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BEFORE all else fails...

READ THE INSTRUCTIONS!

1. Thou shalt incarnate thyself among the people you go to...
2. Thou shalt not allow mono-culture to stop you...
3. Thou shalt love thy brother...
4. Thou shalt not make unto you any sacred forms...
5. Thou shalt take particular notice of the social structure...
6. Thou shalt not substitute Christ's victory...
7. Thou shalt be as patient as God.
8. Thou shalt focus your ministry...
9. Thou shalt understand a people's worldview...
10. Thou shalt not rejoice unduly about your successes...

1. The Lord your God incarnated Himself in Jesus Christ to make His love known to you. Therefore as a minister you should incarnate yourself to the people you minister to, communicate his love to them.

2. Thou shalt not allow mono-cultural myopia to stop you and successful ministry. Therefore, prepare thyself to understand yourself, yet get to your ministering as quickly as possible.

3. Thou shalt love thy brother, even thyself.

4. Thou shalt not make unto you any sacred forms, whether they be the forms your ministering partner or your pastor taught you. You should be free to do the things you do and say. As you minister, be aware of the things you do and say. If you find that your frustration with the 'easy' way is increasing, this frustration will be your frustration with the 'easy' way.

A
MANUAL
FOR CROSS
CULTURAL
CHRISTIANS!

REVISED EDITION

Kevin G. Hovey

BEFORE ALL ELSE FAILS ... READ THE INSTRUCTIONS

A Manual For
Cross Cultural Christians

BY KEVIN HOVEY

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dedication

To Cross Cultural Christians
past, present, and future.

CONTENTS

FOREWORD

George Forbes	...	viii
Charles H. Kraft	...	ix

SECTION ONE: INTRODUCTION

CHAPTER 1		
Successful Cross Cultural Christians	...	3

SECTION TWO: THE CROSS CULTURAL CHRISTIAN

CHAPTER 2		
Culture Shock	...	9
CHAPTER 3		
Anthropology and the Cross Cultural Christian	...	17
CHAPTER 4		
But Only "They" Have Culture	...	29
CHAPTER 5		
Understand Thyself	...	39
CHAPTER 6		
The Making of a Cross Cultural Christian	...	45
CHAPTER 7		
Relating to Other Cross Cultural Christians	...	55

SECTION THREE

THE CHRISTIAN MESSAGE IN CROSS CULTURAL CONTEXT

CHAPTER 8		
Yawehism: Monotheism or Primary Allegiance	...	67
CHAPTER 9		
Christianity: Cultural Form or Primary Allegiance	...	81
CHAPTER 10		
My Role in the Conversion of People of Another Cultural Context	...	91

**SECTION FOUR:
PAPUA NEW GUINEA CHALLENGES
TO CROSS CULTURAL CHRISTIANS**

CHAPTER 11		
Papua New Guinean Worldview Juxtaposed	105
CHAPTER 12		
Animism in the Sepik Worldview	127
CHAPTER 13		
Understanding Cargoism	147

**SECTION FIVE:
SURMOUNTING CROSS CULTURAL BARRIERS**

CHAPTER 14		
Response to Cargoism (Part One)	165
CHAPTER 15		
Response to Cargoism (Part Two)	179
CHAPTER 16		
Ministering to Spirit World Problems	187
CHAPTER 17		
Potential for People Movements in Papua New Guinea	203
CHAPTER 18		
Planned People Movements	217
CHAPTER 19		
Training Non-Literate Church Leaders	227
CHAPTER 20		
Urban Papua New Guinea: Strategy for Evangelism	245

**SECTION SIX:
CONCLUSION**

CHAPTER 21		
Points to Ponder	269

**SECTION SEVEN:
APPENDICES**

APPENDIX A:		
A Religion of Mana, Spirits & Ghosts	277
APPENDIX B:		
Topics for Village Meetings	279
BIBLIOGRAPHY	281
GENERAL INDEX	291
AUTHOR INDEX	296
SCRIPTURE INDEX	297

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Pat Harrison was particularly influential as the person who first encouraged me to formalize my studies at Fuller Theological Seminary, School of World Mission, and also encouraged me to begin writing. Wayne Dye gave me crucial guidance in cultural insights at the times when these were needed most and so had the most result; Dr. Charles Kraft, whose love motivated practical insights and patient prodding, as well as teaching, influenced me to combine a lot of my previously written materials with new specific material to produce this book in its original thesis form. Additionally, faculty and staff of Fuller Theological Seminary, especially those connected with the School of World Mission, whose insights, teaching and friendship contributed to what has been the most influential year of my life.

Finally I would like to thank my wife Glenys, the most patient human teacher I have ever had. More than just a teacher, she has been a genuine partner both in the ministry God has given us, and in the development of the concepts here presented. Furthermore, her assistance and encouragement in the preparation of this manuscript has been invaluable.

FOREWORD

GEORGE FORBES

This book is a valuable tool for missionaries in service as well as for people seriously preparing themselves for cross cultural ministry. To be successful in communicating the Gospel to peoples of a totally different worldview to your own is no simple matter. Kevin Hovey has the ability and depth of experience to so communicate, as well as to help others to understand the skills and sensitivities needed.

With more than 25 years experience as a missionary in Papua New Guinea and a big slice of that time involved in successful church planting ministry in remote Sepik River villages, Kevin writes from real flesh and blood experience. He knows and understands the stark realities of animistic practices as well as the importance of worldview. He is likewise experienced in the realities of the power of the Holy Spirit over all the powers of evil spirits and the kingdom of darkness. His specialized studies at Fuller School of World Mission, which earned him a masters degree, were the defining and outworking of his “hands on” missionary experience.

This is literally a manual of resource for Christian witness and work in the “two thirds” world. Valuable skills and insights are shared, which if thoroughly understood and practiced, will make the reader a more effective servant of God.

A proper awareness of culture, contextualization of the Gospel, understanding of the spirit world, potential for People Movements to Christ, proper training of missionaries and national workers in the great task of world evangelization are all dealt with in clear and courageous terms.

This highly readable book should be studied by Christians everywhere. It is my hope and prayer that it will be used of God as a text book by colleges and individuals for preparation of cross cultural Christians committed to the Great Commission.

George Forbes
Director of World Missions
Assemblies of God in Australia

CHARLES H. KRAFT

This is a book by a good friend and favourite student. I count it a high privilege to be asked to write a foreword for it. I refuse however to write from a purely academic perspective. My wife and I know Kevin and Glenys too well, and God has ministered to us through them too often for me to speak only academically. Whether in class in the USA, gliding along in a motor boat returning from ministry along the Sepik River in Papua New Guinea, receiving help with our computer, or vacationing with them in Brisbane, our times with the Hoveys have been precious and filled with deep spiritual blessing. What I covet for the reader is that you too may experience something of that blessing that flows from this deeply committed person.

What follows is, however, an academically competent piece of writing. Kevin has a very keen and very fertile mind. God has endowed him with the ability to see, to understand, and to analyze at both natural and supernatural levels. It is pure joy for both professor and student to be in class with him. How often when his insights start flowing have I felt it should be I in the student role and he as teacher. Those of you using this book with him as your teacher will soon be rejoicing in that privilege.

Kevin and Glenys are, furthermore, effective practitioners. There are thousands more in the Kingdom now than there would have been had Kevin stuck to auto mechanics and Glenys to nursing. There are, in addition, a large number of colleagues and students whose ministries have been changed for the better through association with the Hoveys. For their concern is not simply for knowing what God wants. Their love for Christ and for those whom he loves compels them to do what He wants done.

This is, therefore, a competent piece of work flowing from a heart for God, demonstrated effectiveness in ministry and a truly insightful mind. Given this fact, the aim of the writing is to lead others into the kind of integration of mind and heart that the Hoveys have found so effective in and necessary to their ministry.

One of the most difficult problems anyone in Christian ministry has to face is the fact that God seems to allow even dedicated, spiritually alive people to make serious mistakes in their efforts to communicate the Gospel cross culturally. We would have thought God would preserve from error those closest to Him. But, unfortunately, even those who have thoroughly prepared themselves in the spiritual areas of their lives frequently make mistakes in cultural and personal areas by breaking rules that they have never learned. Apparently we are expected to obey such rules whether we know them or not. Perhaps the rules are built into the universe and, like the law of gravity, are constantly influencing our lives whether or not we know them or even agree with them. It is to share with those who may

not know these rules that this book is written. The principles here presented can never substitute for spiritual dedication. But spiritual dedication can never substitute for an understanding of, and application of the rules either. The correct combination is that demonstrated in Hovey's own life - complete dedication to God plus an insatiable thirst to learn and employ whatever principles God has put in the universe to enable us to better serve Him.

I wish I could say that we at the School of World Mission have taught Hovey all the things in this book. We haven't. We have, though, provided part of the context within which the materials here presented have been discovered and hammered out. And the fact that many of our students learn many of these same things gives us a degree of confidence that these principles come from God, rather than from their human authors.

My advice is, therefore, that we listen to Hovey. Listen when he presents insights that many secular theorists have also come to. If they are rules of the universe, we should not be surprised if even godless humans have discovered many of them. Listen when he focuses on understanding rather than effort as the crucial human prerequisite for success. Listen when he directs us to study the culture and worldview of ourselves, others, and the Bible if we are to properly communicate God's messages to today's peoples. Listen when he shows how such understandings can free us to love others the way God wants us to. Listen when he points out that God wants to reach others within their cultural and personal ways of life, just as he has reached us within our cultural and personal ways of life. Listen when he contends that it is correct allegiance, not similarity of customs that marks true Christians. Listen when he points to our need to deal more effectively with the world of spirits. Most of the world is searching for the power over evil spirits that Christ has given us. Listen when he warns of syncretism, both in other peoples Christianity and in our own. In short, take whatever Hovey says seriously. He's not infallible, but should never be ignored.

Don't let new terminology make you impatient. As Hovey emphasizes, it is the meaning, not the forms that are important. So get the meaning, whether or not you retain the technical labels for new concepts.

My prayer as this book goes forth is, first, that God use it to raise all who read it to new levels of understanding and commitment, and then that the insights here recorded will enable you, as they have enabled the author to more effectively serve our wonderful Lord to the ends of the earth.

Charles H Kraft

Professor of Anthropology and Intercultural Communication

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Pasadena, California.

PREFACE

There seems to be an urgency in Christians everywhere to see the Gospel effectively communicated to every last people group on earth. 1994 statistics rate the number of such unreached people groups as 11,000, representing at least 21% of the world's population. This means that the Church, through the Christians commissioned by Christ to communicate the Gospel to every person (Mark 16:15), still has a lot of work ahead of it.

In the last few decades of human existence, average life expectancy has increased, especially amongst Westerners. However, for all that, no one even yet lives long enough to learn everything they need to know for satisfactory living on earth, just by learning from their own mistakes. Education and schooling of all kinds are a means of shortening up that process - learning from the mistakes of others.

Yet when it comes to the world of missions, there seems to have been a reluctance to apply this same wisdom. So often, missionaries have been sent out ill prepared, and so have made far more mistakes than would have been necessary as a means of learning how to be effective in a cross cultural situation. Worse still, often these were repeats of the mistakes of others. This author is just one such example. So as a result of this experience, this book has been written to shorten the process for many of my up and coming colleagues.

Knowing we are all human, I don't in any way think that this book will mean that future cross cultural Christians will not make mistakes. But it will at least afford them the privilege of being really creative, and as a result, making some fresh mistakes.

My real prayer and goal is that this book will make a positive difference on where many people spend eternity, as a result of the effective ministry of many cross cultural Christians.

Sincerely,
Kevin Hovey

SECTION ONE:

INTRODUCTION

SECTION ONE:

INTRODUCTION

SECTION SUMMARY

This introductory section, comprising chapter 1, describes the question which this book addresses, plus outlining the methodology and purpose of the study.

CHAPTER 1

SUCCESSFUL CROSS CULTURAL CHRISTIANS

HOW TO BE SUCCESSFUL

There is one major question which has probably had prominence in the minds of most Cross-Cultural Christians. That is, “How can I be successful in communicating God’s Good News about Jesus Christ, and how can I lead men and women in my adopted culture to love and serve Him?”

A complete answer to this question would, of necessity, be so extensive that it would take a lifetime to tell, let alone to write about. However, while talking about the key factors in making Cross-Cultural Christians successful, there are certain basic factors which are incredibly important, yet which are sufficiently a normal part of the equipment of any Christian, whether they are working cross-culturally or not for us to be able to take them for granted for the purpose of this study - things like love for God, a life of prayer, willingness to sacrifice, and faith in an omnipotent God. However, there are some other issues which prove to be just as important as the preceding, but which are not so obvious until one gets involved in a cross-cultural ministry situation, and then finds that the elusive success is a long time coming. Only then does one come to realize that the whole subject of culture and communication across cultural barriers has to be given real consideration if we are to be as successful as possible in that cross-cultural situation.

Lest it sounds like heresy to indicate that cross-cultural understandings are as important as things like prayer, faith and etc, I guess I need to explain what I mean. Our own skills and abilities, be

they communication skills, cross-cultural skills or any other skills we happen to have cannot bring people to Christ. Only the Holy Spirit can do that. However, in a cross-cultural situation, it is possible for us to misrepresent Him, or to even get in the way of what the Holy Spirit is doing just because we don't understand that situation. So it is in that context that I refer to cross-cultural understandings being as important to the success of a cross-cultural Christian as those other more fundamental Christian understandings.

Or to put it more simply, the main barriers to the success of many Cross-Cultural Christians lie in their lack of understanding of the cultural situation in which they work. In this Manual for Cross-Cultural Christians then, I will endeavour to highlight issues and understandings which will result in the success of Cross-Cultural Christians, and therefore the return of our much awaited Lord as soon as possible.

METHODOLOGY

Up to the time of writing these words, I have been endeavouring to answer this question at a personal level for the fifteen years of my own cross-cultural experience in Papua New Guinea. In that situation, I have been working under the auspices of the Australian Assemblies of God Mission. Some of the methods I have used to inform myself in this quest are as follows:

Observation: For ten of those years, my wife and I have lived on a houseboat on the Sepik River of Papua New Guinea, while involved in Church Planting and primary leadership training for those churches. This, combined with living in the homes of Papua New Guineans while on patrol has then given us the privilege of living for long periods in Papua New Guinean villages while largely cut off from other Westerners. This has proved to be an ideal situation to observe what is important to Papua New Guineans, and to come to sense the pulse of how they think. Added to that, is the interaction I've been able to have with other missionaries and pastors who have been involved in ministry in Papua New Guinea.

Reading: Additionally, I have read as much as I could to learn from the crystallized experience of others, both in Papua New Guinea and around the world.

Formal Study: Much of the raw data accumulated by the above processes, I've been able to additionally refine and inform in formal study at Fuller Theological Seminary School of World Missions.

Testing the conclusions I have come to in answer to this question has been done in two ways in particular:

Church Growth Analysis: I have done an amount of research into the growth of the Protestant churches in the East Sepik Province of Papua New Guinea which has meant examining all the available records of some 60 churches, and where insufficient records were available, to construct such records from interviewing Papua New Guinean Christians and Pastors, as well as interviews and correspondence with missionaries. This is besides regularly keeping and analyzing church growth statistics of the 20 churches I am immediately involved with on the Sepik River.¹

Living Laboratory: Then I have been able to put my hypotheses to work in my own ministry and to see them implemented in the ministry of the Pastors I work with, and so have had this living laboratory in which to test my ideas. Out of all this then, I have been able to draw my own conclusions on what are the most crucial issues for the success of cross-cultural Christians.

Reflecting on that question brings to mind many stories of how not to succeed, but in retrospect, I thank God for the lessons learned in that experience, and for His forgiveness when that lack of success has been due to my own failings.

THE PURPOSE OF THE BOOK

This book then, is an attempt to compile my conclusions on this subject into a wide ranging unit which I trust will be a resource for people who want to effectively serve and represent their Lord in cross-cultural situations. The only claim to fame which this document can assert is that it is the first book I have written on this subject. Others have written on aspects of what I have put together here, and I am eternally indebted to their painstaking research. Some, in compendium form, have addressed the basic range of material I wish to address and in so doing have the advantage of breadth of perspective. However, between these covers, I trust I can use the strength of a sin-

gle perspective to then address the issues which I feel are the most significant to cross-cultural ministry.

If I had edited this to such a degree that it flowed together perfectly as a unit, the reader could easily get the impression that it is a comprehensive coverage of the topic. But by leaving it somewhat as a conglomeration, I'm trying to say something: Everything that needs to be said has not been said. It is simply my thoughts on various topics that I've felt to be sufficiently important and sufficiently ignored in Evangelical circles to warrant writing about.

