Breaking Points: Mediating Rupture and Discontinuity within Oksapmin Church Performances, Papua New Guinea

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Abstract: Ongoing and increasingly contested debates within the anthropology of Christianity focus on the role of rupture and discontinuity within processes of conversion, arguing that Christians, particularly evangelical and Pentecostal, seek to break with and condemn their indigenous cultural and religious frameworks. Through an analysis of Oksapmin church performances, as well as drawing upon a range of comparative literature, I contribute to this theoretical discussion by advancing a new conceptual model showing that within Christian music and expressive culture there are at least three distinct ways in which converts create discontinuity with their surrounding social and cultural worlds: "resonant" rupture, defined by a continuity of indigenous aesthetic form and a simultaneous change on the level of asserted meaning; "dissonant" rupture, defined as a total opposition to indigenous expressive forms and an embrace of a Western performative repertoire; and "sonant" rupture, a critique of all instrumentation, both traditional and Western, as symbols of worldliness and a strong emphasis upon singing as the purest form of divine communication. I also show how these modes of expressive discontinuity are, first, rooted in particular historical trajectories and, second, may extend to the everyday, non-ritual lives of Christians as well.

Keywords: religion, Christianity, cosmology, performance, music

Résumé : Dans l'anthropologie du christianisme, on assiste à des débats de plus en plus vigoureux sur le rôle de la rupture et de la discontinuité dans les processus de conversion. Les discussions portent en particulier sur la façon dont les chrétiens, notamment les évangéliques et les pentecôtistes, cherchent à rompre avec leurs cadres culturels et religieux autochtones et en viennent à les dénoncer. M'appuyant sur l'analyse des cérémonies de l'église d'Oksapmin et sur plusieurs travaux de littérature comparée, je contribue à cette discussion théorique en proposant un nouveau modèle conceptuel qui montre que, dans la musique chrétienne et la culture expressive, les convertis rompent avec leurs mondes sociaux et culturels environnants d'au moins trois manières différentes : la rupture « résonnante », définie par une continuité des formes esthétiques autochtones et par une transformation simultanée du sens qu'elles expriment ; la rupture « dissonante », définie par une opposition frontale aux formes expressives autochtones et par l'adoption du répertoire performatif occidental ; et la rupture « sonnante », définie par la critique de toute

instrumentation, traditionnelle ou occidentale, en tant que symbole du monde matériel et par l'insistance sur le chant comme forme la plus pure de communication avec le divin. Par ailleurs, je montre que ces modes de discontinuité expressive s'inscrivent d'abord dans des trajectoires historiques particulières et qu'elles peuvent ensuite s'étendre à la vie quotidienne et non rituelle des chrétiens.

Mots clés : religion, christianisme, cosmologie, performance, musique

Introduction: Rupture, Christianity and Performance

When entering a church in the Oksapmin area, the kind of music that one hears varies greatly between denominations. In some churches there will be traditional drumming, singing and dancing; in others it will be guitars, tambourines and clapping; and in others one might hear only harmonious singing. Despite this performative variety, however, most of the Christians in these churches assert a claim, which lies at the centre of evangelical theology, namely, to have been "born again," accepted Jesus Christ as their personal saviour and, importantly, to have made a break with their former selves and surrounding cultural worlds. In this article I describe this situation in detail and also propose a series of concepts with which anthropologists of Christianity can understand these variations of world breaking within and also beyond the realm of expressive practice. As such, I contribute most directly to the deep-seated and ongoing debates within the anthropology of Christianity about rupture and discontinuity, which Coleman and Hackett (2015, 13) call "one of the key theoretical tropes" of the sub-discipline.

Joel Robbins states that, at the most general level, "almost all forms of Christianity emphasize radical change in one or other dimension of time" (Robbins 2012, 12; see also Lampe 2010, 79). Whether in the context of Christianity's separation from Judaism, the

East–West Schism, the Reformation period, the millennial age ushered in by Jesus's return, or personally transformative experiences of conversion and repentance, Christianity places a good deal of attention on the need for definitive change. Narratives of rupture take on a more potent and specific form within Pentecostal and evangelical variants of Christianity, commonly referred to in the literature as P/e Christianity. "Evangelicalism" refers to Christians who share a defining set of religious beliefs, most importantly the need to be "born again," that is, breaking out of one's old life at the same time as developing an intimate relationship with Jesus Christ as personal saviour; the fundamental authority of the Bible; and the importance of evangelism aimed at converting others. Pentecostal-charismatic Christianity shares these beliefs and can be rightfully considered a part of evangelicalism, but is distinguished by its theological imperative of being "baptised in the Holy Spirit" and consequently receiving "spiritual gifts" such as speaking in tongues, interpreting tongues, faith healing, visions, and prophecy, all of which are seen as signs of the Holy Spirit "working" in the lives of converts (Synan 1997).

Of the three Christian churches that I discuss in this article, two of them, the Baptist Church and Papua New Guinea Bible Church (PNGBC), are Pentecostal-evangelical. The third church I discuss, the Seventh Day Adventist (SDA) Church, is typically not considered to be evangelical. Rather, Seventh Day Adventists, together with groups such as the Mormons and Jehovah's Witnesses, belong to a marginal group of Protestant churches with a strongly millennialist, eschatological theology (Casanova 2001). However, while the SDA church is not technically evangelical, within their expressive practice they do nonetheless establish discontinuity in a way that mirrors the practices of other P/e groups around the world. Their presence within the discussion is thus justified on these grounds.

Rupture within P/e Christianity plays out on multiple levels, from the personal to the metaphysical (Robbins 2010), but the break that has interested anthropologists the most, and the one that I wish to centre my attention on, is the one that these kinds of Christianity demand their adherents make with their indigenous and traditional cultural heritage. It is now a key plank in anthropological theory on P/e and P/c (Pentecostal and charismatic) Christianity that converts are asked to make a "complete break" with their traditional beliefs and practices and that the cultural material thereby broken with becomes identified with sin and Satan through a process of "diabolization" (Meyer 1999). It is precisely this dynamic, where converts simultaneously fight against, yet thereby reproduce and amplify, traditional religious and spiritual elements, that lends P/e Christianity its paradoxical shape: both deterritorialised and local, straining toward the virtuous present while always addressing the heathen past, focused on the Holy Spirit but continuing to recognise the negative power of indigenous spiritual forces. Concerning these kinds of Christianity, Casanova (2001, 438) puts it nicely in stating that "it is in their very struggle against local culture that they prove how locally rooted they are" (see also Meyer 1999, 340). As these and other studies demonstrate, a total break with traditional culture is at best a theological project that can never be fully achieved in practice and that always entails a degree of indigenous cultural reproduction and ontological preservation.

