THE CHURCH AS EMBODIMENT AND EXPRESSION OF COMMUNITY ON UJELANG AND ENEWETAK, MARSHALL ISLANDS

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The church as a culturally constructed location is constantly "unmade and remade" on Ujelang and Enewetak Atolls (Marshall Islands) with semantic values tied to wider social and historical changes. Stories about the original church represent it as a sacred site forming the physical, moral, and cosmogenic center of the Enewetak community. During World War II, Japanese military rule transformed the church into a location of resistance. During postwar exile to Ujelang Atoll, the village-centered church became a site where solidarity-enhancing practices allowed the community to confront isolation and suffering. A new church, built in 1978 as a symbol of reinvigorated identity, was abandoned within two years with repatriation to Enewetak Atoll, where church and town "center" were displaced and cohesive elements of community were unraveling. A foreign upstart church made the 1990s a contentious time as churches, new and old, were refashioned as physical and sociosemantic sites of significance in the ongoing negotiation of communal identity.

IN *THE ELEMENTARY FORMS OF THE RELIGIOUS LIFE*, Durkheim posits that the church is doubly constituted: by the community of believers and by the multifaceted set of practices and beliefs shared as part of a common worldview. He clearly recognized that the system of belief was dynamic and that it was intimately embedded in temporal and spatial constructs that were also social in character (Durkheim 1965:28, 22–24). Yet, in his zeal to demonstrate the collective character of social life, Durkheim spent scant time exploring the particular ways in which "the church" as a community and "the church" as a physical site and cultural artifact come to be "incessantly unmade and

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remade" (p. 28) in relation to one another. It is the particularities of "the church" as a physical and architectural site that form the central concern of the present article, both in relation to the community of Enewetak and Ujelang people who fashioned their house of worship, and equally in relation to the shifting social dynamics within the community that come to be reflected in the symbolic dimensions of the physical structures through time.

My contention is that the church is a particularly well-situated example of a multireferential place. As de Certeau argues for other named places, these sites are symbols "that hierarchize and semantically order the surface" of a specific location (1984:104). While the signifiers "slowly lose, like worn coins, the value engraved on them, . . . their ability to signify outlives its first definition. These names, [therefore] make themselves available to the diverse meanings given to them by passers-by; . . . as metaphors, they determine for reasons that are foreign to their original value" a diverse array of meanings and articulate with a wide array of activities. As the lived realities of life shift through time for Enewetak people the church, as a physical site tightly interwoven with local people's identities, closely reflects these changes.

While spatial topographics and toponymies have interested Pacific scholars (see for example, Parmentier 1987; Carucci 1997), these topics have not been treated in any detail in the extensive literature on Christianity in the Pacific. Numerous authors, of course, note the central placement of churches within local villages and the way that the church, commonly, forms a particularly visible stage for the conduct of social life. "The church edifice is the geographical, ceremonial, and social center of the community, and the spatial and social nexus of the moieties," notes Tobin, writing about the Enewetak community during its time of exile on Ujelang (1967:108).

Barker provides a rather different case where spatial and social symbolics are less isomorphic. Barker describes the way in which Saint Thomas church, part of the Uiaku Mission Station that was both physically and psychologically detached from the central village, came to be transformed into a significant site within the village. At Saint Thomas's consecration in 1962, he observes:

> As the bishop's party approached the church, they found it surrounded on three sides by a low fence of crisscrossed sticks. The different trees making up the fence were *kawo*, emblems of the clans, linked together in a sign of unity. In building this fence, Maisins had symbolically transformed the mission station from a foreign social order to a village center; these kinds of emblems had hitherto been set up only on feast days in the central plazas of the higher-ranking clans. In effect, the Maisin converted the mission station into the

> village and thus encompassed external conversion within the idiom of internal conversion. (Barker 1993:220–221)

For the Enewetak people, who began their missionary encounter with a physically central church, centrality continues to be a meaningful issue in current discourse about the church, but the layers of significance are hardly exhausted by this characteristic.

In an insightful article on Stone-faced Ancestors in Waimira, Kahn discusses the way in which stones "anchor mythological narratives to the land" (1990:55, 57). Kahn's metaphors of anchoring and recording seem to align with Basso's view of the landscape among Cibecue Apache. Basso depicts Cibecue discourses as multireferential statements with meaning for people on account of their grounding in a largely shared historic past that has an "inseparable connection to specific localities" (1988:103). And Basso also suggests that place names have an evocative power that "is most dramatically displayed when a name is used to substitute for the narrative it anchors" (pp. 112–113). With more sweeping strokes, Kahn contends that "all across Melanesia, are traces of peoples' mythology recorded in landscape." At the same time, Kahn gives evidence that the "anchoring" processes are, in fact, dynamic and polysemic. For example, she notes the way in which the stories about Tauribariba shift as social practices that surround the stone are altered by historical occurrences. Tauribariba is a well-known stone that was taken by missionaries to be cemented in the church. Furthermore, Kahn suggests that the mythology that is "anchored" by certain stones is "negotiable and subject to revision" and that events "recorded" in a stone are most easily changed by the movement of the stones (1990:53, 56–58). Seemingly, then, while stories and stones are semiotically linked in several revealing ways, such ties are neither inherent nor perduring, but are the product of historical processes and situated interpretations.

My reason for concentrating on this point is to ask readers to problematize the relationships among various symbolic spaces, the meanings attached to them, the social personas that fashion those meanings, and the multilayered webs of social and historical relationships in which those persons are embedded. An entire genre of ecological literature (particularly concentrating on the naturalness of the western United States) suggests, far too simplistically, that meanings and symbolic relationships are embedded in the landscape, and simply exude from inherent conditions of that landscape. This reductionist view fails entirely to account for the cultural construction of the environment and its semiotic appropriation for multiple purposes. Basso and Kahn, of course, have much more sophisticated views. Nevertheless, in the context of de Certeau's discussion of the

continual (re)contouring of the city, it would be shortsighted for anthropologists to set up a false "hot society–cold society" (or "the west" and "the rest") dichotomy between societies that have perduring relationships with symbolically potent but unchanging features of the landscape and societies that have dynamic relations with their surroundings. Indeed, Dominy demonstrates just how symbolically rich relationships with the land are grounded both historically and pragmatically (2000). Certainly my experiences with Marshallese people and landscapes agree with Kahn's recognition that historical relations are recalled less in terms of the temporal relationship between events than they are "conceived of in a spatial framework" (1990:61). As Douglas notes for New Caledonia (1982), a great deal of local history is "written on the ground." But Douglas's inscription metaphor evokes a more active human process than does Kahn's "anchoring." Certainly, for Enewetak residents, the dynamic relations among people, spaces, stories, and social settings is itself a landscape that is constantly being recontoured.

