



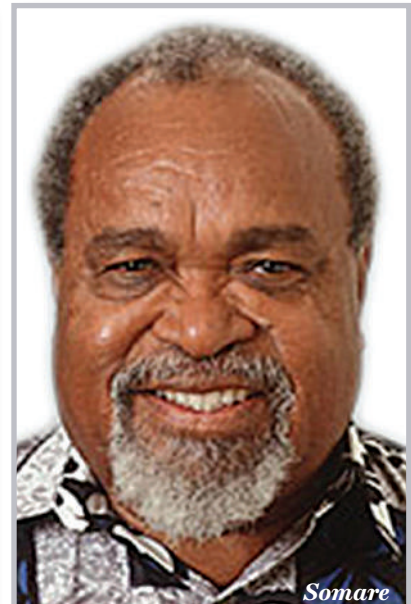
REFORMATION OF NATIONAL PARLIAMENT AS A SYMBOL OF NATIONAL UNITY

A TRIBUTE TO THE FOUNDING FATHERS SIR MICHAEL SOMARE AND SIR JULIUS CHAN

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MP Speaker of the 9th PNG
Parliament*



Chan



Somare

I would like to take this opportunity to inform the people of Papua New Guinea about the Reformation, Restoration and Modernization program that is taking place at the National Parliament, which has been partly reported by some sections of the mainstream media.

When Parliament elected me to the Speaker's chair in August 2012, I inherited a House that had lost its dignity, integrity, respect and reverence. The Parliament had become a house riddled with rotten administrative systems and processes that urgently needed transformation to bring it up to international standards.

Since Parliament stands as a symbol of national unity, an emblem of collective wisdom and the pinnacle of political

decision-making in which noble dreams of great men and women have been and will continue to be, translated into reality through legislation that will transcend to the Executive, Judiciary and the rest of the society, it needed the reformation, restoration and modernization to be undertaken.

The idea of National Unity was taken from the courageous actions of our Founding Fathers who united our very difficult and fragmented tribes of thousand languages to give us Independence.

Inspiration was also drawn from the spirit of unity still alive and active in two of our remaining Founding Fathers, Rt.Hon. Grand Chief Sir Michael Somare and Rt.Hon. Sir Julius Chan.



After going through our most divisive and constitutionally tumultuous year when Grand Chief Sir Michael Somare was removed from the house by predecessor and his reinstatement by the Supreme Court, the manner in which his true Melanesian statesmanship and spirit of unity was demonstrated to make peace with his foes and form the current government was the noblest and courageous act of the highest order to be found anywhere on earth. I have been deeply inspired by his leadership, a leadership that kept this country together from being disintegrated.

Moreover, his leadership demonstrated respect for the Constitution our Founding Fathers gave us at independence. The Constitution holds this nation together. We are united because of this founding legal document. From it springs the source of our laws. It compels us to remain united as a sovereign nation among other nations.

Alongside him, urging on, supporting and plotting through the political storm, among others, was Sir Julius Chan, a leader who appreciates and cherishes national unity and is calling for greater political power-sharing with provinces to keep our unity together, including Bougainville, which should be persuaded to elect to remain as an integral part of PNG come 2015.

Our Grand Chief Sir Michael Somare not only delivered us Independence, adopted for us a living Constitution, and averted the most explosive constitutional crisis we have experienced yet, but also made two

decisions of far – reaching ramifications that cements the unity of this country.

The first was the adoption of Vision 2050 in 2009. Vision 2050 was the revitalization of his Eight Aims introduced on the eve of Independence with which to guide our development trajectory as an independent nation. The Eight Aims were designed to unite Papua New Guineans through economic empowerment. During the last 30 years, successive governments have lost sight of it, although they are embodied in the National Goals and Directive Principles of the PNG Constitution. During his term as Prime Minister, our Grand Chief had witnessed the disunity in policy direction and economic development. Therefore he caused national planning and economic development to be guided by this one document, and re-directed us towards the vision of financial independence and economic freedom.

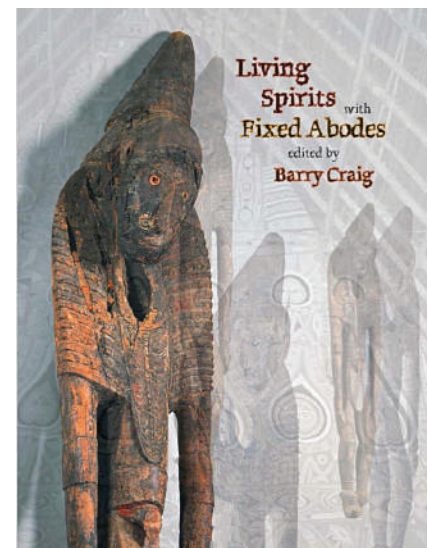
The second was his dedication of PNG and covenant with the God of the Holy Bible in 2007. This second action was in my view the most important of all the actions he had taken since the founding of this nation.

