

Melanesian Wisdom Unveiled

Part 3: The Paradigm Shift

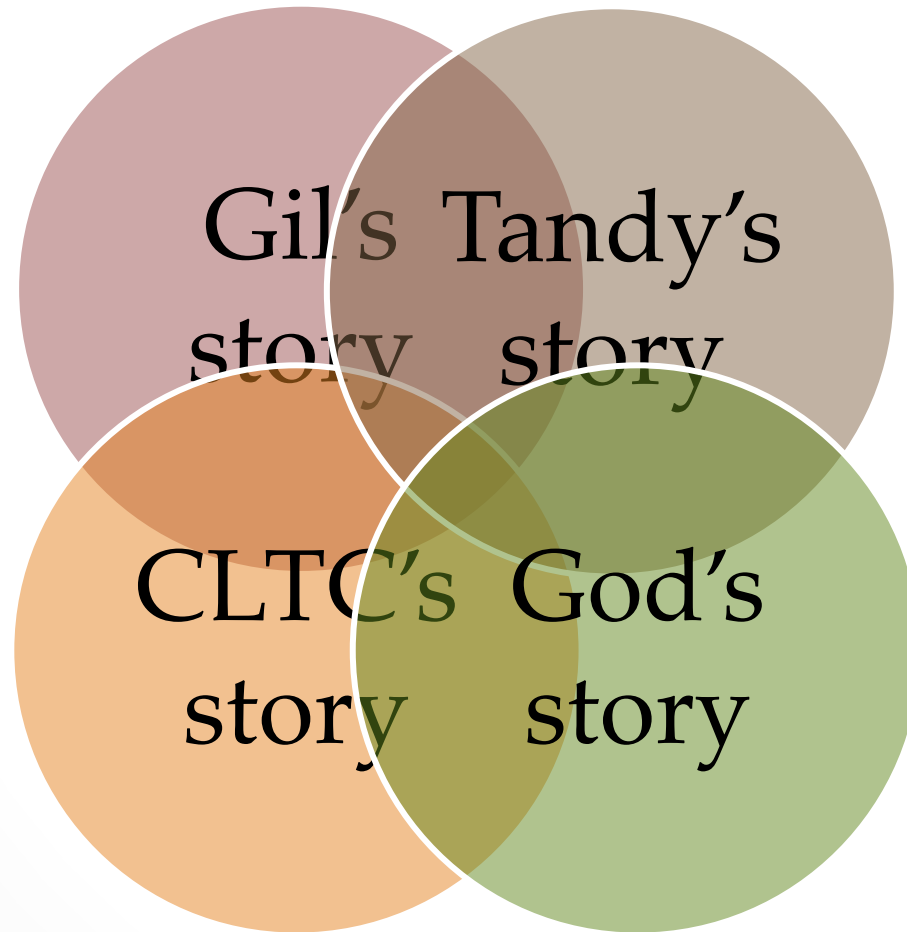
CLTC and Gil McArthur

- The Christian Leaders' Training College holds a rich heritage that is deeply relevant in today's context. Founded in 1964 by Australian missionary Dr. Gilbert McArthur, CLTC was established with the aim of training indigenous leaders to serve their communities, churches, and societies. The college's heritage and mission have had a lasting impact, and its relevance today can be understood in various ways.
- Gil was a great leader with a great story of resilience, energy and passion to serve his maker. His legacy lives on among many who knew him personally and those of us who never met him.

My story

- My story does not match up to Gil's story; however, our childhood and adolescent years share so many similarities. I bounced back from a sickness that almost took my life, and other social and cultural obligations that affected who I was as a six- and fourteen-year-old.
- We come from different backgrounds, but we have one thing in common: our love for the Kingdom culture to permeate people's lives.

A meeting of stories



Quality outcomes

Empowerment and Leadership Development

- CLTC's heritage is rooted in the empowerment of local leaders. The college's focus on training indigenous individuals to become leaders has helped nurture a generation of pastors, community workers, educators, and advocates who play critical roles in their communities.

Cultural Relevance and Contextual Theology

- CLTC's heritage highlights the importance of contextual theology and cultural sensitivity. The college has worked to integrate Christianity with local traditions, and practices, making it relevant and relatable to the people of Papua New Guinea.

