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Chapter 1

Introduction

The objective of this thesis

This thesis examines the evolution of a collection of children's art created during the late 1960s and early 1970s in Catholic mission churches based in Enga, a province of the Highlands of Papua New Guinea. My objective in this thesis is to identify the Enga children's art as unique narrative art and demonstrate how effective this medium is in cross-cultural communication and expression, especially in a Christian missionary context. I propose that the children of the Enga mission villages absorbed the imagery of unknown Western artists and interpreted it within their own experience, and in so doing, they created a new school of Christian art.

In the West, children's art is generally not seen outside the school classroom as art. However, in Enga this art is recognised for its narrative excellence and therefore the people have established the children's drawings as art in a communicative context. Thus the meaning of the Enga children's work, the interpretation of their art within a provincial and historical cultural context is investigated to determine what influences have made this art distinct.

The scope of the work undertaken for this thesis

The first chapters of the thesis concentrate on literary research, defining the character of children's art within the complex milieu of Western art aesthetics. This positions the Enga children's art within art for the contemporary Catholic church. The Wabag Diocese Missions have been incorporated into the history, geography and culture of the Enga people thus placing them in a religious framework.

The influence of European culture, in particular language and illustrated Biblical texts, was considerable; and the child art evolution from a sub-culture of semi-literate

indigenous people established a solitary movement in global art history, especially as two dimensional painting and drawing was not a traditional art form in Enga culture. During the late 1960s and early 1970s, the main form of artistic expression of the Enga was applied body art. In the Highlands, body art is a form of communication, transcendent and gender specific, demonstrating social values (Strathern, 1971: 171-173).

The research I conducted on a two week field trip to the Pompabus, Wanepap, Kasap, Pina and Kilimb (Tongae) missions, in the Wabag Catholic Diocese of the Enga, forms the foundation of this thesis. My research documents and analyses the iconography of the art. A visit to the Pompabus and Wanepap village schools (to study the current art education system) has been used as a means of determining, within reason, the original teaching environment, taking into account the information offered by field workers interacting with the children at that time. Photographs and interviews taken on the field trip have been essential for the thesis' coherence and argument. Information contributed by parish priests working, or in contact with the five missions in the late 1960s, early 1970s and correspondence from teachers and former school students, verified my study of the children's art, in particular Martha Muigg.

Marthia Muigg, a volunteer teacher with the Austrian Service for Development Cooperation, was one of many European volunteers working in education in the Wabag Diocese missions in the 1960s and 1970s. Martha was instrumental in the evolution of the children's art in the Enga churches.

Methods of investigation and research

In much of the literature published on children's art an understanding of the scope and cognizance of the child's mental development takes precedence over their artistic achievement. Most literature on children's art is published within psychology, art

therapy and secondary school education parameters, but it does not exist with any consequence in contemporary art aesthetics.

It would appear however, that there is a place in Christian ideology and instruction for children's art as 'art for arts sake', but I believe that the context and circumstances for which, or by which it is introduced and implemented must be approached from a different perspective to education, psychology and art therapy.

Christian missions, their educational policy and participation in the production of children's art is perhaps one of the few, if not the only sphere where a child's work is recognised as art and appropriated within a religious context accordingly.

I was first informed of the children's art in Enga by an anthropologist, Dr Maria Wronska-Friend, who had worked for ten years in Papua New Guinea and my subsequent knowledge of this art came initially from an article by Dr Hermann Janssen in an exhibition catalogue, *Kinderzeichnungen aus Papua-Neuguinea*, published in 1974 by MISSIO-Internationales Katholisches Missionwerk e.v., Aachen, Germany. The disciplined continuity of a distinct style made it difficult to identify these drawings within an artistic framework. This presented a challenge to determine a place in art for them (Illus. 1).

The Most Rev. Hermann Raich, SVD, Bishop of the Catholic Diocese of Wabag, gave me permission to visit the Wabag missions and research and photograph the children's art. He endorsed my proposal to visit the churches with children's art, notably, Pompabus, Kilimb, Wanepap, Kasap and Pina however Kandep was excluded from the itinerary as the security situation had deteriorated.

I was based at the Pompabus Mission at Wapenamanda. Father Peter Granegger, SVD, made arrangements for me to visit the churches within the areas of Pompabus,

Kilimb and Pina. Pompabus was the birthplace of the first children's artworks in the churches and they are the largest of the Wabag collection in aggregate and format. Father Peter had also organised the assistance of Mina Kakale, a young woman who worked within the mission and knew the mission church congregations of that area well. Mina made contact with the original child artists, now adult men and women, and she organised for them to come to the mission so that I might discuss the drawings with them. Mina accompanied us when Father Yoseph Mesa, SVD, parish priest at Pina church took us on his routine visit and it was there, through Mina, that I met Angela Pili, the only artist who could identify drawings that were all her own work.

Before my arrival, arrangements had been made by the parish priest Father Bogdan Swierczewski, CSMA, to visit two missions' churches near the town of Laiagum and meet with the headmaster and catechist at each venue. At the Wanepap school, the headmaster, Thaddeus Kaimalan had organised his class so that I could 'sit in' his class during an English language class (Illus. 2). At the church in Wanepap the catechist, Chris Paiya, had been a pupil at the school when the drawings were created and he explained the origin of the church art. The Kasap school headmaster, Paul Sunu, and the catechist, Koronilus Manda knew the drawings' history well although they were not pupils at the school when the drawings were created. This information came later through correspondence with the parish priest at that time, Father Szabo Imre, SVD, now retired in Budapest. Whilst in Wanepap I interviewed two nuns with many years experience in the Wabag Diocese, Sister Claire Gilchrist, RSM, a nursing sister and Sister Jennifer Bailey, RSM, a teacher.

For the research, I first explained the nature of the work and why I needed the information. At each interview the informant signed a statement granting me permission to use the photographs and taped information in my thesis.

Helen Pili, a teaching Sister at the *Holi Kros Paris* (Pompabus) Community School, invited me to 'sit in' her class of nine year olds for a day. I watched the children whilst they had an English language and art lesson (Illus. 3).

Father Joseph Krettek, SVD, was parish priest when the drawings were originally produced and I met him during the early days of my visit to the Wabag Diocese Mission. Since the 1970s, Father Joseph had remained in contact with the 'key players' in the creation of the children's art and he had the addresses of most of the teachers and parish priests working with the children at that time. Whilst on leave in Europe in September 1996, he brought back with him from Austria, Martha Muigg's original album of children's art, (a gift to Martha when she was teaching in Pompabus) and left it with me to study in Canberra. This album was vital in the reconstruction of the history of the children's work, as the quality and character of the drawings within this volume inspired Martha to decorate the church in Pompabus with children's art

I had opportunities on many occasions to observe mission work. These observations were essential to my research as I believe the acquisition of material within the customary activities of the mission gave credence to my theories on the value of the children's art within this community. It was extremely fortunate on my part to be in Pompabus for the fiftieth anniversary of the Catholic Church in Enga, the *Yia bilong Baible 100 yia ol SVD Misionari I stap long Nugini Klostu 50 long Enga* (Illus. 4). The preparations for the service on 14 April 1996 were accomplished by the parishioners including the decoration of the Pompabus church for the celebration service (Illus. 5). A large crowd attended the service that was conducted outside the church so that all could participate (Illus. 6-10). Crusaders would then carry the Bible to all villages in the parish over the next two weeks (Illus. 11). They returned accompanied by a colourful entourage of parishioners, including a string quartet (Illus. 12).

The organisation and the content of the thesis

A formal analysis of the children's art was adopted with the intention of placing the children's art within Christian ideology. A comparison with other children's art was not feasible as there are no comparable biblical works collectively and culturally, to my knowledge, in churches anywhere in Papua New Guinea. There are individual works in isolation, for example those published in Robert Cole's *Their Eyes Meeting the World: The Drawings and Paintings of Children*, and *The Spiritual Life of Children*, but these are studies on the way a child sifts and sorts spiritual matters (Coles 1990: xvii). There are individual works published on a child's conception and depictions of the narrative themes from the Old and the New Testaments in the *International Children's Story Bible: Illustrated by Children Around the World*, as another example. However, these children were assumed to have the advantage of a knowledge of an established tradition in some form of Christian art however informal, and, a place if not a home in a Christian community. My point is that these children were familiar with the concept of two dimensional art and they must also have been aware, although perhaps not involved in, the centuries of Christian art and architecture that abound in the West. The most logical approach to adopt was to assess the progression and development of this unique art and its function in Enga culture.

Chapter 2

Art in Western Culture

Art and communication

Both a definition and a classification of art is subjective, and although critics and art historians establish the rules of art appreciation, there are no rules to make these decisions acceptable to the viewer on an individual basis. It cannot be established or proved what constitutes a work of art, but it can be proved that a work of art in question is a work of art to someone (Forbes Watson, editor of *The Arts*, quoted in Munro 1951: 10).

A definition of art appreciates a philosophy or theory of visual beauty, including an interpretation by which meaning is transmitted or communicated into tangible images that stimulate the sense of sight. Art thus perpetuates a visible world, but the values that determine a work of art have changed with the circumstances and progression of the human race. Values that define 'art' are progressively discarded and new ones are established, even old ones are re-instated. These values differ conceptionally and contextually in origin and purpose. They differ 'in value' independently and accordingly from within a cognitive, historic, social, emotional, sentimental, religious, educational, economic and therapeutic point of view (Budd 1995:1). Thus the application of these values in any model increases the understanding of the functional value of the work. Art can only be appreciated when its *raison d'etre* is recognised and understood.

All cultures in the history of the human race have created art, it is a cultural product like any other and as such, it must be identified with the society that produced it. Art is visual communication, it embodies meaning, a reflection of the artist's idea expressed visually and if it functions successfully, it has the ability to make known or impart knowledge effectively.

Paintings and drawings are intended for visual use only. Artists are skilled in their discipline and they adhere to the doctrine of their group or movement (Maquet 1986: 202). Accordingly, art is a visual language that must first be understood on the surface, that is, the appearance of the work is visually revealing and as with any language, art has stratified components that must be learned to appreciate the most subtle codes of meaning. Drawing and painting are two dimensional forms of art, they are the creation or order of matter, the relationship of colour, line and mass in space, the deliberate placement of one thing in context with another to create a response in the viewer. This association of ideas dictates visually the attitude or mood of the work.

There is no positive definition, in principle, of art. There is however, recognition that the creativity of the artist is the essential ingredient in artistic productivity. A definition of artistic creativity in Western art revolves around innovation, imagination and originality. These impressions of art emanate from aesthetic values developed within philosophical debate in the progression of Western art and their merits as such are not applicable nor desirable in non Western societies.

Art in Western societies

Western history and culture express European experience and these values are reiterated in the art of the Western world. The term 'art' in Western art tradition encompasses painting, sculpture and architecture and within that milieu, art has progressed in a constant state of change over the centuries, however, the definition and meaning of art has changed within Western culture. To understand contemporary art, a knowledge of the artist and his philosophy of his art is as important as an educated knowledge of the work he produces. This theory is particularly relevant to the Enga children's art.

The meaning and function of Western art differs to cultures in other parts of the world and in view of the lack of traditional art in the Enga children's culture, it is therefore necessary to establish the cross-cultural context and thus the value of the children's art in Enga within their social environment.

Three criteria that will decide the value of the children's art are those that make it significant in the realm of contemporary Christian art and the mission community. First, the acceptance of the work within the Enga community for its narrative proficiency and the ability of the art to inspire Christian devotion will be evaluated, that is, the work must be particularly challenging in the sense that it evokes emotion. Secondly, the originality of the work will be considered in a stylistic, analytical context. Finally, the children's art must be examined to establish that it is the first of its kind, absolute, different in content and applied technique to traditional Christian art.

Children's art in Western societies

In Western culture children's art as an art form in its own right does not appear in the literature or academic journals of art history. It does however, appear in the literature of education and psychology in articles pertaining to the analysis, philosophy and theory of those disciplines. For the educationalists, children's drawings are an indicator of their mental, physical and social growth and development. By eleven, the child has developed an ability to think about things and events that are possible although not necessarily present in the world of actual experience. The ability to think logically about objects develops at the same time as he thinks about his own thoughts, as does his ability to evaluate whether an argument is logical (Bisacre et al 1979: 667).