In using the sub-title, "A Manual For Cross-Cultural Christians" for this book, I'm suggesting that although a lot of the points addressed have arisen from ministry on the Sepik River of Papua New Guinea, they are sufficiently important and of sufficient universality to be worth submitting to the cross-cultural, inter-cultural, trans-cultural Body of Christ. As a matter of fact, it would be true to say that the first half of the book is outlining universal principles for cross cultural communication, while the latter half of the book provides case studies from Papua New Guinea on how these principles worked there. As case studies then, they have good teaching value for other cross cultural situations around the world.

NOTES - CHAPTER 1

1. *I have not included the details of this analysis, as it is the conclusions arising from this research which is to be the focus of this book. Furthermore, its sheer volume would make this far too big to be useful within the context of this book.*

SECTION TWO:

THE
CROSS CULTURAL
CHRISTIAN

SECTION TWO:

THE CROSS CULTURAL CHRISTIAN

SECTION SUMMARY

This second section, comprising Chapters 2, 3, 4, 5, 6 and 7, looks at the Christian him/herself in the cross-cultural situation. Chapter 2 looks at Culture stress and its causes under the title of “Culture Shock (Or At Least Stress)” while the relationship between missionary activity and anthropology in historical perspective is examined in Chapter 3 incorporating a case study of R.H. Codrington. The concepts of Culture and Worldview along with Christian goals in worldview terminology are discussed in Chapter 4, with a summary of Western worldview assumptions in Chapter 5. Chapter 6 examines some of the key elements in preparing people for cross-cultural ministry. In the last chapter of this section, “Relating to Other Cross-Cultural Christians,” the issue of working along side other Christian organizations is discussed from a practical and Biblical perspective. There are very few situations in the world that are accessible to Christians where they will not find themselves working alongside some other Christian organization.

CHAPTER 2

CULTURE SHOCK (OR AT LEAST STRESS)

So you're getting involved in cross-cultural ministry? It's a first time experience and you're expecting many adjustments. Changes in your usual routine, changes in living conditions, changes in friends, and so the list extends. Expecting these changes is good thinking on your part and will stand you in good stead. Some of these routine problems I will mention again here so at least you will be comforted to know that others have problems with these things too. And then we'll go on to discuss the troublesome "adjustments you didn't expect" - the things which result in CULTURE STRESS.

PROBLEMS YOU EXPECTED

1. So you miss Mum not tucking you into bed? And unfortunately this is a service which no ministry team will be able to simulate for you. Whether this is actually your experience or not, at least to some degree or another you'll miss your regular friends and family at home. This will be minimized by being involved with the program, but if you do feel this - not to worry, we're all human. This feeling of missing home can be heightened by not receiving any mail until several weeks after you arrive, but this problem can be avoided. Have your sister (or substitute) to send you an Air Mail letter approximately three weeks before you leave, address it to your new address, and it should be there waiting for you. Exit homesickness - hopefully!

2. So your plane was late? Or they didn't think they could fit you on? Oh, you didn't have that problem? Stop skiting! You're going to be stuck up about transport somewhere or other before you get home again, so put that in the list of things to be expected. Maybe it will be the airline, maybe your friends holding you up, maybe - stop guessing - wait and see! Given the right frame of mind you can learn a lot on those frustrating delays. Exit frustrating delays. Delays remain alone.

3. So you've had a little diarrhoea today? Well if not today, then tomorrow or at least early in your experience. Although you mightn't notice too many changes in your diet, it is likely that something will give you a bit of a stomach upset. In Papua New Guinea, we helpfully refer to it as the "Tropical Trots." Probably the best thing you can do about that one is to be super compassionate towards your companions when they are afflicted and hope they'll return the favour!

4. So you heard a rat in your house last night? In football boots? Singing 'Home Sweet Home'? Now even I find that singing bit hard to believe! For your first problem though, it probably wasn't a rat but instead a "gecko" — a small whitish lizard that catches insects in iron roofed houses in many tropical regions. For your second problem, it may have been as you thought, but I think more likely he was in bare feet. He just sounded as if he had football boots on. To solve this problem, we'd appreciate your blueprint for a rat eradication program, and then if it works, at least future visitors can enjoy rat free living. This could also apply to other vermin and bugs whom you'll meet. It is encouraging to realize that scaring you out of your wits is about the only harm all these actually do to you. I haven't seen the latest figures, but the annual death toll from rat bite is really quite low.

5. So you've got a little red spot on your leg? (Which you probably hadn't noticed) A lump in your groin and your legs feel like lead? Enter T.U. Actually a tropical ulcer. Any scratches, cuts, or 'scratched' mosquito bites tend to get infected fast in the tropics. Treatment is usually simple if caught quickly enough, so even if you notice any infection that even looks like it isn't a T.U., show it to an old timer and he/she will fix you up. 'No worries'. (Note: amputations require the presence of trained medical personnel or a mechanic.)

6. So you can't stand that guy from '—————'? The feeling could be mutual, but that still isn't going to help the team spirit of our work too much. And much of the success of the work, not to mention your enjoyment of it, depends on that co-operation, so I'd suggest you pray a lot about that before you leave home. Then if you want to see your prayers answered, love "that guy from '—————'" in the Lord, and watch a miracle happen. Even if the miracle is in your own attitudes. That had to be a miracle, right?

So much for the problems you expected, although this doesn't pretend to be a comprehensive list. But let's take a minute for a bit of reflection: Imagine that all six of the things we've mentioned have happened to you on one day and then some bright character asks ... "djavagudweekend?" I won't endeavour to put the reply in print, as I can't type that fast, but your internalized imagined response does go to show that even those things you expect are going to make you a bit "up tight." Remember that, and make allowances for yourself and others accordingly.

ADJUSTMENTS YOU DIDN'T EXPECT

And now let's go over some of the material from our title. During my first term on the field, I didn't so much as hear of "Culture Stress." But in this particular case, ignorance is not bliss. So I hope mentioning it to you on the sly like this might help you somewhat.

The theory goes like this: When you're at home you don't suffer "culture stress." The reason for this is that you understand perfectly the communication of those around you, or at least as near to perfectly as possible. I've used the word 'communication' in preference to 'language', as much of the communication we need from others to make us feel "good" is not spoken at all. Understanding the language is also pretty important, and so to be in a situation where you're wiped out by the language barrier alone, not to mention the other aspects of communication, can make a person pretty self conscious to say the least. There is an old man here in Papua New Guinea whom I still refer to as 'Dad' to show my appreciation of him taking an hour to teach me three greetings in Pidgin the first day I arrived. I could at least "communicate" something and I thought I was made. We all need affirmation from the people around us to be able to function properly and feel "good." To us at home, all we need is a finger raised from the steering wheel of a passing car, a quick side-ways flick of the head, sometimes accompanied by or replaced by a half wink, a nod, or just the look on somebody's face.

During conversation, there are many unspoken signals too. Taking a breath in a particular way means "I'm about to speak." The interested look from the one you're talking to does wonders for your ego,

while a yawn means “look at your watch” or “check subject matter.” To begin a conversation, stumbling over, and then repeating the first word, or clearing your throat means “I’m going to start talking.” Raised eyebrows means “please repeat” or “I’m still listening” (even though I’m adding up a column of figures and taking a phone call), or it could mean “what would you like?”, or shocked surprise. However, in our own culture, we’re so sensitive to these things, even though it’s the one body action, we don’t get their meanings confused. And they’re so much a part of us, that we don’t even notice them. To show you what I mean, it could be constructive if you took the time to make a list of all the non-verbal communication you’ve noticed in one day. As the list grows longer, you’ll start to see how much we depend on them, even though they are almost unnoticed. By knowing yourself this much better, it is going to make it easier for you to live in a situation where these things are absent.

At the same time, people in other cultures also rely heavily on unspoken affirmations and communications. And theirs are just as logical as ours. But they are different! The result of these differences can be at best, non-communication which, as we’ve already said, can be pretty devastating on you anyway, or more likely, improper communication or even opposite communication. As an example, let’s take the raised eyebrows. This also is common in Papua New Guinea. You enter a store and ask the availability of a reel of cotton, (hems still show no consideration in the tropics) and the store keeper raises his eyebrows. You, thinking he didn’t hear or understand, repeat the question, only several decibels louder this time. Raised eyebrows again!!! ... Fortunately, you’re speechless from exasperation now, so the store keeper has time to get you the reel of cotton he’d told you in the first place was available. Yes he did! Raised eyebrows in Papua New Guinea primarily means “yes.” You can see how frustrating this was in our example. However if someone happened to be asking if you’d give them something and you raised your eyebrows for a repeat of the question, (or in shock) that “yes” could be devastating to say the least. In Papua New Guinea, raised eyebrows is also a greeting to someone of the same sex. To someone of the opposite sex it can be interpreted as an improper suggestion. In fact it again becomes “yes” to a question which should

never have been asked, so watch that one!

Maintaining eye contact and watching facial expressions is something Papua New Guineans do all the time. This to them is a vital part of, and essential to communication. At the same time, from our society, we tend to insulate ourselves more and so feel “looked at” if we notice someone watching our face and eyes. So when you’re involved in counselling or other close personal contact, don’t be put off by this. It’s helping communication. So when you get to your new situation, take particular notice of eye actions and facial expressions and see how soon you can pass messages by this method.

Even spoken communication can be fraught with problems, even with English speakers who are from another culture. Once again, just because of differences. Negative questions are a well worn classic:

Western English speaker asks, “Didn’t you sweep the floor?”

Papua New Guinean English speaker replies, “Yes.”

The Westerner’s eyesight is okay, but the floor sure looks dirty, and the Papua New Guinean is a Christian so shouldn’t be telling lies???? In fact both are right. The ‘yes’ in that case means “yes I didn’t.” Once you get used to it, it seems to make better sense than our “yes I did”, but in the meantime, still adds to the confusion.

Now comes the big crunch, namely values, or different ways of looking at things. To be able to make any judgement on cultural values of another culture, we must get beneath what we see to what that particular custom means to the people whose culture it is. Also, as we do make value judgements, we often tend to judge by the ideal standard of behaviour in our culture, instead of what real or normal behaviour actually is. This then views our culture through rosy coloured glasses, while not giving the other culture the same advantage. Some of the differences in values will be obvious and possibly frustrating. Then there are others again which are virtually impossible to notice, but which can have profound effects especially on missionaries and their ministry.

When thinking of Papua New Guinea an obvious value difference is the different attitude to time. In our society, everything runs so much by the clock, newcomers enjoy the ‘release’ to some degree. At the same time, without even thinking of suggesting that they’re clock watch-

ers, but because they come from a time oriented society, there are times when they find the lack of time orientation to be frustrating. In our society, 5 minutes late is frowned on as much as 1 or 2 hours late in Papua New Guinea. This is even more flexible if you've planned an early morning activity on a wet morning, as the cloud cover hides the face of the "solar clock."

Saving face is another of these value differences. It is normal throughout all Melanesia, and in fact, most of the non-Western world, to save face regardless of the cost. In practical living for an outsider coming in, this will probably mean that somewhere along the line, you'll have someone say "yes" to a suggestion you make and then not turn up to see the project through. This was because it would have been embarrassing to say "no" to your face, when you were obviously so excited about the idea, so the way to save face is to say "no" in a special code form which is actually pronounced "yes!"

The only difference between a "yes" yes and a "no" yes is that to the casual observer, there is no difference! As we are all still learning about this one, I'll offer only three blossoms of wisdom:

1. Be sensitive!
2. "I told you so!"
3. Keep sweet!

We could spend much time discussing attitudes to women in general. This could involve discussions of subjects like "buying a wife", "arranged marriages", "women being the provider for the family", "her being the beast of burden", and her role of "subjection to the men." Much of this you'll be able to see for yourself and be able to discuss with the people you'll be working with. But remember, judge what you find out from their values, not from yours. That may mean postponing your judgement for a while, sometimes a long while.

More particularly though let us look at factors which will have particular bearing on what is decorum for women visitors as well as helping men know how to behave to avoid causing offence.

Traditionally, courtship as we know it was completely unknown to the Papua New Guinean and many other societies. The extended families usually decided who would marry who, then the Bride Price was paid, and, "Guess who your wife is son!?" In many situations there

have been changes to some degree in the way arranged marriages are arranged, but the basic attitude underlying this still remains. Boy-girl relationships, as a twosome in private are not allowable for Christian morals and even in public is not recommended. Even in a group, physical contact between boys and girls is a big no - no!

The “ladies first, women and children in the best seats” attitude from the West is the exact opposite to Papua New Guinea. If any privileges are shown, they are shown to the men. For example, I once saw a woman carrying her husband to hospital in a string bag, while a group of about six men walked with her to supervise things. This is not practised entirely among Papua New Guineans who have had considerable schooling, but as a basic attitude, it still exists even there. The women’s role in all this is to be quiet, submissive and modest. Those of us coming from a Western background will initially feel that the women are put down terribly. But as we come to understand more of their values, we become surprised at the high value afforded women, even if it is expressed in a way very different from our own.

Even with traditional dress, which might seem scant to us, there was a strict code of modesty which was adhered to carefully. When relating to European style dress, a mark of modesty is the length of dresses. Mini length dresses are really frowned on by Papua New Guinean men, and shorts and slacks on women somewhat incomprehensible.

Love as we’d define it between two starry eyed people as a basis for marriage is not totally unknown these days, but is definitely not the norm. To use this as an illustration of God’s love stands a good chance of being wrongly understood. Two singles gazing into each others eyes in Papua New Guinea can really only mean one thing, and that isn’t God’s love.

Sorry to thoroughly confuse you, but before you go grey from worry about whether you’re going to make it or not, let me explain my reasons for putting all this on paper. As you’ve already seen, just those few problems which you already expected produced tension, and then with this list on top, ... wow, that’s quite a stretch! And when you get this whole cross-cultural experience head on and start to feel it, you’ll be feeling Culture Shock, or to be technically correct instead of being

popularly understandable, most probably you'll be experiencing Culture Stress. And bother of bothers, as miserable as you feel, you won't be experiencing anything any different to anybody else who has been through the same experience.

So expect it, learn from it, enjoy it, and remember, God's promise still holds good, "My grace is all you need." (2 Cor. 12:9 TEV)

I said enjoy it, because if you're a good learner, as being a good Christian makes you want to be, Culture Stress should be on an ever diminishing scale, so you should never have it that good again, at least not till you have to start the reverse process when you get home.

Before you go, two last things. First, people who live in a face to face society are extremely sensitive to attitudes. Or to put it in simple terms, without even trying, they can read us like a book. Don't let this worry you, instead, relax and be yourself. They'll be noticing the real you anyway, so it might as well be a relaxed instead of an up tight you. Make mistakes like everyone, but "keep sweet."

Secondly, as well as all your informal discussions with missionaries, nationals and the like, there should be situations where you can have formal interaction on some of these subjects. If you get that chance, make sure you take advantage of it. Anticipating this, right from the start, begin taking notes on things that get your interest or seem to be of importance, and you'll have it ready for discussion when you have the chance.

So they tell me you enjoy cross-cultural ministry and are marvelously successful?

Serve you right, you deserve it!!!

RECOMMENDED READING:

Brewster (1978); Dye T. Wayne (1974); Dye, S.F. (1974)

Dye, S.F. (1983) *Strength for the Task* (S.I.L. Print)

Loss, Myron (1983) *Culture Shock* (S.I.M. International)

CHAPTER 3

ANTHROPOLOGY AND THE CROSS CULTURAL CHRISTIAN:

MODERN MISSIONARIES AND ANTHROPOLOGY

Amongst many Evangelical Missions around the world, there has been a measure of uneasiness whenever the word “Anthropologist” is mentioned. This is especially the case when the Anthropologist being mentioned is thought to be the source of some information being mentioned in the same discussion. The reason for this is probably not hard to find. First, within some Evangelical traditions of yesteryear, there has been a general suspicion of scholarship and more especially of “science.” Secondly, there were the examples of Anthropologists as were seen by those missionaries, or at least, the Anthropologists who were remembered from those who were seen. The first memorable feature has tended to be their unkempt appearance. Then there was often an attitude of arrogance towards the “narrow minded, culture destroying missionary.” At the same time, however, anthropologists recognized mission stations as good places for inexpensive accommodation when needed as well as a source of much initial cultural and general information about the area of research, and Anthropologists have seemed to have had little hesitation in taking advantage of these. How much of the missionary stereotype of Anthropologists is a caricature, and how much based on genuine information would have to be judged on the individual merits of each case. The same would be true of the Anthropologist’s attitudes towards missionaries.

But one thing is sure. As a result of their mutual stereotyping, we as missionaries have been loath to listen to what Anthropologists have

had to say. As we go on in this section, we will find out that we have unnecessarily cut ourselves off from some tools which we could use for the sake of the Kingdom of God.

