

# **A CRITIQUE OF THE NIU LAIP BILONG OLGETA MOVEMENT**

**Sebby Wasmande**

*Sebby Wasmande graduated with a Bachelor of Theology degree from the Christian Leaders' Training College. He is currently pursuing further education at the Dauli Teacher's College in Tari, Papua New Guinea.*

## **INTRODUCTION**

Since the *Niu Laip Bilong Olgeta* (NLBO) was started in Arkosame village, in the Nuku District, in Sandaun Province, it has spread to many areas of Nuku (e.g., Seim, Kafle, Maimai, and Wilwil), and Dreikikir (e.g., Tau, Kibuat, Yakrombok, and Nungwaiya) in East Sepik Province, Papua New Guinea, and many churches have been established. Many Christians in Nuku are questioning whether the NLBO movement is a Christian church, or a Christian cult. The NLBO, themselves, claim that their movement is a Christian church.

Because of the opposing views held by Christians and the NLBO about the NLBO movement, the author was motivated to write this paper to interact with the Bible to critique NLBO's doctrines, beliefs, and practices. The purpose was to make clear what type of movement it really is.

There are two parts to this paper. Part one is an introduction to cults, and part two focuses on the NLBO movement.

## **I. AN INTRODUCTION TO CULTS**

There are many cults existing in the world today. Some of them are: Mormons, Bahai, Jehovah's Witnesses, New Age movement, New Apostolic, Unitarians, Unification church, and Christian Science.

Since the NLBO movement is very much akin to the above-listed cults, we shall briefly discuss these cults in general while interacting with the NLBO movement.

## **A. What is a Cult?**

The Oxford Learner's Dictionary defines a cult as "a system of religious worship, devotion to a person (especially a single deity)". This definition is basically good, but it does not entirely define a cult. When we look at the nature of cults, Christianity, sects, and animistic religion, they all worship a deity, and practise religious worship. Therefore, we can't distinguish, and tell, which one of them is a cult. So we still have to define a cult clearly.

So, what is a cult? A cult, in short, is any system of belief that breaks away from Christianity's faith and doctrines. As Russell Spittler writes, "Cultism is any major deviation from Orthodox Christianity, relative to the cardinal doctrines of the Christian faith".<sup>1</sup> A cult is any religious group, or beliefs, or movement, or organisation that portrays Christian features and culture, and claims to be Christian, but deviates from Christianity's faith and doctrines: the Bible, God, Jesus, the Holy Spirit, salvation, sin, hell, heaven, and the nature of mankind. It is a religious movement, or a religious group, that twists and misinterprets the above-stated Christian doctrines differently from the way Christianity approaches and interprets them. For example, the NLBO movement claims that the Bible is not God's Word; it is white men's words.

## **B. The Marks of False Cults and the NLBO Movement**

### ***1. How to Identify False Cults***

There are three tests that we can use to identify false cults: "test of doctrine, test of livelihood, and test of goal".<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Russell P. Spittler, *Cults and Isms*, Grand Rapids MI: Baker Book House, 1962, p. 12. See also Fritz Ridenour, ed., *So What's the Difference?*, Glendale CA: Regal Books, 1967, p. 118; Bryan Williams, *Learning About Cults*, Fearn UK: Christian Focus, 1997, pp. 7-8; J. Oswald Sanders, *Cults and Isms*, London UK: Lakeland, 1948, p. 17.

<sup>2</sup> David Hammer, "Cults and World Religion Class Notes", Banz PNG: CLTC, 1999, p. 7.

*a. Test of Doctrine*

The cults act and behave like the Bible-believing, Christian churches. However, one must carefully compare their doctrines with the Word of God, as the Bereans compared Paul's teaching with the scripture (Acts 17:10-12).

The cults, or any religious group, or a person, may claim to come in the name of the Lord, claim to be led by the Spirit of God, and claim to speak for God. However, if that particular religious group, or a religious person, claim the Lord Jesus is not the Messiah, nor Christ, nor God Himself, but just a man, then that particular religious group, or a religious person, is cultic and does not come from God, and is not led by the Spirit of God (1 John 2:18-24; 4:1-3). They are used and led by the deceptive and counterfeit spirit (1 Tim 4:1-2), the spirit of Satan.

*b. Test of Livelihood*

Secondly, test how the cults live, behave, and act in their community or society. The cults may claim to be true evangelical Christians. However, if the founders, or leaders (and their members), live an immoral life, practising sexual immorality, practising divination, and deceiving their members into giving them money and other possessions for their own use, then they are heretics.

*c. Test of Goal*

Finally, one should test the primary goal of any religious group that claims to be Christian, and a God-worshipping people. The Bible (Ex 20:3-6; Ps 95:6-7; Is 42:8; Matt 22:37) tells us that we are to worship the creator God alone, and give glory to Him, and have only Him as the centre and the main focusing object of our worship, theology, and religion. Therefore, the primary goal of those who claim to worship God, and claim to be Christian, should have God as the central object, and the main focus, of their worship, theology, and religion.

However, if a religious group claims to be Christian and to worship God, yet centres and focuses their worship, theology, and religion on their leaders, or on a founder, then they are definitely cultic.

Also if the leaders and the members of that particular religious movement go around “greasing the people with false hope of money and cargo”<sup>3</sup> to follow their religious movement, then it is a cult movement.

## **2. *The Marks of False Cults and the NLBO Movement***

What are some of the common marks of false cults and the NLBO movement? The following list contains some of the common marks of false cults and the NLBO movement.

### *a. Treatment of Scripture*

The cults believe in the Bible, and have the Bible, but they only select certain verses that suit their particular doctrine. By doing this, the cults destroy the value of the scriptures and make the Bible become ordinary literature, like the *Post-Courier* newspaper.

Also the cults believe in the statement of their founder, who claims to have new interpretation of the Bible, and accept their founder’s new interpretation of the Bible as final and authoritative.

The NLBO movement falls into this same category. The NLBO have the Bible. But the NLBO chooses certain passages that suit its doctrines and beliefs, and preach on those selected passages. The NLBO also believe, and accept, Charles Mewala’s (the founder of the NLBO) new interpretation of the Bible<sup>4</sup> as final and authoritative.

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<sup>3</sup> Hammer, “Cults and World Religions”, p. 7.

<sup>4</sup> Col 1:24 is one of the passages that Mewala interprets, and gives new meaning to, and his followers believe to be true. In Col 1:24, Paul speaks about his willingness to suffer for Christ’s body, the church. Mewala interprets this as Paul suffered and died to save the Colossians from their sins. Mewala is going to die for everyone in Papua New Guinea and the South Pacific, and save them from their sin. However, this is a heresy. Paul didn’t speak about salvation. He spoke about service. Salvation is not the work of Paul or Mewala. It is only the work of God. God alone, being sinless and holy, can save mankind from sin. Thus Christ’s suffering alone brings about salvation (1 Pet 1:11; 5:1; Heb 2:9). Salvation is found alone in Christ (Acts 4:12). We can share in Christ’s suffering, and go through all kinds of trials and pains in His service, but to save people from sin is not our task. It is the work of Christ alone to save people from their sin.

The NLBO also believe Mewala's own spoken words as directly coming from God. Therefore, the NLBO accept Mewala's words as without error, final, and authoritative, and preach Mewala's words as a sermon in its local churches. The NLBO describe Mewala's own spoken words to them as *Singaut i kam long God* (The call or message from God).

*b. The Cults Claim Absolute Truth about God*

The cultist claims, and believes, that their cult group alone has all the truth about God, and their cult group alone is the true religion. They claim that all the Christian churches are wrong. They claim the Christian churches don't have all the real truth about God, and practise a religion that is not the true religion. As Fritz Ridenour writes: "Cultists believe that all Christian churches are wrong, and their cult is a special group that has the real truth about God."<sup>5</sup>

The NLBO claim that their NLBO movement is the only true church. They have checked with the computer, and the computer has confirmed, and approved, the NLBO movement as the only true church.<sup>6</sup> Therefore, the NLBO claim that the NLBO church alone will give "blessings" to the people of PNG and the world, and the gospel of the NLBO church will spread throughout the world.<sup>7</sup>

*c. The Cults Have a Prophet*

The cults have a prophet, whom they claim was called and chosen by God. Their prophet often claims to receive special and direct messages or callings, revelations, visions, dreams, wisdom, knowledge, and an inner voice from God Himself, or from an angelic being. Joseph Smith, the

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<sup>5</sup> Ridenour, *So What's the Difference?*, p. 119.

