

2015 – The Year of Crossing Over to the Other Side

By

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of Papua New Guinea and
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On behalf of the staff of National Parliament of Papua New Guinea, the people of Finschhafen and my family, it is indeed my greatest pleasure to sincerely extend to you all my very best wishes for an exciting 2015.

2015: End of Forty Years - Beginning of a New Era

The year 2015 marks a significant period of our Nationhood. The year marks the *end* of a *40 years journey* since PNG attained independence from Australian rule in September 1975. Generationally, 40 years period speaks of the *END* of one generation and the *BEGINNING* of a new one. It denotes *passing on of leadership baton* by the older generation to the new. It also speaks of a period of preparing the succeeding generations to reach their full potential and maturity. At age 40, physical, mental and spiritual maturity is said to have reached its peak and succession begins.

Politically, the period signifies a timeframe taken to engraft a people into nationhood. The story of the people of Israel under the leadership of Moses, wandering in the wilderness for 40 years, is the classic case in point. The story is loaded with principles which can be learned and applied to any nation in any given time and space. The wilderness or desert experiences in the said time frame, for the people of Israel, symbolise a condition for testing of values and shaking off of the unwanted. It is a period of moulding and shaping of a people into a new nation out of a colonial influence and mindset. It is a period of perfecting a people through the crucibles of burning desert stones, scorching sun and violent desert storms, ultimately to instil into them integrity, durability, character and resilience – to form a nation out of a raw people.

The forty years period was a timeframe when *new ideas* that directly counteracted those of Egypt were crafted, tested and shaped into norms, cultures and laws that would govern a new nation. It was a period in which ideas and philosophies (Babylonian, Mesopotamian, Egyptian and Greek philosophies) that ruled the world, were dissected critically and meticulously. It was a period of reckoning – a period of regaining sanity and renewed strength, and consciously redefining a definite moral and philosophical direction for a new Nation after 400 years of tyrannical empirical rule. Slavery and colonial mentality, ingrained into the people over 400 years of colonial rule, had to be purged and cleansed during this 40 years period through the hostilities and encounters of the wilderness. So essentially, it is a period of pruning, perfecting and preparing a people to come face-to-face with the Grand Philosophy of Creation and the ultimate Creator.

The *END* of the wilderness period essentially meant a *BEGINNING* of a *NEW ERA*. The end of this period was a clear sign of a formation of a tribal people into an emerging Nation of valour and power. A new ideological foundation for a new Nation was now truly established, which set new directions in rigid contrast to those of Egypt and the surrounding nations. The signs of a new era are signified firstly by *passing of leadership baton from Moses to Joshua*. So the generational leadership shift is clearly visible. Second sign of a new era is the *- crossing of the Jordan River to the other side- to the land of milk and honey*. It also meant driving out the inhabitants, demolishing the pagan gods, destroying the high places, distributing the land and dwelling in the land. It meant taking full control of their promised possession. In other words, the past 40 years period essentially meant *PREPARATION* for the new beginning - to crossover and takeover decisively, precisely and aggressively. New beginning was also a sign that the people of Israel had crafted a philosophical foundation, symbolised by the *Ark of the Covenant*. This was the fundamental statement of a unified force of their faith, from which inspiration, strength, and their reason for existence were drawn. From this foundation - moral, civic, ceremonial, political and economic laws and principles sprung forth. Policy directions for the Nation were inspired and driven by their faith in their God. A nation was established in 40 years on a new foundation. The new beginning meant, it was now time to implement the principles learnt and developed over the 40 years period.

Reflection and Challenges

At the eve of our Nation's 40th independence celebrations, I would like to reflect on our yesteryears and challenges ahead of us and further draw some lessons from the above story to help us enter into our new beginning.

When I look back, I see a Paradise – a *“green island of gold, floating on a sea of oil, powered by gas”*. Our forest cover is among the largest carbon-sink in the world. It absorbs fumes from the industrialised world and in turn releases and feeds the world with clean oxygen – an immense contribution to the survival of our planet. By this alone, we are a world leader. Our forest, agriculture and fisheries combined, offer enormous amount of resources that can sustain our nation for decades without exploiting our geochemical resources. Our land is elegantly magnificent in every sense and dimension that its potential ranks among the top in global tourism, forestry and agriculture sectors alone. This is our Promised Land, our Paradise, however, ironically, we remain yet so poor. This is the grand paradox of our 40 years history, which must be resolved as we welcome the new beginning of another 40 years ahead.