Decolonization and identity

CLTC's founding in the 1960s was a time of political and social change in Melanesia. The college's emphasis on indigenous leadership and contextual theology reflects a commitment to decolonization and the reclamation of cultural identity.

Community engagement and service

The college's heritage emphasises community engagement and service. CLTC graduates often return to their communities as pastors, educators,

Holistic approach to education

CLTC's heritage emphasis a holistic approach to education, considering spiritual, social, and practical aspects of life. This approach resonates with indigenous ways of learning and contributes to the overall wellbeing of individuals and communities.

Continued relevance in changing times

The college's ongoing commitment to indigenous leadership and contextual theology remains relevant as Papua New Guinea and Melanesia navigate modern challenges while preserving their cultural roots.

Education for social transformation

CLTC's heritage aligns with the broader goal of using education to facilitate social transformation. By equipping leaders with knowledge, skills, and values, the college contributes to positive change in society.

What is a paradigm shift?

A paradigm shift is when we make a big and important change in how we think about something. This happens when the usual ways we understand things are questioned and replaced by new ways of thinking. It can cause a big impact on how we see and interact with the world around us.

- I am hearing this from the students! They need a social and spiritual space to explore the issues they come up with.
- In the 'paradigm shift' scenario, students could be given the opportunity to discuss and engage with topics related to sorcery, tribal conflicts, traditional practices, paybacks, compensation, drug issues, and indigenous beliefs.
- This shift represents a departure from traditional theological education approaches and embraces a more inclusive and culturally sensitive approach. Here's how this could be viewed as a paradigm shift:

How a paradigm shift could be realised

By allowing students to openly discuss and engage with topics like sorcery, tribal conflicts, and traditional practices, CLTC is facilitating a paradigm shift in theological education. This shift involves:

- **Inclusion of Indigenous Perspectives**

The shift acknowledges and values the indigenous cultural context, allowing students to explore their own beliefs and practices within the framework of their theological studies.



- **Holistic Understanding of Ministry**

The shift recognizes that effective ministry in Papua New Guinea involves understanding and engaging with the social, cultural, and spiritual dynamics of the communities where students will serve.

- **Open Dialogue**

The shift promotes open dialogue and discussions about topics that might have been considered taboo or irrelevant in traditional theological education.

Implications and benefits

This paradigm shift can lead to several positive outcomes.

- **Cultural Relevance**

Students are better equipped to minister effectively in their communities by understanding the complex social and cultural dynamics.

- **Empowerment**

Students can grapple with these topics in a safe environment, enabling them to critically evaluate and respond to challenges faced by their communities.

- In this situation, the big change in how things are done shows that there is a strong promise to understand local beliefs, include everyone, and look at the whole picture when teaching about religion.
- This change respects the culture and beliefs in Papua New Guinea and Melanesia. It also wants to make sure that students learn in a way that helps them handle the many different things they might face in their communities.

Redeeming indigenous spiritual visions

- Indigenous epistemologies and methodologies can give rise to an authentic redemption of culture
- Local culture is seen as not 'pre-Christian' or 'heathen' but as a consciousness of the Creator God implanted within each person
 - Examples?
- Are we transplanters, mixers, separators, or contextualizers?

A paradigm of leadership

- Worldview as the genesis of leadership
- Essentially, leadership must restore relationship
- *Varvateten* the example from my context