<sup>6</sup> John Afal, interview by the author, Sebitala village, Seim, Nuku, Sandaun Province, November 25, 1998.

<sup>7</sup> Interview with John Afal, Sebitala village, November 25, 1998. John Afal didn't specify what he meant by "blessings". He didn't clarify the specific blessing the NLBO gives. He is probably referring to the work of salvation as a blessing that would come from the NLBO church through Mewala.

founder of the Mormon church, claimed that, in 1823, the angel of Moroni, Mormon's son, visited him (when he was 17) and told him of the plates.<sup>8</sup>

The NLBO claim that Charles Mewala is their new prophet, and the final prophet of this present age, whom God called when he was harvesting yams in his garden at Fawaiyi, Arkosame, in 1976.

*d. The Cults Force People to Give*

The cults force, and demand, their followers to give money and other material possessions to their cult leaders,<sup>9</sup> as does the NLBO movement. The NLBO leaders often claim *Singaut i kam long God* (the call from God), and force their members to give money, pigs, sago, and garden foods to Mewala for his use.

*e. The Cults Deny that Jesus is God*

The cults often see Jesus as an ordinary person born of Joseph and Mary. He was just a good man, full of wisdom and knowledge, a man of good moral standard, a teacher, and a prophet. The NLBO also believe that the Lord Jesus was not God Himself. He was just a man. As Francis Aulong (one of the NLBO movement leaders) said, "*Jisas em i man tasol, tasol anointed Spirit bilong God i yusim em long mekim wok* (Jesus is just a man, but the anointed Spirit of God used Him to do the work)."<sup>10</sup>

*f. How People are Saved (Salvation)*

Cults claim that "the person can't be put right with God and be saved by faith alone in Christ Jesus".<sup>11</sup> The person must have faith, plus do good works, like obeying the cult's teachings to be put right with God, and be saved. So the cults see salvation as an equation of F (Faith), plus GW (Good Works).

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<sup>8</sup> John E. Schwarz, *An Introduction to the Christian Faith*, Minneapolis MN: Tabgha Foundation, 1995, p. 216.

<sup>9</sup> Williams, *Learning about Cults*, p. 7.

<sup>10</sup> Francis Aulong, interview by the author, Hambasama village, Seim, Nuku, Sandaun Province, January 14, 2000.

<sup>11</sup> Ridenour, *So What's the Difference?*, p. 119.

The NLBO claim that, for a person to go to heaven, the person must obey Mewala, and their pastor's teachings, and become a member of the NLBO church. Therefore, when the NLBO leaders urge their members to give money and food to Mewala, break the firewood, and bring the food to their leaders, the members would obediently do what their leaders urge them to do, because this is part of earning their salvation.

*g. The Cults Like Following Laws and Regulations*

The cults are a legalistic-type people or group. They often emphasise following laws and regulations. The followers have to obey the laws that are set by their leaders. If the followers disobey the laws of their leaders, they lose their good name and salvation, and are cast out from the group.

*h. Predictions about Future Things (Eschatology)*

The cults often make false predictions about future events of the Bible. William Miller, the founder of the Seventh-day Adventists, predicted that the second coming of the Lord Jesus would be in 1843.<sup>12</sup> The Jehovah's Witnesses also claim an invisible second coming of Christ occurred in 1914.<sup>13</sup>

The Lord Jesus' return to earth for the second time is real. The Bible (Matt 24:36; Acts 1:9-11; John 14:1-3; 1 Thess 4:16; Rev 1:7) teaches that Jesus will return personally, physically, visibly, and with glory and power. However, the times and dates for His second coming are not for us to set and predict. It is something that only God alone knows (Matt 24:36). Our task is to prepare our lives and be ready for His coming.

The NLBO predict that there is no last day. Heaven is here on earth. God will only do away all the corruption of this world, and make it become heaven, and we will continue to live on this earth. Since the marks of the NLBO are very much akin to many Christian cults (like Jehovah's

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<sup>12</sup> Williams, *Learning About Cults*, p. 36.

<sup>13</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 36.

Witnesses, Mormons, etc.), the NLBO movement comes under the heading of a pseudo-Christian cult.<sup>14</sup>

## **II. FOCUSING ON THE *NIU LAIP BILONG OLGETA* (NLBO) MOVEMENT**

The name *Niu Laip Bilong Olgeta* (NLBO) simply means “New Life for All”. Mewala and his leaders named their new religious movement “New Life for All” because, when they were with the South Sea Evangelical church (SSEC), they didn’t find a new transformed life spiritually. Now, however, they claim they have a transformed spiritual life, and are walking in the new way of the Spirit.

### **A. History of the NLBO Movement**

#### **1. *The Place of Origin***

The NLBO movement was started in Arkosame village in the Nuku District in Sandaun Province in 1988. Geographically, Arkosame is situated on the border of East Sepik and Sandaun Province, east of Nuku. Prior to the establishment of the NLBO, the SSEC was the dominant denomination in Arkosame. Now the entire Arkosame area has converted to the NLBO movement. Only ten percent of the SSEC congregations are left.

#### **2. *The Founders***

Both founders are called “Charles”. One is called “Charles Mewala” and the other is called “Charles Sambeli Carroll.” They are both cousins from Arkosame.

##### **a. *Charles Mewala***<sup>15</sup>

Mewala is the main, initiating, founding, father of the NLBO movement. Mewala’s date of birth and attendance at primary school is not known. In 1972-1973, Mewala attended PNG Bible church’s Bible School at Pabarabuk in the Western Highlands Province, and did his theological training, as well as grade seven and eight. In 1974, Mewala transferred to

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<sup>14</sup> Hammer, “Cults and World Religions”, p. 5.

<sup>15</sup> John Afol, Sebitala village, Seim, November 25, 1998; Michael Anlong, Hambasama, Seim, January 12, 1999; John Judah, CLTC, June 26, 2000; Carol Noah, CLTC, June 16, 2000.



Aitape High School in Sandaun Province, and did his grade nine. In 1975, he completed his grade ten at Aitape High School.

Mewala was unsuccessful after the completion of his grade ten in 1975. He then returned home and attended the SSEC Bible School in Brugam and did his pastoral training. When he had completed his pastoral training, the SSEC church synods appointed him as District Church Secretary for Guanga One. Being a District Church Secretary, Mewala also taught at the SSEC local Bible School at Arkosame.

Mewala began the NLBO movement through what he thought was a direct calling from God in 1976, and through receiving divine revelation from God in 1987. In 1976, Mewala thought he heard God's voice calling him to become the leader of the New Covenant and establish seven churches. In 1987, Mewala claimed to have a revelation from God that he would become the final prophet of this present age. This caused Mewala to initiate, and start, the NLBO movement.

*b. Charles Sambeli Carroll*<sup>16</sup>

Like Mewala, nothing is known of Carroll's date of birth and attendance at primary school. Carroll attended Aitape High School in 1972, and completed his grade ten in 1975. In 1976-1977, Carroll attended Dauli Teachers' College at Tari, in Southern Highlands Province, and trained as a primary school teacher. He graduated from the College, taught for some years, and then resigned from teaching in 1986. Carroll saw some of the miracles<sup>17</sup> Mewala did, and joined Mewala in 1986.

Carroll worked with Mewala as Mewala's Associate Managing Director. Carroll was mainly involved in dealing with the social affairs of the NLBO movement. He drew up and set up the social structures and policies, constitutions, statement of faith, and financial management procedures. He received Mewala's messages, and passed them on to the leaders of the seven regional churches of the NLBO movement.

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<sup>16</sup> Interviews with John Afal, November 25, 1998, August 19, 2000; Michael Aulong, January 12, 1999.

<sup>17</sup> John Afal (November 25, 1998) didn't specify the miracles that Mewala performed.

## **B. How the NLBO Movement Started**

### **1. Pre-Stage**

Before the establishment of the NLBO movement, Mewala and Carroll were religious people in their high school days. They often gathered together in a secret place, fasted and prayed together, and talked about what they believed.