Spatial Reconfigurations on Enewetak and Ujelang

First missionized in the mid-1920s the Enewetak people, as did many groups throughout the Pacific, welcomed missionization with open arms (once the churchmen had received the support of the principal chief of the southern [Enewetak] segment of the population). In the 1970s, people discussed this time as one when the word of God was *lukuun beran*, "very potent or strong," and part of that strength came from the physical and cosmological location of the church. Pita, chief of the Enewetak segment of the community, was also recalled by many as extremely *beran*, "empowered with superhuman force," a descendant of a line of chiefs of the clan DiPako (Shark People) who had the sacred ability to deflect typhoons and, as long as the totemic taboos were obeyed, also had siblingship ties with sharks that ensured that he and others of his clan were impervious to attack while in the sea. The first missionaries lived on Pita's land parcel in the center of Enewetak islet, an inherently highly ranked location that derived its potency both from its centricity and from its having been worked by the communal labor of the community out of respect for, and in an ongoing exchange with, their high-ranked chief. While this scenario of honoring the chief may well have derived from the late nineteenth century, when taxes imposed by Germany were often paid by communal corvée labor arrangements, it was remembered in the 1970s and 1980s, first and foremost, as the customary local strategy to show respect to chiefs. The chief's land parcel, Lojitak (The belly [insides or stomach] opening to the windward), itself reflects the semiotic centrality of this place. As

discussants on ASAOnet in 2003 noted, in many Pacific locales, the stomach is intimately intertwined with thinking and feeling processes.[1] Though the throat is considered the emotional seat by Marshall Islanders, much thinking and feeling is believed to be assessed and modified through the belly. Equally, the belly is aligned with a generational force that is also said to be carried in the chief's person. On Enewetak, the fundamental group with whom one shares the closest feelings, the group where the most fundamental interpersonal relationships are fashioned and maintained is the *bwij*, "bilateral extended family"; it derives from *bwij-*, "umbilicus." This ontologically primordial locus ties a person through his or her mother to others in the extended family and, ultimately, to others in the entire community. This generational potency is precisely analogous to the strength imputed to the first church as it sat upon the empowered grounds of Lojitak.

A number of Ujelang residents in the 1970s clearly recalled the days when a missionary presence preceded the physical structure of the church, but most current-day Enewetak historians condense the coming of the missionaries with the specific location and physical structure of "the church."[2] Obviously experience and recollections have shifted, but the mode of contemporary condensations also reflects a long-standing cultural practice of embedding sacredness and other deeply felt primordial meanings in set locations and certain objects (cf. Basso and Feld 1997). In people's recollections, primordial Enewetak deities became manifest in the form of particular pandanus, coconut, and breadfruit trees and, although those trees no longer exist, their approximate locations are still recognized and still said to be invested with noncorporeal force. Likewise, the location of the first church is spoken of as a special, sacred site. The specific design elements of this first indigenized church are not memorialized in stories, but World War II bombing photographs place the structure some distance on the inland side of the lagoon-shore path that follows the contour of Enewetak islet. It was the largest and the highest structure on the islet, where both size and height are said to have served as measures of importance and rank. It was of post-and-beam design, open-sided or with half-walls (accounts vary), and covered with thatch. The thatch required repair every two or three years and was renewed by communal effort, much in the fashion that labor on the chief's land was carried out. These shared labors, like the Sunday service, which at the chief's request was attended by all, gave the church a universalizing contour that persisted unquestioned for as great a length of time as the chieftainship itself. In local residents' recollections of the 1930s, the church served as a prototypical expression of community in its physical enactment or in corporate form, very much in the mold of Durkheim or Radcliffe-Brown. The entire structure dominated the windward side of Lojitak and, while Enewetak land-

resettlement boundaries remain contested (see Carucci and Maifeld 1999), the church is said to have stood near the location of Paul and Akiko's current house or, for those who feel the parcel boundaries should extend further to the windward than is currently the case, near Atila's house on the leeward section of Āelālen (the parcel just windward of current-day Lojitak).[3]

Christian Places/Japanese Spaces

The enactments of community that are said to have taken place at/on/within the cultural site described as "the church" occurred in the midst of the Japanese era. Unlike other locations in the Marshall Islands that were missionized much earlier—1857 for Ebon, 1893 for Kwajalein, 1912 for Bikini—Japan had full control of the region prior to the time that missionaries from Kosrae, trained by the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions, arrived on Enewetak (Tobin 1967: chap. 2). While Japanese entrepreneurs attempted to carry out a wholesale appropriation of the land, there were few disruptions of the church until the war years. As Poyer and Carucci note, support of already-established Christian churches was typical Japanese policy in Micronesia (Strathern et al. 2002), and missionary influence even expanded without intervention on Enewetak. Indeed, during the prewar years, as the potency of the church faced potential routinization, institutionalization, and possible decline as it became part of the mundane, the church came to provide a communal location for community resistance and for hope. Even when the Japanese military came to discourage church activities, the disruptions on Enewetak were less forceful than they were on Jaluit and certain other Marshall Islands locales to the east (Poyer, Falgout, and Carucci 2000). Nevertheless, the Japanese challenge to the sanctity of the church, both as a communal body and as a physical space, helped to reinvigorate it, giving cause for increased, and sometimes clandestine, solidarity. Specifically, as Japanese soldiers proliferated around 1942 and 1943, the sacred space occupied by the church was defiled. This defilement was far less than on Jaluit, where the church was turned into a pigpen, but a spatial invasion took place that itself represented the increasing conflict between rising Japanese nationalism and the church that traced its primordial roots to New England and the United States. Ultimately, the church was driven underground and its physical structure reduced to rubble by the bombing of the islet, however ironically, by invading U.S. servicemen. People prayed for the continuity of their lives from within the confines of Japanese-dug entrenchments. The bombing and invasion took a substantial toll in terms of local lives; Enewetak prayers for survival were answered for only about 80 percent of the community.