Despite the centrality of rupture to the anthropology of Christianity, little attention has been paid to how it works within the realm of church performances (Marshall 2016). This is even though a substantial body of literature now exists on the role of performance within P/e Christianity confirming that music is "an essential element of its appeal" (Oosterbaan 2015, 165; see also Cox 1995; Hackett 1998; Ingalls and Yong 2015; Schrag 2016). It is into this gap that I position this article.

Varieties of Rupture within Christian Expressive Culture

The main contribution my article makes to anthropological debates about rupture and discontinuity is the advancement of a model that shows how Pentecostal-evangelical Christians use their expressive practices to mediate the relationship between, on the one hand, their identities as "born again" converts and, on the other hand, their traditional cultural heritage and the material world. The model is built mainly on an analysis of ethnographic material gained from participant observation and interviews within three different denominations in the Oksapmin area, Papua New Guinea: the Baptist Church, the Papua New Guinea Bible Church and the Seventh Day Adventist Church. My analysis of this material reveals that each church has its own unique approach toward establishing discontinuity in its expressive practices. By drawing upon comparative literature, we can generalise these denominational attitudes and treat them as three distinct types of rupture that are manifest throughout the P/e Christian world more broadly. "Resonant" and "dissonant rupture" are terms that refer specifically to the relationship Christians construct with their traditional performative repertoire, while "sonant," which I here use to mean "of the voice," pertains to the ways in which Christians exclusively privilege singing

over instrumentation and music in order to symbolize their rupture with the material world of earthly desire.

"Resonant rupture" is a term I borrow from Marshall (2016), who has taken up the project of rupture within music very productively in her work on Navajo neo-Pentecostalism. Marshall directly addresses questions of rupture and continuity within Pentecostal Christianity through a nuanced analysis of performance within Navajo tent revivals. Across a range of expressive mediums, Marshall perceives a process that she calls "resonant rupture," whereby "feelingful attachment to expressive form persists, but . . . the inherent ambiguity of these forms allows for the attachment of drastically different meanings" (2016, 15). Whether in dance, faith healing, musical practice or hymnody, Navajo neo-Pentecostals make use of traditional cultural forms while assigning them radically new meanings in line with the Christian faith. Handman's work among the Guhu-Samane of Papua New Guinea (PNG) reveals a similar process, wherein Christians continue to deploy local drums alongside guitars in their efforts to achieve immediacy with God while also critiquing rival church groups for not having a full appreciation of the power of the Holy Spirit (Handman 2013, 2015). Her work thus covers similar ground to Marshall's, yet instead of couching her analysis in terms of a rupture with traditional culture, she instead opts to look at her material in terms of how each denomination expunges "the social" from their worship through acts of "purification."

My own ethnographic material on Oksapmin Baptist church performances aligns closely with Marshall's and Handman's analyses, and I think that together they illuminate one crucial way in which Christians, especially Pentecostal and evangelical, handle the imperative of establishing rupture within their expressive practices, namely, through the continued utilisation of local expressive forms within performance (whether exclusively or alongside imported forms) at the same time as assigning them new Christian meanings. Within resonant rupture, the performative material employed is typically not religious in character, thereby embodying the tendency of P/e rupture to follow both religious and cosmological lines (Robbins 2010; Zehner 2005). I add to understandings of resonant rupture by showing how the inclusion of local expressive forms can occur through a process of sacralisation whereby traditional expressive forms are ritually repurposed for Christian worship.

The second key way in which P/e Christians establish cultural discontinuity within their performances is through what I call "dissonant rupture." Dissonant rupture involves converts treating indigenous expressive forms as fundamentally incompatible with Christian worship and therefore working to establish a total and definitive break with them while at the same time embracing instruments associated with Western Christianity such as guitars, keyboards and tambourines. Shown in my material on the PNGBC, dissonant rupture is thus a break whereby converts often define their embrace of Western Christian aesthetics in strong opposition to, and condemnation of, the indigenous performative repertoire. This coincides with Ingall's point that "identifiable elements of pentecostal music and worship are found as much in what pentecostal congregations identify *against* as in what they identify *with*" (Ingalls 2015, 13; emphasis in original). Thus we see some Guhu-Samane Christians described by Handman (2015, 237) embracing guitars and Western melodies at the same time as criticizing the "over-localization" of other churches that employ traditional instruments. Dissonant rupture can also be seen within the "abandonment approach" pursued by a variety of Christian denominations among the Duna of Papua New Guinea described by Gillespie (2016, 220–221), whereby converts reject and diabolize indigenous expressive forms at the same time as adhering to a "relatively uniform" performative repertoire comprised of "chorus singing throughout, conforming to a Western tonal system, and accompanied on guitar and/ or keyboards" (221). Further afield, Hackett has shown how Ghanaian and Nigerian charismatic Christians are "merciless toward 'traditional' and 'ancestral' cultural beliefs and practices" (1998, 261), with one local writer describing a music festival with "traditional" roots as a "demonic invasion of our dear country" (261).