Clinical studies in art therapy utilise children's art for clinical diagnosis. Robert Coles, the child psychiatrist, wrote that in his experience, crayons and paintbrushes

became a means of communication between physician and patient (1992: VI-1X). For the professionals working in these fields, children's art is read as text, it is not appreciated as an object of material culture, nor is it valued for its aesthetic qualities whatever the criteria may be within the child's culture.

Children's art is evanescent, created when the child is immature and although from an adult's point of view, a child's creativity maybe has potential for development; it is not taken seriously during those 'immature years' of the child's physical growth. Children with an 'artistic aptitude' are monitored within some educational institutions but there are many who lose interest when their work is not valued because it does not fall within the accepted Western concepts of art. Children's art is considered to be in a transitory state and not worthy, as yet, of serious consideration, which of course it is as it has merit in narrative, innovation and expression - visual literacy in an 'unadulterated' form.

Ours is not a culture that places a premium on the artistic activity of young children. Scores of child-rearing books sensitise parents to the importance of reading, writing, numbers and "objective" thinking as necessary for the good life. They say nothing about artistic activity as a source of personal experience, mastery and satisfaction over a lifetime (Sarason 1990: 4)

The English Psychologist Maureen Cox argues that children's art is regarded as a pleasant, non pressurised activity within the primary school curriculum and seldom taught as a skill in its own right, where in fact, drawing is a problem solving activity as intellectually demanding as any other. Cox maintains that any child who demonstrates a need for remedial action within their age group in reading, writing or number has recourse to this facility. However, this is not the case with drawing which is believed to be a natural talent that the teacher cannot do anything about because if they do, they may interfere with the child's 'natural' self-expression. On the

contrary, the lack of remedial action in drawing generally leads to frustration and disinterest due to the lack of solutions to their graphic problems (Cox 1989: 43-44).

Creative propensity is ever present in children but there is always the possibility in Western culture that the originality and creativity displayed by a child is rendered impotent at the onset of formal art instruction.

Whatever its capacity of assimilation, Western culture has long persisted in dismissing three autonomous forms of expression (which one smiles today to see associated, so very different are they from each other): those of children, "madmen" and "primitives" (more will be said about these last two and the inverted commas they call for today). Actually the only common feature of these three forms of expression is the fact that they have been relegated to the same ghetto, on the same charge of illustrating a "prelogical mentality" formulated jointly by ethnologists (Levy-Bruhl), child psychologists (Jean Piaget) and psychiatrists (nearly all of them). (Thevoz 1995, *Art Brut*,: 13).

The art of a child should be evaluated in exactly the same manner as that of an adult. Peter Steiner argues that children are artists in their own right and not underdeveloped adults whose only aim is to imitate adults (1973:2). However, the reverse would appear to be the case. The art of children has been appropriated (with that of indigenous people, especially Africa and the mentally disturbed or mad) and employed or exploited by artists of the twentieth-century. Robert Hughes (1980: 227) wrote, that the compelling ability of all three groups of artists to unequivocally reproduce their experiences, untutored and thus uncensored, has been desirable for many adult artists not blessed with the ability to reveal the reality behind appearances. How does a child accomplish this? Daniel Mendelowitz's (1963: 103-105) synopsis of Viktor Lowenfeld's distinction between the two different artistic personalities is

explicit. Lowenfeld identified two artistic personalities, the visual and the expressive. He felt that the visual artist has an objective and analytical attitude towards what he sees whilst remaining emotionally detached from it. The expressive artist relies more on imagination, he paints how he feels about what he sees and he communicates and conveys visually his emotions. Most artists, including children, have elements of both in their work. Children paint their own perception of the world around them, they seldom copy another, instead, they concentrate on what they personally know exists in their reality. Their method or application is immaterial, what they expose visually in conceptual representation is important.

Children's art is also identified with twentieth-century naive painters. Naive art is characterised by a sublime disregard for academic art conventions of composition and although the effect may not be acceptable within art traditions, the intention of the artist is immediately clear.

However, it is not acceptable to include children's art with the naive painters as they are distinct from one another in the sense that the child's work is fleeting, seldom lasting into adolescence, where it disappears with inevitable maturity. The work of the naive painters however, remains constant. There is also commercial deliberation in the intent of naive artists. Naive artists have exploited their art style for financial gain and although this could be said of most artists within any group or movement it especially so for the naive artists. As a child matures, his natural, instinctive creativity is invariably suppressed in school. Thus intuitive and uninhibited spontaneity is lost forever. School is compulsory in Western cultures and every child within the school system has been exposed to some form of art education if not art history (Greer 1979: 115-116). This is an important point in the evaluation of the Enga children's art as they had not, at that time, the advantage of art as a subject in their school curriculum.

Christian Art in Western Society

Christianity

Historically, Christianity was founded in Palestine in the first century AD, inspired by the teachings of Jesus, a Jew who lived during a time of social unrest when Ancient Rome colonized and ruled the Middle East. The occupation fostered hatred and uncertainty in both communities providing the background to the life and death of Jesus, and this environment was paramount to his ministry (Roberts 1976: 298-303). The basis of his ministry was salvation and redemption and after his death his life was documented in the records now known as the Gospels (Goring 1995: 196). Christians adhere to the Bible, an anthology of early Christian writings in two parts, the first of which is The Old Testament, the Hebrew Bible, the sacred literature of Judaism. The second part is called The New Testament because its writings are believed to represent a new covenant of God with mankind through the sacrifice of Jesus Christ (Metford 1983: 241). The Bible is believed to be the one book for all Christians because it contains the whole plan of salvation (Metford 1983: 50).

Christianity is a proselytising religion, one based on conversion and missionizing (Livingstone 1977: 339-340). Christianity has been the most assertive exponent of the missionary religions and their clergy are sent to almost every country in the world to teach the faith and establish and support agricultural schemes, schools, hospitals, housing schemes and church organisations (O'Brien and Palmer 1993: 109). The history of missions is the history of Christianity.

Roman Catholicism

The doctrine, worship and life of the Roman Catholic church, is the version of Christianity held by the largest Christian denomination (Goring 1995: 444). It is characterised by a hierarchical structure of bishops and priests in which doctrinal and disciplinary authority are dependent upon apostolic succession with the Pope as head of the Episcopal college. The focus of Christian life in the Roman Catholic church is

the liturgy, the prescribed, official and public services of the church (as opposed to private devotions) which includes words (written text), music, actions and symbolic aids (Goring 1995: 306).

Christian Art

Christian art was the focus of Western art and architecture since the third-century AD until the mid nineteenth-century. Throughout this time, the Roman Catholic church had been responsible for the majority of the art produced in the Christian world. Consumerism flourished with secularisation, as religious ideas and organisations lost influence when faced with science and other forms of knowledge.

The early Christians believed that any representation or semblance of a religious image was idolatrous and akin to worshipping a false God. Perhaps to appease themselves of this law, they found solace in symbol art, a visual and tangible reality representational of a religious or spiritual belief. Gradually, everyday items became religious and sacred emblems of faith.

In a twentieth century characterised by anti-religious and ardent materialistic tendencies, art devoted to biblical subjects is declining (Usherwood and Holberton 1987: 5). I would argue that in Western art this assumption is well founded, however Christian art survives in Enga.

The function of art in Christianity

Christian art is dedicated to the majesty of God. Real devotion, especially prayer, can only be brought about if there is a definite atmosphere in the church and the creation of this atmosphere is the fundamental function of sacred art (Regamey 1963: 41). There is no law within the Christian Church that opposes the nature of sacred art that is truly sacred and truly alive, although there are restrictions on excessive realism and symbolism. There is however, an obligation to satisfy the deepest needs

of the faithful and this must be within a universal language. It is also expected that the artist have an affinity with their subject matter and treat it seriously, with Christian character and affiliation (Regamey 1963: 124).

The aim of Christian art is insight and the iconographer Gertrude Schiller has said:

The function of Christian art is highly allusive: it suggests something beyond the visible object. Each artistic representation of a biblical story is not merely an illustration of the text, but, whether the artist is aware of the fact or not, an interpretation. Art moves hand in hand with the liturgy to actualize the events of the salvation (Schiller 1971:1)

The historical theologian Margaret Miles defines the function of this art within Christian thought:

Religion needs art to orient individuals and communities, not only conceptually but also affectively, to the reality that creates and nourishes, in solitude and in community, human life. Religion, as we have seen, is a complex of concepts about the self, the world, and God; it is also an altered perception of the meaning and value of the sensible world, a different way of seeing. Both are cognitive functions, both involve an organisation of experience, but they are different in content and they train different capacities in human beings (Miles 1985: 4).

Chapter 3

Enga Culture and Christianity

The Enga Province

Papua New Guinea, in particular the Highlands, was perhaps among the last unexplored territory in the world to be detected by Western explorers. In 1933-1934 the brothers Michael and Daniel Leahy accompanied by Jim Taylor, a patrol officer, ventured into the Waghi Valley in search of gold. Government posts and mission stations followed soon after. The Highlands were closed in 1935 to further European expansion although the missionaries were allowed to stay and this remained the status quo until the Japanese invasion. An airstrip was built in Wabag in 1939 for supplies and aerial surveys in the area, and it became a patrol post in 1941 (Meggitt 1973: 15-17). The area was 'opened up' to outsiders with the assistance of small single-engine aircraft and landing strips are found on the most precarious slopes throughout the mountain ranges.

The Enga and their culture

The Enga Province in the central highlands is the highest, coldest and least developed province in Papua New Guinea and fertile central plateau sustains a large population of culturally distinctive Highlanders. The Highland tribes differ in physical characteristics and customs within Enga and they form the largest single language group in the country. In 1991, there were 164270 Enga citizens and 264 expatriates (Rannells 1991: 40).

The Enga have for centuries been subsistence farmers, traders and warriors and the survival of the clan depends on the combined efforts of both men and women. The responsibilities of each are clearly defined as is the work which is divided into men's and women's work. Men were are the defenders of the clan and the well being of

their people is paramount, especially maintaining congenial relations with neighbouring clans, their ancestors and the spirit world (Kyakas et al 1992: 106).

The Enga Province is densely populated and violent disputes, which frequently develop into warfare (especially over land ownership, theft and pay-back obligations among others), are a traditional and active part of Enga culture.

Leadership, or the clan head is not inherited but awarded on merit that constitutes a very competitive society (Wet Ipu 1987: 7). Today, 'Big men', men of wealth, prestige, economic and political power are elected to the position and their responsibilities are concentrated on the welfare of their people and the clan as a whole. These leaders must demonstrate a measure of humility and modesty in this position and they also need assistance in managing their many obligations to relations and the clan. Accordingly, they enlist the help of their many wives to produce children, gardens and pigs (Tumu et al 1989: 21).

The women are especially accomplished and profitable gardeners and they work very hard for long hours in their gardens. They harvest not only the sweet potato, (which is the staple diet for both humans and pigs, with approximately two thirds of the crop going to the pigs), but a variety of vegetables, fruit and nuts as well. The gardens in Enga are lush and beautiful with an abundance of flowers grown in conjunction with the edible produce.

Pigs have great value in Enga society and much depends on their proliferation in Enga culture. They are raised by the women and they represent wealth in a culture of liability, compensation, exchange and ceremony. A young man cannot be initiated without having pig-meat, nor can a man marry without pigs because they constitute the bride price (Brake et al 1979: 62). Before the introduction of money, pigs were a form of currency, and they were exchanged in bride payments, land settlements and

peace negotiations. Today they are valued for ceremonies as opposed to a regular meal (Tumu et al 1989: 16).

The oral tradition in Enga society, language and literacy

The oral tradition in Enga is perceived in the same way as histories from other pre-iterate societies, a verbal record of the past with explanations and meaning for current practices and beliefs and it is essential to the survival of their culture and social organisation (Douglas et al 1988: 4). Enga is the only province in Papua New Guinea where one language only is spoken, however, in many dialects. Today, Tok Pisin, Pidgin English, is widespread throughout the country and English is the official language of the Papua New Guinea Government.

Westernised Education in Enga

The Wapenamanda Community School was established in Pompabus by the Catholic Mission in 1954. In 1969, the major concentration of educational effort was the development of a viable system which would prepare the indigenous student for a place within his own rapidly changing society (Dept. of Information 1969: 47). This was to be accomplished in schools specially designed for this purpose, where the students were taught in English using foreign language techniques as very few spoke English before lessons in primary school (Dept. of Information 1969: 47).