Local Responses to Forced Changes in the Aftermath of War

After the war, military authorities moved the community to two northern islets of Enewetak Atoll, Aomen and Bijile. Although the physical structure that was the church had been leveled during the battle, the collective social body that was the church appears to have become even more cohesive with the move to Aomen and Bijile. Formerly separated by a twenty-mile sail across Enewetak's large lagoon, the two intermarried atoll "halves"—Enewetak and Enjebi moieties—now resided on neighboring islets. Placed on the outer islets by the U.S. Navy to allow the Allies to use the main islets of the atoll during the final year and a half of the war, community members recall this period as one of good fortune on account of the generosity and kind treatment demonstrated by naval personnel. But their rejoicing turned to ambivalence as the United States continued to use the atoll to monitor nuclear tests on Bikini Atoll after the war, and finally to sadness, as community members learned, late in 1947, that like the people of Bikini they, too, would be resettled away from their home atoll—testing was to begin within the confines of Enewetak.

Ironically, as the people of Enewetak gathered within the walls of a tar-paper-roofed sanctuary on Ujelang Atoll, 130 miles from their homeland, to celebrate their first Kūrijmōj festival in exile, little did people realize that this "*Kūrijmōj* thrown off in sadness" (Carucci 1997b:xx) would mark a further unification and solidification of the church and the community. On Ujelang, for the first time in remembered history, the entire group of Enewetak people resided in a single village. As they transformed themselves into DiUjelang, "the people of Ujelang," they did so as a unitary community; and the focus of that community was the physical structure of the church. Along with the council house and dispensary, the church occupied a piece of "community ground" in the middle of the village, a parcel that was not aligned with either moiety, Jitaken, "the windward half," or Jittoen, "the leeward half." As previously, the church occupied a high-ranked space on the ocean side of the village path. And, as before, the Enewetak chief (a position now held by the offspring of Pita, who had first welcomed the missionaries to Enewetak) resided next to the church. But the entire Enjebi half of the larger Enewetak community, a group that had once resided at a distance from the church based on Enewetak islet, now congregated in Jittoen, on the leeward side of the sacred physical location occupied by the Ujelang church. Under these conditions, the Ujelang community grew much more unified than the "halves" of Enewetak ever could have been, and the church came to be the focal point of that unity. During this era, both within the walls of the church and outside, people on Ujelang had legitimate rationale to use

the extended family (*bwij*) as a core metaphor to describe the community as a whole: "We are all really just one family." This expression of solidarity was heard constantly when people first spoke of the community to me, in 1976.

Ironically, the substantial suffering and isolation experienced by Ujelang people during the 1950s and 1960s contributed equally to their sense of internal solidarity. Enewetak had been in frequent contact with Pohnpei prior to the war, but only infrequently did government supply ships from the Marshall Islands visit Ujelang. As blame for the community's plight came to be placed increasingly on Marshall Islanders, Ujelang people began to speak of them as distant "others." The opposite side of seeing themselves as "all one family" was the perception of "those Marshall Islanders" (who do not treat us with the respect and caring expected of siblings [or of those sharing other sorts of common identity]). Indeed, these exclusionary identity constructions were mutual during this era since, in the Marshall Islands, Ujelang people were spoken of in derogatory "backwoods" terms. To Marshall Islanders, Ujelang people spoke strangely, ate tabooed foods, and acted improperly. The same sort of stereotyping was done by Ujelang people in their assessments of Marshall Islanders.

The church, however, served as a bridge across these rifts of identity, however unstable and temporally restricted the underlying girders may have been. Regional church activities provided one of the sole reasons many Ujelang people left the atoll as well as the minimal context of exposure to others that bred stereotyping of "these strange others." Ultimately, the church became one avenue through which Ujelang people could demonstrate to these "others" that they were Marshall Islanders too, deserving of respect. This shift was particularly marked in the late 1970s when the community decided to construct a new church.

As Durkheim recognized (1912), at one level a church is always a social collectivity, a "moral community," with largely shared beliefs and modes of representation. Yet in its historical fashioning on Enewetak, the church was thoroughly woven into a physical site, a place. The church, in this sense, models Enewetak's primordial sacred sites. At the same time, in its placement on the chief's land parcel the church comes to represent the identity of the broader group, for the chief is said to "stand for (or embody) all of Enewetak." Lojitak, the stomach, the central generational point for the entire physical space that is Enewetak islet, is equally the central point of metaphoric origin for the community. This cultural and historical alignment of the church with a particular physical location created a series of indexical, and even iconic, connections that aligned the community's sense of spatial orientation with its social fabric and its moral character.

Of course, these symbolic alignments are contested upon occasion, for certain purposes, by specific subgroups in the community. Nevertheless, such

disputes do not detract from the potency of the symbolic alignments among church, chief, and location in situations when such alignments are used to construct arguments about group solidarity. If anything, disputes lend further value to people's persistent alignment of the symbols in solidarity stories. Throughout the years, I have never heard any disagreement about the way in which Pita, the chief, came to empower the early missionaries through his support. This story is now a standard trope. The story has come to be the standard account through which the newly arrived church is sanctified and given credibility. On the other hand, since the chieftainship itself is contested and since land rights are equally frequent matters of internal disagreement, it is not surprising that Pita's rights to Lojitak are questioned. Indeed, not one Enewetak chief has chosen to reside on Lojitak since the 1980 return to Enewetak. Chieftainship is transmitted through males on this atoll, yet Ioanej (Pita's son), Tom (Pita's youngest son), and Naptali (Pita's grandson) have all chosen to live in locations where their land claims are less disputed than on Lojitak. At the same time, Naptali's sister's offspring live on this land parcel, and their residence serves to mark the extended family's continued claims on the locale. I have discussed the disputed nature of claims to land on Enewetak and the way in which a thirty-year exile on Ujelang further complicates these matters. My point here is to make evident the way in which stories about the centrality of the church as a marker of shared identity and community solidarity come to be fashioned out of core symbols of primordiality and potency even as features of the symbols may be brought into question for other purposes and other audiences.