A third way in which evangelical and Pentecostal Christians mediate discontinuity with the surrounding cultural and social world is through what I call "sonant rupture." Whereas resonance and dissonance both pertain directly to the relationship that Christians establish with elements of their traditional culture, sonance instead marks an exclusive commitment to singing as the proper, most "pure" means of communicating with God. In this view, instrumentation and music are seen as being worldly and material and thus able to lead converts into sin. My concept of sonant rupture builds directly upon Matthew Engelke's (2007) analyses of the Friday Masowe apostolics of Zimbabwe in his book *A Problem of Presence*. Members of this church distrust the materiality of worship and instead seek a "live and direct" relationship with God through "immaterial" means, which are considered superior (see also Lampe 2010, 78). These apostolics are essentially seeking to remove all mediation between themselves and God. The spoken authority of prophets is thus paramount, but Engelke (2007, 200–223) also draws

attention to the central importance of singing in this project. As he describes,

> For an apostolic, the best music, and the only genuine Christian music – in the sense that it helps instantiate God's presence – is vocal. Like other objects, instruments compromise the integrity of the religious practice . . . Producing Christian sounds should involve nothing more material than the human voice . . . It is live and direct in a way that a written text or musical instrument is not. (205–206)

The members of the Seventh Day Adventist Church in Oksapmin that I describe share the same need to break with instrumentation while stressing the importance of singing, though they stop short of a "rejection of the Bible" (Engelke 2007, 2), which in itself is a radical gesture for evangelical Christians, whose tradition is based upon a recognition of the inerrancy of the Bible.

In what follows I explore the details of how the three denominations exemplify each of the three modes of rupture discussed above. I also expand upon the explicitly ritual and performative aspects of each denomination to demonstrate how each mode of rupture informs the lives of the denomination's members outside the church. More space is given to discussing resonant rupture within the local Baptist church compared with dissonant and sonant rupture in the Papua New Guinea Bible Church and SDA Church, respectively. Before exploring these modes of rupture, I first provide an introduction to the role of music and performance within traditional Oksapmin society.

Oksapmin Expressive Forms

The Oksapmin are a group of around fifteen thousand people spread throughout a series of contiguous mountain valleys in Sandaun Province, PNG (see Figure 1). Music, singing and dancing have historically been very important cultural activities within Oksapmin society. The traditional Oksapmin repertoire is organised into a number of genres, each designed for a particular kind of occasion or event.
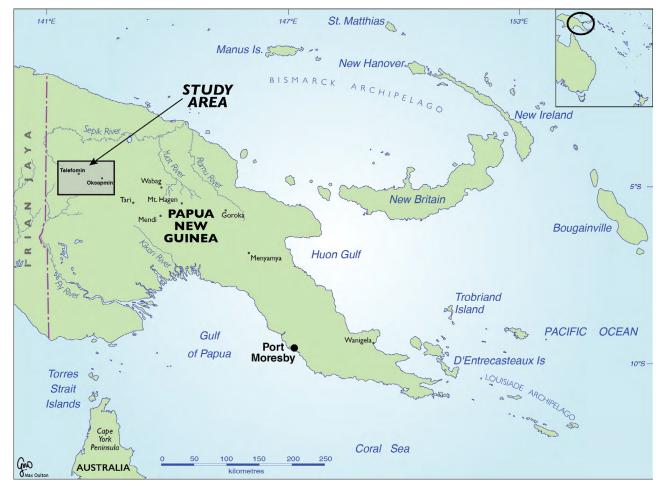

Figure 1: Map of Papua New Guinea, showing study area

First, there are celebratory songs and dances (Tok Pisin: *singsing*) that accompany marriage, the arrival of an eminent visitor, or the opening of an important facility in the area. While people no longer regularly perform these songs to mark marriage as they did in the past, they are still performed whenever a prominent person – politician, intending candidate, or returning missionary – visits the area, or when a new health centre, school or other important public amenity is officially opened. There are also mournful laments and memorials sung by individuals whenever a friend or relative has died or is departing for an indefinite period of time. More commonly, though, these are sung at *haus krai*, events where friends and relatives gather, sometimes for weeks, to mourn the passing of someone who has died and commemorate their life. Formerly, the Oksapmin held all-night dances within specially built structures known as *tel ap* (see Figures A.1 and A.2 online at https://www.utpjournals.press/doi/suppl/10.3138/anth.2017-0051). By Oksapmin standards, these houses were huge, capable of accommodating around one hundred people. According to informants, these dances were undertaken mainly for purposes of entertainment and meeting potential suitors. *Tel ap* have not been built for some time, however, and today all-night dances take the form of "six to six" disco parties. Another important context that performance was formerly associated with is men's initiation. The completion of each stage of the overall cycle was a cause for the proud assertion of masculine identity and knowledge and was often accompanied by singing and dancing.

Traditional Oksapmin performances employ a variety of media. Undoubtedly the most important of these is the elongated hand drum (*walon*). In traditional *singsing* the *walon* is played only by men, who bang out a strong, monotonous rhythm. Historically the *walon* was a preeminent symbol of ritually bestowed masculinity and was played only by initiated men. It also announced to all in attendance, but especially women, the strength, virility and status of the man playing it. Such gendered values were especially potent when *singsing* were performed following the completion of a phase of the graded initiation cycle. As one Oksapmin man explained to me,

> Playing the *walon* is a sign that tells all the women and children that we have finished school [initiation] and have received power and strength and that they must respect us and should not do anything carelessly around us. It was the time when all the women and children must respect them. They have been through a very important learning process, learning how to make crops grow, how to make animals abundant, how to attract women for marriage, and also how to generate wealth and become rich, and the drum is a sign of all of this. It makes it clear to everyone that we have got this power.

Here the drum is important for announcing that initiates have made the transition to manhood through being ritually imbued with powerful ancestral knowledge (compare Lohmann 2007). Men continue to be the exclusive players of the *walon* within traditional performances, but the influence of Christianity on this strongly gendered instrument, as well as the contexts within which it was historically played, has been significant, as I discuss further below. In further recognition of their status as initiated men, within *singsing* men would typically wear ceremonial string bags appropriate to their ritual grade as well as elaborate headdresses combining bird-of-paradise and cassowary plumage. This adornment is still observed wherever *singsing* are performed today, though the ceremonial string bags no longer denote a particular ritual status but are employed more as symbols of traditional masculinity more generally.