However, this attitude has not always existed. Missionaries have and do make a big contribution to anthropology, while anthropologists and anthropology have and do make big contributions to missions. But unfortunately, this fact is seldom recognized by the modern rank and file from either group.

At the present, there are many anthropologists who have chosen that profession specifically to use it for the cause of missions. For example, Darrell Whiteman was planning to be a missionary doctor, but then changed to be a missionary anthropologist when he realized how he would be able to help missionaries to be effective.¹

There is another category of missionary anthropologists who have trained to be anthropologists to help them be better missionaries. Several of these are or have been professors at Fuller Theological Seminary's School of World Mission and are well known in the mission world for their insightful concepts which have revolutionized the effectiveness of many missionaries, myself included. Examples would be Alan Tippett, Charles Kraft, Paul Hiebert and Ralph Winter.

Then there are organizations such as Wycliffe Bible Translators, that have been involved in Bible translation. These organizations have made anthropology a key tool in their program. From that background, men like William Smalley, William Reyburn, Eugene Nida and many others have made significant contributions to both the field of missions and anthropology. But most important, they have contributed to the effectiveness of missionaries. Many of their insights have been made available to the world in the journal, *Practical Anthropology* which has since been incorporated into *Missiology*.

EARLY MISSIONARIES AND ANTHROPOLOGY

Protestant Missions began to flourish after William Carey, in 1792, had highlighted the world's need, and the necessity of founding Mission Societies to meet that need. In the following fifty years the Mission Societies so formed saw their personnel spread across a great part of the globe, confronting cultures which were completely different from

anything those missionaries had known, or could have ever imagined.

Dr. Alan Tippett mentions six integrated problems which confront missionaries of any age when they go to work amongst people of another culture. They are:

- (A) **The problem of Social organization.** The missionary needs to understand how different people structure their social organization and then must understand the implications of this for his/her work.
- (B) **The problem of Social Dis-equilibrium.** The need to introduce changes only as they are necessary and in such a way as to maintain Social Equilibrium.
- (C) **The problem of Cultural Voids.** The need to lead the people to a more satisfying religious experience.
- (D) **The problem of Syncretism.** The need to distinguish between the universal ingredients of the Christian message and the cultural garb in which they show themselves both in the donor and receptor cultures.
- (E) **The problem of Meaning.** The need to assure that the meanings which are given to the message by the receptors are in harmony with the essential message in Scripture.
- (F) **The problem of Dynamic Equivalence.** The need to make the Christian message relevant to the receptors.²

These same problems then, were the problems confronted by the wave of missionaries who spread out across the world. As they did so there were several things in their favour when comparing them to some of the missionaries of a later era. First, there were no missionary institutions for them to go to on the field, hence they had to be involved with the people. This environment forced them to learn the languages of the people and to get to know them intimately in their native environment. Secondly, it was before the Victorian era, with its resultant narrowness. The Paternalism which was dominant by the end of the nineteenth century and the beginning of the twentieth century can be seen as a result of this Victorian era. Thirdly, there was no such thing as anthropology or anthropologists for the missionaries to react against. As a result, amongst the missionaries of the time, there were some perceptive men, who, even though children of their age, were able to

penetrate and understand with amazing clarity the worldview of the people to whom they went. Dr. Alan Tippett has documented many of these people and their specific contributions in *The Ways of the People*. Fison of Fiji and Willoughby of Africa are just two who I refer to specifically in other parts of this book. As we go on, we will look in some detail at the methods and insights of R.H. Codrington, a priest with the Anglican Melanesian Mission in the islands of the Pacific. I have chosen Codrington due to the importance of his insights, even today, for missionaries working in Melanesia. But his work is just indicative of many other missionaries who were doing similar work as a part of getting to understand the people they ministered to.

Before we meet him and endeavour to understand his anthropological insights, let us first, by way of comparison, look briefly at the development of secular anthropology.

EARLY SECULAR ANTHROPOLOGY

A major line of development of anthropology in England began after the abolition of slavery in 1833. Hiebert traces this from that point:

After bringing an end to slavery in England (1807 to 1833), the abolitionists turned their attention to the welfare of native peoples in the colonial dependencies, and organized the Aborigines Protection Society in London in 1838.

Soon after its establishment, the society split over the question of how best to help the “natives.” One faction associated with the missionaries, wanted to protect the rights of aboriginals by giving them immediately the “privilege of western civilization.” The other wanted to study the people in order to better understand them and the ways of helping them. The latter group left the society and organized the Ethnological Society of London in 1843. ... In 1863 the Ethnological Society split over the question whether or not Negroes were a different, and presumably lesser species than Europeans. The big majority held not only that Blacks were physically of a different species, but that this made them mentally and morally incapable of assimilating civilized ways. This faction left and organized the Anthropological Society of London. The two factions finally reunited in 1871 and formed the Anthropological Society of Great Britain and Ireland (1978:166,168).

It is evident from the dates of the above events, that anthropology was but a fledgling science by the time Codrington first went to Mela-

nesia in 1863. This is important to note, as many anthropologists of the present era have the impression that anthropologists have been the ones to explore cultures around the world, and then, when they have been listened to, have been able to give the poor missionaries a few insights.

These same anthropologists give credit to Bronislaw Malinowski as being the anthropologist who introduced to the world the need for field research. In this however, they unwittingly profess their ignorance. Malinowski was doing his field research between 1914 and 1920, some 51 years after Codrington began his observations on the field (1863) and 23 years after Codrington's major work on Melanesian cultures was published (1891).³ As we have said, Codrington was only one of many insightful missionaries at that time, Another of these was Bromilow, a missionary to the Trobriand Islands, from whom Malinowski gleaned much of his initial information.⁴

To a large degree, what secular anthropology did exist at the time Codrington was in Melanesia was of the "armchair" variety, which was actually drawing heavily on missionaries for the data on which it could work. But at the same time, as well as the contribution of data, we must not forget the contribution missionaries made to anthropological theory and method as well. For example, when Marett wrote his work *The Threshold of Religion*⁵ his footnotes have some 21 references to Codrington regarding the concept of "mana" and "tabu" as seen in Melanesia/Polynesia as had first been described by Codrington.

Today however, this contribution is often covered over in anthropological writings. This can be illustrated by a quote from a quote from the *Encyclopaedia Britannica* on the subject "Melanesian Literatures."

Great pioneering work was done by Maurice Leenhardt into the literature of New Caledonia, but it has scarcely been followed up. A prime difficulty is that of method. Leenhardt trained a few Melanesians, teaching them to read and write their own language after inventing for them a system of transcribing their verbal utterances. Leenhardt's method (which had in fact been previously employed half a century earlier by British clergyman Robert Henry Codrington (1830-1922), who did not however, leave to posterity the literature of the Mota language that had been given him by his pupils) makes it possible to obtain texts of very high quality over a long period.⁶

However, the results of Codrington's use of what *Encyclopaedia*

Britannica terms “Leenhardt’s method” are preserved. Fifty one pages of his book **The Melanesians** contain exclusively the stories given him by his Melanesian pupils,⁷ plus the autobiography of a Melanesian, Clement Marau⁸ which was translated and published by Codrington.⁹

Speaking of the development of secular anthropology also brings us to the point of “cultural relativism” which became dominant for a period within anthropology. According to Hiebert, this cultural relativism came about as:

They adopted the scientific methodology that had worked so well in the physical sciences and sought to give objective, unbiased analyses of non-western peoples. However, “objective” in this context meant detached and value free. And their detachment de-humanized people by treating them as pre-determined objects rather than as rational human beings. (1978:168)

This supposed objectivity, or should we say, the “deification of subjectivity” was in sharp contrast to any pan-human authority such as God or the Scriptures, and so, while this was dominant in anthropology, it put that science in a spurious light in the eyes of Christians.

However, the anthropology of the period we are discussing profited from and was of profit to missionaries. An example of this is the American anthropologist, Lewis H. Morgan, who was able, through another missionary, Fison of Fiji, to help Codrington understand kinship structures far more clearly, while at the same time drawing data on kinship from both Codrington and Fison for his work on that subject.

R.H. CODRINGTON

A. CONTEXT

Codrington was born in England in 1830, and lived until 1922. He first went to Melanesia in 1863 and was a priest with the Melanesian Mission (Anglican) until 1887. He was head of that mission, although declining appointment as Bishop from 1871-77. Codrington was mainly involved in a training school on Norfolk Island to which students came from the Solomon Islands, Banks’ Islands, and Northern New Hebrides (Vanuatu). These students, from over such a broad spectrum of Melanesia then became the basis for his data collection. Added to this however, were numerous visits to each of these island groups.

The Melanesia within which Codrington worked was undergoing drastic acculturation due to culture contact, especially with European trading vessels, while the black-birding trade, combined with the diseases brought by this culture contact was cruelly decimating the Island population.¹⁰

B. ASPECTS OF CULTURE EXAMINED

Codrington was “indebted for much instruction” in cultural matters to his contemporary, Rev. Lorimer Fison of the Wesleyan Mission, Fiji.¹¹ Fison himself was collecting anthropological data from all over the Pacific, especially on kinship, and was guided in this by Lewis H. Morgan of the Smithsonian Institute, U.S.A.¹² Codrington’s research led to the publication of *The Melanesian Languages* (1885) which “dealt with the phonology, grammar, and vocabulary of the languages of the New Hebrides and the Solomon, Torres, Loyalty, and other islands.”¹³ He co-authored with J. Palmer *A Dictionary of the Language of Mota, Sugarloaf Islands, Bank’s Islands* (1896),¹⁴ and translated and published the *Story of a Melanesian Deacon: Clement Marau* (1894)¹⁵ which was written by Clement Marau himself.

Codrington’s most widely known work however, was his ethnographic work which was first published in the *Journal of the Anthropological Institute* in February 1881. Later, the expansion of this became *The Melanesians* (1891) which was the result of his double checking his data, having made “with the natives of the various islands, a systematic inquiry into the religious beliefs and practices of the Melanesians, and the social regulations and conditions prevailing amongst them.”¹⁶ The second systematic enquiry was carried out in 1886-7.¹⁷ Even by today’s standards, this is a most comprehensive and extensive piece of work, but considering the time when it was written, it is most remarkable indeed.

Before we progress, we must pause to make the distinction between anthropological data and anthropological insights. The anthropological data compiled by Codrington was extensive indeed, and the published works containing this have already been mentioned. But in this paper, we will be primarily concerned with his anthropological insights which were a result of that data, while at the same time making it possible for him to collect and interpret that data.

C. ATTITUDES

As a basis from which we may understand the anthropological insights of Codrington, we will first examine some of his own attitudes as we can reconstruct them from materials that are available, both from his own pen, and the pen of others.

1. The first attitude that is evident is his trust of other people. For example, when the ship, the Southern Cross arrived back at Norfolk after the murder of Bishop Patterson:

The sad emergency brought out all that had been instilled into the elder scholars. They were plainly told (presumably by Codrington) that the work of the mission lay practically in their hands, and well they responded to the appeal. Twenty of them at once came forward and were placed on the teaching staff: so that with their help, Mr Codrington, bravely fulfilling his promise to his friend before that last parting, was able to carry on the work of the school numbering in all 153 Melanesians, and the various duties of the establishment, regularly and effectively (Armstrong 1900:131-132).

This attitude is again seen in the fact that in *The Melanesians* Codrington was able to say:

I have endeavoured as far as possible to give the natives account of themselves by giving what I took down from their lips and translating what they wrote themselves. It is likely that under the circumstances of such inquiries much of the worst side of native life may be out of sight, and the view given seem generally more favourable than might be expected. If it be so, I shall not regret it (1891:vii).

2. The second attitude that is evident, is that of empathy. That is, the ability to imagine ones self in the role of another person, and to make value judgements from that position. To be able to be empathetic, a person must understand the role into which he must project himself, as well as having the attitude that makes the empathy possible. That Codrington understood and practised this is evident from the tenor of his work as a whole. He said:

The writer is persuaded that one of the first duties of a missionary is to try to understand the people among whom he works (1891:vii).

This empathy can be seen in the way he was able and prepared to step outside the mono-cultural view given him by his own culture, thus making it possible for him to understand and state the insiders perspective on many issues to do with Melanesian life.

Chiefs exist, and still have in most islands important place and power, though never perhaps so much importance in the native view as they have in the eyes of European visitors, who carry with them the persuasion that savage people are always ruled by chiefs. A trader or other visitor looks for a chief, and finds such a one as he expects: a very insignificant person in this way comes to be called, and to call himself, the king of the island (1891:46).

This empathy then makes it possible for him to see and describe the “mono-cultural myopia” of people of his own culture, i.e. the belief that everything in ones own culture is perfectly right and normal and anything different to this must be irrational and bad. For example;

It is not only in Melanesian islands that whatever confirms a belief is accepted and whatever makes against it is not weighed (1891:193).

The civilized observer is always ready to assume that the savage takes a childish view and has absurd beliefs, when all the while, if the savage could put him to a close examination, his own conceptions would be found very indistinct and his expressions (describing the soul of man) mainly figurative (1891:248).

3. The third attitude we see is also one that is essential for good anthropology. It is true that the primary ingredient to good research is admitting “I don’t know”, and then proceeding to find out. In the preface to *The Melanesians* Codrington discusses this and thus demonstrates his attitude on this matter:

No one can be more sensible than myself of the incompleteness and insufficiency of what I venture to publish; I know that I must have made many mistakes and missed much of what I might have learnt. I have felt the truth of what Mr. Fison, late missionary in Fiji, to whom I am indebted for much instruction, has written: ‘When a European has been living for two or three years amongst savages he is sure to be fully convinced that he knows all about them; but when he has been ten years or so amongst them, if he be an observant man he finds that he knows very little about them, and so begins to learn.’ My own time of learning has been all too short (1891:vi-vii).

D. SPECIFIC ANTHROPOLOGICAL INSIGHTS

1. On the basis of these general anthropological insights, Codrington was able to arrive at several other important insights. The first of these was the concept of “mana.”

The Melanesian mind is entirely possessed by the belief in a super-

natural power or influence, called almost universally 'mana'. This is what works to effect everything which is beyond the ordinary power of men, outside the common processes of nature; it is present in the atmosphere of life, attaches itself to persons and to things, and is manifested in results which can only be ascribed to its operation. When one has got it he can use it and direct it, but its force may break forth at some new point; the presence of it is ascertained by proof (1891:118-9). (For a full statement see Appendix A.)

Of the significance this observation, Tippetts writes,

Codrington was describing what he saw, felt and what his native informants said was there. No anthropological conception more influenced writing on 'primitive' religion than this one point articulated by Codrington (1979:22-3).

A thorough understanding of the concept of "mana" is still absolutely imperative for anyone aspiring to be a missionary within Melanesia today, or even Africa where a similar concept exists and is known as "Vital Force" (Tempels 1959:30) as well as many other parts of the world. This is imperative as it is so far from the usual European conception of the area of the supernatural but at the same time so basic to all Melanesian life.

2. In the second place, we will group several concepts that Codrington helped to distinguish for us which are crucial to an understanding of Melanesian worldview. (a) The first of these was the distinction between sacred and tabu, (1891:181,215) sacred being an inherent holiness or awfulness while tabu signifies an unapproachable characteristic which is imposed. (b) Secondly, there was the distinction between idols and images. An idol, according to Codrington, was something that was considered sacred, holy, an abode of a spirit, something having supernatural efficacy in itself. An image on the other hand was some sort of carving which could range from being insignificant even to being treated with respect due to its being the representation of an ancestor, but still not coming into the category of an idol by Codrington's definition. (c) Thirdly, there was "the distinction which seems so important between ghosts, the disembodied spirits of men deceased, and spirits, of another order from the souls of men, which have never been connected with a human body (1891:175). (d) Fourthly, there was

a distinction between formal and informal leadership. This is seen consistently in his discussion on chiefs but is especially clear when he discusses the part played by the secret societies (informal leadership) versus the chiefs (formal leadership) (1891:54).

F. CONTRIBUTION TO ANTHROPOLOGY

Codrington's contribution to the science of Anthropology is very great. As has been mentioned, R.R. Marett of Oxford drew from his work extensively to develop his theory of "dynamism." The interesting thing to notice is that though Marett's theory has been largely rejected in Anthropology today, the concept of "mana" itself is still vital for both anthropologists and missionaries in Melanesia. Through Marett however, Codrington's concept came to the notice of the world and has had a big influence on anthropologists and missionaries alike in many parts of the world.

