSEM/SSEC and the interdenominational CLTC. To begin with, the SSEM depended upon the theological and evangelistic contributions of individuals from a wide range of conservative evangelical backgrounds. The organisation thus transcended denominational boundaries in the name of spreading the gospel throughout Malaita and Solomon Islands, and was even established in the Sepik region of Papua New Guinea by a Baptist minister (Garrett 1997: 180). The decision of the SSEM to establish a mission in Papua New Guinea in 1948 (which eventually became SSEC Papua New Guinea) was also crucial in establishing an important piece of infrastructure by which the revival could spread. It will be recalled that it was this regional extension that allowed a team of SSEC pastors fresh from the Malaitan revival to visit the Sepik area in 1972, beginning what would become a full-scale charismatic movement with far-reaching cultural changes. Even more so than the parent mission, however, the autonomous SSEC, which was established in 1964, served as a beacon of inspiration for other churches throughout the region due to the shape and tone of its worship and organisation. As Barr states, the SSEC served as "a 'prototype' or 'model' for ecstatic activities and the intense evocation of the Holy Spirit, since its independent ethos and evangelical style have been actively pursued by other similar bodies" (1983a: 112). Nowhere was this more evident than in the interconnected revivals spurred by SSEC Christians that I have described.

The other institution importantly responsible for spreading revivalism was the CLTC. Before discussing the role played by the CLTC in the revival, it is necessary to first understand its connection to the Evangelical Alliance (EA), an association of evangelical and Pentecostal missions within Melanesia established in 1964 for ecumenical cooperation and support. The organisation expanded quickly, with Liddle estimating that "by 1966 the EA represented approximately 400 European missionaries, a constituency of over 100,000 in New Guinea, and 285 local churches in the Solomon Islands" (2012: 366) and that by 1973 that number had expanded to 34 members and associate members.

Many of the missionaries associated with the EA, particularly those within the Asia Pacific Christian Mission, had strong ties to the Melbourne Bible Institute. A key figure within both organisations was Leonard (Len) Buck, a

Melbourne Methodist businessman who spearheaded efforts to establish the CLTC. Opened in 1964 and still running today, the college's central objective is to provide theological and biblical instruction to local Christian leaders primarily from the EA's constituent churches. CLTC acted as the engine room of the Papua New Guinean revivals, taking in students from across Melanesia, exposing them to the rapidly unfolding charismatic movement, and then sending them back out to their home communities, where they promulgated their revivalist inspirations. The CLTC accommodated a wide range of theological positions, and certainly not all supported charismatic revival. Indeed, it must be noted that it would have been enthused elements within the college which would have supported the promulgation of these ideas. In this respect, it should also be noted that several original members of the EA were Pentecostal denominations, who are likely to have exerted some influence on any developments concerning spiritual gifts and baptism in the Holy Spirit. Also of importance are the connections between CLTC and SSEC, as it was through this specific relationship that Christians involved in the 1970 revival on Malaita were able to travel to Papua New Guinea and, consequently, ignite further fires throughout this country. Without this wide variety of relationships, revivalism would not have spread as quickly or as successfully.

Christian Leaders: The Firestarters

Fires are often intentionally lit. As Robbins states, "revivals are, like other movements, very much guided by leaders who help to initiate and shape them with their preaching and other promotional activities" (2004a: 125). However, unlike other social movements, in the case of the revivals I describe this does not entail the development of a cult whereby the personal character and objectives of the leader come to dominate; rather, leaders of such revivals tend to move into the background as participants give pride of place to the work of the Holy Spirit. In this section I want to briefly show how it is against the broad brushstrokes of political history, culture and institutional configurations that the leaders of the revival stand out as specific and definitive details.

In line with Robbins's remark, a review of the literature clearly shows that at each step of its spread, revivalism was continually reignited in each individual society through the actions of charismatic and persuasive men and women Christian leaders. One of the most important individuals was Muri Thompson, as his evangelistic crusades in Malaita provided an important forum within which revival emerged. While Thompson looms large in documented accounts of the 1970 explosion, the identities and backgrounds of the SSEC Christians who first catalysed revivalist fervour in Kakara, helped to guide the Malaitan revival, brought the movement to Papua New Guinea and, in conjunction with their Papua New Guinean colleagues at the CLTC, helped to spread it throughout the country are more obscure. Griffiths

(1977: 198–99) provides the photos and names of the four pastors who carried the fire from Solomon Islands directly to the Sepik in 1972, but little else is known of these pivotal figures. As for the senior SSEC pastors who were the fulcrum around which many of the Papua New Guinea highlands revivals revolved, even less is known. To take just a few indicative examples, J.O. Sanders, the principal of CLTC during 1973, writes simply of "seven senior pastors from the Solomons" (1978: 113), Garrett (1997: 337) refers to "a group of Solomon Islander students who had experienced revival in their own church on Malaita", and Cramb and Kolo (1983) also mention them in passing in their account of the Engan revivals of 1973. These were a group of Christian leaders who catalysed a religious revolution in Papua New Guinea but whom history has not appropriately acknowledged. More research is needed to bring their stories to light.