While local people certainly did not control the conditions of their relocation, in some ways the American designers, by placing the church in the logical center of Ujelang and by creating a centralized village, increased the iconic connections between the church's physical position and its symbolic position as the center of the social and moral community. With these communicative connections taken for granted, it is not surprising that in the late 1970s, as the Ujelang community was facing the most disruptive influence in its recent history—relocation to the "new" Enewetak—the community decided to construct a new church on Ujelang. This construction, I believe, accomplished two ends. The first, which drifted within the purview of collectively expressed consciousness, was the idea that the new church would stand as a representation to other Marshall Islanders of the altered state of the Ujelang people. In their own minds they were no longer the "backwoods" folks of long-standing stereotypes. The church building would display to Marshall Islanders the fact that the Ujelang community was now a group with a certain financial clout, and the dedication ceremony would allow the community to demonstrate its new cosmopolitan sophistication to other

Marshallese. The second aim, far less conscious, was even more central: as the group faced a plethora of radical changes, the entire process of constructing the church and, in the process, using it as a praxis representation as well as an abstract symbol of unity allowed the community to face impending uncertainty unwaveringly.

The "backwoods" imagery had been fashioned out of geographic and historical isolation and concomitant cultural and linguistic difference. Enewetak and Ujelang atolls are among the most distant locations in the central Western Pacific. From a Marshall Islander's perspective, the isolation of these two atolls was ultimately marked by their precontact "independence" from neighboring island groups. Enewetak and Ujelang were governed by their own chiefly lines, and those local lines held no connection to chiefly lines elsewhere in the Marshall Islands.[4] These primordial claims of isolation were further exacerbated by the fact that the two atolls had been administered from Pohnpei during the pre–World War II Japanese era, though earlier missionary and German governmental ties had once linked the two outliers with atolls of the Rālik Chain (Tobin 1967). Wartime strategy by Japan shifted this center-periphery arrangement. Enewetak was selected as a strategic stronghold and, even though substantial reinforcement of the atoll took place belatedly (not long before U. S. troops landed), the atoll would never again be like Lae, Ujae, or Ujelang. Enewetak proved to be a particularly valuable strategic site for U.S. forces, who could easily fly B-17s from Enewetak to Guam without refueling.[5] While on Ujelang, local residents were kept on the periphery of this recentering. But with some financial compensation for their suffering in the 1970s and with the U.S. agreement to repatriate Enewetak people to their home atoll in 1976, by 1978 Ujelang people were already experiencing an invigorated sense of atoll identity.

New Contours for Old Identities

At this same historical moment (1977–1978), the idea of moving from Ujelang to Enewetak was far from innocuous. As I have noted elsewhere (Carucci 1992; Carucci and Maifeld 1999), Enewetak people were thoroughly transformed into the people of Ujelang during their thirty-year exile, and the move back to Enewetak was perceived to be a sea change, a movement into another world and another generation of existence. While highly charged with emotional energy, the entire move evoked extreme ambivalences. These ambivalences were overdetermined by "Temporary," a program set up to allow Ujelang's oldest residents to return to Enewetak Atoll during its rehabilitation and reside there on Jeptan islet. The elderly, in particular, were to return to their homeland since dying on Ujelang, separated from

their homeland, would place their spirit beings in postmortem limbo, "at home" on Ujelang, yet not truly "at home" since nearly all of one's ancestral consociates from times past were diEnewetak, Enewetak people, resident in spirit as they had been in life on their own lands within Enewetak. After an initial six-month trip, though, all of the elders other than those thought to be nearest to death returned to Ujelang, and Enewetak became a camp for youth. The elders longed for the Enewetak of their youth but encountered a place entirely dependent on the Americans who inhabited the main islet. In the elders' stories, Jeptan had become just like Ebeye, a dependent work camp, and they longed for the Marshallese outer-island lifestyle, the local foods, and the sense of community that they had left behind on Ujelang. Not unimportantly, this first round trip of "temporary" seniors returned to Ujelang early in the autumn of 1977. Construction on the new church began around the same time, after an assessment of "Temporary" had already been formed among the people of Ujelang and Jeptan.

Coterminus with the disorienting effects of the pending repatriation came the negotiations of the "KanKan" (congressional convention) that would lead to independence for the new Republic of the Marshall Islands in 1985. I will not dwell on the effects of these negotiations other than to note that Ujelang people voted, early on, unanimously against an independent Marshall Islands; at the *fait accompli* stage, against affiliation with the Marshall Islands; next, in favor of an appeal to the United Nations for separate consideration to remain an unaffiliated dependent trust of the United States (so nuclear issues could be properly cared for); and finally, at the last minute, reluctantly (and under substantial pressure from Marshall Islands chiefs and future government authorities), in favor of association with the new republic. Needless to say, a considerable measure of communal ambivalence and animosity was generated as a result of these changes. Church construction provided a method for demonstrating solidarity and empowerment in the face of such uncertainties.

Realignments of Church and Community

The church on Ujelang was built under these circumstances, with full knowledge that the community would be repatriated to Enewetak in the near future. At that point in time, some felt that they might remain on Ujelang or return to reside after a short visit to Enewetak. But in large part the church was built without a future living community of parishioners in mind. It was a very costly venture in both cash invested and time dedicated to the task. Why would the community focus its energies and resources so completely on a project with such a narrow future?

The answers, I believe, can be found in the issues discussed above, but it is the details of the construction and display that illustrate the importance of these themes. Building began in late August 1977 with an initial shipment of lumber and plywood, cement block, reinforcement bar (*tikkiñ*), and cement from Majuro. Work crews were made up of every able-bodied man in the community and prepared food and drink were provided daily by the women. To pay for the supplies, a mandatory tithe was required; the sum was deducted from each resident's portion of a quarterly Relocation Trust Fund payment. Except for young children and the very old, participation was required of everyone. During the first weeks of the project, work crews of masons were organized from each of the six "towns" in the village. From its initial conception the project was designed as a communal Ujelang effort, much like the Kūrijmōj festival, even though many involved in these endeavors were not members of the church.