Sir James Frazer, who himself drew extensively on missionary data for his anthropology described the above phenomena in these terms;

Books like mine, merely speculation, will be superseded sooner or later (the sooner the better for the sake of truth) by better induction based on fuller knowledge; books like yours [referring to missionary observations as is Codrington's] containing records of observations will never be superseded (Quoted in Tippet 1979:i).

CONCLUSION

As we conclude we must refer this back to the Evangelical Missionary situation as we see it today. First we see that the suspicion of anthropology, while probably understandable, is based on a lack of time depth in our understanding of the relationship between missionaries and anthropology. This same lack of time depth is observable in the attitudes of many anthropologists and so to a large degree we have only been able to see the "hate" end of what Paul Hiebert (1978) has called "the love/hate relationship" that is, the relationship between anthropology and missions.

Secondly, we see that this misunderstanding on our part has locked us out from a wealth of absolutely crucial information, especially material written by missionaries. *The Melanesians* which contains so much information that is still relevant to help us understand the Melanesian

cultures amongst whom we work today is an example of this. It is to be hoped the added insight into the roots of anthropology, especially the anthropology of R.H. Codrington may help us to

acquire as expeditiously as possible a knowledge of the peculiarities of the human material that we will have to make the most of, and of the methods which have led to failure and success amongst our predecessors

to use the words of Willoughby (*Race Problems in New Africa* 1923:268), another such missionary anthropologist.

NOTES - CHAPTER 3

1. *Whiteman, personal interview, 1982.*
2. *Tippett, A.R. delineates these points in his unpublished lecture notes, Development of Missionary Anthropology, 1979:vii-viii, Fuller Theological Seminary.*
3. *The Melanesians*
4. *Tippett: Class Lecture, FTS SWM 1979.*
5. *See Bibliography.*
6. *Encyclopaedia Britannica, 1974 Vol 13:454-455.*
7. *Codrington 1891:360-411*
8. *Story of a Melanesian Deacon: Clement Marau. 1894. Brighton:Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge.*
9. *Tippett,A.R. op.cit. page 23*
10. *Tippett,A.R. 1967:20-21*
11. *Codrington 1891:vi-vii. There are 12 references to Fison in this book.*
12. *Tippett, A.R. 1977:50*
13. *Encyclopaedia Britannica 1974 Micro-Paedia Vol II:1037, "Codrington."*
14. *Tippett,A.R. 1967:381*
15. *Ibid.*
16. *Codrington op.cit. page v.*
17. *Ibid. page vi. The 1972 reprint edition of this work which I was using incorrectly records the date of Codrington's last stay at Norfolk Island as 1866 and 1867.*

FURTHER READING

Hiebert (1976), Tippett (1977)

CHAPTER 4

BUT ONLY THEY HAVE CULTURE

MONO-CULTURAL MYOPIA

Mono-Cultural Myopia¹ is a disease of the mind that affects the eyes. Probably it is better illustrated than defined. In April 1912 when the unsinkable ship, the “Titanic,” on its maiden voyage struck an iceberg and sank in the Atlantic with 1,500 lives lost, an Aberdeen newspaper had a very revealing headline in their paper next morning: “ABERDEEN MAN LOST AT SEA.” Not one mention in that headline of the other 1499 people lost at sea. That’s what Mono-cultural Myopia does to us. It only lets us see the things that are important to us, the things we’ve been trained to see, the things we’ve been taught are important. Then due to the same cultural conditioning, we assume that what we see of the world around us is indeed reality itself, when in fact it is only our culture conditioned perspective on reality. What’s more, we all tend to think that our forebears have chosen our customs, practices and ways of thinking out of all the possible practices in the world, and so ours are best. Which means that not only should we remain as we are without compromising our heritage, but also, all people on earth, in order to become “real people” should also become like us. It is interesting to note that Mono-Cultural Myopia afflicts all human beings until, by a conscious effort, they begin to learn what it really takes to communicate cross culturally.

WHO IN THE WORLD HAS CULTURE

Who in the World has Culture? Well of course, every race on earth except us! But are you sure? The fact is that every person has culture & is so immersed in his/her own culture that they don’t notice it. You’ll notice that it is only ever “they” that have strange customs, only “their language” is hard to learn and only “they” think in very funny ways.

WORLDVIEW

The importance of understanding and then communicating within the framework of other peoples culture and worldview can probably best be seen by describing how each of us develop our particular worldview. When we are born, we are born without culture. That is we don't initially know any of the basic assumptions and values of our home culture. That is why a child who is adopted early enough into a culture which is foreign to its parents has no trouble in acting like a native. The worldview he has learnt has been that of his step-parents.

Because this worldview is learnt while a person is so young, from those who are trusted most, its validity is rarely questioned. This process is so pervasive and

so thorough and subtle that even one's emotional reactions and muscular movements reflect one's cultural conditioning (Luzbetak 1970:77).

Then to complete the process, as we grow up we "live" this worldview, i.e. put it in practice in life, and this then proves beyond doubt that it is true.

An example of this can be found in comparing the Germ Theory of Westerners to the Spirit Theory of the Papua New Guineans as far as the cause of sickness is concerned. Very few of us as Westerners have ever seen a germ, yet we all unquestioningly assume that germs are basically the cause of sickness. In our minds, we can't see that there can be any other theory that makes sense. But when we consider how many germs the experts tell us are in any given room at any given time, then if that theory is correct why aren't we all sick all of the time. What thoughts go through your mind when someone sneezes beside you? And then 10 minutes later you start sneezing? You see what's happened? You have proved your worldview assumptions by living them, and no amount of reason can dissuade you.

But to the Papua New Guineans, all sickness is caused by the intervention of some supernatural forces, usually due to sorcery or magic. To them, the big question is "why me?" and "who caused my sickness?" So when someone gets sick after an enemy has visited the village, everything is explained: The enemy collected some food scraps belonging to that person, and has since used these to have sorcery per-

formed on him/her. Again, worldview assumptions are proved by living, and absolutely unshakable in the minds of the Papua New Guineans.

Due to the pervasiveness of worldview, we “know” the sort of things we can believe and what is beyond belief. And in the same way that our worldview governs the things we can hear and see and perceive, so this same process applies to the people to whom we are going with the Gospel. Therefore if we want to make the Word of God intelligible to them we must

make the Scriptures understandable within the limits set by these traditional categories. To pass beyond these is to move outside the knowable and to fail to communicate. (Reyburn in Smalley 1967:301)

Therefore, we must communicate within the bounds of their worldview, while it is these basic meanings, values, assumptions and especially allegiances that must be influenced by Christianity if people are to become truly Christian rather than simply secularized.

Or to put it in anthropological terms, a cross cultural witness is actually an agent of directed culture change. As the witness goes into his/her particular ministry situation, it is most important to realize that all cultures, including the one he/she is going to are always changing. The variable factors between different cultures and over time are: (a) the starting point, (b) the direction of change and (c) the rate of change. In the new situation, the starting point is the given, but this starting point must be understood by the witness if he is to be effective. The direction of change is really what the witness does want to have some influence on, while he/she will need to be very aware of the traditional rate of change so that he/she will be able, as much as possible, to avoid advocating changes too fast for the continuing integration of the society.

WORLDVIEW AND / IN CULTURE

Well, so much for talking about culture and worldview. But what is culture? What is worldview? As human beings, there are basically three things that make us behave the way we do. (1) Our biological make-up, (2) our environment, and (3) culture. Culture not only makes up the balance of why we do things, but it even directs our involvement with the first two givens. Therefore, we can define culture as “the integrated system of learned patterns of behaviour, ideas and products,

characteristic of a society” (Hiebert 1976:25). While worldview, which is at the very core of a culture could be defined as

the central assumptions, concepts, premises and values, more or less widely shared by the members of an individual community. (Kraft 1978:X.1)

For the purpose of study, we can artificially dissect culture into various sub-systems. e.g. 1. Political, 2. Economic, 3. Religious, 4. Social Structure, 5. Technological, 6. Communication, etc. (See Diagram 1). This then is very useful to help us to understand what comprises culture, but in reality, the integration of these sub-systems must never be ignored.

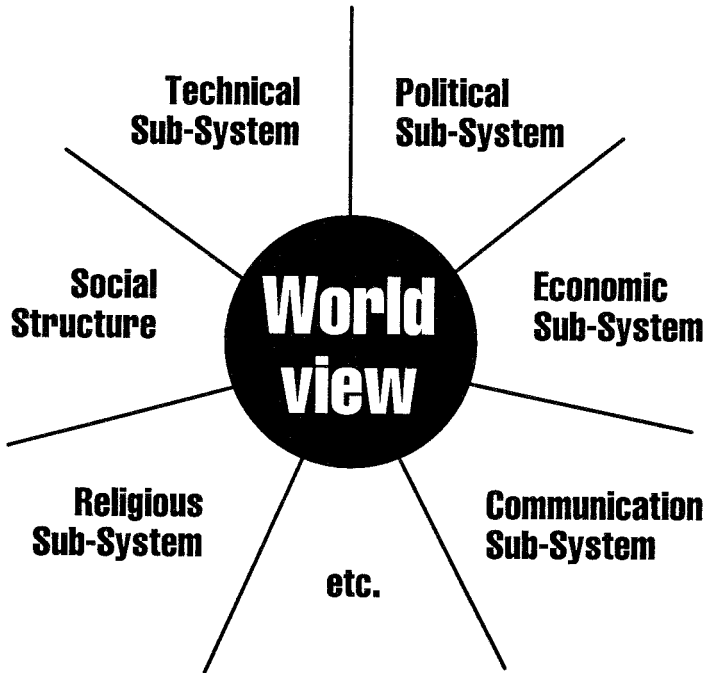


Diagram 1: Cultural Sub-systems (from Kraft 1978:III.1)

For purposes of analysis and understanding again, we endeavour to diagram worldview, the core of culture, to help us to see its various components and the inter-relationship of all of these parts (See Diagram 2). At the very core are the allegiances of the people of a given culture, these are at once the focus, goals and motivator of the whole of

that culture. These are only few in number and are the pinnacle of prioritization of the themes of the culture. The themes then are a prioritization of the basic assumptions of the worldview. The allegiances and themes are common to and have a strong influence on all aspects of the worldview.

At the level of assumptions however, it is possible to group information more or less discreetly into categories such as assumptions relating to: (a) human, (b) supernatural, (c) time, (d) space, (e) flora, (f) fauna. The assumptions in each of these groups then we will be classifying according to three categories; i.e. whether that assumption is to do with (a) causality, (the why of things), (b) classification and relationship, (the way things are classified and related), and (c) the nature of things. As these assumptions then work out into behaviour, there are interpretations of these assumptions, still within their six major categories, but being a synthesis of the three minor categories. Beyond these assumptions is behaviour through the cultural sub-systems on the basis of worldview.

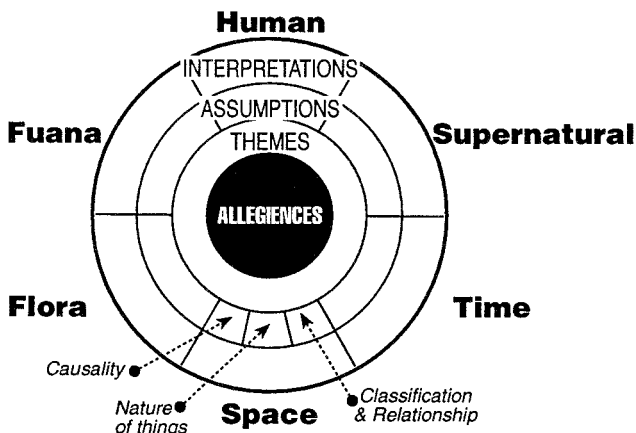


Diagram 2. WORLDVIEW

HOW TO DISCOVER WORLDVIEW

As you've now come to see, and will continue to realize the importance of an understanding of culture and worldview to a cross cultural witness, I'm including some guidelines on how to discover worldview so that it will be possible for missionaries in their own local situation to

compile a more accurate picture of the worldview of the actual group with whom they are working.

To discover worldview, we must know how people acquire their worldview. When a child is born, its biological make-up and the environment in which it will live are givens. But its culture and worldview are then learnt from the members of its community by participation in that community. So participation is a very effective and an important way of learning worldview.

However, no missionary has the time, the objectivity, or the absence of inhibitions to be able to learn worldview solely by participation. So participation has to be combined with observation by which deductions can be made to enhance the learning and discovery process. But most of the worldview assumptions are held on the sub-conscious level so even observation is not sufficient to find them. So then we come to four other specific areas which are a gold mine in the process of discovering worldview.

1. **Myths, proverbs legends etc.** Myths, proverbs etc. are a storehouse of worldview assumptions. But, being a storehouse, the contents are likely to be (a) stale; it will be the worldview assumptions of some time back in the history of the culture that are indicated and, (b) unprocessed: the assumptions so discovered will tend to be the ideals of the culture rather than the norms of behaviour. But as long as these two problems areas are taken into account, a lot can be learnt from myths.
2. **Parents instructions to children.** Parents will primarily only teach their children things that are important. If these instructions can be observed over a period of time, a lot can be learned about worldview.
3. **What the children take notice of.** In noting parents instruction to children, it must be remembered that the children will only obey the instructions that are really important, i.e. the instructions that will be enforced. So observing this can also teach us a lot about up to date worldview.
4. **Borrowed cultural traits.** Especially in an intense culture contact situation such as exists in much of the third world, it is possible to learn a lot about worldview from the things that one culture

will borrow from another. Things from within a culture that are very important and/or are favoured positively will not readily be replaced by something from another culture. Furthermore, things from outside that culture that are favoured negatively will not readily be borrowed.

WHY WE NEED TO UNDERSTAND

Before we get into the question of why we need to understand other people's worldview, notice that it is talking about "understanding", which is but the first rung on the ladder to effective cross-cultural ministry. But notice how important this one is. We need to understand so we:

1. Don't cause offence. I've heard it said that it is possible to make more enemies in two weeks in a new situation than we can win back in a lifetime.² In Papua New Guinea the following are just some of the danger areas: Stepping over people and belongings, Actions and attitudes towards the opposite sex, Speaking with a raised voice, Not accepting food which is offered, Writing letters with red ink.
2. Can understand what's going on. If we don't understand what is going on around us, then our stress levels will be very high, and we will not be able to focus our ministry on the real issues of the people we're ministering to. Also, this lack of understanding will mean that we are under tension all the time in trying to keep abreast of what is happening around us, so this will sap our energy very quickly, which is in fact the main reason for "tropical malaise."
3. Can get Information. Only asking the right question of the right person in the right place in the right way results in the right answer.
4. Can communicate accurately. By that I mean, using right words, grammar, and gestures.
5. Can communicate effectively. Communication that is gripping, clear and memorable. A cross-cultural Christian, although needing to be a learner in attitude and in practice, will still be regarded as a teacher, and a teacher in any society and especially in oral oriented societies, has to be an orator in their terms.

6. Can advise the nationals on their own turf. Most cross-cultural Christians find themselves working as advisors to the nationals, with a responsibility to tell them how best to do things in their own land amongst their own people. To try to do this without really understanding them and their situation is an insult to them.

So you can see just what it means to be able to see things from another person's perspective. It's not easy, can sometimes be threatening, and can lead to a lot of mis-understanding of us as people. But as a result, the message will get across. And we shouldn't be afraid of the problems encountered along the way. The Jews couldn't believe that Jesus was the Son of God because he was so much like them. And as a result He was crucified. So cheer up, brothers and sisters, a servant is not greater than his or her Lord.

CROSS CULTURAL CHRISTIAN'S GOALS STATED IN WORLDVIEW TERMS

The presence of a cross-cultural witness presupposes certain goals. And these goals in popular terms would be "the conversion to Christ of the men and women of that region and the planting of indigenous churches." To help us understand the internal dynamics of achieving this goal, we will now endeavour to re-state it in worldview terms.

The first thing we notice as we look at the diagrams of culture and worldview is that at the very core of worldview is what we are calling "allegiances", the foremost of which is the primary allegiance. As we examine the famous missionary handbook, the Bible, we find that the crucial passages about man's relationship with God which are summarized by Jesus are actually speaking to this allegiance level;

Love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your mind. This is the greatest and the most important commandment. The second most important commandment is like it: Love your neighbour as yourself (Matthew 22:37-39 T.E.V.).

The primary allegiance of a Christian has to be to "love God", while the subsidiary allegiances are to "love your neighbour" and to "love yourself", with the subsidiary allegiances, of necessity, being subservient to and not in conflict with the primary allegiance. So, right from the start, it is obvious that the transformation that we refer to as "conversion" is actually a transformation at the core of worldview, a change

in primary allegiance.