The same applies for the majority of local Papua New Guineans who, influenced by SSEC Christians while at CLTC in the early 1970s, spread revival among their own communities. I use the word "majority" advisedly, since one figure in particular, namely Diyos of Eliptamin, the man responsible for orchestrating the Min revivals of the late 1970s and early 1980s, has had his story told many times by anthropologists and missionaries working in that culture area. We should also note that the men centrally involved in the 1976 upheaval in Ilahita, namely, Barnabas Ke'in and Jezreel Filoa, have also been recognised (Griffiths 1977; Tuzin 1997), though not in any detail. These exceptions notwithstanding, however, the identities and histories of the majority of local men and women have not been recorded, and exist only as scattered and isolated references in reports of revival. As with the SSEC Christians mentioned above, I argue that these are individuals who played pivotal roles in ushering in a new era of religious worship and organisation throughout many parts of Melanesia, but whose stories have largely been ignored or forgotten. As Barker (2012) states, for the anthropology of Christianity to be truly inclusive it needs studies of regional networks and associations, but for it to be historically respectful it also needs to give due recognition to the local men and women who animated these configurations.

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The spreading fires that erupted throughout the world in the twentieth century, whether inside established Pentecostal churches or mainline Catholic, Protestant and evangelical denominations, precipitated a seismic shift in the character of world Christianity. Here I have provided an overview of a formerly hidden chapter of this global revival story, namely, a major branch of Melanesian Pentecostalist revivalism that radiated outwards from Malaita to the rest of Solomon Islands and also many parts of Papua New Guinea in the 1970s. With this account, Melanesian revivalism should begin to take its

rightful place alongside the innumerable spreading fires that facilitated the rapid global diffusion of Pentecostalist Christianity, in all its myriad forms, in the twentieth century (Anderson 2007a, 2007b).

Like Pentecostal revivals across the world, the Melanesian movement I have examined was a popular religious revolution that exhibited a number of generic features associated with global revivals (Shaw 2010: 12–29). It was a politically infused religious movement that marginalised missionary rule; it vigorously critiqued existing traditional cultural frameworks from the theological position of embracing the power of the Holy Spirit, yet often unconsciously drew upon existing spiritual experiences for its momentum; it spread through an established transnational Christian network of churches and colleges; it depended crucially upon influential Christian leaders to set local expressions of the revival in motion; and it manifested itself by means of a familiar repertoire of charismatic techniques of worship.

While embodying these generic features, however, my discussion has shown how the Melanesian revival was unique in its political, cultural, historical and personal details. Its ethos for spiritual self-determination in many places emerged out of a set of historical conditions that are particular to Melanesia, including the social movements of Solomon Islands and the cargoism found in Papua New Guinea, as well as the trajectories of both countries toward formal political independence in the 1970s; the cultural and religious traditions that formed the raw material for the movement's impetus thereby animated the fire with features specific to the region; the networks and associations that expedited the fire's spread throughout Melanesia, particularly the rise of the SSEC and the establishment of the CLTC, appeared at the most opportune historical juncture; and, finally, one can also speculate that the men and women who catalysed revival were drawing, either consciously or unconsciously, upon political, persuasive and oratorical techniques associated with traditional Melanesian leaders, such as the big man.

Historically, then, the paper has demonstrated the existence and the importance of a series of closely interconnected revivals that can be seen as one of the regional spreading fires that established Pentecostalism as a prominent global force in the twentieth century. Moreover, anthropologically and theologically the revival needs to be recognised as a regionally unique, culturally and historically localised expression of a global phenomenon. The revival movement I have described, and other regional Pentecostal effusions like it, can best be thought of not as departures from a Western or mission-based Christianity but rather as essential, integral and unique elements of a world Christian faith. Christianity as a contemporary world religion is not built upon a process of adopting and indigenising a western form of Christianity but rather that local people, within and beyond the cultural kaleidoscope of Melanesia, creatively and strategically build their own Christian worlds.

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