With the return of the first group of "Temporary" residents, bringing with them extra supplies from Enewetak, the songfest groups (*jepta*) began practicing for Kūrijmōj, Ujelang "Christmas," and, with that shift, the church work groups became the songfest groups. As I have discussed in detail elsewhere (Carucci 1980, 1997: chap. 2), the *jepta*, while based on the "towns," are only tenuously attached to them and often include members from various locations elsewhere in the village. The shift to *jepta*-based labor groups was quite logical since all of the hours not spent working on the church were dedicated to one's songfest group and the success of the Kūrijmōj games depended on each *jepta* hiding its plans from the members of other songfest groups. If membership in the work groups crosscut the *jepta*, the success of Kūrijmōjwould be compromised (see Carucci 1997).

By the end of November, the external walls and window frames of the new church had been constructed around the existing structure, enlarging the old building slightly on each side and adding about three meters to the ocean side of the existing sanctuary. The community became so involved in Kūrijmōj activities that work on the church was postponed until the latter half of January. At that time, work once again began on the structure, but a period of food shortage that followed a typhoon and tropical storm in December and early January (1977–1978), exacerbated by the standard depletion of foods following the major feasts of Kūrijmōj, soon turned to famine. People dispersed to distant parts of the atoll in order to maximize access to resources, and work on the church came to a halt. Late in February a government supply vessel arrived with enough rice to ease the famine slightly, but nearly another month passed before a ship arrived to exchange the "Temporary" residents on Jeptan and truly resupply Ujelang with food. During this period the *jepta* groups continued to compete, as they had during Kūrijmōj,

but the competition focused on church building, food gathering, and food preparation. It was a community effort energized by the competition among the arbitrary *jepta* divisions. The workday had to be shortened to allow the men time to fish and collect coconuts but, while increasing the burdens on all community members severalfold, the extra efforts provided further inspiration in the competitive arena since the *jepta* that could come up with the most generous and exotic indigenous foods had more definitive markers of its skill, larger bragging rights, and a greater source of group empowerment than did the groups when they had exchanged imported foods. Whenever a group could distribute more than the minimal famine foods during the work breaks, the group's pride was evident, its rank was increased, and a contribution was made to the competitive atmosphere. The competitive Enewetak chant was heard frequently during these trying times: *"Kaatebadbad, te badbad, kw' bar joraan."* This chant, difficult to translate, means roughly "to make (someone, 'the listener') continuously jealous/envious, make continuously jealous, you are damaged once again."

The most inspired groups and those masons with high-quality skills were privileged by being assigned work on the high-ranked ocean-side front or "head" of the building, which would house the pulpit and elevated platform, the focus of parishioners' attention. The entryway, on the lagoon-side end, was the next most valued location to work since, it, too, would draw the attention of all who entered. There was a certain appeal in working on the bell tower, which stood above the entryway. Young men in particular competed to work on this highly elevated location, a high-ranked space that displayed the prowess of those who competed in races to climb the tallest coconut trees (and thereby elevate themselves above their peers and other members of the community; Carucci 1987). Much of this upper platform and structural support for the tower was constructed early in the summer season, after the respected elders and I departed on the supply ship for Enewetak in order to decide on preliminary land boundaries there.

The window frames also provided a context for the display of talent, and it was the respected elders who had to fashion the upper arches of the windows out of local woods before leaving for Enewetak. Windows were spaced around the entire periphery of the structure and did not occupy particularly sacred and high-ranked areas. Instead, they constituted an interstitial boundary between interior and exterior. Their position on the inside-outside margin meant they would also command extraordinary attention and, therefore, had to be perfectly fitted (*jetjet*). Most of the men who worked on the window frames were canoe builders with the highly valued ability to shape wood to a precise form with a machete, a skill that most younger men had not perfected.

The women and mature youth of the community took on an extraordinary amount of labor as well, for nothing on Ujelang could be accomplished without food. While men fished in the after hours of construction, women of the various *jepta* did much of the gathering and all of the food preparation. Normally men assisted with the gathering tasks, but with their attention turned to building, women had to redouble their efforts. Preparing for each break of doughnuts, unleavened arrowroot bread, drinking coconuts, and coffee or tea, and for every afternoon meal was headed by the women of each *jepta*. Like the men, the women competed to provide the most food and the most highly ranked foods for each food event. The men claimed that the women's job was to "lighten things up," a task that involved singing, joking and laughter, but one that also suggested its metaphorical sexual connotation: lightening men of the sickness-engendering possibility of being overburdened with too much semen. As with the jokes and games of Kūrijmōj, many of the humorous encounters of church construction were focused on sexual innuendo. For local residents, the entire atmosphere of a location is shaped by the interactions that are a piece of that space. A fragment of each man's bodily essence comes to be embedded in the church through labor on the structure. Equally, the women of the community contribute in essential ways to the shape of the new church by providing the prepared foods that give men their strength. In addition to this regenerational energy, women also lightened the atmosphere, infusing the scene with sexual joking and lighthearted banter. The resultant discourses encourage men to fantasize about sexual "work" and are as energizing as food for men engaged in more mundane labor. Far from being contrary to Ujelang Christian belief, the reproductive focus of this banter is an essential religious force for Ujelang and Enewetak people (see Carucci 1997b for more on this topic).

The Ujelang church was nearing completion at the time that I left the atoll in August 1978 for Majuro. We had been working on the roof, and the bell tower still required some finishing touches. This work was completed in the next two months. The structure then received its whitewash and windows prior to the dedication the following year. Whitening the structure, and then hand trimming it in light blue, gave the structure additional qualities of purity and sacredness (Carucci 1997b: chap. 6). Above the door was inscribed a welcome to all, a snippet of scripture that had been emblazoned on a banner in the old church and provided continuity with it: *Komin delon im kabun ilo an*, "You (plural, command form) come in and make religion (worship) within."

Stories about the dedication give strong evidence of just how important church construction was to the process of refashioning the Ujelang identity on the eve of their repatriation to Enewetak. Marshall Islands church and

government officials were in attendance, including the soon-to-be president of the emerging Marshall Islands state. A government supply ship was chartered to transport the guests. "Hundreds" of bolts of brightly colored cloth were purchased, and huge quantities of food were stockpiled in preparation for the event. All of the foods and gifts were given to the visiting dignitaries and guests as representations of Ujelang people's generosity. The spectacle aimed to overwhelm the guests, and Ujelang people suggest that the guests who attended were (properly) "amazed" (*bwilōñ*).