The second thing we notice is that “religion” is a cultural sub-system. But before we examine the implications of this realization, a further word of clarification would be in order. In much anthropological writing including the very perceptive writing on culture and Christian conversion by A.R. Tippett³, we find statements like “Religion is the integrator of society.” Such statements would lead us to see religion in the place where we have worldview rather than out in the sub-system category as we have it. But on closer examination, we find that a lot of this writing is on the basis of observation of societies with a supernaturalistic worldview, where the supernatural features very highly in the worldview allegiances. So in this regard, when discussing societies like these, then these two words would appear to be synonymous, but the more neutral term ‘worldview’ makes the concept more readily understandable and applicable to societies of any orientation. However, even in societies with a supernaturalistic orientation, there are still aspects of religion that do not and cannot fit at the worldview level. For example, a chant, a fast, a fetish, or a hymn book are all obviously a part of a cultural sub-system, making it necessary, for the point of analysis, to maintain a religious sub-system at the cultural level. So again, for the sake of clarity, we will be speaking of religion at the cultural sub-system level only, and not at the worldview level. This will also align with much popular thought that stresses that “Christianity is not a religion; it’s an experience!” In saying this, what is really meant is that although Christianity may be evidenced in a culturally religious way, the crux of Christianity is the faith allegiance relationship with God through Christ.

So to state our goals in worldview terms, we conclude that “the goal of a cross-cultural witness is to bring men and women into a life lived in conscious faith allegiance to God through the means provided by Christ, with neighbour and self being subsidiary but essential allegiances. These allegiances will then be evidenced and worked out in appropriate ways through their cultural sub-systems.”

But what about their “heathen” religion? Surely we have to do something about that? In later chapters we will look more closely at God’s dealing with people throughout the Bible. To anticipate the con-

clusions of those chapters, we find that it was their allegiances that God was concerned about, not the religious forms through which they expressed those allegiances. As long as the forms of the traditional religion can be satisfactory channels to express the new primary allegiance, that is, allegiance to the true and living God, then the forms themselves are not heathen. At the same time, there are some things that would, by their very nature, tend to be allegiances that would compete with allegiance to the True and Living God. Idolatry and magic would fall into this category. These are religious forms that would have to change, but once again, not because they are religious forms, but because they represent competing allegiances. But more detail on that in a later chapter.

As we proceed in our instructions to missionaries, it will be very obvious that at many points worldview level assumptions between the witness's worldview and the worldview of the people being ministered to cross culturally will differ greatly. What should happen in those cases? Whose responsibility is it to make the necessary adjustment? As messengers of the Gospel, it is to be expected that we are responsible to come to know their worldview. Then at all points, even where it is radically different from ours, we must at least be empathetic with them. That is, not necessarily adopting their worldview as our own which in an absolute way would be impossible, but understanding their worldview, taking it as seriously as they do, and making value judgments on matters relating to them from that perspective. Surely that is what Paul meant when he said, "to the Jews I become a Jew that I might win Jews; etc." (1 Cor. 9:20 N.A.S.B.)

NOTES - CHAPTER 4

1. *Mono-Cultural Myopia is taken from the expression "mono- lingual myopia" coined by Donald Larson and popularized by Brewster & Brewster. It means "a disease of the tongue that affects the eyes."*
2. *K. McElhanon in an Anthropology Lecture, SIL Brisbane, 1971.*
3. *Tippett, Alan R. in Solomon Islands Christianity, page 69.*

FURTHER READING

Brewster (1978), Hiebert (1976), Nida (1956)

CHAPTER 5

UNDERSTAND THYSELF

To help us see in a concrete way that we, the Western cross-cultural witness also have a culture and worldview, the following should serve to illustrate the point: It is a generalized summary of the basic worldview assumptions of the group of missionaries I'm most familiar with, that is myself and my colleagues of the Assemblies of God in Australia New Guinea Mission. For simplicity, I'll just refer to this as "missionary worldview." I address only four areas: time, space, human and supernatural, as these are the areas having the most important implications for our ministry to people of a different cultural background.

For the sake of brevity, I only make this a summary, as to illustrate each point would require a book length treatise. In a later chapter, I'll include a similar analysis of the worldview of the Papua New Guineans amongst whom we work, along with a chart of the themes and allegiances of both groups, showing points of consonance and dissonance as we go.

MISSIONARY WORLDVIEW ASSUMPTIONS

A. ASSUMPTIONS ABOUT TIME

Time is seen as a linear passage of seconds, minutes, hours, days, months, years etc. with three separate aspects of time always in focus. These are: past, present and future. Both past and future are considered to be a part of reality, and both can be measured and counted with equal ease. However, past time and the events associated with it cannot be changed so is largely ignored, although some unfocused nostalgia about "the good old days" is evident. The future can be changed by human ability and endeavour, so it is focussed on a lot and is assumed that it will be better than the present is or the past was. Time is considered to be a material commodity which can be bought, sold, wasted,

used etc. For this reason, precise methods of time keeping have been developed.

The whole of life is oriented to time, with specific times being set for almost everything, which are then followed slavishly. There are regular times for events such as eating, sleeping, working, bathing, playing etc., as well as times that are set for non-regular events.

There is a very big difference in attitude towards activities depending on whether they are carried out in “work” time or “play” time. A classic illustration of this is in the field of religion: Professionals in religion do their religion as “work” while the laity do theirs as “play.”

B. ASSUMPTIONS ABOUT SPACE

In the missionary worldview, space is measured by constants, e.g. Kilometers, millimeters etc., and is consequently invariable. At the same time, due to their transport technology, space is not normally perceived of as a barrier to them, and never perceived of as a barrier to the supernatural. Also, they do not consider any space to be sacred, even including space that they could associate with their supernatural, e.g. church buildings etc.

C. ASSUMPTIONS ABOUT HUMAN BEINGS

Human beings are seen as autonomous individuals of supreme value. This value is only challenged in much of the missionary worldview by their allegiance to their Deity, and although the latter is usually the dominant position, the two are in constant tension. The life of an individual is seen to begin at or before birth, and finishes at biological death. This life must be maintained at all costs, and tampering with it in any way is seen as immoral. A human being is thought to comprise a body, a soul (mind), and an eternal spirit. These three parts are inseparable until death. At death, the spirit immediately leaves the body and this earth, and goes to either Heaven or Hell. A human being can never be anything other than a human being although both demons and angels can also take on human form, while it is possible for demons to take possession of human beings.

Two-fold value judgments play a very big part in the orientation of life. Something is either right or wrong, irrespective of who is involved. Other two-fold judgments frequently employed are Christian/pagan, sin/virtue, true/false, legal/illegal, moral/immoral, etc. For the ultimate

standard for these value judgments, a person is expected to look both within, to his own conscience, and also to God's word. As a result of this, justice is punitive, that is, it is aimed at deterring wrong doing by meting out punishment based on a single universal standard of justice and is executed by authority figures.

Frankness in speaking is considered to be a virtue, and interpersonal disagreements are considered to be an unavoidable "occupational hazard" which should be avoided as much as possible, but which are a necessary evil in some situations, to "clear the air." At the same time, for the spiritual well-being of the people involved, the disagreement should not be prolonged un-necessarily. At the same time, gossip, although indulged in a lot, is regarded negatively.

Personal growth is calculated in years, and some assertiveness amongst children is expected, including fighting. A crying baby is annoying but necessary for its own well-being, as crying is seen as a form of exercise and expression. Also, corporal punishment of children is the correct form of discipline.

Marriage forms a new independent family. The focal point of the marriage relationship is companionship between husband and wife. The presence or lack of children is relatively unimportant, and when they are present, it is the responsibility of the parents to provide for them until they "leave home" to begin their own family.

Property is personal and exclusive. Even when property is group owned, the same exclusiveness is evident, and so that property can only be used for the purpose for which it was acquired. Even homes of close friends or relatives are not normally entered without permission.

There is a distinction between male and female roles, but there are many overlaps. Outside of marriage, men are expected to acknowledge and respect women but show discretion at the same time. Sex sins are thought to be the greatest sins of all. There is a place in the society for unmarried women of marriageable age.

Leadership is appointed independent of the group. Leaders don't like to wield authority over their followers and consciously avoid prestige and authority. At the same time, followers continue to exercise their independence, even towards leadership, thus making leadership very difficult. When formal meetings take place, majority rule is the

format, while rules have to be written to be binding.

All knowledge except as revealed in the Bible is considered to be of human discovery, while all knowledge including that in the Bible other than “confidential Mission information” is thought to be public property, and as such, should be available to everyone. Technical skill is thought to be sufficient for most tasks.

Interpersonal relationships are independent of the social structure of the society. They range from moderately intimate with relatives and close friends through varying degrees of friendship with the far extreme of the continuum being the status of “stranger” and people who “aren’t my cup of tea.”

Work is the moral obligation of all human beings. However, this is only required for a certain period each day. At any time, action is thought to be preferable to non-action, even in a difficult situation when it is obvious that action and non-action will be equally productive. In labour and skills there is intense specialization.

Money is considered necessary for life but undesirable. It is hard to come by and people are responsible to God for their use of it, so frugality is considered to be an extreme value.

Help given to others is given impersonally and soliciting help is frowned upon except among the closest friends. But even then it is not expected to have any continuing obligations/privileges.

Human beings are seen to be created by the Divine but distinctly separate from Him. Supernatural help and human ability are thought to be mutually exclusive. Humans can influence the Divine by prayer, but cannot control Him as such. However, where the Divine has stated His intentions in the Bible, reminders are considered to be effective and allowable ways of producing Divine action.

D. ASSUMPTIONS ABOUT THE SUPERNATURAL

The missionary worldview assumptions regarding the Supernatural are: The universe and all that it contains was created by One Supreme Being who is omnipotent, omnipresent, omniscient and eternal. He is remote from humans by nature, but due to His concern for them, imminent at the same time and in fact indwells and empowers all Christians, but their yieldedness governs the amount of his activity in their lives. He demands exclusive human allegiance to Him, and desires fel-

lowship with them. He is angry with human behaviour that is contrary to His will, but loves the humans just the same. God has revealed all that humans need to know about Himself in the Bible. God can allow sickness and trouble to come to humans but at the same time has said He can and will heal sickness and can also intervene in human circumstances. This intervention is requested by prayer.

Non-Christians of all races can and should also come into this relationship of allegiance and fellowship with this God. The most potent way of informing them of this is by monologue preaching.

There are two parts to the supernatural realm: One is God who can only think and do good who is accompanied by His angelic host. The other is Satan and his demons who can only think and do evil. All super-human activity is from either of these sources.

THEMES

Out of these assumptions then we can crystallize the more dominant of these assumptions as the themes of the missionary worldview.

- (a) God demands primary allegiance to Himself.
- (b) Self is very important.
- (c) An individual human life is valuable in and of itself.
- (d) Everything is judged by a twofold value judgment.
- (e) Technology is very important.
- (f) Life is time oriented.
- (g) Life is future oriented.
- (h) Monologue preaching has special power to bring people to Christ.
- (i) Property is personally owned.
- (j) Cleanliness is an absolute requirement.

ALLEGIANCES

From these allegiances then, we can select the following as being the allegiances of the missionary worldview.

- (a) The primary allegiance is a faith allegiance to God.
- (b) Secondary allegiance is to oneself.
- (c) Third allegiance is to the sanctity of human life.

CONCLUSION

So our point has been sufficiently made. The cross-cultural witness him/herself has a culture and worldview just as does anyone else on earth. What's more, as we will discover more as we progress, the worldview of the cross-cultural witness can hamper genuine communication of the Good News just as easily as can the worldview of the people being ministered to.

Also, as the cross-cultural witness gains experience in understanding worldview and its implications, the foregoing analysis will help him/her to have real insight in to some of the things that cause him/her so much frustration. For example, why does he/she react so strongly to someone spitting near them. It is perfectly acceptable in the host culture, but as westerners, we often find ourselves saying "I'll never get used to that 'custom'!" And the reason? Simple. One of the themes of our culture is the importance of cleanliness. And so by understanding ourselves and our reactions so much better, we will be able to perform so much better with so much less frustration.

FURTHER READING

Hiebert (1976)

CHAPTER 6

THE MAKING OF A CROSS CULTURAL CHRISTIAN

As is no doubt very obvious from our previous chapters, the task of becoming and being an effective cross-cultural witness is no easy matter. So in this chapter, I'll address what I consider to be key issues in making Australians into cross-cultural Christians, which implies being a witnesses for Christ in that situation. I guess this is what is commonly known as being a "missionary."

When we are talking about the making of a missionary or anyone else for that matter, we have to remember that God is the creator, and also the giver of gifts. So in the final analysis, it is God who makes a missionary, But at the same time, we can do a lot of things from the human end that will make a big difference as to whether that person is able to co-operate with, or hamper what God is doing and wants to do. Or to state it in a different way, the world sure needs **new missionaries**, thousands of them. But it can't afford to have, nor can we have any excuse for sending, **green missionaries**.

DRAINING MOTIVATION

In many churches there are basic concepts that inadvertently hamper motivation for missionary service even though some of them are actually meant positively. We could list some of these as follows:

- (1) **Everyone is a missionary:** However, the hard, cold fact of the matter is that if we think that everyone is a missionary, then the end result is that nobody is a missionary. There is no longer any challenge for anyone to take the hard road of becoming an effective cross- cultural witness. As a result, the 3.2 billion non-Christian people in the world, and more especially, the 2.6 billion unreached and out of reach people on the earth have no way of

hearing about Christ.

- (2) **Missionaries are a special breed of person.** This is often stated positively, but in the minds of the hearers it tends to imply another statement; “I’m not a special breed, so therefore not a candidate for the call to missions.”
- (3) **You have to have a call.** I agree! But I’d like to rearrange our statement of what you need the call for. When you consider the “Heavy End” of the world, you’ll agree with me that you have to have a call to stay at home!
- (4) **You’re too good for that.** So was Jesus, but no one less than him could do it. Likewise, being an effective cross- cultural Christian is one of the most demanding jobs on earth, which likewise can only be filled by the best personnel our churches can offer. I hope you’ll see what I mean by that before we finish.

As far as motivation is concerned, the Pastor and the home church are vital keys to building motivation. I heard a Pastor say recently that he’d just realized that with such a big world out there, his church had better grow so they can provide workers. I’d say that is a healthy concept of Church Growth.

PREPARATION

In talking of preparation for cross-cultural ministry, we need to note that there are no Biblical examples of truly cross-cultural witnesses in the sense of a witness going to minister in the long term amongst people drastically different from him/herself, let alone any models for their preparation and training.

Even Jesus, the person often spoken about as “the greatest missionary”, although he came from heaven, was born a Jew, grew up in Jewish Culture and, other than for some brief contact, didn’t minister outside his own culture.

Paul, likewise, was a Jew, but was brought up in Hellenistic Tarsus, so was in fact bi-cultural. So amongst Jews or Greeks he was really witnessing to people who thought like himself. The only genuine example of Paul amongst people radically different from himself was on the Isle of Malta after his shipwreck (Acts 28:7-11). In that instance, he healed a few people, but we don’t read of any preaching or of any

churches planted. It seems that ministry to people radically different from himself even gave Paul some headaches.

ATTITUDES TO MISSIONARY TRAINING

My own experience is a reasonable example of how aware many evangelical/pentecostal churches have been to the need of specific training for cross-cultural ministry. I was in a missionary meeting towards the end of 1962, my first year of High School, and felt something inside me that told me I was to train as an auto mechanic and I was to go to Papua New Guinea as a missionary. A little while later I went to see my Pastor about this. He was very happy about what I felt, and gave me advice on how to evaluate the call of God on my life so I wouldn't be misled. But looking back, that advice, although appropriate to a point, sure wasn't the only advice I now wish I'd been given. As a result, I didn't prepare myself as well as I could have in the time prior to my going to the field. Mind you, I'm not criticizing my Pastor in saying this. All I'm saying is that it would be good for Pastors to be more aware of the real issues of cross-cultural ministry. As a result of this concern, I've set myself a goal of providing busy Pastors with information about key resources about missions and cross-cultural ministry. That way, they can have these readily available, while not taking their valuable time to find out about them.

Later, another Pastor suggested I read missionary biographies. Unfortunately, that suggestion was a bit late in that it was just before I went to the field, and by that time I had a job, had a girlfriend, was attending Technical College at night, worked overtime, taught a Sunday School class, led Junior Youth and Youth Departments in our church, played in the Church Band, was involved with the running of a city centre coffee house ministry. So basically I had formed habits of activity that did not allow much time for reading. But in retrospect, I'd like to emphasize that missionary preparation is more than the history of missions. Furthermore, biographies tend to be written from a **promotional perspective** so often don't give a balanced picture or the critical evaluation necessary to make them suitable as a training manual for further missionary work.