To understand the importance of this, let me take you back to the totem pole and carvings the newspapers have published about in the past two weeks.

The totem pole, as the picture here shows, has three heads representing the god of witchcraft on the left, the god of immorality on the right and the god of idolatry in the middle. While the carvings are harmless and lifeless wood, they symbolically represent ancestral gods and spirits of idolatry, immorality

and witchcraft. I am not making this up. I paraphrasing what the Grand Chief Sir Michael Somare said on the eve of Independence.

Recorded in the book *Living Spirits with Fixed Abodes: The Masterpieces Exhibition of the Papua New Guinea National Museum and Art Gallery*, edited by Barry Craig, published in 2010, Sir Michael declared that wooden carvings and cultural artefacts are 'living spirits with fixed abodes.'



Barry Craig interprets this to mean that the Chief "was referring to the prevailing belief of Papua New Guineans that everything is invested with spirit, not least the objects carved, modeled, or constructed for ceremonial, and often everyday use.

Some would scoff at this and dismiss it as joke, but I am stating what our founding father affirmed when he was then Chief Minister in order to provide you the context of his important declaration in 2007.





I call upon the people of Papua New Guinea to see that the National Identity and Unity Pillar is a fitting and uniting symbol, uniting our present and future with our Founding Fathers

our nation, restored us back to God and showed us the new direction. In the case of economic development and policy direction, he has given us Vision 2050. For cultural, ideological and spiritual direction, he has disconnected us from our ancestral spirits and idols, and joined us with God of the Holy Bible.

So, when the Parliamentary House Committee was considering our reformation, restoration and modernization plans, the forgoing actions of our Founding Fathers became inspirational.

Therefore, we decided that a fitting tribute to our Founding Fathers, and especially the Grand Chief who has demonstrated statesmanship in forging unity in difficult circumstances in the wake of the recent Constitution crisis, was to implement his declaration and covenant with God by removing the carvings of wooden idols he renounced, and installing in its place a National Unity Pole.

In accordance with the declaration and covenant of Grand Chief Sir Michael Somare, the Foundation of the National Identity and Unity Pillar will be the Bible, representing the infallible Word of God. Our Grand Chief has dedicated us and our Nation to this God, and it is only fitting that the Word of God forms the foundation of our Nation.

Inspired by the Bible and our noble customs, our Founding Fathers gave

us the Constitution. So on top of the Bible will be the PNG Constitution. United to worship one God, the God to whom our Parliamentarians pray to before every session and our Grand Chief covenanted with and brought together as a nation – state under one Constitution, are the people. So, on top of the Constitution will be the people of PNG.

Above the people of PNG will be the declaratory prayer and covenant of our Grand Chief Sir Michael Somare. This will point our people to a new direction, to the God of the Holy Bible as our source of strength, prosperity, knowledge and wisdom.

Right at the top of the National Identity and Unity Pillar will be an everlasting flame, symbolizing the light that comes from the Word of God showing us the direction for PNG to follow and representing the Holy Spirit as our ever present help.

Our Founding Fathers deserve to be honored, especially our Grand Chief, after the underserved humiliation he went through during our worst Constitutional crisis, and how he had come out it as a victor and Father of Unity, making friends with and forming a government with foes.

I call upon the people of Papua New Guinea to see that the National Identity and Unity Pillar is a fitting and uniting symbol, uniting our present and future with our Founding Fathers, with all

our people in our country and with our Creator God.

I want to take this opportunity to salute our Rt. Hon. Grand Chief Sir Michael Somare for being an inspiration to the ensuing generations. Equally, I would like to salute our Founding Father, Rt.Hon. Sir Julius Chan, for his statesmanship in weathering storms and standing with friends in dark times. And further, I extend my thank you to all our Founding Fathers for uniting our people to achieve Independence.

When we complete our reformation, restoration and modernization exercise, a new light will shine in the Grand Hall of our National Parliament. Everyone will then know that our Founding Fathers have passed on the leadership mantle to the younger leaders to take us through the next 40 years and beyond.

Thank you

God bless Papua New Guinea

Hon. Theodore Zurenuoc, MP

Speaker of the 9th Parliament