Mission Schools around 1969 were staffed by voluntary Christian agencies as literacy was considered an important step towards the acceptance of the faith and participation in the mission activities (Dept. of Information 1969: 49). The 1952 Education Ordinance by the (then) Legislative Council for the Territory of Papua and New Guinea, granted financial assistance to the missions and made it illegal to conduct a school without the approval of the Director of Education. The intention was to encourage the missions to adopt the aims of the state education system (Dept. of Information 1969: 49).

The traditional spiritual beliefs in Enga society

A definition of a spiritual belief in any context is a challenge and although many cultures may share common traits with other systems of belief, the practice and doctrine will vary quite dramatically from culture to another. Belief is a set of convictions held by a society or a group of people; in supernatural beings, powers and forces and it has a part to play in a society's cohesion. Implicitly, a belief in a supernatural power is the vehicle by which a community or an individual, adjusts to and rationalises their existence in the world around them. Thus ritual expresses and reinforces the belief and rituals are enacted to overcome crisis when it is held that a problem cannot be solved in a known sphere of knowledge and help is sought from supernatural beings and powers to intervene, guide or direct. There is a moralistic attitude in most traditional beliefs, be they absolute and responsibility from decision making, or adhesion to the given laws of behaviour within a community.

Enga religious beliefs and practices stemmed from oral histories and they centred around the 'sky people' and the ancestors. The mythical sky people lived a similar life to those on earth but their world was one of plenty. They were created by the creator of all things, the god Aitawe (symbolised by the sun) and although remote from life on earth, they were responsible for the weather, earth tremors and land slides (Tumu et al 1989: 33-35). The beliefs about the sky people explained the origins of man and natural events and these had little influence on everyday life, that was the prerogative of the ancestor. These beliefs were compatible with Christian beliefs and made the assimilation of the two acceptable to the Enga (Tumu et al 1989: 34).

It was necessary to maintain good relations with the sky people and the ancestors to live in a co-ordinated world (Kyakas et al 1992: 136). Albert Wet Ipu (1987:32) wrote that the Enga were not only expected to honour their obligations of living relations, they were also obliged to uphold relations, through rituals, with the

ancestors as well, and although the beliefs and rituals varied from community to community, the rationale was similar.

The ancestors were taken very seriously as they were thought to have much more serious implications for both the individual and the clan (Kyakas et al 1992: 136). The ancestor most recently deceased was credited with malicious behaviour of a personal nature and a 'specialist' in this field could identify the ghost responsible and slaughter pigs to pacify it. These ancestors also had the power to influence the action of a person in everyday life. Ancestors who died long ago were believed to be collectively responsible for misfortune that may befall a clan or tribe, for instance a famine, epidemic or prolonged warfare and to restore harmony, fertility ceremonies were conducted by ritual experts. These ritual ceremonies brought together many clans in the spirit of shared crisis, giving support, hope and encouragement to one another (Wet Ipu 1987: 32-35).

The traditional role of art in Enga society

The Highlanders did not produce art in the traditional sense. Sculpture and painting were confined to the lowlands, the coastal areas and the islands of Papua New Guinea.

Men's tools were and still are applicable to the task of hunting, fishing and fighting although they are no longer essential for survival. Similarly, women's tools were devised for gardening and carrying capacity. For example, both men's and women's bilums, (hand looped string bags found throughout Papua New Guinea) are constructed in 'dozens' of different types of material, threads, yarns and colour although the knotting technique usually remains constant within one bilum (Illus. 13). The design of the bilum depends on the intended purpose and the decorative pattern is taken from anything and everything imaginable (Pers. Comm. Minna Kakale). There

was not however, other domestic art such as weaving, basketry or pottery (Tumu et al 1989: 22).

There were no art forms in Enga to compare with the Pompabus children's art at the time of its creation. Sand painting was later produced at the Enga Cultural Centre in Wabag in a form and medium appropriate to the Enga culture and environment (Simons in Cochrane et al 1990: 41). Today, the sand paintings on exhibition at this Centre vary and change depending on the artists in residence at the time.

The idea of sand painting came from Akii Tumu, the Director of the Enga Cultural Centre in Wabag, who organised the Centre as an art school and village art industry using inexpensive materials found locally. It is interesting to note that the materials and the techniques were variations of those used by the children in Pompabus in the late 1960s and early 1970s. The subject matter differs but it has the same aim, to describe and inform viewers of Enga traditional and spiritual life.

The Enga sand paintings were made by first outlining the figures or objects on a prepared surface (standard plywood) within the picture space. Selected components of this composition were given an application of wood glue. This surface was then sprinkled with a sand made from local ground ochres or pulverised rock depending on the colour needed and when it was fixed, the next colour was applied. When the sand application was dry the surplus was tapped off. Finally, when the painting was completed, a lacquer was sprayed overall to seal the surface. Again, it is noteworthy that this production technique resembles that of the children in Pompabus. A 'master' artist designed the main subject and thereafter the infill was left to the students and helpers leaving the master to work on other larger pieces. There was a progression throughout this system for the students to gain experience and become master sand painters (Simons et al 1990: 41).

However, the Enga have always felt that their art lay within a narrative tradition; public speaking and body decoration.

Art and material culture are poorly developed among the Enga, but oral traditions and skill in public speaking has become a fine art (Wet Ipu 1987: 7).

In the past, the principle art in Enga was the art of public speaking and it still is to some extent today. Men attain status and influence largely through their skills in public oration. This is not surprising as their only true power over others is the power of persuasion (Tumu 1989: 22).

There was another visual, more culturally significant art form from which the children raised in this environment must have developed their appreciation of pageantry, symbolism, pure and rich colour, line and form, and that is the expressive medium of subjective experience, body art.

Small children accompanied adults to many events and there were no separate children's songs, stories or occasions.

Children sang songs sung by their parents and listened to the often frightening myths told in the family (Kyakas et al 1992: 13).

Body decoration

Body decoration is a cultivated, sophisticated and illusionary art form, designed to have great impact on the beholder. It is a major art form in Enga and its tradition and history has been recorded in oral traditions dating back many generations. Body decoration is associated with a sing-sing, ceremonial dancing and singing a festivity, invariably associated with feasting. The sing-sing in Enga mythology has been attributed to Lelya, a sky person who adorned himself in splendid and exceptional form and completely out-shone all others present as he danced through the day from place to place, creating a sing-sing at each (Tumu 1989: 47).

Hundreds of people may attend a sing-sing, they are major social events and they vary according to place and occasion, sometimes continuing for days or weeks (Illus. 14).. It is usually the domain of the men but women may participate in full decoration under certain circumstances (Illus. 15). Sing-sings, and more explicitly the body decoration of the dancers, are a means of reiterating social values, clan unity and status and individual wealth and prosperity (Strathern 1971: 172-173). Originally, a sing-sing was organised by clan leaders to give all a chance to discuss future feasts or pig exchanges but today they are more likely to be community affairs of importance. Sing-sings are also marriage alliances, venues sanctioned for young people to meet with their own age group and dance with them in public (Wet Ipu 1987: 11).

Songs are composed for each occasion and include veiled references to the forthcoming event, a deliberate ploy on the part of the host clan, a means of introducing their intentions for and at the celebration (Tumu 1989: 47). Those wishing to participate must assemble the material for decoration and adornment. This is an extremely expensive pursuit and few individuals have the apparel as personal possessions. However, there is a borrowing system within the clan through which friends and relatives may lend and borrow the basics requirements.

The magnificence and brilliance of the Highlander's body art is first demonstrated in the 'surface value' in the arrangement of lines, shapes and colours, and then there is the subject, the person behind the decoration who communicates meaning in response to the encounter. The most basic elements of body art are structured in colour, texture and physical dominance to appear all powerful and render the wearer unrecognisable (Tumu 1989: 48)

The dancers wear feather head-dresses and hair wigs, layers of floor length woven net aprons hang from special belts, the aprons moving as one in rhythm with the dancers and their drums (Illus. 16) Men's belts and hair wigs distinguish regional dancers.

As the quality of a Highlander's 'wholeness' is measured by the appearance of his skin, participants in the dancing oil and stain their bodies so that they appear burnished and healthy. Faces are painted with charcoal and black, red, white and yellow ochres. Traditionally, body ornaments were natural, readily available plant and animal material. In recent years trade store paint has replaced the natural ochres and manufactured items, such as tins and mirrors, the body ornaments. But the ingenuity in application remains the outstanding characteristic of the dancers. The head-dresses of the Highlanders are traditionally very tall with elaborate towering extensions made from Bird of Paradise and Cassowary feather. Both species are expensive because they are obtained by trade from other areas and a sign of wealth and status (Swadling 1996: 99-103)

I was invited to the sing-sing at Pumakos for the *Buk Baible: Jubili Yia 1996-1997 Katolik Daiosis Bilong Wabag* celebrations on 25 April 1996; and photographs taken at the time illustrate the continued cross-cultural role of body decoration in the Enga culture (Illus. 17-19). The values by which the Enga assess the quality of their own unique art form is esoteric and thus ambiguous to the outsider.

Chapter 4

Christian Missions in Papua New Guinea

Christianity has always been a missionary religion and throughout its history it has been the most assertive of missionary religions (O'Brien and Palmer 1993: 108-110). To missionize non-Christian people has been paramount in Christian convictions and practice from the beginning (Livingstone 1977: 339-340). The Gospels record, in Mathew 28:19, the ordinance of Jesus Christ:

Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in
the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost:

(Thom. Nelson Bible Pub. 1976: 1459).

The introduction of Christianity to Enga

In 1933, the Catholic mission at Alexishafen established a station at Bundi (Bismarck Range) and from this post three Society of the Divine Word missionaries crossed the Chimbu valley and arrived in Waghi. Father William Ross later led a further five Society of the Divine Word missionaries from Bundi to set up a mission posts first at Kundiawa and some time later at Mt. Hagen. Within two years there were ten European mission posts between Kainantu and Mt Hagen.

The first missionaries in Enga, Fathers William Ross and Gerard Bus arrived in Wabag in 1947 to reconnoitre for the Catholic church as a matter of some urgency as other denominations were already well established in the area and rivalry was intense, and virtually, effective (Kruczek 1995: 13-15).

The Wabag Catholic Diocese

Pope John Paul 11 authorised the Wabag Diocese as a Suffragan Diocese on 18 March 1982 within the metropolis of Mount Hagen (Kruczek 1995: 34). On that same day, Father Hermann Raich, SVD, the Parish Priest of Wabag and Bishop's

Vicar in the Enga territory was appointed the Most Reverent Hermann Raich, SVD, Bishop of Wabag and consecrated on 29 April 1982.

The boundaries of the Wabag diocese follow those of the Enga civil province which is divided into six districts, Wabag, Wapenamanda, Kompiam, Lagaip, Kandep and Pogera. The Wabag diocese was initially investigated and then opened by the clergy of The Society of the Divine Word, an international religious community of priest and brothers. The Society of the Divine Word was founded by the German, Arnold Janssen, who was ordained a diocesan priest in 1861 and began his ministry as a teacher. In a magazine, *The Little Messenger of the Sacred Heart*, he started to promote mission awareness and also infused the idea of a seminary to train diocesan priests for the missions. The Mission house, *St. Michael the Archangel* in Steyl, Holland was dedicated in 1875 and the Society of the Divine Word was created. The society grew rapidly to serve ever expanding mission fields and organised additional mission houses in Austria and Germany. Today, the Society of the Divine Word has a membership of five thousand spread throughout fifty countries and the work of the missionaries is consistent with, and dependent on, the needs of the local church and the particular expertise the society brings to the task (The Society of the Divine Word, <http://www2.one.net.au/~divineword/> 07/11/97).

Pompabus station was founded in Wapenamanda in 1948 by Father Gerard Bus, a member of the Divine Word Missionary Society. It was the first Catholic mission (and parish) in the area and it was administered by the Bishop in Mount Hagen. At the same time Pumakos in the Tsak valley, destined to become a very large mission community, was established.