At Aitape High School, Mewala and Carroll were the leaders of the Evangelical Alliance (EA) students' fellowship group. They organised Sunday worship service for the EA students, and took part in teaching religious instruction (RI) to the students. Since Mewala and Carroll were serious about what they believed, it gives us an indication that, while they were at Aitape High School, they probably must have planned to start their new religious movement. That's why when Carroll heard about Mewala trying to start the NLBO movement, he resigned from his teaching career and joined Mewala, and established the NLBO movement.

### **2. Mewala's Divine Call and Revelation**

In 1976, Mewala received his direct divine calling from God in his garden at Fawaiyi, Arkosame.<sup>18</sup> Mewala claimed that, in the garden, he heard God's voice calling and telling him to become the leader of the New Covenant, and establish seven churches.

Mewala heard from God of this big task, and replied "Lord I am not qualified to do this task, because I've never had experience to do this work. It's good that you choose Judah, because he has done some missionary work, and has had experience." But the Lord said, "I have chosen you to

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<sup>18</sup> This was when Mewala was still with SSEC. It was the harvesting season when Mewala went to his garden at Fawaiyi, Arkosame, and harvested yams. In the garden, Mewala heard a voice calling him by his village name, "Umblara" three times. However, after the first two calls Mewala didn't reply, because he thought it could be from some of his family lines. Later, when he heard the voice the third time calling him by the same name, Mewala replied by asking, "Who are you?" The caller replied, "I am your God, Lord. I am now choosing you to become the leader of the New Covenant, and establish seven churches."

do this work.” To prove that He had called and chosen Mewala for this big task, the Lord did “many miracles”<sup>19</sup> before Mewala.

Mewala then returned home and told the SSEC missionaries (e.g., Karl Kalmbak, and Bill Kisbread) and church elders (e.g., Ruben Wakalo, David Minimbi, John Sambeli, and John Judah) that the Lord had called and chosen him to become the leader of the New Covenant, and establish seven churches. To prove that this was from God, and not from the evil spirits, the missionaries and the church elders prayed and asked God to make it clear to them.

In 1987, around 12 midnight, Mewala claimed that the Spirit of God led him to a tree. As he came closer to the *okari* tree, and stood beside it, the Lord appeared to him, and told him that he would become the last prophet for this contemporary age. After some weeks, Mewala called all the councillors from Nuku District, and all the SSEC church leaders from Guanga One District, and shared with them that God had called him, in 1976, to become the leader of the New Covenant, and establish seven churches. Now, He had revealed himself to Mewala, and told him to become the last prophet of this present age. However, whatever advice these leaders gave to Mewala is unknown.

In 1988, Mewala started the NLBO movement. But the movement wasn't named the NLBO movement. The NLBO movement was kept under the SSEC, and was part of the SSEC. Then, in 1989, Mewala and his people (SSEC congregation from Arkosame), departed from the SSEC. Mewala and his leaders named their new movement the NLBO church of PNG, and made it known to the public.

### **C. The Reason for the Establishment of the NLBO Movement**

There could be many reasons that caused such departure. However, according to my research and interviews about the NLBO movement, the following reasons<sup>20</sup> were the cause of departure.

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<sup>19</sup> John Afal, November 25, 1998. John Afal didn't clarify the kind of miracles the Lord did for Mewala.

### ***1. Termination from being part of the SSEC***

In 1989, the SSEC (South Seas Evangelical church) leaders, at their general conference meeting at Brugam, terminated Mewala and his followers (from the SSEC Arkosame and Seim areas) from being part of the traditional SSEC. When the traditional SSEC found out that Mewala and his followers practised divination, they tried to discipline, and correct them. But Mewala, and his followers, didn't want to listen to the SSEC leadership. The traditional SSEC leadership had a meeting and terminated Mewala and his followers from being part of the SSEC. When Mewala and his followers had no church to come under, they named this movement the NLBO church of PNG and left the traditional SSEC church.

### ***2. Mewala's Direct Divine Calling and Revelation***

Mewala thought he was called by God to become the leader of the New Covenant, establish seven churches, and become the final prophet of this present age. Therefore, to fulfil the task for which God had called and chosen him, Mewala established the NLBO movement.

God does indeed intervene and manifest Himself, and communicate to people, to do His work, using many different ways. These ways can be classified under two main ways: direct and indirect. The direct way is the way in which God personally revealed Himself, and had a personal contact with people and communicated with the people. Examples are Moses (Ex 3-4; 5:22-14:4, 20-22, etc.), Paul (Acts 9:5-6), Abraham (Gen 12:1-3; 22:1-3, 15), and Samuel (1 Sam 3:4-21). God manifested Himself personally to them, and communicated with them, and told them what to do.

The indirect way is when God uses other sources and means, like visions, dreams, prophets, and angels, to intervene and communicate to people about Himself, and tell them to do His work. For Jacob (Gen 46:1-4), Daniel (Dan 8; 10-12:13), Jeremiah (Jer 1:11-19), Ezekiel (Ezek 3:1-14), Peter and Cornelius (Acts 10:1-33), and John (the book of Revelation), God appeared, and spoke to them through a vision. For Joseph (through an

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<sup>20</sup> Interviews with John Afal, Sebitala village, November 25, 1998; Carol Noah, Diploma 4 student, CLTC, July 7, 2000.

angel – Matt 1:20-23; 2:13), Abimelech (Gen 20:4-7), and Daniel (Dan 7), God appeared and spoke to them through dreams. For Lot (Gen 19:14-22), Peter (Acts 12:1-18), Abraham (Gen 22:11-12), Joseph (Matt 1:20-23; 2:13), and John (Rev 19:9-10; 22:6-10), the Lord revealed Himself by speaking to them through angels. In the OT prophetic books (Isaiah-Malachi), we see God telling His prophets to warn the Israelites when they turn their back on God. However, OT prophets also gave a message of blessing and hope to the Israelites if they returned to God.

Therefore, we can't negate God's way of using all sorts of interesting ways of revealing Himself, and telling people to do His work. In the areas where the gospel hasn't been preached to the people, there is a place where God can intervene through visions, dreams, direct calling, etc., and communicate to people, and use them to do His work. However, today God has revealed Himself to us through His Word the Bible (2 Tim.3:16), about His divine nature, and His work for us. Therefore, other revelation through visions, dreams, direct calling, etc., would seem little at this time.

Thus, if God really intervened, and called us to do His work through visions, dreams, direct calling, revelation, etc., we would always work to serve His church, edify His church, and to help it grow in faith and unity, and become like the Lord Jesus Himself in character (Eph. 4:12-13). Also, we wouldn't twist what the Bible teaches, and develop new doctrines that are heretical and unbiblical.

What about Mewala's claim? Were his vision, revelation, and direct calling from God true and real? The practices, doctrines, and beliefs that Mewala and his movement teach are against what the Bible teaches. This gives us evidence that Mewala just made all this up from his own imaginative thoughts and led people to heresy. Therefore, Mewala is an apostate.

What about Mewala's claim of being called by God to become the final prophet of this contemporary age? The Bible (1 Cor. 12:29; Eph 4:11) shows us that the gift of being a prophet is among many other gifts that the Holy Spirit gives according to His will (1 Cor 12:11), for the purpose of preparing God's people for the works of service (Eph 4:12), and edifying

the church, the believers, helping them grow in their faith and unity, and bearing Christ-like attitudes in their lives. Indeed, today, God has called some believers, and given the gift of prophecy, and a gift of prophetic ministry to serve Him and His church. However, since Mewala's gifts have led to new doctrines, division, and disunity, his claim of receiving God's voice to become the final prophet of this present age is not true.

The gift of prophecy, and prophetic ministry, in the NT is different from the OT. In the OT, God often used the prophets. But now (in the NT) God has spoken to us through Christ (Heb 1:1-2). Therefore, we can't doubt about what God can do today, but I, personally, believe that, since God has spoken to us through Christ, the prophecies and the prophetic ministries of today should be less.

The true prophets, called and raised up by God, don't produce and speak their own words. They produce and speak what God wants them to speak (Jer 20:9).<sup>21</sup> They only do what God wants them to do for Him, and not do their own thing. They don't contradict the Bible.