How can we resolve this paradox? The processes of transforming these resources into wealth must be regained and retained by Papua New Guineans. As we begin another 40 years cycle, we must resolve to own and develop our own resources. Why shouldn't our people own mining companies? What is stopping us from developing our own resources by ourselves? Whose idea have we inherited to think that Papua New Guinean Companies cannot own oil, gas and mining companies? The residual effects of colonial imperialism must be dissolved. If modern Israel can turn deserts into farmland, what justification do we have to think that we cannot turn our nation into the food-hub of the Pacific? During my recent visit to Israel, the Israeli farmers and the government officials reminded me that PNG can be the agricultural hub of the region. Who told us that we cannot do it? We must recall our engineers and scientists working in other nations to return. We must reorient our own human resource into a

dedicated workforce, and tap into the unmatched potential we have and manage our own destiny.

Our resource ownership and extractive regime must be radically transformed as we farewell the past era and welcome the new beginning. It must not be a period of *business as usual*. Something has to change drastically somewhere. The children of Israel had to drive out seven nations which occupied their Promised Land. We have seven distinct systems in which our people are trapped, which we must take complete control. These systems are (1) the political system, (2) the economic system, (3) the education system, (4) the social systems, (5) the media, (6) the entertainment world, and (7) the religious systems. Our *crossing over must be to take over* these systems. As we begin the new era, these systems must be radically reformed to reflect our belief and convictions – to be in charge of these systems for our full benefit.

In correct sense of our national identity, our nation is the *United Tribes of Paradisia*. So where did the suppressive and exploitative ideas come from? In our search for our true identity, we have discovered that the name *“Papua New Guinea”* was imposed upon us by others – outsiders – which has serious derogative connotations. *“Papua”* is a Malay word meaning, black people with fuzzy air, flat nose, round head and brown eyes who are placed at the lowest end of the social spectrum. It has nothing to do with the people of the Central Province and the rest of the provinces identified by this name. *“Guinea”* has connotation associated with *“small pigs”*. The philosophy behind the name is obvious – uncivilised, savage, uneducated, backward, underdeveloped, low class, kanakaes, cannot do anything, nobody, and the list goes on. *“Old guineas”* were discovered along the West Coast of Africa and new ones discovered in our part of the world. So we were given the name *“New Guinea”*. The term *“KIAP”* (referring to a Colonial Administrator) was carefully, intentionally and thoughtfully crafted to capture the spirit of suppression, control and exploitation. *KIAP* does not mean anything in any known languages. It is an acronym in English language which means – **Keep Indigenous Always Primitive or Poor (K-I-A-P)**. We have adopted and associated ourselves with a mindset that has kept us in prison for the last 40 years.

Ending of the past 40 years calls for putting an end to a colonial second-class mindset. Shadows of our colonial past must not dictate our national policy direction any longer. Beginning of the next 40 years period calls for a radical emancipation from ruling ideas associated with suppression, control, manipulation and ultimate exploitation which have pervaded the seven systems I have alluded to earlier. The new beginning of this season calls for redesigning the future of our national destiny. We must begin the journey of reforming systems that influence our governance. We must challenge the philosophies that rule the world today. It is extremely imperative that every ruling and domineering idea must be put to test. We must refuse ideas where necessary and reform them when we can as we embrace the new beginning. Resource ownership, development and distribution laws must be redefined if we are to be in control of our own destiny.

National Unity - Our National Treasure

Now let me draw our attention to our most prized possession – NATIONAL UNITY – our *National Treasure*. We are a nation of a thousand tribes and languages who subscribe to *“unity in diversity”*. Our national *UNITY* is our greatest achievement, unparalleled with any other nation in the World. Sadly, our unity is facing a real threat of disintegration from both internal and external forces. We are increasingly becoming globalized, driven by rapid technological advancement as we open up to foreign interests and influences. We are forced to allow diverse social, political, economic and religious forces which are already negatively affecting our survival as a unified nation.

In this fusion of competing ideas, I see our sons and daughters on the crossroad of transition. Our people's collective sense of origin, identity, purpose and importantly moral consciousness, is being eroded. Consequently, I see our people, our boys and girls wandering in confusion. Today's leaders have an enormous obligation to restore purpose and hope to our people. After 40 years, as with the people of Israel, we must resolve in our heart to take a new direction – to ascribe to common values on which we must anchor our nation on today and into the future.