During traditional dances women wear layered grass skirts and also headdresses similar to those worn by men. The most distinguishing feature of women's adornment during *singsing*, however, is *tiambel*, strings of luminous coastal shells slung across the body from both shoulders. When women dance, the shells make a light jangling sound pleasing to the ear and also reflect the light so as to draw attention. As with the drum played by men, such adornment has historically been strongly gendered and was believed to be attractive to onlookers of the opposite sex.

During *singsing*, the style of singing is antiphonal and performed collectively by both genders. Dancing during these occasions follows the simple rhythmic pattern of the drum. Dancers assemble in lines, with each performer making small jumps, alternating the position of the feet from forwards to backwards to each beat of the drum. Today the Oksapmin refer to this traditional style of dancing as "the snake dance" because of the long and winding shape cut by the dancers as they weave across a performance space. Laments and memorials contain no dancing, and they are always performed in melancholic tones. When performed by men they may also be accompanied by drumming.

Most obviously, traditional music for the Oksapmin has always had an important celebratory role; whenever someone is married, an important visitor arrives, initiates emerge from ritual seclusion as proud young men, a valuable public amenity is opened, or people simply want to sing and dance through the night, *singsing* have

typically been performed. The music is, of course, also used to mark moments of sadness – for example, when a friend or relative dies or departs indefinitely. The only clear religious value of the indigenous expressive forms described above is the close association of the drum with the ancestral cult, yet there is no obvious evidence from the ethnography that the Oksapmin used music to address spirits or legendary figures, though this is a possibility.

Resonance: The Baptist Church

Like with the Navajo neo-Pentecostals described by Marshall (2016), the expressive activity within the Oksapmin Baptist Church reveals a process of "resonant rupture." The indigenous expressive forms described above continue to play an important role in Baptist church performances, but they have been assigned new Christian meanings. Whereas Marshall's account of this process plunges us directly into an already strongly indigenised tradition, my own material requires starting further back with the introduction of Christianity into the area by the Australian Baptist Missionary Society (ABMS). The ABMS established their first mission station in the Oksapmin area in 1962, and it remains the largest local denomination. Early missionisation did not oppose indigenous culture as a whole but focused mainly on the abolition of traditional ritual practices that valorised the power of the ancestors and spirits and thus challenged God's omnipotence (Marshall 2015; Robbins 2010; Zehner 2005). As a result, local people largely abandoned their indigenous religious practices, and within a few years practically all ritual houses had fallen into disrepair and disuse. Despite this change, traditional religion is still often looked upon favourably by many local people as having prefigured Christianity, particularly in terms of how both share rigorous moral codes (compare Scott 2007, 303). While ritual elements were largely discarded and replaced by Christian worship, many aspects of local cosmology were preserved, including magic, sorcery, and witchcraft, bush spirits, and mythological clan totems and legendary figures. These ontologically preserved forces have become associated with sin and Satan through a process of diabolisation (Meyer 1999), thereby revealing a basic tension between good and evil upon which evangelical and Pentecostal Christianity thrives (Robbins 2010).

While the mission targeted traditional religion for elimination, there were many practices they permitted to be assimilated within Christianity. Most importantly, the ABMS missionaries did not consider local expressive practices to be incompatible with Christian worship. This was because, from their perspective, they were "social"

and not "religious." As Reverend Keith Bricknell, the first ABMS missionary to work among the Oksapmin people, told me,

> We didn't ever suggest that elements of the local festivities (singsings, the dancing house celebrations etc) were wrong or incompatible with Christianity. Christian worship was not said to be in contradistinction to those elements of their culture that were used in local celebrations. We deliberately refrained from saying that their musical culture was incompatible with Christianity, but rather suggested that they could use their instruments and songs in church. (Personal communication, 6 January 2017)

Thus made available for use in church worship, these expressive forms were "sacralised" by the Oksapmin through prayer, thereby giving them an explicit Christian meaning. As described by James, a senior Baptist pastor,

> all these things are a traditional way of worship. For example, like a guitar, it's the same, you know, even some Australian cowboys play a guitar. You play the same thing but, you see, we pray over the instrument for a different purpose. So for the *kundu* [*walon* drum], we prayed over the *kundu* a long time ago, we pray over and then we say that this is God's. God has given us the ability to use, to play this *kundu*. It doesn't matter what the object is as long as we are using it to worship God instead of the old spiritual world.

James's statements show how important sacralisation is to the overall process of "resonant rupture," in that it is the ritual process through which "drastically different meanings" (Marshall 2016, 15) are assigned to traditional expressive forms. The engine room of change, sacralisation transforms indigenous instruments, adornments, and dancing and singing styles from "traditional" to "Christian" at the level of asserted meaning, while still retaining their aesthetic form.

Sacralised for worship, indigenous expressive forms could be combined with the range of new musical instruments introduced through missionisation, such as the guitar, tambourine and ukulele. However, Reverend Bricknell had limited musical knowledge and did not teach the Oksapmin any Christian songs. The acquisition, learning and performance of church songs consequently fell entirely to the mission's local assistants. Local people set about constructing their own Christian performances using the diverse repertoire available to them. Christian songs in Tok Pisin were learned from public servants who had come to Oksapmin from other parts of the country, and there was also a Tok Pisin hymn book published by the Christian Missions in Many Lands (CMML)

circulating throughout the country at the time. Both sets of songs were translated into the Oksapmin language and performed in early services.

From its inception in Oksapmin, then, the Baptist soundscape resonated strongly with indigenous expressive forms deemed compatible with Christianity but that at the level of asserted meaning had been firmly oriented toward Christian praise. The main changes to this sphere of performance have taken place as a result of an indigenously orchestrated charismatic revival (*rebaibal*) within Baptist churches throughout the wider Telefomin district in the late 1970s and early 1980s (Bennett and Smith 1983), itself a part of a much larger charismatic revival that swept through the South Pacific (Robbins 2004a, 122). The charismatic movement instituted new kinds of worship, such as speaking in tongues, prophecy, visions and healing, all of which were seen as evidence of the Holy Spirit. It also intensified church music, as described by Ian Flatters, the ABMS missionary in Oksapmin at the time:

> 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. Praying which was always a strong point took on a new power and vitality. (Personal communication, 31 August 2010)

In line with a strongly egalitarian gender ideology promulgated through *spirit meri* (spirit women), it also became common for women to play the *walon* drum and, conversely, for men to wear the *tiambel* (see Figure 2). The charismatic revival thus reshaped church performance into the form it exists in today, a vibrant soundscape drawing upon a mixture of local and imported song structures, instrumentation, singing, and bodily gestures. As I now show through a consideration of a performance within the 2009 Easter service, including the detailed reflections of several of its participants, expressive activity clearly reveals a process of "resonant rupture," the basic form of which was given through the early missionary encounter. Indeed, it is this particular historical trajectory that has given to the Baptist Church its unique ritual identity today.