However, Mewala, like other OT false prophets, deceived people, and lead them to worship and serve false gods (Deut 13:1-5; 18:20-22; 1 Kings 18:16-46) and practise divination (Deut 18:14). He has contradicted the Bible, by saying Jesus is not God, but just a man, and has led his followers to practise divination. He has broken away from the SSEC church. Mewala's claim of having heard the voice of God, and his appointment to become the prophet, is not true. He just made all this up by himself. This also demonstrates that Mewala is a heretic, and a false prophet.

### **3. Money and Cargo Mentality**

Mewala and his followers wanted things to emerge quickly, as it did with the Yaliwan and his Peli movement.<sup>22</sup> The NLBO didn't want to waste

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<sup>21</sup> Gordon D. Fee, and Douglas Stuart, *How To Read The Bible For All Its Worth*, Grand Rapids MI: Zondervan, 1982., pp. 152-153.

<sup>22</sup> Wendy Flannery, *Religious Movements in Melanesia Today (1)*, Point 2 (1983), p. 98. Yaliwan, and his Peli movement, and the NLBO movement said, "*Ol i laik samting i mas kamap nau tasol* (they want things to emerge immediately)." During the night naked young men and women of the Peli movement would search for the dead in the memorial

time. They wanted to receive money and cargo from their dead ancestors quickly.

The NLBO thought white-skin missionaries had come, and blinded their eyes, stealing the money and cargo their ancestors and dead relatives had left for them. Therefore, the NLBO (particularly Mewala and his followers from Arkosame) argued with the Liebenzell missionaries (Bill Giesbrecht and Karl Kalmbach), who, at that time, lived and worked with the SSEC church in Arkosame. Then Mewala led the deviation and established the NLBO movement.

Because of their money and cargo mentality, the NLBO keep a spare room in their house. They decorate the room with the flowers, and put a plate or an empty tin in it. Between 2 am and 4 am, they go into their prayer room and pray and ask their ancestors to give them money and cargo. (Interview with Jul and Yimorika, June 6, 1998).

#### **D. Social Structure**

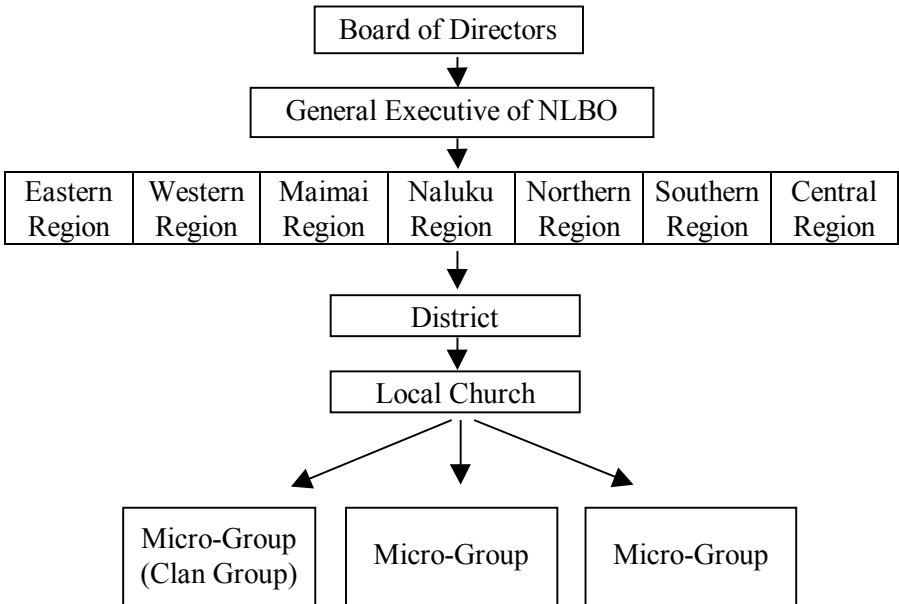
The NLBO's headquarters are in Arkosame. That's where the whole administration of NLBO's spiritual and social affairs are proposed, and carried out. The NLBO also have seven regional centres that function on behalf of the headquarters. The main role of these seven regional centres is to look after district and micro-group (clan group) churches that come under each of these seven regional centres. These regional centres are: Eastern region, Western region, Maimai region, Naluku region, Northern region, Southern region, and Central region. Each of these seven regional centres are responsible to tell all the district and micro-group churches that come under their leadership to carry out the religious activities that the headquarters in Arkosame want.

The NLBO's leadership is structured in a hierarchical system. The head of its leadership is a board of directors. The board of directors comprises the spiritual director (Mewala), managing director (Caroll), and the secretary,

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gardens in order to seize them and make money fall from their pockets (page 96 of same book). Likewise, when the NLBO started, the NLBO would go to the cemetery, and pray to their dead relatives, and ask them for money and cargo.

and treasurer. Under the Board of Directors is the general executive of the NLBO movement. The general executive is made up of the leaders, who represent each of the seven regional churches or centres. Under the general executive, are seven regional churches. Then, under the district church, are micro-group churches. This is the set up of the NLBO church leadership structure:



## E. Worship

In this section on worship, we will mainly be looking at two things. First, the object of the NLBO worship, and secondly, how the NLBO practise its religious worship and activities.

### 1. *The Object of Worship*

The NLBO claim they worship God, and that they have God as the centre of their worship and religion. However, if the NLBO's claim is true, that they do worship God, and have God as the centre of their worship and



religion, why do they deny one branch of the Trinity, the Lord Jesus Christ as not God but just a man?<sup>23</sup>

God is one God (Deut 6:4) and a unified being. He revealed Himself in three persons: the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. These three persons are one Godhead, and are equal in their divine nature and power. They cleave together as one, and depend on each other in their task. They also support each other in their Godhead role. Therefore, the religion that claims to worship God, and serve God, must not degrade and deny the deity of one branch of Godhead, and recognise only two persons of the Godhead. Therefore, since the NLBO deny and degrade the deity of the Lord Jesus, the NLBO don't know God (John 7:28; 8:19), don't have God, and don't worship God.

Jesus came from heaven, and He is God Himself (John 1:1b; 1 Tim 1:17). He has all the divine nature of God in full (Phil 2:6; Heb 1:3). But He became man to reveal God to us clearly (John 1:1-3; 7:28; 8:19; 17:5-8; Phil 2:6-7; Heb 1:3). Therefore, when we believe in Jesus as God, and worship Him, we truly know God (John 14:7, 9) and worship God. Jesus is the gateway to God (John 14:6). To enter into God's presence, and worship God, we must come to Jesus first. He is the only means through whom we can come to worship God in spirit and truth (John 4:24).

The NLBO call upon the name of God in their worship. However, in reality, they just cover up with the name of God in their worship, and they actually claim Mewala as their new Jesus Christ, and worship him.<sup>24</sup> They have Mewala as the centre, and the focus, of their worship and religion.

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<sup>23</sup> Hendrick Tambala is one of the NLBO leaders; he said (January 16, 2000), "The man, Jesus, the Spirit of God came upon Him and used Him to do the work of God." Also see Francis Aulong's comments in footnote 10.

<sup>24</sup> Interview, Michael Kaiyambor, Sebitala village, Seim, Nuku, December 20, 1998. Michael Kaiyambor is a former member of the NLBO movement. Having an interview with Michael about the object of NLBO's worship, he said, "*Ol NLBO i no save lotu long Krai's Jisas. Tasol, ol i save lotu long Charles Mewala*" (The NLBO worship Charles Mewala and not the Lord Jesus Christ). One of the songs the NLBO composed about Mewala reads: *Jisas i kamap pinis long NLBO sios*. Literally, it means Mewala is the new Jesus of the NLBO movement.

What does the Bible say about the object of worship? Before we elaborate more on the object of worship, let's briefly define what worship is. Worship is our total being, responding to our eternal creator God. How? By bowing and kneeling down before Him, and giving Him our total adoration, and the appreciation, praise, honour, love, and thanksgiving that is due to His greatness, holiness, mercy, and love upon us, because He saves us from our sins through the work of Christ Jesus (Ps 96:6-7; John 3:16; 2 Cor 5:21).<sup>25</sup> As Robert G. Rayburn writes, "For worship is man's means of ascribing to God that adoration, reverence, praise, love, and obedience, of which he sincerely believes God to be worthy."<sup>26</sup> Also, worship is being in the presence of God, singing, and acknowledging His greatness (Is 6:3; Rev 4:8-11, 5:9-13).