Slightly over one year from the dedication, Ujelang people departed their adopted atoll to return to Enewetak Atoll. Behind them, they left their newly fashioned church, which contained within the birth and death records of the community for their thirty-three-year residence on Ujelang. Some part of each of these persons would remain, forever, as a piece of Ujelang.

The return to Enewetak proved at least as disorienting as had the original move to Ujelang. Exile on Ujelang had brought impoverishment and isolation, but a considerable continuity in "movements of people from day-to-day" had been maintained. In contrast, the move back to Enewetak was hardly a return to the homeland. After a couple of years on the atoll, people spoke of "the New Enewetak" as a "land of badness" or disappointment and of "ill fortune." In spite of Enewetak's tremendous size, life on the three rehabilitated islets in the south was far more restrictive than on Ujelang. People soon craved the local foods of Ujelang, and most of the mature adults who loved to visit Majuro to experience the excitements of *moud in palle* (life [in the style] of white people) very much disliked the incorporation of that type of lifestyle into the day-to-day routines of Enewetak. At the same time that overnight Americanization was abhorred, somehow the community could not resist its charms.

On a foraging trip back to Ujelang in October 1982, people spoke endearingly of life on Ujelang (the same life about which they had complained a few years previously), and felt great sadness at the sight of the church. "Working together" on the Ujelang church became a condensation symbol for all of the talk about communal endeavors that had typified life in the past, both on Ujelang and in more distant times. As communality became increasingly infrequent, so its value increased as a representative form—a way to discuss an idealized past.

The new Enewetak church had none of the qualities of the memorialized structure on Ujelang. A military building converted to a church by the U.S. Army, the drop-shuttered building of corrugated tin was almost lost amid a clutter of similar structures in the "town" section of Enewetak islet. It was not the largest, not the most central, not the most distinguished looking. The military personnel responsible for the cleanup of Enewetak had added a bell

tower to the structure and donated a bell as a gesture of goodwill. Nevertheless, the Enewetak-Ujelang people's decision to retain most of the buildings in the military village near the windward end of Enewetak and use them as their village center proved shortsighted—the bulk of the residents lived far to the leeward where the land parcels were larger and more productive. On Ujelang, "the bell" came to replace the nostalgic tones of the trumpet shell as a means of gathering the community for church or council meetings. Those bell tones, clanging and abrasive, emanated from striking a pressure cylinder with a steel rod. But, if the resonant tones of the Enewetak bell were far more pleasant, on most days they could barely be heard even at Metetekan, the first of the narrow land parcels that separated the main residential section of Enewetak from the windward arm of the islet where the military town was located. The loss of the bell as a collective timepiece that regulated the temporal ordering of communal life was but a modest marker of the more serious decline in the collectivizing capabilities of the church.

In 1982 and 1983, people constantly complained about the physical location of the church and school. The decision to move the church from Lojitak to the windward end of Enewetak was truly a disaster from the perspective of community formation. A concomitant part of the geographic distancing was the distancing among the ranks of community members themselves. This fissure focused soon after repatriation on the issue of land rights on the windward-most parcel on Enewetak islet, the parcel on which the town and the church sat. In 1978, at the time of the land division and the decision to retain the American military town, the community was in agreement that this land parcel was owned in common. In 1982, however, a community-wide dispute was begun when the Enewetak chiefly line claimed that they were its sole owners. In spite of heated disagreements and ongoing claims of supernatural sanction against the chiefly line, the chiefs took control of the parcel and encouraged their family members to build and take up residence on the land. This small-scale squatters' movement was an important part of activating a local claim of land rights, since living on and working the land, along with dying and being buried there, constitute proof of having physically embedded one's substance in the land (Carucci 1992; Carucci and Maifeld 1999). The standing chief then "beneficently" proclaimed that the part of the land parcel on which the town actually sat, including the space occupied by the church and minister's residence, would be set aside for the community in perpetuity. The community lost access only to the remaining parts of the parcel.

The rift between the chiefly line and members of the community was only slightly smoothed over by the chief's concession. The disagreement continue to simmer under the surface in discussions about the town's location, including the church. Any stories about the new church could never be the equiva-

lent of those about Pita and the original church, when the missionaries were welcomed and housed by the chief. In that primordial story, the chief's actions serve as a metonym for the general welcoming that the church received on Enewetak. In the new story, the bickering and stinging associated with the land parcel on which the church stands fail to align with the messages of love and sharing that people place near the core of their ideas about what becoming Christian was all about.[6] At the same time, the physical marginality of the new church in relation to the community and the shift in discourses from depictions of centricity and community to depictions of discord and bickering over rights to what should be a sacred site do serve as an appropriate analytic marker for the concomitant decline in community solidarity that has accompanied the return to Enewetak.

Whose Church?

An even more blatant indication of the way in which the "community as unified church family" trope fractured following the return to Enewetak came late in the 1980s when a new church, Assembly of God, succeeded in coming to the atoll. While fissioning the community, most likely permanently, the threat of a new church also created a *raison d'être* for solidarity within the community and church that served as a locus where an otherwise unfocused community could seek revitalization. It is in this state of ambivalence that the community continues today. No longer can there be an apparent (if somewhat artificial) seamlessness in melding together metaphors of community, church, and family. On the other hand, out of a period of communal anomie, the presence of another church has given new focus and meaning to the wayward directions of the church on the New Enewetak.

Assembly of God was, at first, denied entry on Enewetak Atoll when the denomination sent a minister to accompany some Enewetak residents who had been converted in Majuro.[7] Local residents, however, began meeting on their own and, in less than two years, had gathered together enwough converts to bring in a minister and build a small church. One advantage of the new church was its central location, on the land of an early convert on the ocean side of Lopat. Those who rose too late on Sunday morning to attend services at the Congregational church (formally the United Church of Christ [UCC], though much more like the nineteenth-century Congregational Church in structure) still had time enough to walk the short distance to make the service at the Assembly church. Despite an attempt to demonize the new church early on, its central community location, along with longstanding networks of interpersonal relationship that crosscut the Congregational-Assembly church split, proved critical in attracting parishioners. By

1995, the small Assembly church group was talking of expanding its plywood and tin sanctuary. A modest expansion of the building began within the year. Given the dual church choices now available, members of the Congregational church responded with a building proposal of their own.