The 2009 Baptist Easter service was held over three days at the Tekin Station church. The focal point of these services is the performance of "items," songs

Figure 2: Contemporary Christian performance

and dances composed for the particular occasion either individually or in groups, local equivalents of the "praise teams" and "worship bands" that characterise evangelical and Pentecostal music globally (Ingalls 2015, 6). These special performances can also be compared to the "one-offs" of the apostolic Christians in Zimbabwe described by Engelke (2007, 216), though they are underpinned by a different semiotic ideology. Here I focus on a group performance by members of the Sambate Baptist congregation. As a preceding item concluded, the Sambate "team," numbering around 20, assumed their starting positions and began. The item started with Bulex, the group's leader, positioned at the front of the church, gently strumming a guitar and voicing ascending notes in a major scale. After a few measures, Bulex suddenly stopped. The pause was dramatically broken as the group erupted into life. Until that point waiting outside the church doors, the group came bounding inside the church, winding their way through the crowd to join Bulex. As they entered the church, the group performed the traditional "snake dance," joined in single file and bouncing up and down to the beat of the *walon* drum. Both men and women were draped in *tiambel* shells. The singing was clearly localised, following a restricted melody and percussive rhythm that mirrored the beat of the drum. The local-language lyrics were arranged in three lyrically and musically similar sections that were repeated several times over. The first section proclaimed that Christ is present and is "the man" (*han*) around which their lives are based; the second expressed the happiness (*amamsi*) they feel knowing of Christ's imminent Second Coming; and the third affirmed that, upon his return, Christ will take them all to heaven, the "good place" (*ap yah*).

After the service I interviewed two of the performers about their perspectives on the obvious presence of indigenous expressive forms within their performance. Consider first the thoughts of Bulex, the group's leader:

> The shells, the bird of paradise, the drum, they saying in the Bible, especially in Psalms, you can use these to praise God's name. It is not sin, it is the way of praising God. These ways of performing are good and we are still using them. The snake dancing that occurs in our item looks traditional. It used to mean different things. We used to dance like this on traditional occasions. But the dance here is expressing the joy we, as Christians, find in Christ. When I'm leading the songs, the spirit of God comes into me first. I feel happy and I start speaking quickly. Then everybody knows that the spirit has come, and then when I sing the spirit spreads to them all. It is when it flows into them that they start dancing. When the dancers were in a straight line, this represents that we are "straight" and true in our commitment to God. You see the drums, the shells, our songs, the way we sing, these are from before. That is true. But we use these because we don't have any other way to praise God.

Similar sentiments were expressed by Bapris, one of the women who participated in the item:

> Yes, all of those traditional things are in our services. The way we dance, too, is traditional. But now it has a different meaning. Now we do it to praise God, to glorify God. The traditional meaning is gone. It is nothing. We do it to worship God. Galatians, chapter five, verse 22 [a passage in the Bible referring to the nine "fruits" of the Holy Spirit]. When dancing, I feel these things. I feel happy, overjoyed. It is from my heart. This is why we dance. We feel so overjoyed that we want to jump up and down. Traditionally we used to dance to celebrate marriage, but now it's a sign that we have Jesus Christ in our lives. We would do these performances for a marriage, for children, and then that would be it. Now we do the same things because we want to go to heaven. We will gain eternal life and we will be there forever.

The statements of both performers exemplify Marshall's (2016, 15) concept of "resonant rupture," whereby "feelingful attachment to expressive form persists, but . . . the inherent ambiguity of these forms allows for the attachment of drastically different meanings." A range of indigenous expressive forms persist within this Baptist church performance, including the drum, shells and dancing, as well as song style and structure, but their meaning has been radically changed. More specifically, in line with Marshall's concept, we can notice a "feelingful" attachment to the traditional elements that appear in the performance. Defined as an "emotional attachment to form" (12), "feelingful" connections are a driving force behind processes of cultural continuity within evangelical and Pentecostal worship. Indeed, for both Bulex and Bapris there is a fondness felt toward these forms; they regard them as essentially positive and remember them as being central to important celebratory occasions. As expressed most clearly by Bulex, it therefore makes cultural and theological sense for such forms to be included in church worship. Despite these clear cultural resonances, however, on the level of asserted meaning there has been unequivocal rupture. According to Bapris, "The traditional meaning is gone. It is nothing." Owing to their inherent ambiguity as cultural symbols, all of the traditional expressive forms found within the performance now announce Christian meanings: a true commitment to God, the joy of experiencing the Holy Spirit, a desire to go to heaven. These meanings are explicit in the song's lyrics, which also affirm the eschatological rupture of Jesus's Second Coming (compare Robbins 2010).

It is useful to also briefly note that resonant rupture, namely, the "feelingful" retention of indigenous cultural forms while assigning them new Christian meanings, is also something that can be observed outside the church lives of not only those Oksapmin people belonging to the Baptist Church but also those in other denominations. Here I draw attention to the ways in which traditional spiritual forces and ancestral entities have been ontologically preserved and reimagined within a dominant Christian cosmological framework, something discussed in a recent article (Macdonald 2018). This should not be confused with the kind of ontological preservation and diabolisation theorised by Robbins (2011) and Meyer (1999), whereby local spiritual entities remain only as figures of evil to be fought against through prayer and exorcism. Rather, as in the case of the primordial animals, plants and environmental features from which local clans and lineages descend, what can first be seen is a continued acceptance and recognition of these entities as the origin of different social groups. However, their cosmological provenance and positioning has been remade through conversion to Christianity. More specifically, they are seen to be angels fallen from heaven that are under God's control, thereby exhibiting a rupture on the level of asserted meaning. "God," as they say, "came first," and these local clan ancestors can be made sense of only in relation to his omnipotence (Macdonald 2018). This is perhaps the key way in which the process of resonant rupture finds expression outside the explicitly ritual realm, but further research could potentially illuminate other cultural and social contexts within which it operates.