The above definition reveals that God alone matters in all levels of our worship, and is the priority, and the centre, of our worship. This tells us that God alone should be the only object that matters, and that He becomes the priority in our worship and religion. In fact, the Bible<sup>27</sup> clearly tells us that God wants us to worship and serve Him alone, and have Him alone at the centre of our worship, and worship no other false gods, idols, or man (like Mewala).

The chief purpose of God creating us in His own image (Gen 1:26), and bringing us to live in this world, is to give honour and glory to Him, fellowship with Him, and worship Him alone. As Robert G. Rayburn said, "Man's chief end is to glorify God, and enjoy him forever. . . . Man was created for the purpose of bringing glory to his eternal Creator God."<sup>28</sup>

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<sup>25</sup> D. A. Carson, *Worship, Adoration and Action*, Grand Rapids MI: Baker Book house, 1993, p. 17.

<sup>26</sup> Robert G. Rayburn, *O Come, Let Us Worship*, Grand Rapids MI: Baker Book House, 1980, p. 21.

<sup>27</sup> There are many passages that reveal that God alone should be the only object of our worship and religion, and no other false gods, like an image of a person, or animal, spirits, or person like Mewala. See Gen 24:26; 1 Kings 18:21; 1 Chr 16:10, 29; Ps 81:9; 95:6-7; 132:7; Ex 20:5; Is 42:8; 45:20; Matt 2:4; 4:10; 28:9; Luke 2:37; 24:52; John 4:24; Acts 16:14; Rom 1:23-25; Col 2:18; Rev 5:14; 13:4; 14:7; 19:10.

<sup>28</sup> Rayburn, *O Come, Let Us Worship*, p. 16; also, A. W. Tozer said, "The reason God made man in His image was that he (man) might appreciate and admire and worship

The NLBO may claim that their worship is Christian worship, however, the NLBO worship is not Christian worship. Christian worship is worship, where total adoration is given to the eternal God (Father, Son, Holy Spirit)<sup>29</sup> and focuses on Christ Jesus, the founder of Christian faith (Heb 12:2) and religion. Worship is founded upon the person and work of Christ. Christian worship should have Christ as the centre of worship and religion.

However, since the NLBO have Mewala as the central object of their worship and religion, and deny Jesus as God, their worship is not Christian worship, and their NLBO movement is not a Christian church. NLBO is a Christian cult.

## **2. *The Practice of Worship***

How does the NLBO movement practise its religious worship and activities? The following points will show us how the NLBO practise its religious worship and activities.

### *a. Decoration and Dance*

The NLBO decorate themselves with white flowers and white feathers, and sing and dance in their worship. The reason for decorating with white flowers and white feathers is to show that their spiritual lives are changed, and they now have newness of life in the Spirit.

However, what does the Bible say about the true mark of a Christian, or a spiritual person, who has newness of life in the Spirit and in Christ? Paul, in Gal 5:22-23, clearly spells out the marks of a true Spirit-filled person or Christian. These marks are: "Peace, love, joy, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control." Paul, in 2 Cor 5:17, reveals that those who believe in the Lord Jesus and are in union with Him (Christ Jesus), are new spiritual people in Christ, and have found new life in Christ.

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God." See: A. W. Tozer, *The Missing Jewel in Evangelical Church*, Harrisburg PA: Christian Publications, 1961, p. 7.

<sup>29</sup> Evelyn Underhill, *Worship*, London UK: Collins, 1936, p. 70; also see Colin Buchanan, *Lambeth and Liturgy 1998*, Bramcote UK: Grove Books, 1989, p. 8.

Therefore, we can prove to the NLBO that they have false doctrine and practices. True spiritual people are those who show the fruit of the Spirit in their daily lives. We can decorate the outside of our skin with white flowers and feathers and yet become corrupt in our inner being with evil things.

*b. Sign of Respect*

As a sign of respecting their leaders, the NLBO decorate their leaders with flowers, carry them, and sing and dance before them. For example, when the NLBO group from Masanja, Sebitala village in Seim, appointed Fabian Ambassi (30/12/1997) as their district pastor, they put flowers on him, sat him on a chair and they carried him and sang and danced.

There is a place where we should respect our church leaders. However, what the NLBO did is beyond respect. It is like seeing and treating their leaders as their little gods, and giving them more honour, respect, and praise than God. In fact, carrying the leaders, and singing and dancing before them, show us clearly that they are worshipping the leaders and not God.

The NLBO say they do not worship their leaders. However, the NLBO carry their leaders, sing, and dance before them. Carrying people on a bed, singing, and dancing are a worldly way of respect, and not a Christian way of respect. In a Christian circle, we can put flowers on our leaders' heads to show them that we respect them. However, we should not carry them, sing, and dance before them. If we carry them, and sing and dance, then we are worshipping our leaders. This is against what the Bible teaches about worshipping only God, and no other gods or human beings.

*c. Nicknames*

The members of the NLBO are required to give the nicknames of dead relatives or ancestors to leaders. The leaders take those nicknames down to Charles Mewala at Arkosame. Mewala uses the nicknames, and gives each member the telephone number<sup>30</sup> to phone their dead relatives and ancestors,

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<sup>30</sup> Interview with Domanic Sembeyai Wangunu, Sebitala village, Seim, September 1, 1998. Domanic is a former member of the NLBO. But he has left the NLBO, and now is

to ask them for money and cargo (e.g., rice, tinned fish). A critique of this will be made next.

*d. Prayer Room*

Every NLBO member has spare rooms for prayer. Both the husband and wife have their own prayer room. In their prayer room, they put an empty tin or plate, and decorate it with flowers. Around 2 am to 4 am, they leave their bed and go into their prayer room and pray and ask their dead relatives and ancestors to give them money and cargo. This is akin to Yaliwan's Peli movement (see footnote 22).

Praying and communicating to the spirits of the ancestors or dead relatives (and asking them for money and cargo) is a form of divination and cult practice. Divination practice is a satanic activity, and God is against any form of divination practice (Lev 19:31; 20:6, 27; Deut 18:9-12; Acts 16; Gal 19-20). Since the NLBO pray and ask their ancestors and dead relatives to give them money and cargo, the NLBO movement is a cult movement similar to Yaliwan's MT Rurun or Peli cargo movement (see footnote 22).

## **F. Doctrine and Beliefs**

We have pointed out some of the NLBO doctrines and beliefs in part one. However, these doctrines and beliefs are core to NLBO faith and teaching. Therefore, as we interact with the Bible and discuss them, we shall highlight the issues.

### **1. The Bible**

The NLBO believe that the Bible comes directly from white men, and does not come from God. They believe that the Bible is not God's word, and it does not originate from God. It comes from white men, and it is their word.

In response, the Bible is God's manual that contains everything that God wants to tell us about His divine nature, His work in creation (Gen 1-2),

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fellowshipping with Sebitala Christian Brethren church (CBC). Domanic didn't clarify what kind of phone numbers Mewala gave his followers.

and His divine plan for mankind's salvation (Gen 3:15). Though men originally wrote the Bible in ancient languages (Hebrew, Aramaic, and Greek), these men were inspired by God to write.<sup>31</sup> The Bible tells us God inspired the words, even though men wrote them.<sup>32</sup> A translation, closer to the original language of Greek, is "All scripture is God-breathed." That means the words that are in the scriptures come from the mouth of God, and God spoke those words. This tells us that the scriptures are of divine (God) origin, are a divine product,<sup>33</sup> and not from white men.

The words that are in the Bible are from God. But the writers didn't repeat God word-for-word, and write them down exactly. The writers received God's message or word, used their own imagination, expressed, and wrote them in their own words, in the context of their hearers' life situations. However, the Holy Spirit guided the words the writers wrote.<sup>34</sup> Therefore, the words that the writers expressed, and wrote, in the Bible are authentic and authoritative.