The new Congregational church, of which the chief was a member, would be built on a strip of land on the windward side of the current church and minister's quarters. In part, perhaps, as a concession to community members still upset with the land issue, the chief agreed to allot the land for the new church. Like the Ujelang church, this one was built of cement and block, a symbol of permanence that would not be shared by the expanded Assembly of God church building. Nevertheless, the new church would be constructed on the windward-most end of town, not its center and certainly not the center of the islet. These factors each introduced a variety of symbolic ambiguities to the venture. Some elder residents, in particular, still longed for a return to the original site of the first church in Lojitak since that site had a certain primordial sacredness associated with the "coming of the word to Enewetak." Others felt that the association of the church with the other town buildings was more empowering, giving the church a sort of inherent legitimacy derived from sharing the space with the council house, the school, the dispensary, and other Enewetak commons buildings that had long occupied the communally owned center on Ujelang. And, while Marshall Islands churches occupied the central location on most atolls, on Enewetak such a placement would set up a symbolic competition with the school, a large three-story cement structure refabricated from a former U.S. military dormitory. Given local building skills and available materials, it would be difficult to make the church higher than the school without risking disaster.

Given available options, the windward placement of the new church was the best option. It occupied a high-ranked location, even though its lack of centrality to either the New Enewetak town area or to the islet as a whole (the Lojitak placement) involved pragmatic compromises. The structure brought to Enewetak the symbolic elements of permanence and modernity of construction that had been lost when the community left behind the Ujelang church in 1980. Like that structure, this one would involve a large dedication ceremony with invitations to church and government authorities from throughout the Marshall Islands. But, unlike that structure, it would not be the entire community that welcomed the visitors, as it had not been the entire community that contributed substantial sums of money to construct the new church. Not all members of the community had invested labor in the church, either in terms of preparing meals or mixing cement. The materials out of which shared substantiality were fashioned, that which for fifty

years made people, to their very core, common members of the community (including a shared religious fragment of identity), were no longer consumed and no longer invested in the land in the same way (Carucci and Maifeld 1999). The community was no longer unitary. Long ago it had begun its trip toward postmodernity, but the decouplings of cohesive, largely isomorphic identities involved in that process were now undeniable. Even on Enewetak, there were types of persons who might have religious identities and yet not be members of *the* church. This New Enewetak church reflects in its placement, its construction, and its christening, all of the contradictions of the new order of social relationships and lived existences on the atoll. The new structure was inspired and constructed with revitalizing vigor, in an attempt to capture the complementary solidarities of the past. It was fashioned in opposition to the complex realities of the new logical (dis)order on the atoll; yet, in important and innovative ways, the new structure incorporates all of the contradictions of the new: complicated identities, conflicted spatial arrangements, and a persistent inability to contain change within a unitary order.

In the spring of 1998, as the Enewetak motor-sail vessel, the *Wetak II,* was departing from Majuro to bring supplies for the church, a waste-disposal hose became dislodged from its mooring. The vessel filled with water and sank. While the crew escaped alive, the supplies to complete the final stages of construction were lost. Nevertheless, by late June construction was once again in full swing, with completion scheduled for August. *Tikōn* (church elder) Majao Lukas was in Majuro arranging, with a senator's support, to have church and government officials from the Republic of the Marshall Islands come to Enewetak for the church's dedication in mid-August. By late July, however, it became clear that the dedication would not occur in August. A supply ship arrived with food and church supplies, but not all of the materials required to complete the church were on board. Part of the cargo space had been given over to supplies for the dedication ceremony itself and another part to supplies for the Assembly church. Officials had not yet committed to the August date, and time was short. It was evident that the dedication would have to be pushed back in spite of conflict with the school calendar. It did not actually occur until November 1998.

At the same time the Assembly church was making equal progress, though the structure was not as far along. Although early discussion had indicated the new structure would be a larger plywood-sided building, in the end representations of permanence prevailed. The new Assembly building, situated just downwind from the former edifice, was fashioned from cement block. The "other" church was here to stay, and the cement-block structure transmitted this message of permanence. At the same time, while larger than the structure it replaced, the Assembly building was less imposing than the Con-

gregational structure. The message of "same but smaller than" was encapsulated in the material from which it was formed, six-inch cement block as opposed to the eight-inch block of the main church. Temporally as well the Assembly of God church lagged behind in its construction. For members of the Assembly, this was rationalized as a good thing since the two dedications would not compete with one another. But, of course, some UCC members saw the comparison in competitive terms: the main church was larger and the Assembly lesser, the main church's dedication sooner and small church's later. In leveraging more money to support the UCC dedication, leaders stressed the importance of making the UCC festive event unsurpassable. The intent went beyond impressing their Marshall Islands guests. Equally, it would serve to highlight the Assembly of God group's inability to compete with the proposed grand scale of the UCC church dedication. These arguments about comparative power frequently added references to the slower completion and smaller workforce of the Assembly group. Even though the entire comparison barely masks a fear of loss of power and control by UCC members, the overt intent was to point out the perduring potency of the long-standing "Enewetak church."

Throughout this period, the symbolic comparisons between the UCC and Assembly churches were interpreted differently, depending upon the interpretant. Permanence and larger scale in relation to their previous church were markers of growth and progress to the Assembly of God members. Diminutive size (in relation to the UCC church) and the slow pace of completion were seen as markers of inferiority by members of the "real" church. From all perspectives, however, the very possibility of a within-community comparison along the lines of a distinct religious identity was an exploration of new symbolic spaces on the atoll. Lacking a sense of being one, the fragmentary segments of that former whole began to negotiate their new identities based on relative assertions of power in relation to one another and in relation to the historical past. While these statements and interpretations were multifaceted, they shared only their inability to project a cohesive sense of unity beyond the distinctiveness of the newly fashioned fragmentary groups.