The missions with churches displaying children's drawings were established at different times, Pina near Pompabus in 1948 and later, Wanepap in the Laiagam area, in 1954. Kasap, under the direction of Father Imre Szabo, SVD, became a parish

when he was appointed the resident priest there (Kruczek 1995: 18-32). Kilimb (Tongae), the tiny mountain top church is within the Pompabus parish.

The role of the Catholic missions in Enga society

The clergy worked systematically to christianise the Enga people by preaching, praying and Christian acts of love. Negotiations were initiated very early to purchase land from the Enga for the construction of mission stations, churches and schools (Kruczek 1995: 82).

The study of the Enga language produced the first prayer book and catechism, and later, a catechism with explanations was published. By the 1960s young, literate Engas were employed as choir masters and prayer leaders. Subsequently, the outstations had their own lay people trained and entrusted with the responsibility of conducting the Sunday service in their parish. Nevertheless, for the priests religious instruction remained the vital obligation and it was honoured within the Sacrifice of the Mass (Kruczek 1995: 81-87). In accordance with the SVD missionary policy, the missionary church is directed towards the autonomy of the local churches (Kruczek 1995: 71). Enga was the last territory in Papua New Guinea to be served by the SVD congregation and the first to produce an indigenous priest. Subsequently, four others have been ordained in the Wabag diocese.

Generally, the missions in Papua New Guinea were instrumental in initially implementing the country's infra-structure notably air transport, medical services and especially, education. For example in 1936-37, the government managed six schools as opposed to two thousand administered by missionary organisations. The mission schools included thirty-five training centres, fifty-six high, intermediate and technical schools, one hundred and ten elementary schools and one thousand, eight hundred and forty-eight village schools (Elkin 1936 382).

The history and role of the Austrian Service for Development Cooperation in Papua New Guinea

The Austrian Service for Development Cooperation stems from the Catholic Youth Movement in Austria. Their response to the biblical bidding to extend the Good News of Christianity to the ends of the world manifested itself in practical terms. In the late fifties this movement instituted a program to support developing countries (Buerstmayr 1993: 6). Some of their proposed projects were published in *Die Wende*, the magazine of the Rural Catholic Youth Austria and the subsequent interest in their combined vision, in a sense, guaranteed their success.

In the early 1960s, some of the first volunteers were seconded to the American Bishop Arckfeld to work as lay missionaries, (Arckfeld was famous as the Bishop who established the Flying Mission on the North Coast of New Guinea around Wewak, administering to remote missions). In time, the development strategy within Papua New Guinea became the major regional program in the Austrian Service for Development Cooperation's operations (Zeiner 1993: 8). In 1972 the first field office was opened in Mount Hagen and in the thirty years of operation since 1963, four hundred development workers have completed assignments with the organisation in Papua New Guinea (Buerstmayr 1993:6-7). Martha Muigg was a volunteer in this service and through this organisation met the children of Enga.

The background to children's drawings in the mission churches in Wabag

The background to the children's drawing has been provided by many different people in Enga and Europe. Whilst in Enga it was not possible at that time to trace all the artists, now adults, so that I might interview them. However, members of the clergy and many of the local people contributed where they could to fill in the relevant details. Teachers and volunteers from Europe who were working in the Wabag diocese when the drawings were created, have given explicit details of their

observations and experiences at that time and they are acknowledged throughout the text.

Mrs Martha Muigg's Private collection

Martha Muigg arrived in Enga in 1966 with a co-volunteer and teacher, Ursula Lechpammer. Together they worked from 1966-69 as teachers in the Pompabus Community School which was established by the Catholic mission in 1954. At the end of 1969, Ursula left and Martha carried on alone until her return to Europe on 23 August 1970.

The Pompabus school was at that time still in the developmental stage and it was hard to attract pupils, especially girls as the girl's families got more 'bride price' if the daughters were un-educated (Muigg 1996). The classes were co-educational and Martha never knew exactly the pupils ages at that stage, as no birthdates were recorded, nevertheless, the estimated ages ranged from seven to eleven in her class. Martha was an experienced teacher having taught Home Economics in Austria and both she and Ursula taught Primary School grades two and three, and in collaboration, started grade four.

In late 1969 early 1970, Martha was the only teacher left at the school although there were other volunteers at the mission doing social work. She was not an artist, having admitted that she 'could not even draw a simple picture' and for this she was later thankful, because she could not influence the children in any way with their art (Muigg 1996).

At this time the school was exclusively a mission school and Religious (Christian) instruction was part of the school program. It was a difficult task to teach this subject to the second grade children as they knew little Pidgin and less English. Martha was fluent in Pidgin but her pupils were not. The mission staff including the

parish priest Father Joseph Krettek had at that time little knowledge of Enga, although after two years of living among the people they mastered the language. There was a Pidgin Bible when Father Joseph arrived in Enga in 1966 but the Enga Bible was not published until the late 1980s (Pers. comm. Father Joseph Krettek).

Father Joseph Krettek recalls Martha's rapport with the children was exceptional. She explained that after some time, when she believed she knew her pupils well, she discovered that it was easier and most rewarding if she taught religious studies in a foreign language. She told them a biblical story and to illustrate it, showed them pictures. The children's comprehension of the topic was excellent. As she recalls, it was 'perhaps similar' to Nazarene art from Europe, the work of a group of German artists who, in the early nineteenth century, formed a brotherhood of painters with the intention of reviving early German religious art as the tool of religion. After the narration she took the pictures away and told the children, especially the younger ones, to draw the story she had told them.

The ease with which the children interpreted the story amazed Martha because she knew there was no art of any description in, or on, their homes. There was no reference, a role model that they could draw from in their own environment, only the memory of a story, told by their teacher in the abstract, and in a foreign language. This I believe was the success of Martha's art program with the children although how this liaison functioned has not been researched in this thesis. What has evolved however, is that together, Martha and the children found a common language, a visual language.

It is not known what illustrations were shown to the children, the artists recall both pictures and books. Father Joseph said there were black and white illustrations of the Stations of the Cross from Germany hanging in all the churches at that time. Many

copies had been printed by one of the fathers and they were readily available and most, if not all, of the children would have seen them.

Whatever the illustrations were, they were foreign and completely out of the sphere of knowledge and experience of the Enga children, but this did not bother nor deter them. The children liked working with Martha, and not only did she manage them very well, they were receptive of her teaching methods (Pers. comm. Father Joseph Krettek). They thought it was all play, certainly not a task, and especially not part of the school curriculum although it was taught in class. The Pompabus children were never idle, and at that time, when a visitor called at the mission every child in sight was busy, either drawing or making some craft item, they revelled in being busy (Pers. comm. Sister Claire Gilchrist) and this remains the same today (Illus. 20).

The Pompabus children's art grew initially and quite naturally out of a set of circumstances in their school environment at that time including the materials available. Government stores school issue art materials were used throughout the Diocese because there was nothing else and these included crayons, pencils, school paper and finally, clear varnish spray to fix the crayon and help maintain the colour.

These first children's drawings were amalgamated in an album and presented to Martha and she took it with her on her returned to Europe in 1970. On his return from leave in Europe in 1996, Father Joseph brought the album to Australia and I had an opportunity to study and photograph the children's first work. Four drawings from this album have been selected for analysis: *Creation*, *The slaying of Abel*, *Moses and the Pharaoh's daughter* and *Christ calming the Waters*.

1. *Creation:* Genesis 1: 1-35, 2: 7-25. Illustration 21.

The Bible decrees that God made the universe, the earth was without form, and void; and darkness was upon the face of the deep. On the first day God created light and

darkness thus creating night and day, and on the sixth day He created Adam, the first man, formed from the dust on the ground and God's breath. Adam lay on the ground since God caused a deep sleep to overcome him whilst removing his rib and he thus made Eve, the first woman.

This is a very perplexing subject to give form, especially for a child, but the artists of this composition displayed an original approach and response to the biblical origin of mankind. This composition is cohesive, colour defines the components of the composition. The first day of creation is shown at the top of the picture, distinct from the later sixth day creation where the sun illuminates the darkness. Adam and Eve are distanced from the first day on a different picture plane.

The difficult proportions of the human form are well balanced although there was a slight miscalculation in the length of Eve's feet with the page. Nudity was perfectly normal in these children's lives and this is obvious in the naturalistic depiction of the anatomy of the figures. The modesty of the figures displays the Christian attitude to nudity, Eve covers her breasts and Adam his genitals.

2. *Cain kills his brother Abel:* Genesis 4: 1-8. Illustration 22.

Cain and Abel were the first two sons of Adam and Eve. Cain offered God a gift from his harvested crops which was rejected in favour of Abel's offering of a sacrificed lamb, the best of his flock. In jealous anger, Cain killed Abel and God punished him by banishing him to a nomadic existence. This story has similar characteristics to many Enga examples in their own cultural and mythological traditions; warfare triggered by jealousy, conflict and finally, retribution.

The picture is constructed on three planes, with the cloud scattered sky disappearing over the black horizon of the black middle ground. The middle ground disappears gradually to the left of the composition, an optical illusion of space. This

background, including the realistic hand of God pointing accusingly at Cain, is well designed and clearly executed in comparison to the figures of Cain and Abel in the foreground. This image of God is innovative but nevertheless consistent with traditional Christian art in the sense that a large area of light surrounding a whole figure is reserved for God the Father, Christ and the Virgin.

The figures of Cain and Abel are distorted and flattened so that every part is seen in its most characteristic aspect. The brothers are clad in the traditional Enga ensemble of belt, grass skirt and tanget. Abel bleeds from a head wound and Cain holds one of the Enga weapons, a stone axe. The figures are not as clearly defined nor proportionately as convincing as those in the previous work, probably because they have been completed by different artists.

3. *Moses and Pharaoh's daughter:* Exodus 2: 1-10. Illustration 23.

A large group of the Israelites were slaves to the Pharaohs and fearing their increasing numbers, Pharaoh ordered the death of all Jewish male children. Moses' distraught mother hid him in a basket made of bulrushes at the edge of the Nile River, where he was found by Pharaoh's daughter. Moses' sister Miriam hid and watched the child, and when Pharaoh's daughter identified Moses as a Hebrew child, Miriam offered to find a Hebrew wet-nurse. Moses' mother was brought forward to nurse him. When he was old enough, he was brought to Pharaoh's daughter who adopted and raised him.

The children have depicted this story within contemporary Enga culture, the child Moses is secured in a multi-coloured woven basket which floats on the river beside a luxurious palm tree. The colours are expressive, red, a bold colour has been used to separate the key players in this drama, giving them status and bringing them into focus against the rest of the scene. Pharaoh's daughter and Miriam, the other important person in the story, cannot be mistaken hiding behind the tree. All wear meri blouses,

(the garment introduced by Western missionaries to instil the concept of modesty in Papua New Guinea women) and skirts, the popular contemporary dress in Enga and it is noteworthy that the children have depicted Pharaoh's daughter with long hair whereas her maids peering inquisitively at the child, have the short hair of the Enga people.

4. *The calming of the water:* Luke 8: 22-5. Illustration 24

Christ was in a boat with his disciples on a journey from one side of the lake to the other, Christ was asleep when a fierce wind storm erupted and threatened to drown them all. In terror the disciples woke him. Christ arose, stilled the storm and rebuked his disciples with the words 'where is your faith'?

This scene in traditional Christian art has been depicted with the disciples in either a rowing or sailing boat. The Enga children have interpreted this story within their culture and the tradition vessel in this case would mean a canoe. It appears suspended in turbulent water, formed by the repetition of bands of blue and white. This technique for depicting volume remains one of the identifying characteristics of the Enga children's later works.

This is a scene with appealing emotional expression. Christ is identified by the nimbus (in Christian art the gold circle of light around the head of a divine or sanctified person), surrounding a square red head and the raised hand in blessing, the special favour granted by God. The predicament of the disciples, depicted as Engas, is obvious, one sitting on the edge of the canoe clutches Christ, a second has his arm around Christ's body, and a third grips two others. They cower in the hull of the canoe, all with eyes filled with fear. The artists have repeated this eye motif in all the works in this album but in this instance, the enlarged white of the eye and the pinpoint pupils convincingly suggest fear. This is a wonderful example of children's art,

sensitive, expressive and above all, an empathic and realistic portrayal of anticipated danger.