Furthermore, in the gospels, Jesus often quoted OT scriptures authoritatively, and referred to them as God's Word.<sup>35</sup> In ancient times, God chose certain men<sup>36</sup> to receive His words, and they spoke and wrote

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<sup>31</sup> Philip W. Comfort, *The Complete Guide to Bible Versions*, Wheaton IL: Living Books, 1991, p. 4; also see J. I. Packer, *God Has Spoken: Revelation and Christian Foundations* 6, London UK: Hodder & Stoughton, 1965, p. 43; Merrill C. Tenney, *The Bible: the Living Word of Revelation*, Grand Rapids MI: Zondervan, 1968, p. 32.

<sup>32</sup> See 2 Tim 3:16, GNB translation.

<sup>33</sup> Bruce Milne, *Know the Truth*, Leicester UK: IVP, 1982, p. 35.

<sup>34</sup> The apostle Peter affirmed that the Bible is God's word, and originated from God, when he said, "Above all, you must understand that no prophecy of scripture came about by the prophet's own interpretation. For no prophecy ever had its origin in the will of man, but men spoke from God as they were carried along by the Holy Spirit" (2 Pet 1:20-21). The phrase "men spoke from God" seems to be a very short phrase. However, it is the key phrase to understand the origin of the Bible – it comes from God, and not from white men. In fact, the writers were not white-coloured men. They were dark skinned.

<sup>35</sup> John W. Wenham, *Christ and the Bible*, London UK: Tyndale Press, 1972, p. 37. Jesus quoted OT scriptures authoritatively, and referred to them as "the word of God" (Matt 19:4f; Mark 7:11-13; John 10:34f). He also believed the OT to be revelation from God, given under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit (Mark 12:36), and believed them to be authoritative (Luke 24:25-27, 44).

<sup>36</sup> Refer to OT prophets in the OT times. For further details see footnote 37.

them. That's why, in the OT, you often see the phrase "The Lord Almighty says", or "The Lord says" (e.g., Jer 5:14; 6:21-23; 7:3). This reveals that the words the prophets received and spoke were not their own words, but they were God's word. God used them as His instrument, or mouthpiece, to communicate His word. In the same way, in the NT, God used some men<sup>37</sup> to communicate, and write the message of salvation that Christ brought to us.

Since the Bible itself, and the Lord Jesus Himself, prove to us that the Bible is God's revealed word, we can prove to the NLBO that they have twisted what God's word teaches. The Bible (Deut 4:2; 12:32; Prov 30:6; Rev 22: 18, 19) clearly tells us that those who add to or subtract from God's word are under God's curse.

## **2. *The Lord Jesus***

The NLBO believe and teach that Jesus is not God. He was just a man that the Holy Spirit came upon and used to do the work of God.<sup>38</sup>

In response, we can't deny Jesus' humanity. He was truly a man, who possessed human characteristics.<sup>39</sup> However, despite emptying His divine nature (Phil 2:6-7) and becoming a human being and having human features, He never sinned (Heb 4:15), and had no sin in His entire life. The Bible (Ps 7:11; Deut 32:4; Is 5:16; 6:3; 1 Thess 4:7; 1 Pet 1:15-16) reveals that God alone is holy, perfect, and righteous. However, Heb 4:15; 7:28

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<sup>37</sup> In ancient times, God chose certain men, like Moses, David, Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, Daniel, etc., to receive His words, and they spoke and wrote them in their own context and life situation that they went through. The words they spoke and wrote became books or sections of the OT. In the same way as the OT, for the NT, God used men like Matthew, Mark, Luke, John, Paul, James, and Peter to receive His Word and communicate to their hearers, in their setting and context, and wrote them down. The words they expressed and wrote became books of the NT. The NT books are God's inspired books, because the NT writers were not "taught by human wisdom" but with "words taught by the Holy Spirit" (1 Cor 2:10-13). The Spirit of God guided and taught the NT writers what to say and write.

<sup>38</sup> Milne, *Know the Truth*, pp. 142-144. Milne points out heresies like Ebionism, Docetism, Gnosticism, Arianism, Apollinarianism, Nestorianism, and Eutychianism. They are like the NLBO, in that they deny the Lord Jesus as God, and say He is just a man.

<sup>39</sup> Jesus, as a human, possessed human characteristics: He felt thirsty, tired, and hungry.

reveals that Jesus was a sinless, perfect, and righteous person, like God. Therefore this reveals that Jesus is not just a man. He is God Himself (1 Tim 1:17). As H. E. W. Turner said, “the incarnated Lord (Jesus) was both ‘true God’ and ‘true man’ ”.<sup>40</sup>

Jesus became man to reveal God to us clearly (Heb 1:1-2). He is like a window that opens, and reveals to us clearly all the personality and divine nature of God that was hidden and wasn't previously clearly revealed to us. In fact, the Bible (John 14:9; cf. 17:4, 6, 8) reveals that, if we have seen Jesus, we have seen the Father (God). So Jesus is the window, and the human face, of God, so that we can see and know God.<sup>41</sup>

Also if Jesus had not become a man, how would He know our struggles in life, and help us? Jesus became man, and went through all the struggles and temptations that mankind faces (but He did not sin), so that He is able to help us overcome them (1 Cor 10: 13).

To prove to the NLBO that Jesus is God, let us go further, and spell out some of the features that God alone has, which are also in Jesus.

*a. The Lord Jesus in Eternity Past*

God alone lived and existed in the eternity past, before the existence of the world. What about the Lord Jesus? In Micah 5:2, Micah prophesied about the ruler who would come to rule over Israel, whose origins are from old or ancient times (eternity). This prophecy has been perfectly fulfilled in Jesus (Matt 2:4-6). Jesus was the ruler who lived in ancient times about whom Micah prophesied. Indeed, He lived before the OT period started.

John (John 1:1-3) also reveals that Jesus was the Word that existed in eternity past, before the world was made. He was with God, and had a relationship with God the Father, in eternity past. Jesus Himself also reveals that He was there before Abraham was born (John 8:58). This reveals that Jesus is God, who already existed and lived previously in heaven, and shared with God His eternal glory before the world was made

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<sup>40</sup> H. E. W. Turner, *Jesus the Christ*, London UK: Mowbrays, 1976, p. 125.

<sup>41</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 124.



(John 17:5). The author of Hebrews reveals that Jesus Christ continues the same. He has lived in the past, is living in the present, and will continue to live in the future. This tells us that Jesus is an immutable (unchangeable) God, who always continues to live.<sup>42</sup>

The passages that we have looked at tell us that Jesus is God (John 1:1) and that he lived in eternity past. Therefore, this proves that the NLBO's claim about Jesus being just a man is not true.

*b. Jesus Possesses the Personal Name of God*

"I AM" who "I AM" is the personal and sacred name of God. The word "I AM" in Hebrew means "Yahweh" or "Jehovah." In Greek, "Yahweh" or "Jehovah", is translated as "Kyrios", meaning "Lord".<sup>43</sup> The name "I AM" was used by God to identify Himself with Moses (Ex 3:14). Jesus, in John 8:58, used the same name, "I AM", when He had a dialogue with the Jews: "Before Abraham was born, 'I AM'."

When Jesus called Himself "I AM", He was revealing to the Jews that He was Yahweh, or Jehovah, or the Lord God, who had existed in eternity past, before Abraham was born. But, before Jesus claimed Himself as Lord or Yahweh, the angels of the Lord had called Jesus "Christ Jesus the 'Lord'", when He was born as a baby in Bethlehem: "This very day in David's town your Saviour was born Christ Jesus the 'Lord'" (Luke 2:11). This tells us that Christ Jesus the Saviour is Yahweh, or Jehovah, or the Lord God.

*c. Jesus Saves*

God alone is Saviour, and He can save people from sin (Is 45:21-22; Tit 3:5). However, the NT leaves us in no doubt that Jesus is God the Saviour (Luke 2:11) who came to save us from sin (Matt 1:21). In fact, Jesus, in

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<sup>42</sup> Immutability is an attribute of God alone. However, Heb 13:8 show us that Jesus Christ also had that divine attribute in Him. If Jesus was just a man, the author of the Hebrews wouldn't have described Him as an immutable, or unchangeable, person. However, Jesus is God Himself. The writer of Hebrews introduces Him as an immutable person, who lives forever.