Dissonance: The Papua New Guinea Bible Church

Evangelical and Pentecostal Christians, however, are as well known for setting up strongly moralised oppositions to their traditional cultural heritage as they are for maintaining a feelingful connection to it. Indeed, as I show below, while indigenous expressive forms continue to resonate within Baptist worship, having been subject to rupture on the level of asserted meaning, the expressive activities of the Papua New Guinea Bible Church, an evangelical church that arrived in the Oksapmin area in the 1990s, reveal a much different relationship to traditional culture, which I call "dissonant rupture." Where resonant rupture permits the utilisation of indigenous expressive forms on the basis that they, first, maintain a "safe distance" from ancestral religion (Marshall 2015, 159) and, second, have been sacralised for Christian ends, dissonant rupture, as the name suggests, treats these same forms as fundamentally inimical, erroneous and sinful. Dissonant rupture thus concurs with the classic Pentecostal-evangelical exhortation to make a "*complete* break with the past" (Meyer 1999; emphasis added). As noted in my introduction, the fact that P/e Christians adopt an attitude of total rupture with their pasts and cultures does not necessarily mean that this is achieved fully in practice. Rather, while most evangelical churches have a theology built on "born again" conversion experiences that compel their converts to turn their backs on their former lives, it is inevitable that some degree of cultural reproduction will occur outside the consciousness of the congregation, whether in ideation, language or worship (see Zehner 2005). Nonetheless, the blanket condemnation and diabolisation of indigenous culture is a hallmark of P/e and P/c Christianity and is described regularly throughout the literature on music within these traditions, with converts in different parts of the world variously labelling traditional expressive forms as demonic, Satanic, or inappropriate (Gillespie 2016; Hackett 1998; Handman 2015). Within this model of dissonant rupture, the use of local instruments, adornment or singing styles within church is clear evidence that Christians have not sufficiently followed through on the evangelical imperative to being "born again" into a new Christian life but are still mired by traditional ways. These ideas, so central to dissonant rupture, are often voiced by members of the PNGBC (and the many small P/e churches like them that have sprung up throughout the Oksapmin area in the last 30 years), who strongly condemn the use of any indigenous expressive forms within their worship. For example, Ninjup, a prominent Oksapmin PNGBC pastor, stated,

The ways of the ancestors? They're [the Baptists] still holding on to it. Following the ways of the ancestors is wrong. The Bible prohibits this. Many people continue to mix Christianity and tradition. They haven't broken out yet. The way of following God is not like this. When people truly convert to Christianity, they completely break out of a world and into a new one. They leave everything of this earth. The people still engaged in this mixing are being tricked by Satan. This is the road along which sin travels. The Bible says no. According to 2 Corinthians 5:17, the old will go and the new will come. When you become a true Christian, you will be completely transformed, born again. For us in the PNG Bible Church, we break out from the ancestral ways. The Bible says no to this.

For members of the PNGBC, "breaking out from the ancestral ways" means forbidding the use of indigenous expressive forms and embracing a completely new performative repertoire. The majority of their songs are found throughout P/e churches throughout Papua New Guinea and learned either from songbooks or visitors to the area from other parts of the country. Like P/e Christians around the world, their lyrics are "preoccupied with the naming of Jesus Christ, God, and the Holy Spirit, and the explicit description of the effect of this Trinity on the lives of the people" (Gillespie 2016, 224), yet, unlike the Baptists, who are content to couch these global Christian messages within local language as part of their resonant approach, the PNGBC favour Tok Pisin and English lyrics, according to their theology of the essential dissonance of local culture with Christian worship. Local instruments, adornments and singing styles are rejected outright; instead, songs are based on uplifting Western chords and melodies and accompanied mainly by acoustic guitars, tambourines and, more rarely, keyboards. Owing to their remote, rural location, the instrumental range available to the PNGBC is limited, though in more urban areas within PNG, and throughout the world, the ideal expressive configuration for Christians seeking to fully break with local culture but continuing to permit the use of instruments and popular music styles is the "worship band" (Ingalls 2015, 6), consisting of "a rock band setup with some combination of acoustic guitar with pickup, electric rhythm/lead guitar, bass guitar, keyboard, and drum kit – as well as guitar amplifiers, a multichannel mixer, and public address system" (Webb 2015, 83). In terms of bodily gestures, local dancing styles are condemned, but globally common evangelical movements such as swaying, clapping, and outstretching one's arms are widespread.

In terms of accounting for why the PNGBC has adopted this approach, it is more to history than theological

outlook that we should turn. After all, theologically the Baptists and the PNGBC are quite straightforwardly evangelical, with both placing a strong emphasis on, inter alia, being "born again" Christians who pursue a direct relationship with God, the Holy Spirit and Jesus by leaving behind the religious and cultural frameworks that hitherto defined their lives. The key difference is in the historical trajectory these different churches have taken. As shown in the previous section, the Baptists were first missionised by the ABMS, who, seeing traditional expressive culture as essentially "social" and not "religious," sanctioned its use within church worship. It was also seen how this existing accommodation of indigenous expressive patterns was deepened and enriched through the charismatic revival that swept through the entire Min region in the 1970s and 1980s, prompting an effusion of Christian performative creativity couched in local idioms. The PNGBC has followed a very different path. First, the church arrived in the Oksapmin area comparatively recently, in the 1990s, and has had a shorter period of time in which to make the kinds of adaptations that saw a mainline evangelical church become more sympathetic to local culture. Second, and perhaps more importantly, the PNGBC was founded mainly by members of the Baptist Church who defected because of becoming dissatisfied with the localised character of their worship. Just as Ninjup states above, the Baptists are seen as not going far enough in their efforts toward the sanctification of their worship, a sentiment shared by his congregants. This key historical process of denominationalism, whereby members break away from existing churches in order to "purify" their worship, has given rise to expressive practices that staunchly reject the inclusion of obviously local instruments, singing and dancing styles, or adornment. This contrasts with the history of the Baptist Church, built on both mission toleration of traditional performance as well as charismatic revivalism with a distinctly local flair. More broadly, it is as a result of these unique historical trajectories and resultant aesthetic configurations that each denomination articulates their own distinctive identity within the overall body of Christian churches in the Oksapmin area. We can, therefore, talk of ruptures not only with culture, but also within the Christian religion itself.