The art is characterised by simple composition and shapes and intensified with saturated colour. Background is of little importance to the children and where there is one, it consists of bands of flat colour that divide the picture vertically, thus visually pushing the scene forward. Line is important for figures and objects and the quality of the line dictates the mood of the work. There is an extraordinary lack of 'blunders' in the mechanics and application of the art, the children obviously worked in harmony as a team. Martha Muigg's photographs show the children drawing on the ground 'because it was easier to do it that way, especially the outline' (Pers. Comm. Theo Tei, artist).

The success of the first drawings in Martha's album prompted further art production. In 1968, the children were commissioned to illustrate a set of the *Stations of the Cross*. These are an important Catholic devotion during Lent (Murray 1996: 505) and depict episodes on the road to Calvary. The Stations of the Cross are images to pray to, or to meditate upon. This new commission was completed in 1969 at Pompabus by Muni, small Agnes, and Jacob from Anji (Muigg 1996).

Chapter 5

Children's Art in the Wabag Catholic Mission Churches

In the church at Pompabus, there is a set of the *Stations of the Cross* adorning the posts in the nave beneath the large drawings (Illus 28-31). These drawings, when compared with the album and the Pina drawings, demonstrate a further development in the children's work as a group. The same scenes as those in Pina have been chosen to demonstrate this point.

The *Stations of the Cross* images are specific narrative art, illustrating and relating to an incident, usually self-explanatory and well known. It implies a sequence of events within a dimension of time, and allows the viewer to understand the circumstances that led up to the event, and anticipate the end to the story. This tradition of narrative Christian art dates back to the early wall mosaics of the fifth century AD where stories from the Old and New Testament adorned the nave walls of early basilicas.

The *Stations of the Cross* represent places on Christ's route through the streets of Jerusalem, where it is believed he paused on his way to Golgotha (Mathew 27:11-50). The number of stations have grown over the centuries but fourteen have now been authorised. The four stations illustrated portray Christ falling under the weight of the cross, (the third station) the meeting with his sorrowing mother, (the fifth station), a passer-by, Simon of Cyrene is ordered to help Christ carry the cross (the sixth station Mark 15: 20-21) and Veronica. According to legend, she is the woman who offers her head cloth to Christ to wipe the blood and sweat from his face. When Christ returned it to her she found his features had miraculously remained on it. Veronica is not in the liturgy, nevertheless she has an approved place in devotion in the Stations of the Cross.

In these drawings there is an awareness of scale and balance in each composition; including the bound frame that confines the scene and makes the entire image symmetrical. There is greater precision in line creating; almost sharp edges where they are needed, especially in geometric applications. The split black and orange background would normally dominate the scene but, in contrast, the children have made the foreground colours softer and the darker ground pushes the figures into focus. There is more attention to detail in the depiction of clothing although the human anatomy is disproportionate, either the hands are too big or the arms too long but they add expression to a gesture.

St. Michael's Church, Pina

The relationship of the children's drawings to the architecture

The Pina church was opened and blessed in September 1970. It was a central plan, radiating from a central point as opposed to the longitudinal axial plan of Pompabus (Illus. 25-27). The artwork within St. Michael's church is minimal and the little that is there, is rather lost in this enclosed octagonal space (Illus. 33). Traditionally, religious works are designed for emotional impact on the viewer and small images serve this purpose well, as they usually hang in places where they are easily accessible. In St. Michael's, two panel compositions of *The Stations of the Cross* hang on the wall to the right of the entrance as one enters the church (Illus. 34).

The artists who cultivated these unusual depictions of the Passion have used the same composition as those in the Pompabus church mentioned above (Illus. 28-31). It is understood that these tiny panels were made by the same pupils at those at Pompabus and completed long before the church was built. However, I believe the combination of children in this group was different as they did not perceive the *Stations of the Cross* in the same way. They have not taken their inspiration from Martha's illustration of the text. I suggest that they have produced their own

interpretation, and thus a clearly identified style, of the recently completed Pompabus children's images of the Stations of the Cross.

These small Pina drawings are unique in application because they have been arranged on two long panels in sets of seven (Illus. 35-36). This has given an almost 'comic book' narrative of the events, a rhythmic adaptation that eliminates space and concentrates on figures. The works individually resemble miniatures, carefully composed to represent a single dramatic moment with the events before and after shown in context to each other. All are depicted as 'square on', a viewpoint which is consistent with narrative panel formats.

Angela Pili (now married to Michael Mek Bola, a teacher at the St Michael's Community school and my translator along with Mina Kakale) was a small child when the drawings were made and she remembers the scenes she helped create for the *Stations of the Cross* panels. Angela identified two of the stations that she worked on and these have been illustrated (Illus. 35). Father Joseph Krettek suspects that Agnes and Muni also helped design these panels.

The identification of the subject matter in Christian iconography

In biblical history condemned men carried their cross to Golgotha, the place of execution, and when Christ bore the cross; he fell, for the first time, under the weight (Illus 37). Christ is shown beneath the cross and the centurions stand over him, dominating the scene, one with a poised spear reminding the viewer of the horror to come - the Crucifixion. The children had no concept of an army, let alone a centurion of the Roman army, (the equivalent of a sergeant-major in present day defence forces), who on this occasion, was in charge of the Crucifixion. Thus they have portrayed this incident from the knowledge they have of similar circumstances within their own culture, by depicting the centurions in the uniform of the Papua New Guinea Police.

Throughout this series, there are several elements that distinguish it from the other children's work at Pompabus. Simplified figures dominate the compositions and the colours have been treated with equal value which interact and contrast well. However, this was not enough to dramatise the scene so line has been emphasised, especially the solid black line of the cross on the diagonal, which moves the eye across the scene and back to focus on the fallen Christ.

The style has been established, and it is carried throughout the two panels of fourteen images (Illus. 37-40). The solid black line forms the cross on the diagonal until the final scenes of the Crucifixion, where it is on the square. Colours are of equal value, Christ wears a long red garment (Mathew 27: 28), his head is surrounded by a golden nimbus, and the centurions are shown in blue. The other participants in the remaining three illustrations are identified as Enga, in green and orange. Mary is depicted in a meri blouse and a skirt and Simon of Cyrene in the traditional grass skirt and tanget.

These drawings are very important because they demonstrate the difference in the style of separate groups within the Pompabus school of children's art. The narrative sequence has been condensed and concentrated probably because the picture plane has been reduced. Composition is less important, the artists reduced the number of figures to a bare minimum and in so doing they have focused the narrative on the main characters instead of the whole story. Backgrounds are monochrome, less important because the composition of each image is uncomplicated and well balanced. The figures are clumsy in comparison to the earlier images but the rendering of the human form is more realistic and unified throughout the collection (note Christ's hands on the cross are consistent in position). Colours are subtle and harmonious, they work well together in comparison to the saturated colours of the earlier drawings, especially the album and this is interesting, as the artists for both collections used exactly the same crayons. Also, these artists have adhered strictly to colour from the biblical text (Christ's red robe). The application of colour has changed; these young panel artists

have used black for impact to accentuate the most important elements in the story, whereas the album artists used it incidentally. Former *Stations of the Cross* artists used it to dominate and darken the scene. It would appear that the 'Pompabus School' artists have moved on to the next stage in their development. They are experimenting with form, colour and technique and they are disciplined in their approach, an unusual trend in children with little art education, less reference and no peers to consult with.

Pompabus Holycross Mission church collection

In 1970, Martha believed that the church in Pompabus was empty and she wondered if the children could create drawings similar to those in the album to fill the void in the church and keep the children busy. Martha pondered the suggestion with Father Joseph who, after due consideration sanctioned the proposal. This was indeed a very large commission in comparison to Martha's album and the small *Stations of the Cross* images which had been completed perhaps eighteen months before. Nevertheless, the children were organised to start their commission on religious narrative art for the Pompabus church.

Father Joseph purchased standard three-ply plywood for the larger panels in the Pompabus church in Mount Hagen and the Government stores issue Craypas crayons (a combination of crayon and pastel) were again utilised. Craypas crayons are easy to work with and the children exploited their properties most effectively, especially the fluency of application and the manipulative softness.

Father Joseph believed that the children were perhaps twelve or thirteen years old when they completed these large works, they were certainly older than the children who created the first drawings. Man, a very talented student, was in one of the younger classes but Martha took him to work with the older children because he was very good at designing the pictures (Pers. comm. Father Joseph Krettek).

I discussed the drawings in the Pompabus church with four of the artists, now adults, who were working in the area whilst I was in Pompabus. Francis Daka Itokon, Philip Minani, Robert Kome and Mathew Mar (Illus. 41), who were in Grade two and three in 1968, independently supported what Martha and Father Joseph had told me. None could remember the pictures they had been shown to illustrate the stories Martha had told them, but one recalled a small book with small writing. When I asked these artists how they had transposed the small images from the books into the huge works hanging in the Holy Cross church they said it was not at all difficult: 'We put it in the mind and we did it'. None of these artists have continued with any form of artwork since their work at the Pompabus school and they appeared surprised that I should suggest it. They said they had worked on the drawings 'for the people to follow God'.

The children worked in and around the plywood panels placed on the floor or outside on the ground to accommodate the size of the artists! They were organised in two teams and the teams mostly remained constant, working in tandem (Illus. 42-43). The leader, the 'draughtsman' of the team was responsible for arranging all the elements of the composition, first in pencil and when satisfied, in hard line for the 'colour artists' to fill in with craypas (Pers. comm. Father Joseph Krettek). The draughtsman would then go on to the next panel leaving the colourists to complete the first work. Between them, each team developed their own style. The children loved this work, Father Joseph could remember Martha sending them home as late as 10 pm, they simply did not want to stop their drawing and colouring (Pers. comm. Father Joseph Krettek). In view of size of the panel and the size of the children, it is extraordinary that these large format images in the nave and the entrance were completed in two weeks (Illus. 25-27). The *Last Judgement* altar scene came later and that also was completed in two weeks (Illus. 45 and 73).

Sister Jennifer Bailey explained that the children were told the story by Martha, they then told the story to their parents and family. At the same time, Father Joseph reiterated the corresponding story in church to the congregation in conjunction with either the production or the installation of the appropriate images. The images in the churches were considered the property of the whole community, ownership was in no way perceived as that of the school or the artists.

The relationship of the children's drawings to the architecture

The Pompabus mission church was designed and constructed along the traditional lines of early ecclesiastical architecture, believed to be a modified basilican plan based on the Roman assembly hall, originally a space for public administration. The adoption of this plan for Christian liturgy allowed for public celebration and congregational services. The Pompabus church is consistent with this plan although it is not cruciform and thus without a transept, a later development in Christian architecture (Illus. 44).

The internal space is divided into a raised square apse (at the east end for the altar) and three aisles, divided by two rows of columns with the central nave higher and wider than the side aisles, accentuating the depth of the church. Exposed internal timber beams within the roof structure stress height and correspondingly, visually balance the interior architectural form. Apse, clerestory and aisle windows illuminate the church and within this architecture, the children's paintings have been placed for prominent, harmonious and illusionistic effect on the nave walls in a rhythmic succession. The large altar drawing can be seen from the entrance, clearly visible to all worshippers at Communion. Communication between the nave and altar narratives have been dictated and arranged by liturgical tradition. The large nave drawings in the Pompabus church form a narrative sequence from the entrance to the altar and then to the exit of the church. The intent is to prepare the thoughts of the worshippers for the hope of salvation and an end to persecution (Illus. 25-27, 45).

The identification of the subject matter in Christian iconography

1. *Adam and Eve:* Genesis 1: 1-35, 2: 7-25. Illustration 46.

This work is a variation of the Creation from Martha Muigg's album (Illus. 21) Father Joseph has said that these large works were completed at least a year after the first album and this artist's maturing is shown in the composition of this work.

The composition has been arranged on three horizontal planes, effectively separating light and darkness and dividing the background vertically. The figures of Adam and Eve are pushed to the foreground.

This drawing is expressive, the eyes of Adam and Eve appear to deliberate the inner life of man with great intensity and subtlety. The figures evoke an emotional response with first a direct gaze, and second a stillness of pose which combined, give an impression of isolation, innocence and uncertainty even when the drawing is inverted. Adam and Eve are seen in the light of a bold sun and the unity of the figures is convincing and realistic, an effect achieved with smooth continuity of line. Anatomical details have been emphasised and elaborated, the ears are shown and the cheeks and nose are detailed and this was not the case in the earlier drawing by this artist.