<sup>43</sup> Milne, *Know the Truth*, p. 129; Wayne Grudem, *Systematic Theology: an Introduction to Biblical Doctrine*, Grand Rapids MI: Zondervan, 1994, pp. 544-545.

His death and resurrection, proved He has truly saved us from sin (1 Cor 15:17). Jesus saves people from sin. He is seen as the author of salvation (Heb 2:10). In fact, Acts 4:12 tells us that salvation can be found alone in Jesus name. This tells us that Jesus, who defeated Satan and sin, and saved us from sin, is the only person who can save us from sin now, tomorrow, and in the future.<sup>44</sup> He is the only person, to whom we can come by faith to receive God's salvation. If Jesus does the work (salvation) that God alone can do, this proves that Jesus is not just a man, but He is God the Saviour.

*d. Jesus Forgives Sin*

God alone can forgive sin (Ex 34:6-9; Ps 103:3; 130:4; Is 43:25; 44:22; 48:11; Dan 9:9), and no person can forgive sin, because every person is a sinner (Rom 3:23). However, in Mark 2:7-10, we see where Jesus healed and forgave a paralytic man's sin. Particularly in v. 10, Jesus reveals that He had the power and authority to forgive sin.

If Jesus had the power to forgive sin, as God, this proves that Jesus was God. In fact, the Bible (1 Cor 15:17; Eph 1:7; 1 John 1:7, 9; 2:12; Rev 1:5) tells us that Jesus' death and resurrection really proves that He has forgiven our sins, and His blood alone is the basis for the forgiveness of our sin (Eph 1:7).

*e. Jesus is Worshipped*

The Bible (Gen 24:26; Ex 20:3; 1 Kings 18:21; Ps 22:27; 95:6-7; 132:7; 81:9; Rom 1: 23-25) tells us that we are to worship God alone, and no other person or gods. However, in the NT, we see Jesus is worshipped. For example, when Jesus was born in Bethlehem, wise men from the East brought gifts (gold, frankincense, and myrrh), gave the gifts to Jesus, and worshipped Him (Matt 2:9-12). In Rev 4:6-11; 5:6-14, we see angels bowing before the Lamb (Jesus), and worshipping Him night and day. If Jesus were just a man, the wise men and the angels would not have worshipped Him. However, they knew that Jesus was God, so they worshipped Him.

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<sup>44</sup> Alister McGrath, *Jesus: Who He is and Why He Matters*, Leicester UK: IVP, 1994, pp. 134-135.

*f. Jesus Created Everything in the World*

God alone is the creator of all things (Gen 1:27; Ps 148:5; Ecc 12:1; Amos 4:13; 1 Cor 8:6). He created everything that exists in both the physical and the spiritual realm. However, in Gen 1:26, these two words “US” and “OUR” tell us that the creation of the entire universe was done by the triune God: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. Therefore, Jesus created mankind in God’s image. The NT (John 1:3; Col 1:16-17; Heb 1:2b; Rev 4:11) reveals that Jesus created everything that existed in the world. This tells us that Jesus is God Himself.

*g. Conclusion*

We have seen that Jesus lives forever; that He possesses the personal name of God; that He saves and forgives people from their sin; that He was involved in creating the world; and that He is God Himself, and not just a man. Therefore, we can prove to the NLBO that their view of Jesus as being just a man, and not God, is not true.

**3. Salvation**

The NLBO believe and teach that Jesus died, and saved, only the white skins from their sin. He didn’t die for the people of PNG, and the South Pacific, to save them from their sin. Therefore, the NLBO claim that Mewala is their new Jesus Christ, who will die and save the people of PNG, and the South Pacific from their sin.<sup>45</sup>

Did Jesus die for the entire human race, or for white skins only? Can any sinful man save others from their sin? The Bible (John 3:16) tells us, “God so loved the world that He gave us His only Son (Jesus) so that those who believe in Him will not be lost or die, but have eternal life.” The phrase “God loved the world” is not referring to one particular coloured-skin people, like the white skins. God loved the whole human race (white, black, yellow, brown, and red skins). Therefore, the special gift (Jesus) that

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<sup>45</sup> Herman Wambor (CBC church pastor, Sebitala), in an interview with Jonah Ukalama (October 3, 1998), a member of NLBO movement, reported this information to me.

God gave is for every sinner. As Edwin Blum says, “God’s love is not limited to a few, or one group of people, but His gift is for the whole.”<sup>46</sup>

In John 12:32, Jesus Himself reveals that, after His death on the cross, He would defeat Satan’s power, and draw all people (all the human race) to Himself, and bring them into the kingdom of God. This shows that Jesus came to save all of us from our sin, and He has done that (He offers salvation from sin to every person in this world).

Can any sinful man save others from their sin? The Bible (Rom 3:23) tells us that all mankind have sinned, and are sinners. Therefore, no man is perfect to save others from their sin. Only a holy God can save people from their sin (Is 45:21-22). Thus, salvation is the work of God only (Is 12:2; 45:21-22; Jer 17:14; Ps 34:6) and not the work of any sinful men, like Mewala and us.

The Bible tells us that Jesus is a sinless person (Heb 4:15; 5:9; 7:28), and the Saviour God (Luke 2:11; Matt 1:21) that God the Father sent to save us from our sin. Thus, Jesus, in His death and resurrection, proves that He has forgiven our sin (1 Cor 15:17).

In Acts 4:12, we see that Jesus’ name alone is the only name that can save us from sin. In fact, Heb 5:9 tells us clearly that Jesus alone is the source of eternal salvation for those who obey Him. That means that salvation belongs to Christ alone, and we can only be saved through faith in Him (Rom 10:9-10; John 3:35-36; 5:24).

The book of Hebrews tells us that no person from PNG and the South Pacific, like Mewala, would come later to offer another sacrifice, with his flesh and blood, to God to save the people of PNG and the South Pacific from their sin. The Lord Jesus has offered an eternal sacrifice with His own flesh and blood to God, once and for all (Heb 9:24-26; 10:10-12) to

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<sup>46</sup> Edwin A. Blum, *John*, The Bible Knowledge Commentary: New Testament, Walvoord, J. F., and Zuck, R. B., eds, Wheaton IL: Victor Books, 1983. In addition, R. C. H. Lenski said, “God loved the world, the world of men – all men, not one excepted.” R. C. H. Lenski, *The Interpretation of St John’s Gospel*, Minneapolis MN: Augsburg Publishing, 1961.

save the people of PNG, the South Pacific, and rest of the human race, from their sin. Therefore, Christ was the perfect and final sacrifice (Heb 7:28). No more repetition of sacrifices for sin atonement will be made, now or later, by Mewala or others.

#### **4. *The New Covenant***

The NLBO believe that the new covenant that the Lord Jesus made with His flesh and blood (Matt 26:26-28; Luke 22:14-20; Heb 8:10-13; 12:24), has been corrupted by the white skins, and it has become evil, and it ended in 2000. Therefore, the NLBO claim that, in this new era (from 2001 and onward), they will make their own new covenant, through Mewala.

In response, the book of Hebrews (Heb 7:15-10:18) gives us a vivid picture of the two covenants (Old and New). In the old covenant (OT), the priests continually offered sacrifices for sin atonement every day (Heb 7:27). Also the OT covenant was not perfect and real (Heb 10:1). It was just a copy, or shadow, of the real and the perfect covenant that would come later (Heb 10:1).

The real and the perfect covenant that God had in mind to establish later had been fulfilled in the person and work of Christ Jesus. The Lord Jesus came and established the real, perfect, permanent, and new covenant with His own flesh and blood (Matt 26:26-28; Heb 9:12, 26). The new covenant that Jesus made to forgive, and save us from, our sin is an eternal and final covenant (Heb 9:26; 10:10). This phrase “once and forever” (Heb 26-28; 10:10) reveals that the new covenant made by the Lord Jesus is sufficient, final, and it will last forever. God is not going to ask anybody (like Mewala) to offer another sacrifice for sin atonement, and establish another new covenant. This shows that the new covenant that Christ made didn’t end in 2000. It is still continuing, and will continue forever. This proves that the NLBO claim of Christ’s new covenant ending in 2000 is a heresy.