As with resonant rupture, dissonant rupture also extends to life outside the church. This relates, first, to the well-established models of ontological preservation and diabolisation developed by Robbins (2011) and Meyer (1999), whereby P/e Christians, despite abandoning indigenous religious and ritual systems in favour of Christian worship, "continue to believe in the reality and power of the spiritual beings who were at the centre of their traditional religion, but at the same time demonize them and enlist God as their ally in a struggle to defeat them" (Robbins 2011, 421). This is the case for the diabolisation of *tamam* (witchcraft), whereby an existing spiritual entity has become synonymous with evil and is fought against through prayer and deliverance (Macdonald 2015). This kind of vituperative condemnation is strikingly different from the attitudes that some Oksapmin Christians have toward the ancestral figures that gave rise to their respective clan groupings, which above I showed to be well aligned with the process of resonant rupture. Rather, here we see no sentimental attachment to indigenous cosmology but rather a straightforward and highly moralised rejection of it.

This kind of deeply instituted dissonance between Christian and traditional culture may extend outside religion and cosmology into other quotidian realms – for example, children's school activities. In some Oksapmin schools, children are occasionally asked to perform traditional songs and dances as part of their assessment. While the majority of children participate in these activities with the consent of their parents, children within the PNGBC are strictly forbidden to do so on the grounds that undertaking such activities represents a clear attachment to, and reproduction of, traditional, and thus sinful, customs. One member of the PNGBC explained to me about

> another thing that we do, especially in school. When children are in school, teachers give children some lessons about making traditional performances. For us, we say no. Even though the teachers will say that this is part of the children's assessment and they will get marked for it, we strongly say no. Because half-naked and this kind of thing, that's sin! We can't entertain that. So we say no to it . . . Even though it is marked, we say, "Teacher, you give them a zero, that's all right," because we don't agree.

So while dissonant rupture, like its resonant counterpart, is a theoretical concept designed particularly to make sense of how Christians mediate discontinuity with their traditional performative repertoire in their church-based expressive activities, it certainly is a process that finds currency in the surrounding cosmological and social world.

Sonance: The Seventh Day Adventist Church

The local SDA Church in Oksapmin exemplifies the final way of mediating discontinuity within church performance that I am advancing in this article, which I call "sonant rupture." As I have already made clear earlier in

the article, SDAs are not usually referred to as evangelical but rather belong to a marginal branch of Protestant Christianity that places strong theological emphasis upon a doctrine surrounding the "end times," or eschatology, as well as millennialism, or the imminent Second Coming of Jesus Christ. The reason I include them within my discussion here is that their approach to expressive rupture is common within the P/e world, and it thus acts as an appropriate placeholder for the kinds of processes that I am concerned to explore.

I borrow the word "sonant" from phonetics, where it carries the specific meaning of "uttered with voice" or "vocal sound." This specific denotation aptly distils the essence of an approach to cultural rupture wherein evangelical and Pentecostal Christians place a strong, often exclusive emphasis upon the human voice, and particularly singing, as the right, true way of worshipping God, at the same time as minimising or rejecting instrumentation. The conceptual core of my notion of sonant rupture is taken from Matthew Engelke's (2007) work on Friday Masowe apostolics in Zimbabwe. In his book *A Problem of Presence*, Engelke outlines how the Friday Masowe observe a semiotic ideology within which the potentially corruptive "materiality" of instruments and written text is opposed to the live and direct "immateriality" of the human voice (206). Instruments participate in the world and consequently "compromise the integrity of religious practice" (205), while the human voice, because it is "less of a thing than other things" (206), is positively valued as a result of being subject to the least amount of mediation and distortion in bringing about divine immediacy. Unusually for P/e Christians, the Friday Masowe extend this ideology to written scripture too, which becomes eschewed in favour of listening to sermons by prophetic pastors (171). This deviation notwithstanding, Engelke's description of the Friday Masowe's approach to music conforms closely to the SDA Church within Oksapmin and I think reveals an important way in which P/e Christians, and others like them, may establish rupture in their expressive activities.

The Seventh Day Adventist Church arrived in Oksapmin in approximately 1965, three years after the establishment of the Baptist mission at Tekin, and is the second-largest denomination in the area. However, unlike the Baptist Church, it was not instituted through a process of missionisation but was rather brought to the area by a local man called Kisbin, a former member of the Baptist Church who had converted to SDA while away on migrant labour elsewhere in the country. In her book *The Theory and Practice of the Music in the Seventh-Day Adventist Church in Papua New Guinea*, Jennifer Jones (2004) describes how the SDA approach to music

stems principally from the writings of Ellen White, one of several founders of Adventism who emerged from the failed Millerite movement of the 1830s and 1840s. Showing a strong inclination for spiritual prophecy, White claimed to have received hundreds of visions from God. As a result of these divine revelations, White composed a voluminous body of writing on all aspects of worship and faith, including nearly one hundred pages concerning the role of music (Hamel 1976). Her basic position on the role of music is that

> music, when not abused, is a great blessing; but when put to a wrong use, it is a terrible curse. No one who has an indwelling Saviour will dishonour Him before others by producing strains from a musical instrument which call the mind from God and Heaven to light and trifling things . . . Music was made to serve a holy purpose, to lift the thoughts to that which is pure, noble, and elevating, and to awaken in the soul devotion and gratitude to God. (White 1955, 179)