I then went to Papua New Guinea first as a mechanic. I'd been ac-

cepted to go to Bible College, but God gave a different direction. On arrival on the field, authorities gave some insights, the majority of which entailed reading the minutes of field council of our mission, to find out “how we do things around here.” This was helpful, but still wasn’t preparation for cross-cultural ministry.

After two years, my wife and I came home to Bible School. We were really looking for cross cultural insights, but weren’t given any then either. The books that were recommended were good for missionary awareness, but not up to par for missionary preparation. At the end of Bible College I did a course with Wycliffe Bible Translators, which focussed on linguistics, and amongst all that there was a course on anthropology which at last gave me some “tools” to be able to understand people of other cultures.

Following this we went to live on a houseboat on the Sepik River. This enabled us to live in villages with people, and in that context we tried desperately to achieve something for God. God was good and brought written material across our desk that opened our eyes to people movement dynamics, and in the process, turned our effectiveness for God right around. But the challenging part to us as evangelical/pentecostal missions is that many of the books that I found to most helpful to me as a missionary were in print long before I went to Papua New Guinea, but were never pointed out to me so they could be of assistance.¹ My superiors may have known of these books, but it would have helped me if reading them had been a pre-field requirement. In this context I love the following quote from Willoughby, a missionary in Africa, who, in 1923 published the book *Race Relations in New Africa*, which we referred to briefly earlier. In his chapter *The task of the Church* (pages 268-9) he says:

When the Church has found men of the right calibre and training, it behoves her to husband such priceless resources. Instead of hurrying them forthwith to Africa, she should provide them with such tuition as will enable them to acquire as expeditiously as possible, a knowledge of the peculiarities of the human material that they will have to make the most of in their African Parishes, and of the methods which have led to failure and success among their predecessors. Why should the church pay over and over again what it costs for each new missionary to discover afresh, by a toilsome process, what his predecessors discov-

ered before him! There is much of course that can only be learnt in the costly school of experience; but the unexplored region of Bantu life is both vast and perplexing, and each new explorer should be taken by the easiest and quickest route to the point of vantage that former pioneers gained with bleeding feet, so that with unspent vigour he may push as far as possible into the unknown. If it be protested that the missionary is a propagandist and not an explorer, the objector must be met with the retort that no propagandist can ever become efficient in any community till he has discovered the psychology of the people.

GETTING STARTED

To help us see what this may mean in the life of a missionary recruit in the 1980's we could afford to take a look at a list I'm calling "The other side of missions." This is the busy side of missions that takes so much missionary time away from their real ministry.

A. THE OTHER SIDE OF MISSIONS

Reports	Promotion	- Newsletters
Cassettes		- photographs
Literature		- articles
Mechanics		- deputation
Supplies		- cassettes
Carpentry	Bookwork	- Typing/ Secretarial work
Music		- finances

Now, when we think about how young people can prepare themselves for this sort of involvement as well as the main issues of becoming an effective cross-cultural witness for Christ, we come up with a list of non-formal preparation ideas that we could call "pre-preparation preparation." That is, courses and specialities that can be acquired as electives, courses or as assignment emphasis, either in High School or in special courses prior to specific missionary training.

B. NON-FORMAL PREPARATION

Art of Speech	Communication	Journalism	Phonetics
Anthropology	Computers	Languages	Photography
Bible	Drama	Linguistics	Sociology
Book Keeping	Economics	Mechanics	Speed Reading
Building	Electronics	Music	Statistics
			Typing

We could also take the time to look at the beginning of a good read-

ing list too. For Example:

<i>On the Crest of the Wave</i>	— Wagner	Regal/GL
<i>Perspectives on the World Christian Movement</i>	— Winter/Hawthorne	W.C.L.
<i>Two Structures of God's Redemptive Mission</i>	— Winter	W.C.L.
<i>Understanding Church Growth</i>	— McGavran	Eerdmans
<i>Christianity in Culture</i>	— Kraft	Orbis
<i>Planning Strategies for World Evangelization</i>	Dayton/Fraser	W.C.L.
<i>You Can So Get There From Here</i>		
MARC		

Information about the “Heavy End.”

<i>Operation World</i>	— Johnstone	Operation Mobilization
<i>Unreached Peoples</i> 81, 82	— Wagner/Dayton	MARC
<i>China: The Emerging challenge</i>	— Paul Kauffman	Baker
<i>The Gospel and Islam</i>	— Don McCurry	MARC
<i>Ethnic Realities and the Church</i>	— McGavran	W.C.L.
<i>World Christian Encyclopedia</i>	— Barrett	Oxford

KEY AREAS IN MISSIONARY PREPARATION

So in summary then, apart from normal Bible and Theological training which is essential, there are four additional areas which need to be taken seriously in missionary preparation.

A. Cultural Awareness.

Hopefully, this manual will begin to provide some of the resources needed in this area. Also, Assemblies of God World Missions have developed a training course for for people needing cross cultural tools. Short term exposure trips to cross-cultural situations can enhance this learning process. But this will need satisfactory pre-visit training, and post-visit debriefing to maximize the positive lessons learned, and to avoid possible hurt and mis-understanding.²

B. Self Management Skills.

Ralph Winter lists “The Self Managing Missionary” as one of 12 obstacles to World Evangelization. He says;

I believe that ... the desperate inefficiency of the daily work of

the average missionary ... is far more likely to be a major obstacle to real accomplishment (of missionary goals) than any spiritual factor (Glasser ed. 1976:14 Appendix).

He then goes on to talk about the need for more supervision of missionaries in their daily work, in such a way as it will help missionaries achieve their own goals. This is very good, however, I feel that a lot of progress can also be made by including training in Self Management skills as an essential part of missionary training and preparation. The works of Engstrom and Dayton of World Vision are tremendous resources from a Christian perspective to help cross-cultural as well as other Christians get down to the nitty gritty of how to achieve, even when no one else is setting deadlines or looking over your shoulder.

C. Spirituality for the Long Haul.

This need and this term was first brought to my attention by Fr. Thomas Stransky in a convocation address he gave at the Fuller's School of World Mission. In this address, he listed the lack of training for spirituality for the long haul as one of the weaknesses of Protestant missionary training as compared to Catholic missionary training. As I've thought about this, I've come to realize that we've tended to assume, on the basis of our Western church life, that spirituality is tied inextricably to church programs, especially exposure to fellowship and preaching. This is especially true in the churches using a more dynamic and demonstrative form of worship service. As a result, Christians moving into cross-cultural situations are given to believe that cassettes of services from their home church, and ministry which they receive while on furloughs are the essential ingredients for a missionaries spiritual survival. This is great for the ego of the sending church, but hardly true to Scripture. The fact is that God is out **there!** - wherever "there" happens to be. As I re-read Matthew 28:18-20, I start to feel sorry for folks who stay at home, uninvolved in implementing the Great Commission, and so maybe exclude themselves from some of the promise of Christ's continual presence.

At the same time, the attitudes needed to equip a person for spirituality for the long haul regardless of the amount of fellowship and other input from others is received, by extension can easily lead to an attitude of independence, a feeling that you don't need your brother. This

also isn't a satisfactory Christian response. So somehow the institutions involved in missionary training must take these two problems seriously, strike a balance between the two extremes, and help prospective cross-cultural Christians equip themselves with spirituality for the long haul.

D. Get to the Field As Young As You Can.

As necessary as training and preparation are in producing successful cross-cultural Christians, this has to be balanced by the need for a missionary needs to get to his/her field as young as possible to enable him/her to adapt to the new situation as quickly, effectively and as totally as possible. I personally am very thankful to God for making it possible for me to be in Papua New Guinea by the time I was 20 years old. I feel this has had a big bearing on ability I have been able to acquire with the language and or the ease with which I find I can move in and out of Papua New Guinean situations, and the rapport I am able to instantly attain with Papua New Guineans, despite my skin colour and type of hair telling everybody I'm a foreigner no matter what. Or to borrow the wisdom of Kerr to make a point:

After 30, one's ability to acquire a free colloquial use of a foreign tongue rapidly diminishes and after 35 often ceases altogether. One may learn to read or write a language after that, but he will probably not learn to speak it well. Moreover, one's ability to adapt himself to a different environment becomes less easy as the years pass. For these reasons, the desirable age limit is 30 years (1962:18).

CONCLUSION

As far as the life of the effective cross-cultural witness is concerned, there will be certain benefits to himself that seldom get thought about, let alone mentioned.

- (a) There comes an increased understanding of oneself and the Bible as a result of being able to look at it through someone else's eyes. This then is a most rewarding experience. Personally, I've found that the Bible has become a whole new book, although still remaining the same Old Book.
- (b) A second benefit is the excitement of being part of Acts 29. Unfortunately there often isn't time to reflect much on this excitement.

Furloughs and study leave are a real benefit for that.

If a prospective cross-cultural Christian has already done his/her homework well, it won't take so long for him/her to become really effective for God. And their effectiveness, by multiplication, will make the difference between Heaven and Hell as to where millions of people spend eternity.

NOTES ON CHAPTER 6

1. *For example, Nevius 1897, Allen 1912 and 1927, Pickett 1933, and 1956, and McGavran 1955.*
2. *Because short term and long term approaches and involvement are so different, these short term visits, unless specially structured, often do not give an accurate feel of what missionary work will be like. So cultural awareness becomes the major benefit.*

FURTHER READING

You Can So Get There From Here. (MARC)

Specialized Missions Training Courses (e.g. World Harvest Institute)

CHAPTER 7

RELATING TO OTHER CROSS CULTURAL CHRISTIANS

HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVES

Working in cross-cultural situations, often means being cut off from kith and kin, while attempting a job that is bigger than any one of us. This then seems to have a lot to do with our willingness and in fact our need to have significant contact and co-operation with other Christian organizations who we find working in the same locale as ourselves. Or to put it in other terms, due to the pressures of Christian ministry in a cross-cultural situation, inter-denominational and inter-organizational contact and co-operation tends to be far greater than ever occurs in a home church situation.

Historically, this expedient co-operation in missionary situations has led to the formation of national conferences and councils of missionary organizations in order to be able to better co-ordinate this co-operation. These gatherings in turn have become National Councils of Churches as the work of these missionaries has been successful in planting churches and establishing national church structures in these countries.

At an international level, we see the co-operation of the field extended to make possible a series of inter-denominational Missionary Conferences during the latter half of last century, which finally culminated in the World Missionary Conference at Edinburgh in 1910. Apart from the extension of mission field co-operation that this signifies, this meeting is important to notice for another reason. The two continuation committees from the Edinburgh Conference combined in 1914 to form the World Council of Churches. So we see that the expedient co-

operation of the cross-cultural situation has resulted in both National Councils of Churches, and also the World Council of Churches.

In order to enable a cross-cultural Christian to best grapple with the possibilities and challenges of inter-organizational co-operation present in cross-cultural ministry situations, this chapter will look briefly at the issue of unity from a Biblical and contemporary perspective.

PRESENT POSSIBILITIES

Any discussion on unity in a Christian context today immediately comes under the umbrella of what is known as “ecumenical.” This then confronts us with two vital issues. These issues can possibly be more effectively illustrated than described.

Recently, as I was talking to my brother I addressed him as “friend,” to which he responded;

“Forget the ‘friend’ bit. Let’s leave it at brother.”

Although the statement was made in jest, it does bring into focus the distinction between **involuntary relationships** and **voluntary association**. Of these two, Christian unity belongs in the former. The brotherhood of Christians as fellow children of God can never be denied.

The other incident involved a Catholic Priest who I had some association with, and the local leader of one of their churches. The local leader was complaining that some of the people in his community had begun a Protestant church in the community also. The Priest replied with a question: “Does everyone in the community come to your service?” When the answer was negative, the Priest concluded with, “Then there must be room for another church.”

So we see that today in the Church, there is a greater diversity than ever before, and the barriers between many of these groups are as high as ever. Yet at the same time, part of the diversity is seen in these in-between” groups, some in the name of unity, (Ecumenical Movement) while others are in the name of spirituality (Charismatic Movement), that are bridging these barriers, and incidentally, leaving almost no group untouched. So voluntary association to express the involuntary relationship is a possibility and an obligation today as never before.

UNITY - A PENTECOSTAL PERSPECTIVE

My memories of Christian unity in the Pentecostal Church in which I was brought up were coloured by my exposure to three identifiable groups of people within that first and second generation church. One group of people in that church were there as a result of having been excommunicated by the more recent Protestant protest groups to which they had previously belonged. So for them, the lines of communication with the churches from which they came were already severed, and any attempt to re-establish lines of communication were suspected of being “sheep stealing” attempts. Another segment comprised people who had voluntarily left the mainline churches because they were considered “dead.” Consequently there was no desire to try to maintain relationships. A third segment had come directly from the “world” and so regarded the Pentecostal church as their church. As a result, the emphasis of the Pentecostal Church was on the Lord, ourselves, and the world. The Lord was to be loved, worshipped, and worked for, ourselves were distinct from everyone else, and the world was to be both avoided and won. These goals with regard the world would seem to be mutually exclusive, yet it was amazing how well both were achieved.

Other churches were stereotyped on a continuum. Other Pentecostals were okay, but I was never told satisfactorily why they were “not us.” This question seemed to present a problem. Then came Baptists. They were Christians but there was good reason for ‘them’ not being ‘us’. Methodist and Presbyterian Churches contained Christians, while Lutherans and Catholics were really another form of “the world.” This gives some idea as to what I’d come to feel were the dominant attitudes in the church in which I was brought up.

Today however, there has been change in attitudes towards Pentecostals due in part to the Charismatic Movement. As a result, the first group mentioned above, those who have been ex-communicated from other churches has become very rare in our church. Furthermore, as our denomination has become a second, third and forth generation church, another group has been added which it seems, no denomination to date has been able to avoid satisfactorily. That is, with the children of children’s children, comes the phenomenon known as “nomi-

nalism.” These changes have caused big ripples in our attitudes. With the added interaction of the Charismatic Movement, combined with the reduction of animosity previously mentioned, plus the embarrassing realization that “we too have nominals,” changes in our attitudes to other groups had to occur. And Praise God, they did.

BIBLICAL PRINCIPLES

Realizing the simplicity, shallowness and Biblical deficiency of positions of the past is one thing. Finding alternatives is another matter, especially when we try to apply the principles of unity vis-a-vis separation as seen in the Scriptures to the present reality of the empirical Church. This is especially difficult as the Biblical principles are not and cannot be listed out in any simply delineated formulae that readily apply to all situations.

A. UNITY - NEGATIVE DEFINITION

The theme of unity runs through the entire New Testament like a thread. At the same time the fact that it is emphasized so much and the way in which it is emphasized indicates that it is something that although it is a “given,” at the same time has to be maintained, not simply accepted. For example we recall Paul’s injunction to the Ephesians to “be diligent to preserve the unity of the spirit” (Eph. 4:3).

We can learn a lot about unity from seeing what it is not. First, it isn’t monolithic uniformity. We are brothers, but we don’t all look alike. We are one body, but we aren’t all eyes, etc. Then there are the practical examples of the differences seen between the various New Testament Churches, from Jewish Jerusalem to cosmopolitan Corinth.

Secondly, the unity spoken about in the New Testament is not structural unity. It was instead an organic unity that allowed a great deal of freedom to each of the individual groups involved.

Thirdly, the unity spoken about in the New Testament is not unity between Church groups or associations of Churches, but rather the unity of individuals within a church or between churches, which only by extension applies to unity between churches and church groups. By comparison, if we apply present day standards to the New Testament, we’d probably find the Jerusalem church returning the money sent by the Corinthian church because Jerusalem couldn’t agree with Corinthian

doctrine and so didn't want to be identified with them. But this was not the case.

At the same time, there were differences of opinion, arguments, contentions and divisions in the New Testament Church: The Hellenists in Acts 6, Paul and Barnabas in Acts 15:39, Paul and Peter in Gal. 2:11, Paul and the Judeaizers in Acts 15 and Galatians etc. But these differences were held at a personal "organic" level rather than being at a structural "in-organic" level, and so the oneness of the body was able to be maintained.

B. UNITY - ECUMENICAL PERSPECTIVE

When talking of unity in the modern ecumenical sense, we are usually speaking of Churches, and associations of Churches, not individuals. And often this is thought of in terms of monolithic super-church structural unity. This is not the stated object of the World Council of Churches,¹ although it is interpreted that way by many individual churches. In thinking of unity in an ecumenical sense, there are a number of levels or degrees of involvement that we might consider:

1. Association - Mutual identity with no conditions.
2. Co-operation - Not the same degree of identity and only for a limited time and a limited purpose.
3. Fellowship - See some commonality, but also a lot of differences.
4. Communication - Communication between separate groups between which there is only a very small overlap.
5. Withdrawal - Separation for Biblical reasons.