Mewala and his followers deny the new covenant the Lord Jesus made, and claim to have made their own new covenant. The NLBO thought the white skins corrupted, and made the new covenant become evil, so that a new covenant had to be made. This is unbiblical, and a heresy. The covenant

that God has made through Christ is perfect (Heb 10:1), eternal (Heb 9:24-26), and final. Both white skins and black skins may continue to sin, but their sinful behaviour will not destroy, and corrupt, the new covenant that Christ made to forgive their sin. Their evil deeds will affect their own personal lives, and God will, one day, punish them for not responding to the gospel of the new covenant that the Lord Jesus made (John 3:35-36; 5:24; Heb 9:27; Rev 21:11-15). However, those who believe in Christ Jesus, and the new covenant that He made, will be saved from God's wrath, and find eternal life (John 3:36a; 5:24a; 14:1-3; Rev 21:1-5).

### **5. *Spiritual Independence***

The NLBO believe that the independence Papua New Guinea received from Australia on September 16, 1975, was not spiritual independence. Therefore, the NLBO claim that Germany will give them spiritual independence.<sup>47</sup>

In response, it is true that the independence that Papua New Guinea received from Australia on September 16, 1975, was political independence, and not spiritual independence. In political independence, another country can give independence to another country. Australia gave independence to Papua New Guinea, free from Australia's governing. Papua New Guinea could stand on its own, and rule over its country. But, in the spiritual realm, it is totally different. No country (like Germany), or person (like the Pope, or Prime Minister), can give spiritual independence and freedom. Only the eternal God (Father, Son, and Holy Spirit) can free us from the power of sin and Satan, and give us freedom in our spiritual lives. The Lord Jesus is our spiritual liberator,<sup>48</sup> and He alone can liberate us from the law of sin (Rom 8:1), and set us free from our sin (Gal 5:1; Eph 1:7; 1 John 1:7, 9), and not Germany. This proves that the idea that the NLBO said about Germany giving spiritual independence and freedom to PNG is unbiblical, and not true.

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<sup>47</sup> Interview with Francis Aulong, Hambasama, January 14, 2000.

<sup>48</sup> Don Fleming, *Bridge Bible Dictionary: an "A" to "Z" of Bible Information*, Brisbane Qld: Bridgeway Publications, 1990, p. 142.

Thus, in our spiritual lives, we can't depend on our own selves. We need the power of God, to sustain and help us each day to live a life that is worthy and pleasing to God. Without God (Father, Son, and Holy Spirit), we can do nothing (Phil 4:13). Our spiritual growth depends on being in union with God. If we are alienated from the Triune God, and depend on our little strength, Satan can easily knock us off.

So, in spiritual independence, there is no such thing as self-dependency. It is a way of depending on Christ, and permitting the Holy Spirit to take total control in our lives (Eph 5:18), using us for God's work, and God's glory.

#### **6. *White Skins (White People)***

The NLBO believe that the white skins are not human beings. They are spirit beings.

In response, not even a single portion of the scriptures reveal that the white skins are spirit beings, and black skins are human beings. The Bible teaches that God created all human beings (e.g., black, white, brown) in His own likeness (Gen 1:26). In fact, the spirit beings don't have physical bodies, don't appear in the physical world, don't work in farms and offices, don't have sexual organs, and sexual desires, and get married, and produce children. They do not live in buildings, don't feel hungry and eat, and don't die. But the white skins are real human beings in every way.

1. They have physical bodies like us.
2. They work in farms, and in the offices, to earn their living.
3. They live and sleep in houses (buildings).
4. They have sexual organs, and get married, and produce children.
5. They feel tired, hungry, and eat.
6. They are physically present, and dwell in this world.

Therefore, since the above six points show us that the white skins are real human beings like us, with features of human beings, they are not spirit beings. They are real human beings like us: brown, black, and red skins.

So we can say that the idea that the NLBO have about the white skins is unbiblical and a heresy.

### **7. *The Last Day***

The NLBO believe that there is no last day.<sup>49</sup> God will only destroy sinful people, and destroy all the wickedness on this world, and make this earth become heaven for us, in which to live.

In response, the disciples knew that there would be a last day, and that Jesus would come a second time. That's why they asked Jesus about the time of His second advent, and the last day: "And what will be the sign of your coming, and of the end of the age?" (Matt 24:3). Peter (2 Pet 3:10-11) also tells us that there is a last day. Peter uses the phrase "The day of the Lord" (2 Pet 3:10) to describe the end-times, or the last day. This proves that the NLBO claim of no last day is unbiblical and not true.

Peter (2 Pet 3:7-12) comments that, in the last day, God will judge the wicked people, and throw them into hell (v. 7; cf. Rev 20:11-15; 21:8; 22:15). He will destroy the whole universe (earth and everything) by fire, and nothing will remain (v. 12), except for His people (believers in Christ). Christ will save His people, and they will live with Him forever in Heaven (Rev 21:2-4; 22:14; John 3:36a; 5:24; Rom 8:18).

God will not make this earth become heaven, as the NLBO think. He will completely destroy it with fire (2 Pet 3:10-12), and make a new earth and new heaven for His dwelling (Rev 21:1-4). This proves that the NLBO's claim of God making this present earth become Heaven for us to live in is not true.

### **8. *Why the NLBO is a Christian Cult Movement***

The NLBO are a friendly and hospitable people. They obey, and submit to the authority of the community, and obey the laws of the country (PNG). Their giving to support their church leaders and church work is excellent. In contrast, most of the evangelical churches fail to give their money, and other possessions, to support the work of God in the church. However,

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<sup>49</sup> Interview with John Afal, Sebitala village, November 25, 1998.



since the NLBO practise divination, follow practices of a cult movement,<sup>50</sup> and teach twisted and false doctrines that are unbiblical,<sup>51</sup> their movement is a Christian cult.

### **G. How to Approach the NLBO with the Gospel of Christ Jesus**

There are many ways we can approach the NLBO, and share with them about Christ Jesus. However, according to the research, interviews, observations, and my personal interaction with them, I suggest two main ways of reaching them with the gospel. These two ways are:

#### **1. Friendship**

The NLBO are friendly, respectable, kindly, and open people. Therefore, in order to share the message of salvation with them, we must first of all build a good friendship with them. Through this, we can build an understanding of them. By listening to them, they will be willing to listen to you.

Friendship is the method that I often use to share with them about Christ. I don't argue with them about their heresies. I make friends with them, and, occasionally, they invite me to share with them in their worship time. In 1998 and 1999, they invited me to share with them about God and culture in their church meetings. So, friendship is important in sharing about Christ Jesus with the NLBO.

#### **2. Help Them When They are in Need**

The second, most important way to reach the NLBO with the gospel is by meeting their needs, and helping them when they are in need. For example, if one of their family members pass away, then cook some food, and go and help them, and give it to those other relatives who attend the funeral. Also, if some of them don't have money and good clothes, then share with them, if you have enough money or clothes. In this way, you can win their hearts, and when you share the gospel of Christ Jesus with them, they will hear, and make their own final decision.

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<sup>50</sup> See Part Two: A.5 "History", and B. "Worship", for detailed information.

<sup>51</sup> See Part One: B.2 "The marks of false cults and the NLBO movement", and Part Two: "Doctrines and Beliefs", for detailed information.

## **CONCLUSION**

The NLBO movement is not a Christian church. It is a Christian cult movement. When we discussed the marks of false cults, and the NLBO movement, the NLBO's marks are akin to the Christian cults' (e.g., Mormons and Jehovah's Witness). Also, when we looked at the NLBO's worship practices and doctrines, we saw clearly that the NLBO movement was a Christian cult.

The establishment of the NLBO movement shouldn't surprise us, because it fulfils what the Bible teaches about the coming of false Christs, false prophets, and false teachers in the last days (Matt 24:3-5, 11, 24; 1 John 2:18-23; 4:1-3). The NLBO movement is a heresy movement in Nuku District that has led many people away from the truth.

Those of you who have been led away from the truth by the NLBO movement, come out and serve the true God (Father, Son, and Holy Spirit) before the hour comes for you to stand before God's judgment and go to hell. If you don't want to respond to Christ, you will receive your just reward (see Heb 9:27; Rev 20:11-15; 21:8; 22:15, 19).

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