Not all SDAs follow the "sonant" approach to rupture embedded within White's statement, with many congregations around the world, particularly young church members, adopting the "rock band" set-up commonly found in P/e worship (Jones 2004). However, on the most general level there is a strong emphasis on the need to privilege singing and minimise the influence of instrumentation. The views of SDAs in Oksapmin and throughout PNG clearly embody White's attitudes. Oksapmin SDAs insisted that they deliberately reject instrumentation, particularly the guitar, because of its association with *pasin bilong graun* (material and sinful desires). One even said to me that it was the guitar that Satan had used to create a raucous din that contributed to his expulsion from heaven by God. More specifically, SDAs claim that instruments are morally tainted through their association with popular music styles that demonstrate an excessive concern for secular, corruptive influences, such as sex, money and town life. Positing an intimate relationship between instrumentation, materiality, and sin has compelled SDA churches in Oksapmin to construct a soundscape comprised exclusively of singing Western-style hymns in multiple-part harmonies, a defining feature of the SDA expressive activity more generally (Niles 2004, xv). Singing is always in either English or Tok Pisin and never in the local Oksapmin language, thus further purifying the church of local influence while simultaneously connecting church members to wider regional and global spheres of influence.

As can be seen from the above discussion, for SDAs and P/e Christians that expressively mediate discontinuity in similar ways, a focus on singing achieves divine

intimacy; or, seen from the converse perspective, a break with music is tantamount to a break with the sinful, material world. In this sense, the wider ramifications of sonant rupture resemble, but extend, those of dissonant rupture elaborated above. Like members of the PNGBC, SDA Christians also object to traditional performances within school, but since their mode of expressive rupture is focused not only upon tradition but the "world" more generally, it is not surprising to note that many SDAs also restrict their participation within games and sports, which they see as idle pastimes that detract from readying oneself for the imminent arrival of Jesus. An additional observation from my fieldwork is that the SDA Church is also seen as the most "modern" local church, something evinced not only by the language used within services but also by the fact that it attracts a significant number of high-ranking public servants working in the Oksapmin area, such as teachers, government administrators, and so forth, many of whom see themselves as having risen above local place-based culture and politics. The key point is that the expressive rupture with music and instrumentation as symbols of sinful materiality does inform the lives of SDA Christians outside the church, and we can expect this to be the case with P/e Christians who mirror their approach to discontinuity.

Conclusion: Breaking Points

There is thus much more to P/e Christianity than simply making a complete break with the past; the idea of P/e Christianity as a "culture against culture" (Dombrowski 2001; Robbins 2004b) oversimplifies the dynamics and permutations of cultural rupture, a process that may occur across a range of points in the cultural and historical fabric of a society. Indeed, as my discussion of Oksapmin expressive culture within a variety of churches has shown, discontinuity may be mediated in a variety of ways, with resonant, dissonant and sonant being three of the most salient. The junctures at which each mode of rupture draws the line between sin and sanctity vary considerably, thus the use of the phrase "breaking points" to emphasise the diverse and plural character of approaches to rupture.

It may of course be the case, as seen for projects of dissonant rupture, that these forms of Christianity seek to expunge indigenous culture and expressive forms within their worship. But, as seen, it is also possible that they may either stop short of, or, alternatively, go much further than this in their cultural critiques. Projects of resonant rupture endorse and may even promote the use of indigenous expressive forms, while those Christians undertaking sonant rupture may minimise and reject instrumentation altogether. In short, there are a variety

of distinct types of cultural rupture within evangelical and Pentecostal performance that are obscured by simplistic understandings of cultural rupture as entailing a complete break with the past. Indeed, the past may continue within P/e Christianity in direct, intentional and obvious ways. While the three approaches draw the fault lines of rupture at different junctures – the religious, the local and the social – all take as their basic precondition that traditional religion must be dispensed with, even if elements of local cosmology are ontologically preserved. The literature on evangelical, charismatic and Pentecostal Christian performance clearly demonstrates a systematic intolerance for the inclusion of indigenous expressive forms that specifically recall the world of the ancestors, ancestral spirits and other indigenous spiritual forces, all of which come in for special attention through processes of diabolisation.

It is worth noting that, as seen throughout the article, these three modes of establishing discontinuity find expression elsewhere in the Pentecostal-evangelical world and are thus of significant comparative value. For example, as well as in Handman's work in Papua New Guinea and Marshall's own research among the Navajo, we can see resonant rupture at play among Polynesian charismatic Christians, described in an excellent article by Fer (2015), as well as in Australia (Riches 2015), as groups draw upon existing traditional performance repertoires to engage with the spirit. Dissonant rupture, too, is a widespread phenomenon within global P/e Christianity. It can be seen not only within Melanesia (Gillespie 2016) but also in West Africa (Hackett 1998; Meyer 1998, 1999) and Latin America (Gladwin 2015). So central is this attitude of moral vilification to Pentecostalism that it is likely that many more examples exist. Lastly, we also see that not only is sonant rupture is found in the Oksapmin and Papua New Guinean contexts, but it is also a key part of Engelke's (2007) analysis of apostolic Christians in Zimbabwe, who strongly eschew the use of all instrumentation in the pursuit of a direct relationship with the divine. An interesting additional characteristic of dissonant rupture is that it is not restricted to the P/e world but appears to comfortably fit a range of fundamentalist moral climates. The SDA Church is a case in point, but we can also think of a strong thread within early Quaker thought that opposed the use of musical instruments. The application of all three categories is thus potentially very broad.

My discussion of the Oksapmin ethnographic material as well as the supporting comparative literature has shown there to be at least three key ways in which Christians within the P/e tradition mediate discontinuity and rupture in their expressive practices. This key fact leads to a more general point that should have emerged tacitly

throughout the article, namely, that while it is useful to think of P/e Christianity as a religious tradition that places a considerable amount of energy and focus upon rupture, the fact that different groups within this tradition grapple with this theological imperative in myriad ways powerfully underscores the fact that there are clear ruptures within the tradition itself. P/e Christianity, that is, is not simply a monolithic culture that reproduces itself in an identical fashion wherever it goes, even if it does produce general effects (Robbins 2004b), but one that plays out variously within each denomination, even congregation, according to differences in history and theological emphases.

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