Looking back our trail last 39 years, there is no clear foundation on which our nationhood rests. We call ourselves a Christian Nation but our government institutions and systems are very much capitalistic and secular, greatly influenced by unethical cultures and practices where greed and corruption have taken a foothold. We have not ascribed to a ruling idea that can underpin our moral consciousness – an idea from which we can derive our values, inspire our motivations and define our existence. This, in my conviction, is the root problem of our dilapidating social, economic and moral conditions. We are a society at the crossroad of the past and the present. We are a society without a firm ideological shape or form. We have reached a state where we are neither of the traditional past nor firmly rooted on philosophies of the modern present. We are a fluid society of great cultural, social and religious mix, which provides a dangerous recipe for social disintegration. The consequential product of such a recipe is a self-inflicting society void of moral consciousness, firmly gripped by greed and corruption. In this moral vacuum, alien entities in collaboration with corrupted local capitalists are having their field days. The Nation must break free from such a spirit of *unholy union among local themselves and with foreigners* if we are to be emancipated from the grip of corruption and moral decay.

Turning 40 years this year provides a challenge as well as an opportunity to repossess our nation from such a condition. As new generation leaders, our uttermost responsibility is to do our part in offering our nation a secure future. As we begin the journey, we must see differently. We must design the type of society we want in next 40 years, today. We must see the dawn of a new Nation with the perspective of the 2050 Vision – wealthy, healthy, wise, intelligent and the prosperous nation. However, vision alone is not enough to sustain us into the future. We must incline our ideals to, and anchor our vision, on an unshakeable ideological foundation which must shape, control and influence our attitude. Attitude speaks of a reformed and reinvigorated mindset. With a refined attitude, we can then chart our development path.

Christian Faith – The National Foundation

I have, therefore, celebrated the New Year with optimism for more purposeful and most fulfilling years ahead. For the people of Israel wandering in the wilderness, 40 years period was a time of a nation-in-making through bitterness, suffering, trials and confusion. On the eve of entering the Promised Land the most significant and solemn decisions were undertaken. We must learn from these lessons and make no mistakes as we prepare to enter into the new era. The children of Israel, led by the New Leaders, renewed their covenant with their God. This was a conscious act that signified the establishment of their Nation on a firm

belief system. They renewed their commitments to God collectively as a nation and boldly declared: *"The Lord our God will we serve, and His voice will we obey"* (Joshua 24:24). It was a deliberate decision for national direction and not a mere ceremonial religious act.

Paying homage to the true God, and keeping His Words was to be their *foundation* which would establish a condition for national prosperity. They could never become a blessed nation free from poverty, debt, corruption, and foreign control if God was not their national foundation and security. The benefit of this declaration was that:

"The LORD will make you the head, not the tail. If you pay attention to the commands of the LORD your God that I give you this day and carefully follow them, you will always be at the top, never at the bottom." (Deuteronomy 28:13).

This was the statement of emancipation from Egyptian Empirical rule, and the condition attached to it is clear. At the eve of our 40th Independence Anniversary, we must deliberately decide to turn to God if our nation is to be *the head and not the tail*. We must institutionalise moral and ethical teachings of the Bible into every strata and system to reflect our faith in the True and Only God as the source and foundation of our nationhood. Being fully sure of the conditions for blessing, Joshua, as a new generation leader, at the eve of their new beginning, vehemently declared:

"Now fear the Lord, serve Him with sincerity and in truth, and put away the gods which your fathers on the other side of the river and in Egypt served. Serve the Lord only. And if it seems evil to you to serve the Lord, choose for yourself this day who you will serve, whether the gods which your fathers served on the other side of the River....but as for me and my house we will serve the Lord" (Joshua 24: 15).

What a bold and decisive declaration by a leader. The future of the people of Israel was locked in that profound declaration. Life and death were set by this solemn decree. Curse and blessing was decreed for the nation by this declaration as Joshua prepared the people to cross over to possess the Land. He was determined, courageous and aggressive when it came to philosophical and moral questions. He allowed no room for negotiation when it came to declaring his faith as the foundation for his new nation. Clear lines were drawn. Animistic and pagan practices had to cease operation before crossing over. The Priest carrying the Ark of the Covenant (signifying the Presence of the Lord) led the way and the rest followed and crossed over to possess their inheritance.