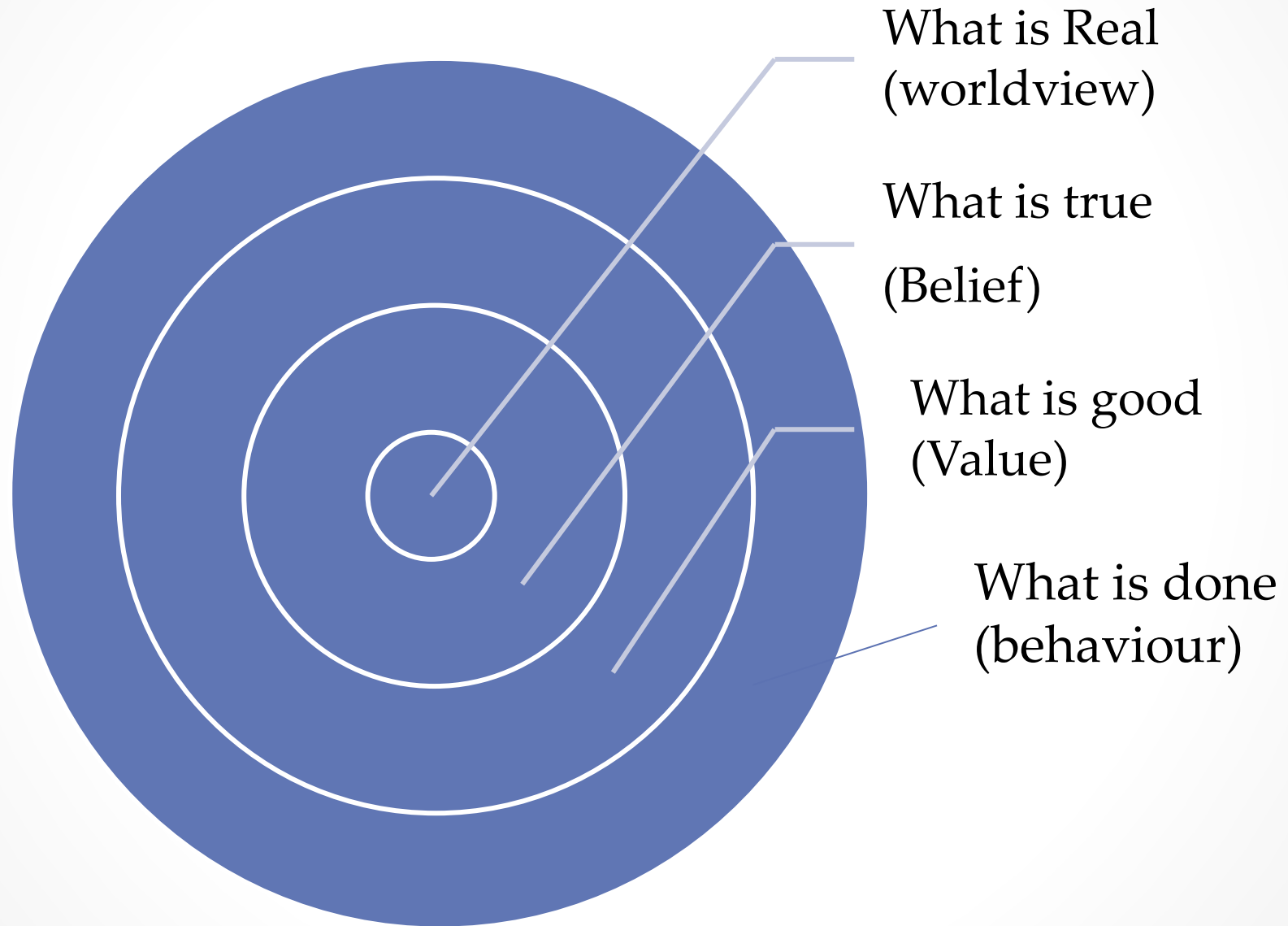
- A 'paradigm of leadership' refers to a specific way or model of thinking about leadership. It includes the beliefs, ideas, and concepts that shape how people understand and practice leadership.

Worldview as the genesis of leadership

- ‘Worldview as the genesis of leadership’ suggests that a person’s fundamental beliefs, values, and perspectives about the world (their worldview) play a foundational role in shaping their approach to leadership.
- In other words, the way someone sees and understands the world greatly influences how they lead and make decisions. This concept highlights the connection between a leader’s core beliefs and their leadership style, strategies, and actions.

Essentially, leadership must restore relationship

- Leadership should focus on repairing and strengthening relationships. In leadership roles, it is important to work towards restoring connections, trust, and cooperation among individuals or groups.
- This perspective emphasizes the significance of fostering positive interactions and understanding to create a more harmonious and effective environment.



Questions for discussion

1. How can indigenous ways of understanding spirituality challenge and expand traditional theological paradigms?
2. In what ways do indigenous methodologies enrich theological discussions by incorporating diverse cultural perspectives?
3. Can indigenous approaches to spirituality inspire a paradigm shift within theology, moving from individual salvation to communal well-being?
4. How does integrating indigenous wisdom reshape theological interpretations of concepts like creation, interconnectedness, and divine presence?