



Ph: +679 3684 212

FOR ALL THE NEWS THAT COUNTS

newsroom@fjiddailypost.com



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Address: 19 Ackland Street, Viria East Industrial Subdivision, Vatuwaqa, Suva. Phone: (679) 3275 176, 3275 177, Fax: 3275 179 Email: info@fjiddailypost.com

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EDITORIAL

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What's in a name? 30-Jan-2010

One thing is sure in the Judeo-Christian tradition: we are not at liberty to call God by whatever name we choose. God has names which he has revealed to us, names by which he is to be designated. None of those names include 'sharp God' or 'snake God' which are the two possible translations of 'kalougata' - the Fijian name for God in extant translations of the Fijian Bible.

Sir James Ah Koy has forcefully argued that kalougata means 'snake god' and this is an insult to God and a curse to the Fijian people since it is the enemy of God, the Serpent, the Devil, Satan, who is a snake god, not God himself.

Apologists have attempted to refute Sir James by asserting that kalougata has actually come to mean 'sharp god' and therefore no curse on the Fijian people applies.

But we would assert that now here in the ancient Hebrew is God referred to as a 'sharp God', now here does he call himself by that name.

God is described as strong God, a powerful God, a mighty God, but never a sharp God. He may be qualified further as a merciful God, a loving or compassionate God, even a jealous God, but never a sharp God.

Sharp, in the Bible, describes arrows, swords, mouths and knives, but never God.

Sharp is also Biblically descriptive of stones, razors, teeth, iron, sickles, and even eyes, but never God.

It may also refer to axes, tongues and anger, but never God.

In other words, there is no Biblical warrant for calling God a 'sharp God', neither do we have Biblical permission or rights to give him that name.

Indeed, we are expressly ordained by God to worship him by his true names or else we violate the third of the big Ten Commandments which forbids taking his name 'in vain'. The fifth of the Ten Commandments more positively orders us to 'honour' our father and mother.

Sir James Ah Koy not only takes those commandments especially seriously, he has put his mind and money behind his mouth by commissioning the publication of an altered version of the Bible - the first wholly Bauan translation and interpretation of the Bible - that gives God, our heavenly Father his proper honour by referring to him as he is to be referred to.

Hence, there is no more kalougata or its derivatives in the Ah Koy funded, New Fijian Bible which has come to completion and will soon be published online for readers to judge and appreciate.

There is no reference to God as sharp or snake. Rather he is given his proper titles.

We applaud this revisionism. It seeks to correct a historical gloss.

It is an alteration for accuracy and respect.

Sir James goes further and asserts that the effect of this linguistic revision will be the lifting of a curse placed upon the Fijian people

FRONT PAGE



Wednesday February 10, 2010



Volasiga

WEEKLY POLL

How do you feel about the rise in fuel prices and increase in taxi and bus fares?

- Aritema Navonicagi, 52 "Well in my opinion it is quite early to increase bus and taxi fares because Fiji is not settled politically."
- Nemaniu Qalo, 47 "The bulk of Fiji's population live in the low income category and we low income earners have very little control over this increase. It will eventually affect everything else, especially food which is the source of livelihood."
- Tara Wati, 50 "I spend approximately \$4.50 from my home to the place I sell food every day. I receive very little profit after I deduct all my expenses."

by their inadvertent dereliction of duty in regard to calling God what he has chosen to be called, and Fijian worshippers ignoring what God orders us to call him.

Sir James may well be right; at the very least he is entitled to this point of view.

Whether we agree with his corollary to the thesis or not, one thing is for sure – we are no more entitled to call God what we like any more than we are entitled to call each other what we like.

Names are sacred self-disclosures. To unilaterally call others, and God, whatever we choose is a form of swearing.

In the ancient world, names were a blessing – we were blessed by being given a name.

To expect God's blessing while we call him something other than what he has called himself is hardly blessing God. In fact, it renders hollow our petitions for his blessing.

The New Fijian Bible is a Christian contrition whose time has come.

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