As we are about to cross over to the *"other side of the river"* come 16 September 2015, the Government and People of PNG are confronted with the same ultimate decision. The Christian Church and Government partnership arrangements, which we have, must be redefined to render absolute prominence to the Church as the Leader Agency vested with divine authority to lead and provide godly direction. Rivalry, division and disunity amongst Christian church must now be a thing of the past if the Church has to lead as the divinely established agent. The Christian Church must lead by example by uniting themselves into single force to be reckoned. The church is the custodian of the teachings of the Greatest Ethical and Moral Teacher – Christ Jesus. Church must continue to boldly declare that Christ is not just a Great Teacher but is the Saviour of the World and the Son of God. The Deity of Christ as God and Divine is being challenged by every religious doctrine and secular ideologies that question the existence of God and the fallen angels led by Lucifer. The greatest battle humanity is confronting today is the battle of the Deity of Christ. The world is falling prey to this battle, denying the divinity of Christ. We must be vigilant and watchful not fall into this snare. The Nations that deny the divinity of Christ are building on perishable foundations. They will fall!

We must make up our minds not to serve any other perishable and inferior deities. We must draw strength and inspiration from the National Dedication Prayer by our Founding Father Grand Chief Sir Michael Somare (MP) on the 5th of September 2007, laying a new Foundation for a new national direction. He prayed and declared with no uncertain terms:

"I renounce the worship of all Idols and evil gods. I renounce all covenants with the evil spirits and demonic powers. I renounce and reject all their actions and reverse all their evil effects....On this day, I pledge our allegiance to serve no other gods but YOU – God the Father, God the Son and God the Holy Spirit....Lead us into this new beginning, to the fulfilment of your plans and destiny for our nation".

What a profoundly significant declaration! The roadmap is given and the direction is set for the new beginning. We must, therefore, revisit the values and principles that govern our institutions and systems in light of this declaration. More particularly, we must review the National Constitution, by which our Nation was established. The preamble of our Constitution must be redefined to reflect God as the **ONLY SOURCE AND ORIGIN OF OUR EXISTENCE**. We must further redefine the content of the *Section 45 of the Constitution which allows for practice of every kind of religions and worship of all kinds of deities*. Drawing inspiration from Sir Michael Somare's declaratory and directional Prayer, we must make clear-cut decisions, leaving no room for negotiations when it comes to moral, ethical and spiritual matters. We cannot afford to leave loose ends carelessly allowing for an ideological onslaught on our people. PNG has now reached a defining moment. **It is time to re-examine and ask if the diverse customs, traditions, cultures and ideals of our founding fathers are sufficient to hold this nation together into the future.**

We must deliberately unite more closely with God of the Bible and His Son Jesus Christ, who is the foundation of our **Faith**. As we enter the new era, we must choose to rid ourselves of all pagan and animistic worship systems and practices. We must destroy all idols and every other competing altars of worship, as declared by our Founding Father Grand Chief Sir Michael Somare. This is the ultimate choice before us as a nation as we farewell the past 40 years and lay hold of the new era.

As a fragmented nation with 860 languages, the Christian Faith has and will continue to provide a solid foundation for our unity in diversity. Undeniably, the Word of God has been a catalyst to breakdown rivalry, promote peace and enhance unity. The preaching of the Gospel created a favourable environment for a single nation of a thousand tribes to emerge. The Bible was the only force that unified our fragmented and hostile tribes as described by a book titled *"The Lutheran Church in PNG – The First 100 Years"*. Radical revolution came about by the preaching of the gospel. The Colonial Administrators (KIAPS) and the explorers heavily depended on the missionaries to penetrate in and unite the people with the Gospel of Peace. How can we be too slow to learn and quick to forget about the amazing things the Bible has done for us in our short history - to bring peace, promote love, forge unity and paved the way for independence? Let us reflect on, and return to, the Word of God, the Bible and its timeless principles as our unshakeable *ideological foundation* to chart the development path of our Nation.

National Unity and Identity Monument

When I look back to the restoration and reformation initiatives which we have undertaken at our National Parliament, and our grand *"National Unity and Identity"* project, I have complete confidence that we are trailblazing a noble path in laying a firm foundation for PNG to enter into a new era of unparalleled growth and prosperity. It is my conviction that our **National Unity and Identity Project** which we initiated under the Parliament reform agenda, will point to this priceless heritage, and make PNG stand out among the nations of the world.