It is relatively easy to plot the various denomination's and church's relationships to each other on a list like this, but this neither tells us what is ideal or how to improve the situation as we see it. Therefore, we will look at Scripture to try to find ideals. But remember that these ideals will be on an individual level, and we will have to make our own application from there to the corporate situations in which we find ourselves.

C. UNITY AND SEPARATION

As we have already said, in the Bible, unity for Christians was held up as the underlying reality: "All believers are one in Christ." By implication then, this would also be true for groups of Christians, both

in their response to individuals within their own group, or individual Christians from without. But as this was between individuals, it was not formulated and frozen in concrete structures and constitutions. This makes a big difference. Not that the New Testament forbids any such formulation, but just that the flexibility allowed by keeping unity at a less structured level meant that unity could be maintained while at the same time enabling doctrinal integrity to be observed, and discipline to be administered. When these same principles are set in concrete and then applied to churches and association of churches, then denominations, divisions, and dissension can be the only result.

Let's see how this worked out in Scripture, first at Corinth (1 Cor. 5). Prior to Paul's writing to the Corinthians, there were different parties in their midst, but unity was still presumed even though they had in fact had to adjust relationships and even morals in order to maintain it. Paul was concerned however, as morals also had to be upheld. But being on an individual basis, it was possible to take action to restore morals, without blowing that unity apart. Even in such discipline as was administered, ultimate unity was the goal. We see in the statement, "that his spirit may be saved in the day of the Lord Jesus," presumably, along with theirs. Then in the here and now of their situation, once the man had repented he was able to be included into the unit again because his separation had not been written into the constitution (2 Cor. 2:6-8), and so unity was still maintained.

Secondly, in 2 John 10, we see that unity was presumed. Christians coming from other groups are included. However, some of these denied even the very crux of the message of Christ. Therefore, visitors who held such doctrines as these, which logically made them outsiders, were to be treated as outsiders and neither greeted nor looked after, and so the unity was maintained. In this context of doctrinal integrity, two other problems could be mentioned. In the first case, that of preaching another Gospel, (Gal. 1:8) the judgment is left up to God, not His body on earth. Those preaching another Gospel were "anathema," cursed by God. Admitted, this would hardly make them blessed by the church, but the judgment was still God's. In the second case, both Jesus (Matt. 24:24) and Paul (Acts 20:29) warned of wolves who would come in amongst the sheep. These it seems are false teachers. But it is interest-

ing to note that although warning of their presence and actuality, no corrective action other than watchfulness was recommended.

Thirdly, there is the person who is factious (Titus 3:10 incorrectly 'heretic' in A.V.). He/she is to be ignored by the group as his/her own action condemns him/her. They are self condemned. Once again on an individual organic basis, this can be done yet the unity maintained.

Fourthly, there is the question of those who reject apostolic authority (Rom. 16:17). From such people the Romans were to turn away. Again something which can be done on an individual basis while maintaining the basic unity.

Fifthly, in Thessalonica some people were unruly, lazy, and busybodies (2 Thes. 3:6-15). Paul's instruction was that the believers should keep aloof from such people, but at the same time, to admonish them as brothers rather than regard them as enemies. Once again, individual in-group action could be taken and unity was maintained.

Lastly, we note Jesus' instructions for the times when "your brother sins against you" (Matt. 18:15-17). First there is to be personal contact, then if that has not been successful, do the same but with witnesses included, and then if necessary, as a last resort, the matter is to be taken to the church. These three steps must be taken and taken in that order to be able to purport as Christian reconciliation. And only after that is done, can a person be regarded as "a pagan and a tax gatherer."

However, it is at this point that confusion often reigns. From the Jewish perspective a pagan and or a tax gatherer would have been shunned. But in Jesus' own ministry, these groups were a key focus of his attention and love. How much more then for us as Christians. In other words, even a person who completely rejects our Scripturally specified remedial attempts is not to be rejected, but rather loved and won back to the fold.

To balance these perspectives, there is also the Scriptural injunction to "contend for the faith" (Jude 3). But this does not give us any excuse to be contentious. The contending is to be done on an organic, not structural basis which then makes it possible to contend while maintaining behaviour and attitudes fitting of brothers.

APPLICATION

All this sounds fine from a Biblical perspective, and “if only we could obey the Bible” everything would be all right. But in the modern church, with its structural fission, even to say “unity is presumed” is being facetious. And, as the problem we are confronting is structural fission, individual unity alone doesn’t correct the problem. But it does help. Obviously, personal fellowship is going to be the thing on which any greater unity is built, be that people in the pew, or denominational representatives at an ecumenical meeting.

Just recently I came across a “bridge building formula” suggested by a group of African pastors that could be very helpful to us in trying to achieve organic unity. At the same time, it is a useful model for seeing the internal dynamics of getting from here to there. As that, it also gives us a plan of action and a progress chart. It consists of four points:

1. Coming together - beginning (ad hoc).
2. Staying together - progress (implies some structure). Staying together is necessary to break down mistrust and to recognize the Spirit and the gifts of the Spirit in other groups.
3. Thinking together - The basis of unity (Phil. 1:27).
4. Working together - Success in unity.²

This formula also highlights a major weakness in a lot of the bridge building efforts of the past. These have tended to begin at Step 1, coming together for some limited purpose, and having enjoyed that experience, have tried to immediately jump to Step 4 without taking the time and effort of staying and thinking together first. No wonder many of these attempts have been failures.

In the light of this model and the Biblical principles already outlined, let us look again at the five possible levels of interaction mentioned earlier. We could say that the last, withdrawal, as a remedial measure, must be kept open as an option at all other levels. However, withdrawal can never be considered permanent. On the other hand, the first level, association, with no conditions attached whatsoever, would be unscriptural. The Bible must be maintained as a standard. If this is

pre-supposed in an association, then it would be true to say that this would be a worthwhile goal for all Christians and Churches. In practice however, this will not mean doing everything together, or even uniformity in practice or belief. Rather it means that lines of fellowship and communication are kept open, thus making it possible for actual co-operation in the small range of activities which it is not possible for individual churches, denominations, or even churches within individual countries to achieve alone.

CONCLUSION

In summary then, we are back to where we began. Christians are born brothers. We might describe this as the fact that they share a “common life.” But there are differences in emphasis, distinctives, rites and interpretations between the different groups comprising the Christian Church. These we might describe as “their particular light,” their understanding of God’s Word as it applies to them. But the distinctive light of every church needs to be (a) scrutinized by others and (b) shared by others as far as it is true. And it is on this level that today as never before there is opportunity for the born brotherhood of life, over and above the divisions of “light” to be expressed in the fact of also being chosen friends.

NOTES - CHAPTER 7

1. *In the ‘Toronto’ document, entitled The Church, the Churches and the World Council of Churches, published in 1950, we find the following on page 6:*
“The World Council of Churches is not and must never become a Super-Church. It is not a Super-Church. It is not a World Church. It is not the Una Sancta of which the Creeds speak. This mis-understanding arises again and again although it has been denied as clearly as possible in official pronouncements of the Council.”
This official statement has never been rescinded.
2. *This ‘bridge building formula’ was quoted by Waldron Scott, then General Secretary, World Evangelical Fellowship, in a lecture given at Fuller Theological Seminary, School of World Mission, May 11, 1979.*

SECTION THREE:

THE CHRISTIAN MESSAGE IN CROSS CULTURAL CONTEXT

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THE CHRISTIAN MESSAGE IN CROSS CULTURAL CONTEXT

SECTION SUMMARY

This third section, “The Christian Message in Cross- Cultural Context” examines key elements of the Christian Message from a cross-cultural perspective. Chapters 8 and 9 respectively look at the question of cultural form versus primary allegiance in the Old and New Testaments - or try to look on the heart issues, as God does, but with human eyes. Chapter 10 looks at Conversion from a cross-cultural perspective, and includes a case study of my role in bringing Sepik River people to conversion.

CHAPTER 8

YAHWEHISM: MONOTHEISM OR PRIMARY ALLEGIANCE

Before we endeavour to look at the Christian message in cross-cultural context in this section, it would be good if we outlined some presuppositions upon which the discussions of the following chapters will be built. The first of these presuppositions, is that God desires to see all men in fellowship with Himself. In order for this desire to be fulfilled, the message of salvation through Christ must be communicated to all people in order that they might have the opportunity to respond to the Gospel. The second presupposition is that the Gospel demands that people who come into relationship with God through Christ must serve Him only. There can be no other Gods. The third presupposition is that those of us who take the Gospel across cultural boundaries often do not realize the steps, the stages, the process that God takes people through in bringing them into that relationship with Him or His patience in bringing this about. The fourth presupposition is that if cross-cultural Christians could understand these steps and stages, then they would be able to better co-operate with God's purposes on earth. Consequently, in the following chapters, we will be focussing our attention on these steps and stages, with the goal of this latter presupposition in mind.

SEEKING GLORY, HONOUR AND IMMORTALITY

A middle aged Iatmul¹ man was talking: "Just a couple of generations back,² a man from this village was just like you Protestants," he told me. "He was a good man, never got angry, never lied, never stole and was always helping people. And he refused to get involved with

our religious ceremonies.”

In the eight years since I heard that brief account, I have been as mystified about it as was the man who told me. Why would one individual in a head-hunting animistic tribe be a distinctly good man? Not just good by their own normal standards, but good even by their ideal standards, and then even going so far as to refuse to participate in the community religion. And to what extent did he withdraw himself? Obviously not totally or he wouldn't have survived in communal Iatmul society.

While I was thinking about this, Romans 2:6-7 came to light in a new way. This verse hadn't made much sense to me until that time but now I read it with a new excitement. “[God] ...will render to every man according to his deeds: to those who by perseverance in doing good seek for glory and honour and immortality, eternal life” (N.A.S.B.).

Could it be that this Iatmul man, by obeying the dictates of his conscience and persevering in well doing, had been genuinely seeking for the God he knew not of? And then my mind went to Abraham. I had often thought of Abraham (to use his later name) amidst the idolatry of Ur. Why did God choose Abraham? Why did Abraham choose to follow? Does the above story give us any clues? To find out, we will have to return to the Old Testament.

In this chapter we will look briefly at Hebrew history, concentrating on the period from Abraham to the Promised Land to show that monotheism as we know it today or as we see it in the post-exilic period was not always the norm for Israel, but was instead a development. The starting point of, and the dynamic throughout the process was “primary allegiance to Yahweh.” As we progress, we must remember that this is a very relevant discussion for the present day world situation where 3.2 billion people still need to turn to God, many of whom are still immersed in backgrounds similar to that from which Abraham began.

PRE ABRAHAM

Pre Abraham, there are numerous historical events recorded in the Old Testament which show God's dealings with man. First there was the creation of “the earth and the fullness thereof.” This is very impor-

tant, not only because creation provides a place for man to live, but also because it is a witness to the existence and power of God as well as his concern for man.

The other experiences of God talking with Adam, or instructing Noah to build an ark, may have been obliterated from man's memory by the passage of time, and in fact that is just what did happen, to such a degree that by the time in history when Abraham lived, there is archaeological evidence to show that the whole region was fairly well given over to idolatry. It seems that the syndrome of degradation as later described by Paul in Romans 1:18-32 was well under way, if not complete. But even at that time as always, the witness of creation still existed and continued to speak.

WHO DID ABRAHAM HEAR?

Did Abraham know of God prior to his call, as Melchizedek his contemporary did, a knowledge apparently maintained since the flood? Or did God simply interpolate Himself into Abraham's experience? Or was it God responding to Abraham's seeking after him as we have intimated above? It would appear from the reference to patriarchal religious practices in Joshua 24:14-15 that we can discount the first alternative. But which, if either of the other alternatives is correct we cannot know for sure. However, the last alternative would seem to be consistent with God's dealing with man in history. That is, although his election is by grace, human response to Him in faith is still the key that makes that grace effective at a personal level.

But whatever the background, God spoke to Abraham, and as a result, Abraham left home headed for Canaan. But the real dynamics involved are shielded from our gaze at this point by the description used by the person who at some later date wrote this account as, "now the Lord said to Abraham" as if it was a present day experience. Consequently, we, from our present day experience, read all of our experience with a much more complete revelation of God into this first verse of Genesis 12. We fail to notice that Abraham himself didn't know the name of this God. And this state of affairs continued until he was enlightened by Melchizedek (Gen. 14:19). As a result of that later enlightenment, Abraham came to refer to his God as "Lord God Most

High, possessor of heaven and earth” (Gen. 14:22).

As to who Abraham thought this God was at that time, we shall never know for sure till we can ask Abraham himself in person.

ABRAHAM'S GOD SPEAKS

In all probability, Abraham thought of the God who spoke to him as the God of his patriarchal group. The evidence for this is summed up by Wright:

We may observe that the early Hebrew and Amorite proper names portray a close relationship existing between a patriarchal group and its god: The latter was ‘an actual member of the clan and could be addressed by a mortal kinsman as “father, brother” and even as “kindred” All members of the clan were, accordingly, children, brethren, or kinsmen of the god, who was head of the house,’ and who, we might add, was also a party to the clan’s covenants (Wright 1950:13).

However, this does not mean that God was conceived of by Abraham as

a purely localized anthropomorphic nature deity, limited to a tribe, shrine or mountain, pacified by human sacrifice, a crude, capricious little despot whose hate and cruelty are unlimited by any moral consistency of character (Wright 1950:55).

Instead, I would see his concept of God as most probably being similar to the Supreme Being concepts of God as seen in many societies throughout the world. That is, not a limited concept of God which had to evolve or be expanded, but a concept of a Supreme Being which was awaiting explanation and fulfillment. And it is that explanation and fulfillment which provides the context which makes the Old Testament understandable.

ABRAHAM'S RESPONSE

But wasn’t Abraham involved in this? Did all this happen in the third person? Obviously not. How he was involved is of vital importance. That involvement is what I’m calling “primary allegiance.” That is, God, as He was continuing to reveal Himself to Abraham, explaining and fulfilling Abraham’s concept of who God was, made certain demands on Abraham at each of these points. Abraham then had to choose as to whether he would make the God who was revealing Him-

self to him in such demands as He was making, his primary allegiance. This would mean obeying God and rejecting the other choices available to him. And as most of the demands which God made on Abraham were in this area of primary allegiance, we see in the struggle that Abraham had to go through in coming to his decision, the embryo form of what we might call "Power Encounter."⁴

These three factors we will be able to trace down through the Old Testament to see that they are God's way of working with people of any age: i.e. Revelation of Himself, demand of Primary Allegiance, which then precipitates, and is consummated in, Power Encounter. These three factors then, we shall term "the triad of spiritual development."

THE TRIAD OF SPIRITUAL DEVELOPMENT

A. ABRAHAM

Having now isolated this triad of spiritual development, we shall now briefly list several events in Abraham's history that illustrate this.

1. In Genesis 12:1 God reveals Himself to Abraham by saying, "Go forth from your country, relatives and family." I say God was revealing Himself because prior to that time, Abraham had felt that his family links were what provided his connection to his God. And so, like most non-Western non-Christian people in the world today, his primary allegiance would have been directed to his family, feeling that this was an expression of his allegiance to his God. But now this God reveals that the relationship between Abraham and Himself is not only independent of his family relationships, but is being placed in contra-distinction to them. This revelation brings Abraham head on to a decision about Primary Allegiance. And, as you imagine the radical change this then brought to Abraham's whole thinking and eventually, way of life, and the struggle it must have been to decide what to do, we can see that his decision to give primary allegiance to God was indeed a "Power Encounter."
2. At the time of his call, God had promised Abraham "descendants," which he had later focused to be a "particular son." In the mean time, Ishmael had been born, followed eventually by the birth of Isaac. But then there was trouble at home until finally in Genesis

21:11-12 God made it clear that the descendants He was speaking of were to come from the particular son, Isaac, and that Ishmael was to be sent away. Now to any of us, sending our own son away would be hard enough, especially knowing the only place to send him was the wilderness, but to a man of Abraham's time and cultural background, a person's family was his prestige and security. Security both for the here and now of defence against raiding parties and for the future of old age in a harsh environment. So the demands of primary allegiance meant Abraham had to choose between his own visible means of prestige and security, his own family, as against the prestige and security of an unseen God which would leave him with just the son God chose. The power encounter was again clinched by sending Ishmael away.

3. In the departure from Ur, we saw that God was beginning to challenge the normal primary allegiance to family which Abraham would have had. Then he challenged the primary allegiance to the prestige and security that family provided. But in Genesis 22 we see God requiring Abraham to place God Himself as his primary allegiance rather than having as his primary allegiance any promise which God had made. In the power encounter on Mt. Moriah Abraham again showed that his primary allegiance was to the God who made the promise rather than to the fulfillment of that promise.