A most effective drawing for the beginning of the narrative sequence, especially for a viewer not knowing the story. It suggests there is more to see, and although it is not easy to anticipate the next sequence in the story, one is compelled to find out.

2. *The Angel Gabriel surprises Mary in the potato garden:* Luke 1: 26-38. Illustration 47.

The Archangel Gabriel, one of God's principal winged messengers to mankind and the angel of annunciation, was sent by God to the Virgin Mary to announce that she had been chosen to give birth to Christ. There are many paintings in the world depicting

this story and they usually show Mary reading the prophecy of Isaiah 7: 14, 'a young woman is with child and she will bear a son'.

In this composition, the background is as important as the figures in the foreground, and this is not the case in many of the works in this collection. This is a naturalistic background, taken from nature rather than the story. Mary is shown receiving the news in the one place the Enga children would expect to find a woman about her everyday tasks, the potato garden. The potato vine is true to life in every detail but without regard for the total effect of the vine in the setting. The stems flow naturally and the leaves are shown in stages of maturation. This is one of the few references the children have made to their natural habitat and in this world, they have unified formal figures in an informal setting.

Mary wears a meri blouse decorated with geometric arm and neck bands and the skirt she wears has a similar motif running down its front, the same outfit in the depictions of Mary in the earlier Pina drawings (Illus. 37-40). Gabriel wears a lap-lap, a fabric waist cloth and a coveted item, once a sign of great wealth in Enga as they were beautiful items of exchange. Today, motorcars and tools have this distinction for the children (Pers. Comm. Father Joseph).

It is noteworthy that with the introduction of naturalism there is now rhythm in the composition, achieved with the repetition of design elements and colour. The leaf forms sway, the bodies, faces and arms of Gabriel and Mary are turned in the same direction and sway in unison. Mary has acknowledged the message, her gestures follow his and the eyes address one another. The children have developed this wonderful technique to acknowledge communication between characters and to visually depict emotion.

3. ***The Last Judgement:*** Mathew 25: 31-46. Illustration 73 (Detail).

The Nicene Creed, the first official statement of Christian belief made in AD 325, asserts that Christ shall return in glory. The Gospels envision all nations will come before Christ when he comes on the last day to judge the living and the dead. As a shepherd separates sheep from goats, Christ will separate the righteous on his right for heaven, and the unrighteous on his left for hell. Traditionally, the Last Judgement was depicted in the early churches on, or near the west entrance to remind departing congregations of their destiny.

Pompabus' altar panel of the Last Judgement confronts the congregation throughout the service. It was started in 1970 and completed in two weeks. Four panels of standard plywood were fixed together vertically with two horizontal panels attached to the top forming an enormous picture plane. It was however fortuitous for the composition of a single scene wherein several interrelated events occur simultaneously. The children, with skill and dexterity, followed the lines of the boards and placed Christ in the top horizontal panel with the angels behind him, and those to be judged in the vertical panels beneath him. This allowed for much activity in the nether regions, especially hell.

Christ resplendent in majesty is the presiding judge, and he stands in front of a large gold cross incorporated into a large red sun. I believe the red sun to be symbolic of God, as it has appeared in the scenes where God speaks or commands his people but this has not been verified. Christ, wearing a crown, the emblem of sovereignty, divine and earthly, raises his left hand in condemnation of the wicked and drives them before him into hell where evil spirits await to drag them into the fires of hell. His right hand stretches out to the good and righteous on his right side, drawing them to him.

The children have depicted elements of their own culture to interpret this story, this is an Enga Last Judgement. The seven angels calling the dead to judgement are Enga

angels, they wear laplaps and the children told Father Joseph that these angels are very happy in heaven because they have such beautiful laplaps there and Enga were wearing them at that time (Pers. Comm. Father Joseph Krettek). The righteous are either wearing grass skirts and tangets or shorts with pink and white striped shirts. Father Joseph had given the catechists at Pompabus pink and white striped shirts for Christmas and those going to heaven, possibly the apostles as well as the catechists have been shown in this outfit. Devils are different to people, they are green and blue, reputedly not a favourite colour of the children, and they are an imaginative embodiment of the *tambaran*, in Enga culture the ghost or spirit of an ancestor, frequently evil in nature and intent (Pers. comm, Father Joseph). There is not a single devil in black. Snakes, the symbol of evil and the biblical synonym of Satan crawl over the fallen and red flames on a blackened ground engulf the sinners. A man, upside down and wearing a laplap with a floral branch, has money (*kina*) and cards falling out of his pocket. Gambling was a sin in Enga and it was impossible to obtain cards as they were an illegal import.

The Big Man, with many wives and pigs, is shown in the traditional Enga wig. Martha Muigg recalls that when this picture was finished and the people arrived for Sunday church, a Big Man left after looking at the Last Judgement because he found himself down among the damned people in hell.

The success of this drawing is the form, the structural quality, and the interpretation that is simple basic and direct. The relationship between the sheer size of the work, the shapes, volumes, line and colour, is harmonious and clearly defined.

The variety is the essence of the whole. There is an appreciative contrast in the vertical overcrowded hell and the calm horizontal heaven. Nevertheless, there is logic in the transition from one prophesy to another, the composition is well organised and lucid, unified in a cohesive narrative. The children have made order out of chaos and that is creation.

This drawing epitomises the culmination of the Pompubus 'school' of children's art. A 'school of art' in the West is a group of artists whose work shows general stylistic similarities and can be recognised, geographically and within a time frame, but, without the works being attributed to individual artists.

Private collection Bishop Hermann Raich, SVD

In 1964 the Kandep area opened for European missionaries and in 1965, Father Hermann Raich, SVD, from Austria, took up residence in (Yapum) Mang. In 1966 he inaugurated the Kandep parish (Kruczek 1995: 31). Father Raich, now the Most Reverend Bishop Hermann Raich of the Wabag Diocese, has said that as the Enga children showed great interest and enthusiasm for their art lessons, the church and the overseas volunteer teachers encourage and developed their talents in mission schools at that time.

Bishop Raich was parish priest when three albums containing children's drawings were presented to him as a birthday gift from the children of his parish. The first album was the result of the Bishop's interest in the children's art work and it evolved after he had encouraged them to express themselves by drawing a miracle from the Bible.

In Christianity, a miracle is an object of wonder, a happening or event independent of the laws of the natural world that denies logical explanation and is considered the work of God. Both pictures show Christ's command over nature and the children drew their imagery not from their environment but from their powerful imagination. It is noteworthy that when they created these images, their work was not in any way whimsical, their approach is simple and direct.

1. *The calming of the water:* Luke 8: 22-5. Illustration 48.

The children ensure that the viewer understands the predicament of the disciples. The boat is almost submerged in a convincingly choppy lake and the sail is in tatters. The disciples' consternation is apparent in their faces and the authoritative gestures of Christ suggests that he has the situation under control, with one hand raised in blessing. Christ does not have the white eyes with pinpoint pupils that is characteristic of most other Enga children's artwork, there is not the same impression of fear.

2. *The miraculous draught of fishes:* Luke 5: 1-11. Illustration 49.

Christ was hemmed in by a crowd when he was preaching on the shores of Lake Gennesaret. He boarded a fishing boat and spoke to the crowd from offshore. Peter, the fisherman had no success and Christ told him to put out into the lake and cast his nets. Peter doubted the wisdom of this but the catch was abundant and he needed help from John and James in a nearby boat. Christ said, 'Fear not; from henceforth thou shalt catch men'.

The children have painted a wonderful scene, the men are bent double hauling in the heavy nets. The scene is well balanced and the artist has displayed an understanding of light, something not present in the other drawings. The canoe is well proportioned, the sky and water naturalistic, the whole scene is convincing.

Mrs Erica Janik recalls the children well. She worked in the Mang/Kandep area between 1968 and 1974. Initially, her work at the mission was statistical, registering Catholics, clans and families in the area. Erica saw and admired the Pompabus children's drawings and when she started teaching Grade 1, she showed them to her pupils. The children were receptive and with little assistance and no outside interference, they too started to draw pictures. Not all were talented, those that were

observed drawing in their school books. Boys did most of the work because they outnumbered the girls.

Teachers chose materials for the purpose of the work. The children drew on plain paper or bark from trees, plywood or sawn board, always with crayons. A child was given a photograph album and asked to draw pictures beside the photographs.

Themes were usually stories from the Bible, a children's book or from everyday Enga life. There were few large 'community' works in the school, however, Erica mentioned that she had a large 'class painting' of a sing-sing that was made by all the students in the class. Those that could draw men well drew all the men in the scene, those that were good at birds drew all the birds and so on until the image was completed. Individual artists could not be distinguished, nevertheless, the joint effort of the children in their compositions melded well. The painting projects were made in the children's lunch time, after school or on Saturdays. The Mang children were encouraged and rewarded for their efforts. They were given something to wear, trousers or a shirt, occasionally a small book or something to eat, tinned fish for example. When local teachers took over the education of the school children Erica taught adult Pidgin and English classes. Her last year in Mang concentrated on social work with the female community (Janik, 1997).

All the parish priests in the diocese were enthusiastic about the idea of religious art, especially children's art and each encouraged the children in their parish to produce art works for their mission church. Competition was rife, especially with Pompabus! At the same time, the children's art was used in conjunction with craft to decorate small practical things, table mats with woven edges, and sewing boxes for example, all the mission stations had them. They were also exhibited at the annual Mount Hagen show until about 1974, and sold in a shop in Goroka (Sister Jennifer Bailey). In 1974, *Missio*, the International Catholic Mission Work organisation in Germany

published a Liturgical Calendar devoted exclusively to the Pompabus children's art and it was distributed by the Catholic Institute. The material for this calendar was organised by Wolfgang Harrasser, Headmaster and teacher at the Pompabus School from 1971-74, using his own photographs. The Liturgical Catechetical Institute in Goroka featured one drawing in their 1980 calendar (Pers. comm. Bishop Raich).

Bishop Raich believed the children's art died when overseas people were no longer allowed to teach in the mission schools as from the end of 1973. Later, there were paintings in most of the Papua New Guinea churches, but these were done by adult artist who had received some art instruction in a mission school as a child and subsequently, had developed their techniques. Regrettably, the children's art has not continued in any way because the Papua New Guinean teachers are not very interested (Pers. comm. Bishop Raich).

This lack of interest was a problem shared by others in education. Don Yarrol, the author of *Art Techniques for New Guinea Schools* wrote in the preface of his book:

There has long been a need for a book of techniques for art and craft work as a reference for the classroom teacher. Also, art has been one of the most neglected areas of the curriculum. This has resulted from the heavy demands made upon the teacher to fulfil the syllabus requirements, and from the fact that the function of art, for New Guinea has never been clarified (Yarrol 1969: 1).

St. Paul's church Wanepap collection

In the mid 1950s, Father William Blank established the Wanepap mission station making it the centre for the whole area (Kruczek 1995: 31). The church was built in similar plan to the Holy Cross church at Pompabus with the addition of a bell tower (Illus. 50). The children's drawings hang in strategic places; the baptistery, over the front door (Illus. 51) and on opposing sides of the altar (Illus 51-52).

1. *The calming of the water:* Luke 8: 22-5. Illustration 52.

When this drawing is compared with the same scene from Martha's album, Bishop Raich's album and the Pompabus collection, it is now possible to recognise a different and older artist. The work is believed to be that of Cornelius Kulimbo from the Par Catholic mission who was a Wanepap pupil and perhaps fifteen years old at the time. Around 1968 or 1969, nearby mission schools held a competition for sacred art with a cash prize for the winner's school (Pers. comm. Chris Paiya, Catechist). Cornelius worked alone on these drawings, usually after school in his own time, and he copied the images from the school religious-studies flip chart or a book similar to the children's bible (Pers. comm. Chris Paiya). The illustration demonstrates that this system is still in use today (Illus. 53).

The scene is structured, figures overlap one another in a three dimensional perspective. The boat is proportionately balanced for the number of figures and its volume is realistic although the detailed form is European in concept (timber hull) as opposed to the canoes of the other works. The anatomical features of the people are convincing and well defined, all focus their attention on the miracle, expressing united wonder. Clothing is explicit, Christ wears a white cassock, the official dress for clergy in the tropics (Metford 1983: 60).