For nearly sixty years, throughout the central part of the twentieth century, the church served as a marker of community cohesion. Though imperfectly aligned with social realities, the physical structure of the church was a master symbol of unity. Now, as the community faces the future, they do so armed with a more elaborated, yet more contested, array of identity-fashioning symbolic fragments. Even though community or atollwide identities were never thoroughly aligned with Christian religious ones, the slippage was easily smoothed over using strategies of ritual inclusion that made all atoll residents welcome at weekly services and in major celebrations like Kūrijmōj.

Embedded in the very designs of the new Ujelang church as well as the new Enewetak structure are codings of this welcome: "Enter and Make Church (i.e., 'worship') Within." Ironically, these inscriptions were given architectonic form at the very time they became less certain. Indeed, if the church had been made out of the alignment of community and place in spite of the distinctions of passive-active, unmarked-marked, nonmember attendees–true church members, then community members are now uncertain of how to design new symbols of unity. For the past ten years, the struggle between community identity and religious identity has been foregrounded and transformed by the new oppositional contrast between UCC and Assembly. Unlike the passive-active participant distinctions, the new oppositional contrast is not easily reconciled with the familial metaphor that was once applied so freely at the atoll level: "All Ujelang people (or 'all Enewetak people'), we are really one." Yet, the increasingly elaborated set of paths traveled by various Enewetak people have complicated identities along many lines. One community sector, now two or three hundred souls, resides on the Big Island of Hawai'i. Others reside much of the time in Majuro. And the remaining half of the community resides, in the main, on Enewetak.

Traveling these different paths is not new or radically different for Enewetak people. Rather, the travels replicate the movements of sailors long ago, who etched movements across the landscape that led far from home and gained great renown from their wanderings. In other words, this is not simply a move from a society tracing roots to one sketching out routes (Clifford 1997). Instead, the era of containment, isolation, and the elaboration of cohesive internal identities focused on the church represents a vital local response to an important phase in a colonial process that required stable communities, dependable workforces, and tamed natives. While the community struggles with just how to align the new array of emergent symbolic identities under the long-standing trope of family unity, its explorations in the postcolonial era are nicely mapped by the contradictions and configurations of the church, both as physical symbol and as social space.

NOTES

1. Unni Wikan has described the indistinct thinking/feeling boundary for Bali, and I have elsewhere commented on the way in which thinking/feeling are intertwined for Enewetak and Ujelang people as well. Contributions to the ASAOnet discussion were, as is often the case, diverse, but Rick Feinberg notes:

> I share his (Bob Levy's) impression that the view of thought and feeling as arising from the gut or belly is widespread in Polynesia—very likely in other parts of Oceania as well. I was first tuned into this in 1972 when an Anutan patted

> his belly while trying to think of an answer to some question I had posed. My suspicion was confirmed by explicit statements. The way he (and others) put it, sense data are channeled (shall I say fed??) into the stomach (*manava*) where they are processed and sent up to the head (*pokouru*) to be formed there into conscious thoughts. An 'intelligent' person is said to be rotomaarama 'bright insides'. Emotions are characterized as *toku roto* 'my insides'. 'Heart' is *patumanava*, literally 'belly stone'; but it's the manava itself—not the patumanava—that's the seat of feeling.

Speaking of her understanding of Trobriand interpretations, Susan Montague notes:

> Ross Clark mentioned the lolo as inside or insides rather than stomach per se. That is true in Trobriand too. Lopo functions the same way, such that lopona vanu is the village's insides or center and lopona wowo is the body's insides or center. Since the stomach is both inside the body and at its center, lopo is also used more specifically for the stomach, such that someone saying that they have a stomach ache would say that it aches lopogu. But as I interviewed on this—wondering why the village center was called the village's stomach—I was set straight as everyone laughed at that curious idea.

While curious, similar ideas in the Marshall Islands are not outlandish or even universally laughable. Many Marshall Islanders and Enewetak people are unaware of the particular ways in which the landscape/seascape/starscape are inscribed in terms of bodily metaphors, but for others such metaphors are critical to an understanding of how segments of the Marshallese universe came to be embodied.

2. The stories and recollections on which this article is based were gathered between 1976 and 2000. My initial research was conducted from 1976 to 1978 on Ujelang Atoll under a grant from the National Science Foundation, and in 1982–1983 and 1990–1991 on Enewetak Atoll with grants from the National Endowment for the Humanities. Supplementary information has been gained on Enewetak, Majuro, and other locations where Enewetak people now travel and live during 1989, 1993, 1994, 1996, 1998, 1999, 2000, and 2001. Funding for these research endeavors has come from a variety of sources including the Enewetak-Ujelang Local Government Council. I am most grateful to NSF, NEH, and members of the Enewetak-Ujelang community for their support. At the same time, while many of the ideas in this article have been provided by community members, the analysis and interpretation are entirely the responsibility of the author.

3. Disputes about the precise location do not arise from current-day residents arguing over the significance of the site, but rather from the fact that the entire contour of Enewetak islet was reshaped by American military personnel at the end of World War II and throughout the nuclear-testing era. While people are agreed on the significance of sacred sites, they constantly argue about how to realign the important sites with a newly designed landscape (see Carucci and Maifeld 1999).

4. Though, as I have noted elsewhere (Carucci 2000b), now that Enewetak has an economic value, there has been a recent attempt by Rālik chiefs to lay claim to Enewetak and to assert clan connectedness as well as ties through adoption. Other than those few

Enewetak people who stand to benefit directly from association with the Rālik chiefs, community members strongly deny that these claims have any legitimacy.

5. Of course, the shift to B-29s and other planes with longer ranges eventually made this a meaningless military criteria, but by that time Enewetak was an established military base serving as an integral forwarding and resupply base for troops and supplies moving westward through the central Pacific.

6. Barker discusses the way in which representations of missionization and what it means to be missionized stand at some distance from the actual events that accompanied missionization (Barker 1993).

7. In large part these conversions were made as Enewetak students of mediocre skill sought to obtain high school admittance in Majuro. Public high school admission was determined by test and, through the late 1970s and the 1980s, schooling on Enewetak had been so poor that only a few stellar graduates were able to score well enough on the examination to gain entry. Tuition-charging religious schools (many more interested in converts than in academic outcomes), however, provided people with alternatives.

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