To symbolise our decision and to renew our commitment after 40 years, as it happened at the Bank of the Jordan River in Joshua's time, the **National Identity and Unity Monument** will be erected in the Grand Hall of the National Parliament of PNG.

The Monument consists of six (6) distinct components. The Foundational Layer will be constructed of a most *precious stone signifying the WORD OF GOD – the BIBLE*. This layer symbolises the ultimate Foundation on which our Nation stands. As it is written:

"For no other foundation can anyone lay than that which is laid, which is Jesus Christ" (1 Corinthians 3:11).

Nations built on this rock will stand. Nations constructed on other materials will utterly fall and disintegrate into nothingness. If the Lord *does not* build a Nation, the builders labour in vain. Jesus said: *"I will build my people (nation) on this rock and gates of hell will not prevail against them" (Mathew 16:18)*. There is no other moral, philosophical and ideological Foundation, greater than, or parallel to this foundation in the entire universe.

On top of the Foundation Layer symbolising the Bible, will be laid the **Constitution Stone** symbolising rule of law drawn from the Ancient Book – the Bible. If the Bible established our National Foundation and Spiritual Unity, then our Constitution is responsible for our Legal Unity and National Sovereignty. The Bible and the Constitution are the first and second layers respectively declaring the essence of our **National Identity (who we are)** which must run through our National Psyche and influence our nationalistic consciousness for years to come. Our children and their children and the generations to come, will then be reminded of their identity and origin, especially in a confusing world, controlled by evolutionist, atheistic and humanistic worldviews which deny the existence of God, Deity of Christ and the origin of creation.

The **Third Layer** will symbolise **Leadership**, which will be dedicated to the Leaders of our Nation. Nations rise and fall on Leadership. Representing and uniting the Leaders (of both past, present and future) at every level Grand Chief Sir Michael Somare's National Dedication Prayer will be inscribed into the front face of the **Leadership Stone**. This is the Leadership prayer that connects us to the true and only God. On top of the Leadership Layer (Stone) will be laid the fourth (4th) Layer which symbolises the **PEOPLE**. The revised National Pledge will be inscribed on this Layer stating the significance of our National Unity, founded firmly on our Christian Faith and the Christian God as the *source and origin of our existence*. It will be stated as follows: WE, THE PEOPLE OF PAPUA NEW GUINEA, UNITED AS ONE. WE PAY HOMAGE TO THE GOD OF ABRAHAM, ISAAC AND JACOB, WHO ALSO IS OUR GOD THROUGH JESUS CHRIST.

Sprouting out of these four layers (Bible, Constitution, Leadership and People) will be the National Unity Pillar, towering up for about 15 metres. The word unity in all 860 languages spoken in PNG will be inscribed on this one pole, identifying us as one people of one faith. The principle of oneness and unity is built on the foundation of the Bible, in which is the written Word of God, and from which came the foundation of love, peace and forgiveness through Jesus Christ, which broke down the barrier of fear and disunity and paved the way for traditional enemies, warring tribes and unknown peoples to interact, meet, live and work together as one people.

On the top end of the Unity Pillar, an unceasing light will light up the Grand Hall. When the citizens see the National Unity and Identity Pillar, they will then be enlightened with its light to realize the power of unity founded on the Bible, our source of inspiration and strength. When the parliamentarians meet on the Floor of Parliament, the light will enlighten them to zealously guide our Nation by debating and enacting laws that will emanate from the Spirit of peace, love and forgiveness for the benefit of all. The GRAND HALL of the Parliament will be renamed: THE GRAND HALL OF UNITY and Psalms 133, which says: "WHERE BROTHERS LIVE IN UNITY, THERE GOD COMMANDS HIS BLESSING", will be inscribed on a Tablet of stone as a reminder for a thousand years that UNITY in God is our prized possession.

We shall then stand tall as a proud and united people who know our origin, our identity, our purpose and our destiny.

The Monument will be unveiled and celebrated on 16 September 2015, coinciding with the 40th Independence Celebration. The Nation is invited to come and witness the Grand Opening on this significant day.

2015 Grand National Declaration:
"FOR ME AND MY HOUSE WE WILL SERVE THE LORD".

Thankyou.

HON. THEO ZURENUOC, MP
The Speaker of National Parliament
Member for Finschhafen Open