2. *The miraculous draught of fishes:* Luke 5: 1-11. Illustration 54.

The narrative has been expanded in comparison to other earlier works of the same story. The occupants of the second boat look on with astonishment at the expansive haul. The naturalism in the delicate detail of the fish and the geometric precision in imagined volume within the net defines a focal point within the work, one of linear quality and draughtsmanship.

3. *The marriage feast at Cana:* John 2: 1-11. Illustration 55.

The first public miracle performed by Christ, was during a wedding in Cana in Galilee which he attended with his mother Mary and some of the disciples. Mary was concerned that there was no wine and Christ told the servants to fill the six stone waterpots (reserved for the Jewish rites of purification), with water. Christ blessed the waterpots and when the master of ceremonies tasted the contents, he declared it the finest wine.

This miracle has been depicted in context with the traditional Enga sing-sing and it has been shown, for the first time, in a landscape setting within a village. A fenced house with a garden is incorporated in one corner and a tree complete with roots in another, but the focus is on Christ blessing the wine. Thaddeus and Catherine Kaimalan, teachers at the Wanepap school explained that the waterpots depicted are large, local pumpkins (or gourds), with a very hard shell and these are decorated with simple geometric designs and used in most Enga households to hold water. It is interesting to see the guests drinking wine, a commodity prohibited in Enga and male guests enjoying Macassan style pipes. The pig has been slaughtered in the traditional manner for the feast and the portions are shown being prepared for cooking.

4. *Feeding the five thousand:* John 6: 1-15. Illustration 56.

This is an innovative composition of the miracle that occurred when crowds following Christ to hear him preach near the shores of the Sea of Galilee became hungry. Christ commanded that the crowd sit on the ground, when the disciple Andrew noticed a young boy with five barley loaves and two fish. Christ looms omnipotent above the crowd, accepting the food from the young (Enga) boy. After He broke the bread and blessed the food there was sufficient to satisfy the hunger of the multitude, with twelve baskets of crumbs left over.

The viewer looks at the crowd from within the crowd, and the impression is they too await their turn to be fed, a novel and realistic approach to a composition of some complexity. All the elements of the story have been included, note the lame and blind shown here in the centre of the scene. The landscape presentation allows for a view from above and cutting the scene at the top suggests that the crowd extends beyond the picture plane, and the 'Pompabus school' style sky has been relegated to a corner of this composition. The detail of the small foreground figures' clothing identifies the majority as Enga people (Illus. 56, note Illus. 6).

5. Jesus, Joseph and Mary for Enga: Luke 2: 1-7. Illustration 57.

A well-known story in the history of Christian art and probably the most popular in terms of images created over the centuries because it became synonymous with annual ritual giving (Christmas) in the West. It portrays the holy family in a stable in Bethlehem after the miraculous birth of Jesus; extraordinarily humble circumstances because there was no other accommodation available. Traditionally, the baby Jesus was depicted in a manger, an open feed box filled with straw for cattle and sheep.

This is the only work of an adult artist within the collections of the combined Wabag Diocese mission churches viewed, and its date is unknown. It was executed by Mathew Kiap, and whilst I was at Wanepap, Father Bogdan Swierczewski arranged for me to meet with him at his village some distance away where he discussed this work with me.

Mathew attended the Wanepap community school in 1974 up to Grade six. He felt that he had no formal art training other than that in the school as a child, but he watched the Austrian volunteers and he felt, learned from them. He was a catechist at Wanepap having received his training at Pumakos between 1981-1983. Father Edward gave him pictures to study, and he therefore felt the idea was never his own. However, his application of the imagery studied was.

The manger is traditionally placed in church on Christmas Eve and the Wanepap church parishioners enjoyed this association with the miracle (Pers. comm. Father Joseph Krettek). However, Mathew chose to ignore this part of the story and impressed on me that this representation was made exclusively for Enga. Catherine Kaimalan explained this painting as follows. Mary, the mother of Jesus, presents a white baby to her husband Joseph; white because he is from heaven. Joseph is shown 'for Enga' in the clothes of a big man, 'a very rich man with plenty of wives and pigs, he gets in front of any ceremony because his clothes tell you; when our men do the village work like building houses like the big one in this picture, they wear tattered clothes'. The detail in the house is consistent with the homes in the province and it has been shown in perspective in a garden. Joseph wears his stone axe in his belt and Enga arm and leg bands. A cowrie shell necklace and an impressive Enga head-dress with Bird of Paradise plumes 'shows Jesus came into the life of the people especially for Enga in this picture'. Mary is also identified for Enga in a grass skirt and a plain bilum.

St. Michael's Parish Church, Kasap.

The first priest in Kasap parish, Father Szabo Imre, took up residence in 1963 (Kruczek 1995: 31). Saint Michael's church in Kasap was built between 1968 and 1972 in the Wabag Diocese architectural style, a variation of the Pompabus and Wanepap basilican plan but it has a bell tower which Pompabus has not (Illus. 58).

Father Szabo wrote that there were very few schools in Enga at that time and with the arrival of the Austrian volunteers, a teaching program was established in mission schools. Drawing and modelling was a subject in the Kasap school curriculum and this aroused an interest in teaching drawing to the children for images for the parish church. Kasap parish, 'being in a good relationship with the Pompabus mission where Martha Muigg had just started her children's art program', decided to make pictures for their new church (Imre 1996).

Although Father Szabo could recall 'art' along the coast of Papua New Guinea, in Enga this type of art did not exist and it therefore never occurred to him to look for adult artists. The children's first attempt was a series of very small paintings of the *Stations of the Cross* but Father Szabo did not like them and after some time they disappeared. The large *Stations of the Cross* now in Kasap were made by the children at Pompabus. Father Szabo explained that he never had an opportunity to see the children working, he took the materials to Martha and when the drawings were ready, he collected them and hung them in the Kasap church. The architecture of Kasap church presented problems when it came to exhibiting this collection. In the absence of a triforium, the works had to be attached to the oblique 'buttress' ceiling (Illus. 59-60).

1. *Christ stripped of his garments:* Mathew 27: 26-33. Illustration 61.

On his torturous journey to the cross, Christ is stripped of his garments. The centurions gambled for his clothes and the artist has structured the composition to show the relationship between the two areas of action. The figures are concentrated in the foreground and they share equal status visually because they are united by the cross underfoot and this has a distinct element of irreverence in it. This episode is usually shown with the centurions throwing dice for the shared fortune. The Pompabus children chose the illicit cards, and this interpretation of gambling cannot be misread, they have clearly shown the hearts and diamonds in the 'hands' of the centurions. This adds a visual measure of depravity to the subject matter, a very difficult scene for a child to compose. Christ is larger which effectively places him closer to the viewer and the artist is innovative in his depiction of 'stripping' Christ of his garment, one hand outside the robe, the other still in the sleeve.

This drawing demonstrates the attention to detail that epitomised the later Pompabus works. Note the face of the centurion (in the uniform of the Papua New Guinea Police force) on the far right of the picture. Also, the detail in the clothing is explicit,

belt loops, lanyard and epaulettes, regimental sock garters are correct, even the ribbing in the socks is shown. There is a wonderful attempt at foreshortening in the figures of the two card players crouched at the feet of Christ. By decreasing the length of the legs, the figures appear hunched over their cards and intent on their game. The legs have been eliminated, but the thigh on one figure and the buttocks on the other have been emphasised is a convincing solution to the problem of visually depicting the obscured parts of the body. This technique was also used for the kneeling figure of the centurion but not quite as successfully.

2. *Veronica*. Illustration 62.

Over a period of time this child's comprehension and visual interpretation of this story has been enhanced, especially in compositional unity. There is a relationship between the figures not seen in the Pompabus or Pina *Stations of the Cross* and the figure of Veronica is relaxed but the head is still too big for the figure, a characteristic of many of the Pompabus works. Line is less important in this drawing, instead there is a painterly impression not noted before; the figures merge into one another and the colours are controlled and muted. There is also stylistically different characterisation in the faces, more realistic and less rigid. This artist has picked on a moment in the story, the time when Christ hands the cloth back to Veronica and his face is imprinted on the fabric.

The artist was perhaps older than the children who created the earlier Pompabus works as there is an increased awareness and ability to visually communicate. When Father Szabo collected the drawings from Pompabus, Martha made a point of explaining to him that each drawing in this collection was the work of an individual artist from a select group as opposed to a combination of artists all working on the one drawing. He also believed that the children who made the drawings were twelve or thirteen at the time.

Father Szabo remembers that there were drawings in the schools because of the children's art programme, however, illustrating biblical stories was a new concept and art for the churches was most certainly new. Another recollection was a book of drawings and some accompanying text which may have influenced the children, especially the design of the drawings and the use of colour. However, he could not remember the title nor the date of the publication. Moreover, before the existing church was built in Kasap, there was an old 'bush church' with a grass roof made from materials collected in the forest which had a collection of the *Stations of the Cross* made by a European artist. It is not known when this church was demolished.

The Baptism of Christ (Mathew 3: 13-17) was executed by a High School student at Kasap who had never worked at Pompabus, but later worked at Wanepap. This student worked alone but he had worked with the 'two Ericas', volunteer teachers with the Austrian Service for Development Cooperation, but I was unable to make contact with them to collect a history of this artist (Imre 1996), (Illus. 63).

The drawings in Kasap were received with astonishment. The old people used to follow the narrative sequence of drawings around the church and wonder at them. Later on, year by year, Father Szabo would pray with the people at the *Stations of the Cross* and each time a little more of the life of Christ was explained to them. This gave them a greater understanding of the story of Jesus (Imre 1996).

Kornelius Manda, the Catechist at Kasap explained the same thing to me. He said the children's drawings in the church helped clarify and give visual form to the stories, especially for older people who had difficulty understanding the significance of the death of Christ.

Kilimb Outstation Church collection

Kilimb outstation chapel is unique and extraordinary. It is beautifully sited in isolation on the summit of a mountain. Built of corrugated iron around a timber

frame, it is complete with a concrete floor and louvered windows. The ascent to it is vertical and of considerable distance from the valley floor and when it was constructed, the materials had to be carried up the mountain on the backs of the parishioners (Pers. comm. Father Peter Granegger) (Illus. 64).

This chapel is warm and intimate, an atmosphere attributed to the walls that are lined with the traditional woven matting found in most homes in Enga (Illus. 65-66). The children's drawing are wonderfully compatible with this interior, contrasting with the soft sheen and texture of the walls. There is a visual vibrancy created by the close proximity of the works and within each drawing, large areas of primary colour contrast with large areas of white, they interact with one another. The value of each differs, white reflects light from the windows, the colours absorb it.

However, this ambience must also be commended to the parishioners who were very proud and very possessive of their chapel, especially of the children's drawings. Father Peter discussed the drawings with me in the company of three parishioners, Andreas Bui, Philip Simmons and Kathleen Anton. These discussions became very heated when the three felt Father Peter had not given enough emphasis and information about the related matters of the stories discussed. The identification of the ten figures in the drawing of the sinner washing Christ's feet had to be rationalised and they knew the intricate details of them all. They remonstrated with Father Peter and challenged his interpretation. However, the number of disciples shown in Western art varies with at least two or three shown in most depictions of this incident (Schiller: 1972 17).

This incident was the essence of my argument for here was proof of the effect of children's art in a cross cultural context and, proof of the communicative value of the art. Andreas, Philip and Kathleen believed in the narrative in the children's art. It did not matter who had painted them, the pictures told a story and they believed in

that story and they would challenge and contest their parish priest in the interpretation of that story (Illus. 66).

1. *The sinner anointing the feet of Christ.* Luke 7: 36-8. Illustration 67.

Christ was invited to dine with the Pharisee, Simon. A woman of the city who, when she learned that Christ was eating there, entered Simon's house. She began washing Christ's feet with her tears after which she dried them with her hair and anointed them from an alabaster jar she brought with her. Simon was perplexed because he believed Christ to be a true prophet and as such, he would be aware of this woman's life of sin and refuse her touch. Christ converted her saying, 'Her sins which are many are forgiven as she has loved much'.

This composition is structured and ingenious. There is an emphasis on subordinate objects in the scene shown from both inside and outside the house. The cloudy sky and the flowers in the garden are seen in context with Christ eating at a table half in the sky and half on a coloured floor. The children had to accommodate the disciples at the table and the solution was to extend both the figure of Christ and the distal end of the table. Effectively, this draws the eye to the tables' narrow proximal end and the attention is thus focused on the weeping woman kneeling at Christ's feet. The flowers possibly represent the garden, note the cross-hatching similar to cultivated soil.

2. *The calming of the water:* Luke 8: 22-5. Illustration 68.

The Kilimb artists have drawn their inspiration from the Pompabus image of the same story (Illus. 74) although the Kilimb composition is vertical as opposed to the horizontal format of the Pompabus School. The Pompabus artists have successfully depicted the submerged hull of the boat to suggest tumultuous water where as the Kilimb children have placed emphasis on the volume of water to achieve the same effect. The faces of the figures in the Kilimb scene differ individually, they appear startled and they express fear. In contrast, the eyes of Christ and the two disciples on

his right in the Pompabus School depiction are flat, triangular and placed high and wide on the temple. This is perhaps an attempt to depict that these people are seeing everything around them.

There are two words written on the Kilimb drawing, 'Anglea' or 'Angiea' and 'Win', and it is not known if these are signatures or graffiti. None of the other drawings discussed, to my knowledge, were signed or dated. However, when I visited St Michael's Community School at Wanepap and The Holy Cross Community School at Pompabus and watched the children drawing, most of them signed their work.

St. Michael's Community School, Wanepap

The Sea of Tiberias. John 21: 1-25. Illustrations 75-78.

When I was visiting the Wanepap Community school, the pupils in Grade 4, aged between eleven and thirteen, were told this story by the headmaster, Thaddeus Kaimalan. The story, Christ's appearance to some of the disciples (after the Resurrection) on the beach by the Sea of Tiberias, was illustrated in *The Children's Bible*, Golden Press New York (date unknown, photograph not available). After the narration in English, Thaddeus closed the book and asked the children to 'draw what he had told them'.

The four illustrations by Albert Konkam, Edward Kainkali, Nancy Thomas and Jack (Illus. 75-78) are depictions that were quickly memorised from the Bible and the children made sure that their name was on their drawing before they gave them to me. The children also stressed the point that the title was important 'so that I would remember the story'. The children felt the written word was more important than the image they said for them, the words told the story not the drawing.

Nancy Thomas's depiction (Illus. 77) is well balanced, proportionately correct although distanced from the viewer and carefully executed with attention to detail.

Note how Christ's robes are draped over his shoulder and the way the fabric folds beneath the taut material at his knees. This artist has concentrated on the attributes of the Christ figure and she has not included the pebbly beach and the sea, however, I do not recall the nimbus in the Bible illustration. This was an addition by Nancy that she may have seen in another illustration, nevertheless she has added it to heighten the symbolism of piety. It is perhaps the most faithful reproduction of the image in *The Children's Bible* and a remarkable drawing for the time given to produce it, twenty minutes!

The boy's drawings are similar with Christ dominating the picture space, a faithful reproduction of the Bible illustration. Christ's long straight hair, his beard and clothing have been carefully copied, similarly, the pebbled beach beside the sea. Albert has written 'sea' on his work, in the appropriate place so that there is no visual misinterpretation of this scene.

Thaddeus Kaimalan explained that art classes were popular with the children but not a priority in Wanepap due to lack of resources. Art materials were not always available and the school did not have a dedicated art teacher although all the teachers could, and did teach art.

Holy Cross Community School, Pompabus

Helen Pili taught a class of seventy-two, twenty-seven girls and forty-five boys, but on the day I visited her schoolroom thirty pupils were missing because their parents had not managed to find the school fee for that term.

The teaching program in both Wanepap and Pompabus concentrated on Enga culture and improving literacy. The three languages promoted in both schools remain Enga, Tok Pisin and English. I understand that Helen's class had art instruction included in

their curriculum but lack of materials and teaching resources hampered art production.

Helen asked her class, in English, to draw anything they enjoyed doing when they were not at school. All the boys drew tree felling activities for house building and firewood, and all the girls drew women and children working in their gardens (Illus. 79-82). Enga children are exceptionally inquisitive and uninhibited and I wondered why they all drew the same things, almost as if there was not an imaginary or 'pretend' play activities in their lives that they could draw on for visual inspiration. I wondered also if they would write about the same things given the same opportunity, but I did not wish to encroach any further on the teacher's scheduled time. However, there was the possibility that they decided together to do the same things, a 'copycat' situation perhaps.

Wesley, Regina and Etapene have demonstrated that they have mastered the basic steps in drawing for children of their age; an acceptable likeness of common objects about them (Gardner 1980: 94). Mario however, has produced a profile of a man with a distinct resemblance to the head of the police officer in illustration 61, perhaps the work of an observant child in the Holy Cross church. This is consistent with the development generally of Western art, one artist building upon the work of artists before him.

The purpose of my visits to these two schools in 1996 was to determine if the children of the same age and in similar circumstances to those of the Pompabus School of Art of the 1970s, could match the quality and originality of the work. It is understood that a re-enactment of the conditions that were conducive to the production of this unique school of children's art was not possible. However, these observations established that children of a similar age in similar circumstances can understand, absorb and visually reproduce an illustrated text. They also demonstrated that most children can produce imaginative visual material without copying another artist,

nevertheless, the production circumstances were very different to those of the children on Pompabus in the 1970s. For example, the materials were different in size, texture and quality, and the demonstration was fitted into a busy teaching period. The children had no time to experiment and they worked alone, not in a group. From my very brief experience in two Enga schools, I would suggest that the present day curriculum promotes literacy over artistic expression due to the lack of time, material and dedicated art teachers.

Conclusion

Whilst gathering material for this thesis I realised that people from a different culture live in a different visual world. My research in the Wabag Catholic Diocese has revealed the lack of recognition and appreciation of children's art, especially in Western societies. It lacks a definitive place in art history and aesthetics although it is acceptable in terms of the intellectual development of the child in psychology, psychiatry and art therapy, it is not perceived as 'art'. It is accepted as a 'lesser subject' in the compulsory educational systems in most Western countries, usually filling vacant periods in the curriculum. Nevertheless it will not be found in literature devoted to art appreciation in Western culture. To prove my point, I have assessed this art as a mature art form as I would any adult artist or school of art.

My research has revealed the power of children's art as a visual language in a (then) illiterate society, and this is indicative as this ability is developed in the child long before verbal literacy is achieved. This was demonstrated by Martha Muigg's method of teaching Christian philosophy in a foreign language and especially noteworthy as it was understood that at that time, the people of Enga had never been exposed to two dimensional art in any form, especially from the West.

The children's drawings in Enga are the material culture of children and within this context, I could prove the art is a school in its own right, the Pompabus School of Christian Art. This is indicative of the Western aesthetic of Christian art using three criteria for the acceptance of art within a community.

The first criterion demonstrates the efficiency of narrative quality and the ability of the art to inspire Christian devotion. The parishioners of the Wabag Catholic Diocese mission communities rely on these images for their spiritual well being in devotion,

and they depend on the narrative quality of the art to understand their position within Catholicism.

The second criterion stipulates that it is necessary to establish the originality of the work to prove that it is the first of its kind. It was not possible to find comparable children's art in Papua New Guinea nor published literature on the subject within the sphere of Western art aesthetics. I therefore concluded that the Pomabus School of Children's Art was the first of its kind, unique and original.

Finally, the argument must demonstrate that the art is absolute and different in applied technique to traditional Christian art. The children's art could not be compared with similar art techniques and applications because there was no other to compare with. This supported my argument that the Enga children's art is absolute and therefore should be recognised within Christian art as a School of Art in its own right.

The structure of Enga society differs dramatically from that of the Christian West. I therefore classified the drawings within the artefact category, objects manufactured for a culturally defined goal, in this case Christian indoctrination by a designated Catholic Mission Society. This approach allowed me to research the art from an historical perspective in both cross-cultural and visual terms.

At the beginning of the research, I believed the problems with defining 'art' and the lack of recognition of children's art in the Western concept of art would mean that the Enga children's work could be placed within contemporary art, especially indigenous art of the twentieth-century. On the contrary, my research has highlighted the unique quality of the work of the children in the Enga churches because there was no representational art tradition in their culture. This was a solitary situation as most Western artists build their art on the experience and discoveries of preceding artists, and most indigenous cultures continue the art practices of their ancestors, their

cultural predecessors. However, the Enga children had not the advantage of either of these options and my research has revealed the evolution of this art within an isolated and encapsulated environment, circumstances fortunately conducive to the creation of children's art.

Christian art, the work of a long tradition of literate artists, was introduced into an illiterate society where Western artistic traditions were unknown but the oral tradition was paramount, a sophisticated verbal art form. The children were told the stories, incredibly, in one of two unknown languages, English and Tok Pisin, and although this method of communication was familiar to them, the languages were not. Nevertheless, they were not hampered nor restricted by an educated or inherited art tradition. Instead, they had the advantage of a dedicated teacher who was prepared to allow them to create as they wished, a rare and unique opportunity for any child. The fact that they were not guided in any art tradition suggests that this approach in children's art creation produces original and innovative work. I would further suggest that the success of the project rests with Martha Muigg's lack of formal art education and training, especially her ability to 'leave well alone'.

I focused on individual art works because it appeared the most logical way of approaching the subject and this was problematic because I had no guidelines by which I might assess, contrast or appraise them with the art of children in similar circumstances. Thus the evaluation had to be within the formalities of Western art aesthetics as this has been the tradition for Christian art analysis since its inception and evolution. It is understood that the material originally shown to the children with the relevant story would have been in this tradition.

Consequently, terminology for the Enga children's art presented problems as 'a school of art', an 'art movement', 'indigenous art' or 'ethnographic art' were all inappropriate. Christian art would be appropriate but children's Christian art? The work of the

children is subject based and although it is executed in a distinct style, that style is content specific. I believe that intrinsically, the drawings are historical documents of communication across language barriers, in this case, Christian art. The acceptance of the art as a developed art form is one thing but the functional relationship of that art within the culture that produced it is another.

The children have depicted the events from the history of Christianity in their own surroundings and adapted their knowledge, although perhaps not their experience, from their own times and culture. They do not deny the reality of any one given situation, instead they adjusted the story within Enga moral parameters to give visual expression to an introduced monotheistic philosophy and its concepts. This is consistent with the practice in Christian art throughout the centuries and it places the Enga children's work culturally in context with Christian art from other cultures, if not art history in general.

There does not appear to be any symbolic meaning from Enga culture in the children's drawings, but as there is symbolic meaning in most Catholic iconography, it is assumed that the children were shown visual material that contained little, if any Christian symbolism. The moral of the Christian stories must have been conveyed visually as the children, I understand, could not have interpreted Christian morality from its initial introductory oral source. However, the children could explain the stories to their elders in their own language. Consequently, the Enga people within the mission complex understood and related to both the visual and moral components of the art and the narrative.

The justification of this topic lies in the significance of the Enga children's art achievement within Western Christian art and its acceptance and continued function within the mission culture, nearly thirty years after it was created (Illus. 69-72). The

Pompabus School of Children's art evolved from the adoption, perception and affiliation of introduced Christian art within a Catholic mission culture.

The essence of my argument was the proof of the effect of children's art in a cross cultural context and proof of the communicative value of the art. The parishioners believe in the narrative of the children's art, they do not care that children and not adults painted the images. On the contrary, I believe that the older generations willingly accepted the children's interpretation of the art because they were not literate nor familiar with the Western concept of art in general, but their children were. The bond with their children and their children's art was, and still is strong. The adult parishioners perception of and belief in the children's narrative art in the mission churches was strong enough to challenge and contest their parish priest in his interpretation of this art.

I believe that the communicative value of this art developed originally from the strong functional relationship between Martha and her pupils. The children's art was, and still is, a visual form of communication that has overridden language. A narrative tradition within the children's culture allowed this relationship to develop and flourish in spite of the language barriers. I believe visual literacy within a Christian context became the dominating communication influence in mission religious education and the success of the art.

I also believe there is sufficient material to warrant a full exploration and analysis of the Wabag Diocese children's art and its function within the community. This however would be a major research project and beyond the scope of this initial thesis.