B. PATRIARCHS

Having seen this triad illustrated in three examples from the life of Abraham, we now turn to the lives of the patriarchs to see that this is God's continuing formula for spiritual development.

1. Jacob had become successful and secure in Paddan-Aram. Whatever he did prospered. But God demands primary allegiance to Himself so in Genesis 31:13 He told Jacob to leave the land of security and as a sign of his primary allegiance to God, to return to the land of God's promise where his brother Esau, his enemy lived. The result was that Jacob obeyed. God was his primary allegiance.
2. Upon arriving back in Canaan, and receiving a fuller revelation of God, Jacob found that there were other things that had a bearing on his primary allegiance. This time it was the gods they had accumulated in Paddan-Aram. So these were done away with in what

would have been a most dramatic power encounter in the classical sense of the term. Would they be harmed by the destruction of these gods? But they decided to take any risks necessary to demonstrate their primary allegiance to God.

3. We move on to the life of Joseph. Joseph was familiar with the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. He knew what primary allegiance to God meant as far as behaviour is concerned. So when tempted by Potiphar's wife, his primary allegiance to God meant that he refused to yield, not because he feared for his good position or even his life, but rather because he could not and would not sin against God (Genesis 39:7).

4. From the life of Moses we'll isolate just one incident. God had revealed Himself to Moses as the great "I Am," "I Am that I Am" the Self Existent One. Following on from that revelation, God demanded that Moses demonstrate his primary allegiance to Him by returning to the hostility of Egypt from the tranquility and safety of the desert, to free Israel even though this meant coming into direct confrontation with Pharaoh and the gods of the Egyptians. Although he could see the difficulty involved in this, his primary allegiance to the great I Am meant that the consummation of this power encounter was Moses willingness to go back to Egypt, the result of which was the Exodus.

EXODUS

But what of the Exodus? Surely this must have ushered in monotheism as we know it? Rather than saying that the Exodus ushered in monotheism, I would see it as a continuation of the revelation, challenge and power encounter process that we have already traced. In Egypt, God revealed Himself to Israel in a new way. And again the response that was required was primary allegiance, while the events of the Exodus provided many opportunities for power encounter situations in which they could show that allegiance. It is a fact that at numerous points they even failed in the test of primary allegiance to which God put them, even as did the Patriarchs. But it is not the human failure factor we are addressing here, but rather the progressive demands made by God.

IN THE WILDERNESS

At Sinai we see this increased revelation and increased demands most clearly. God states in concrete terms what He has been showing in pictures all along. "You shall have no other gods **before** me." Here we see the concept of primary allegiance in its most crystallized form. The popular thinking on this subject is also evident in the song which Moses and the Sons of Israel sang upon crossing the Red Sea: "Who is like Thee among the gods, O Lord? Who is like thee?" (Exodus 15:11) That is, other gods were considered to be real, but Yahweh was supreme. What we are seeing in effect then is a transformation from within. Not an evolution from animism to polytheism to henotheism to monotheism, but instead a growing, developing relationship between a people and the God who chose to reveal Himself to them and enter into covenant relationship with them through these stages.

Just prior to entering the land of Canaan, Moses gathered the people of Israel together and recounted their experiences of the Exodus period, and then gave very specific and detailed instructions about their future life in the promised land. These instructions are contained in the book of Deuteronomy, and among these instructions we find some of the most revealing statements in the whole Old Testament concerning this matter of Israel's relationship to Yahweh.

Deut. 6:14 You shall not follow other gods, any of the gods of the peoples who surround you.

Deut. 12:30 Beware that you do not inquire after their gods.

Deut. 13:2 Other gods (whom you have not known).

Deut. 29:18 Who's heart turns away today from the Lord our God to go and serve the gods of those nations.

Deut. 29:26 And served other gods and worshipped them, gods whom they have not known.

Deut. 32:17 They sacrificed to demons who were not gods, the gods whom they have not known.

Until now we've been making the point for the submission of all other allegiances whether on a supernatural or natural level to the one primary allegiance to Yahweh, and this view continues to be supported throughout the book of Deuteronomy. But as can be seen by the above passages, God absolutely condemns any association at all with gods

who their fathers had not known, the gods of the people of Canaan. Without considering these particular verses cited above, we have tended to interpret “strange gods” as any gods except Yahweh. However, we know from Joshua 24:14-15 and other verses that the Hebrew’s fathers had worshipped other gods. So when considered in the light of the above verses, strange gods, especially at this end of the history of the Hebrews takes on a different meaning. We observe that the existing allegiances of the Hebrews were made subservient to allegiance to God. Then as long as that primary allegiance to Yahweh was maintained after the power encounter which sealed the relationship, the only specific law that needed to be made was that they shouldn’t attach themselves to any “unsubmitted gods,” that is, gods they hadn’t known. As far as their previous supernatural allegiances were concerned, these would be put in their right place by giving Yahweh primary allegiance.

CONTINUITY OBSERVED

As we are seeking to find principles that show us what is involved in the process of people turning to God, it will be worthwhile for us to balance what we have observed so far by tracing the continuity with the cultural past that can be seen in the period under discussion.

1. Very obviously, to Abraham there was a continuing association in his mind between oak trees as places of communion with deity and places of divine protection. Whether this came from the animistic association of spirits and huge trees or from the polytheistic association of a sacred grove as the abode of a deity is uncertain. But of the reality of this to Abraham there can be no doubt. On first arriving in Canaan, he set up camp under an oak tree (Gen. 12:6-8). Later at Mamre in Hebron he set up camp and an altar under an oak tree where he stayed for a long time, during which time he had God reveal Himself to him on a number of occasions (Gen. 13:18; 14:13; 18:1). His planting of the tamarisk tree in conjunction with calling on the Name of the Lord to seal his covenant with King Abimelech also fits into the same category (Gen. 21:33).
2. In the life of Jacob, a similar thing can be seen. When he wanted to be done with the gods whom they had accumulated in Paddan-Aram, he buried them under the oak tree at Shechem (Gen. 35:4).

Here again we see the continuity of thinking between trees/groves and the supernatural. But this time, the meanings were very different. These gods were dealt with in a power encounter situation which, although carried out under an oak tree normally should have killed them, but they buried them in that sacred place believing that Yahweh would protect them from the revenge of these gods as well as protecting them in the future, making the keeping of these gods not only against their primary allegiance, but also redundant.

3. Also in Joshua 24:14-15, we see Joshua, while calling the people to serve God alone after his decease, referring back to the gods who had been served by the Hebrews both in Haran and in Egypt.

So again we come to the point: At least up to the time of the Exodus, primary allegiance to Yahweh there had been, but not monotheism. Then again in the later period we can observe the cultural continuity with the past that carried on through the Exodus experience. To do this we will focus on particular aspects of two of the Hebrew feasts.

The first of these is within the Passover itself. There are numerous clues within the prescribed ceremony itself that indicate that this was the continuation of something that had already existed in their traditional rituals. This can be seen from the prohibition placed on (a) eating the flesh raw (Exodus 12:8), and (b) breaking any bones (Exodus 12:46). If this was a feast being instituted without precedent, then these prohibitions seem to have no point in the rest of the ritual. But in many Semitic cultures, it was common for a sacrificial animal to be eaten raw and for the bones to be broken so the marrow could also be eaten. This was because the life of the animal was thought to reside in the blood and the marrow and so by eating these parts of the sacrificial animal, the people could partake of the life of the deity himself, in whose name the animal was being eaten. Also the fact of this feast being at night at the time of the full moon and also the command to burn any of the meat that was left until morning, i.e. until after the moon had set, gives a hint that traditionally this had been a feast in honour of the moon god.⁵ In other words, in the Passover we find a continuation of a traditional festival having been suitably transformed to convey the fresh meanings of their primary allegiance.

The second of these continuities can be observed in the scape-goat ritual on the Day of Atonement. We find that Azazel to whom the scape-goat was to be presented had originally been a wilderness god - Azazel - who in course of time had been degraded to the position of demon of the wastes, possibly as part of the process of already changing primary allegiance to Yahweh. So again we see continuity yet a transformation. Continuity of form, but transformation of meaning by being made subject to their primary allegiance to Yahweh.

CONCLUSIONS

From further study of the Old Testament, there are very many conclusions we could draw that apply to our subject. One such which it will be important for us to state at least, is the fact that as the history of Israel proceeds on through the Monarchy and on to the Post-Exilic era, a type of monotheism which we would feel far more comfortable with is what we find. And presuming our assumptions about revelation, challenge to primary allegiance and power encounter are true, that is what we would expect to find.

Then from the material we have covered, we can also draw several conclusions that have real import in the present tense reality of the thousands of people who are turning to God from similar backgrounds every year, not to mention the billions who presently need to, but maybe aren't given a real option because we, the messengers of the Good News are not prepared to begin at the same starting place which God chose for Abraham and all the other characters whose experience with God we have recounted briefly: That is, the starting place of "where they are." So summarizing this we could say that:

1. God is prepared to begin His relationship with people wherever they are, on the assumption that primary allegiance is to be afforded Him according to the revelation afforded them. However, in our missionary zeal, we must be aware that "revelation, here (in the case of Israel) as always, was organic to the life of the people, and its shape was hammered out of tragic experience." (Bright 1953:19) And we must never forget that it is the Holy Spirit who is the Revealer of Truth to the hearts of those who are turning and have turned to God. We proclaim the truth, but we must be prepared to allow the Holy Spirit's timetable to be followed.

2. Putting God first does not, indeed should not eliminate all other allegiances. Within the Decalogue itself we see allegiances to parents as well as allegiances of varying degrees to other people around and about. As with most non-Western non-Christian people, primary allegiance for the Hebrews without God was focussed on their own people group, that is, family, tribe and nation, with their allegiance to the supernatural being only to enhance and help the object of that primary allegiance. But even today many times this is not noticed with the end result that on becoming Christian, people give God the place previously filled by their own supernatural beings, that is, secondary allegiance, while the primary allegiance to group or to self is left unchallenged.
3. Finally, we must be aware that there are some allegiances which as long as they exist will compete for the primary allegiance due only to God. And it is these allegiances that will have to be met head on in Power Encounter. For example, when primary allegiance is afforded to God, other allegiances in the area of the supernatural would very likely be a problem. However, the final human word as to which allegiances fall into this problem category can only be determined by insiders of that culture who are being sensitive to the leading of the Holy Spirit. Concerned, informed outsiders can raise intelligent questions about things that may appear to them to be in the area of conflicting allegiance, but as allegiance is a thing of the heart, not even sound argument, much less coercion or force can bring about change in allegiance.

Allegiance to God can only be decided by the individual, in his context, enlightened by God's Word, directed by the Holy Spirit, determining on a continual basis that; "as for me and my house, **WE WILL SERVE THE LORD!!!.**"

NOTES - CHAPTER 8

1. *Iatmul is a Sepik River Tribe in Papua New Guinea. This man was from Korogo village. For more on their way of life, see Bateson, G. (1958).*
2. *The particular context used indicated that this was still in "living memory time." Probably about one generation before European contact. This makes the account more accurate and more applicable to our purposes than if "ancestral time" frame of reference, the mythological period had been described. For more on the significance of these time frames, see Chapter 11.*
3. *I am indebted to Dr. C.H. Kraft for this term.*
4. *Re "Power Encounter," I am aware that this is not the normal sense in which this is used. But in the Melanesian context from which it comes in Dr. A.R. Tippett's writings (e.g. 1967 & 1971) it is the demonstration of Primary Allegiance as is relevant to their situation. So I am here using it to denote demonstration of Primary Allegiance in other situations, whatever that demonstration may be. I feel this is justifiable as the three essentials of a "Power Encounter" in the more usual sense are:*
 - (a) *It is a demonstration of Primary Allegiance at the level where that allegiance is challenged.*
 - (b) *It must be implemented by the guardian of the object of conflicting allegiance, be it another deity or a human will.*
 - (c) *It must be demonstrated on its own terms.*
5. *Information on these practices from Oesterly (1937) and Oesterly and Robinson (1966).*

FURTHER READING

Kraft (1979)

CHAPTER 9

CHRISTIANITY: CULTURAL FORM OR PRIMARY ALLEGIANCE

A COMMON PROBLEM

Christianity, today as always faces problems on every side. In fact, it seems that problems are God's means of keeping spiritual adrenalin at a high percentage in the veins of the church. As has been proven over and over again, from the days of the apostles to the present, it is in the face of problems that the real unique dynamic that possesses the church can show itself most clearly.

Even today, the church is encountering people, millions of people, billions of people who have yet to be given the opportunity to come into living relationship with God through Christ.

At the same time, there are millions in Third World churches who have come into living relationship with God, but since then have been accused by their fellow countrymen of betraying their cultural heritage in the process.

Meanwhile throughout the world, including the West, people who have been brought up in the church are groping for, yet often failing to find the meaning in Christianity that their parents had known. Does this mean that Christianity has lost its meaning?

In this chapter, I will be contending that each of the three examples given above highlight the same major question that is facing Christianity: That is, does Christianity comprise cultural form or primary allegiance? To answer this, we will look at various New Testament case studies to see what answers the New Testament Christians would have given. Then from these case studies we will indicate a solution to the present day problem.

Do the three examples above crystallize into one problem? Obviously my answer is "Yes," but how do I arrive at that conclusion?

1. When we think of the billions yet to be given the opportunity of turning to God, it is true in many cases that they have heard of Christianity. It is also true that many of them have heard of it as an evangelizing religion. But from that point on many of them have been able to “hear” no more, but not because they have rejected the message, as many of them have never heard anything of the Gospel message. Instead, what they have heard is that to become a Christian means becoming like some other cultural grouping which in turn means being a traitor to their own people. So to make it possible for these people to “hear” the Gospel, we must settle this key issue: Is Christianity cultural forms or primary allegiance?
2. In the case of many third world Christians, they have been brought into a relationship with God by Christians and churches who have their roots in a very different culture from their own. As a result, these people have accepted many of the cultural forms of the people who first brought them the Gospel as an essential part of Christianity itself. Then when these people are accused of being traitors to their own cultures, they are faced with the problem of deciding what Christianity really is: Cultural form or primary allegiance?
3. In the case of people who have been brought up in the church, the problem is the same. The forms of Christianity in the churches where they were brought up were developed by previous generations of Christians as meaningful ways of expressing their primary allegiance to God, and as such were very effective. But when their Christianity was passed on to succeeding generations, these same forms were the vehicle used. So by the second generation often the meaning behind the forms has begun to fade, until by third and fourth generations, Christianity has become an empty shell. So again, to help these later generations find the true meaning of Christianity, the question begging for an answer is: is Christianity just cultural forms or is it really primary allegiance to God.

JESUS' MINISTRY

We will begin our case studies with Jesus. In His ministry we see that cultural forms were not a means to salvation and eternal life. Instead it was allegiance to God that resulted in these blessings. What did

Jesus require of those whom He counselled personally? These are so well known that we will only review them briefly.

1. Nicodemus would have expected requirements that we could define as cultural forms as the way to eternal life: fast more, pray more, tithe more, learn more, and above all else, “everything decently and in order, please.” But being “born again?” Or to paraphrase his response in the words of the songwriter; “If I ask my mother to make me my brother and hatch me again, she’ll be quiz-zical!!”¹ This in fact was a challenge to the things he was used to doing which we listed above. And it was to these forms that his allegiance had been. But it was allegiance to God expressed in a living relationship which Jesus pointed to, not to cultural forms.
2. “Go call your husband” was not a cultural form. It was a challenge to allegiance as far as the Samaritan woman was concerned. Cultural forms would have required “this mountain or that mountain” sort of questions, with “don’t return to that man who isn’t your husband” sort of instructions. But instead, Jesus was demanding allegiance to the “I am He.”
3. The Rich Young Ruler had also been fulfilling cultural forms; keeping the commandments. And even Jesus didn’t dispute that. But instead He spoke directly to this young man’s allegiance. If cultural forms could have given him eternal life, he would have gone away joyful, but as it was allegiance that was required, he went away sorrowful.

THE JEWISH CHURCH

In the Jewish church we see the opposite side of the same coin which we have seen in Jesus’ ministry, i.e. cultural forms can’t bring salvation. But in the Jewish church we see that allegiance to God doesn’t mean breaking with cultural forms per se either. Rather, these forms must be made vehicles for expressing that new allegiance.

But what do we find in the early church? With all the spiritual fire they exhibited, surely they had converted to “Christianity” as we would understand it? But you see, at Pentecost there was no Christianity to convert to. Instead, in those early years of Christianity, it was a pledging of primary allegiance to the God in Whom they already believed,

but now realizing that this was actually made possible through Jesus, the long awaited Messiah. This then can be seen in two things:

(A) THE WORSHIP OF THE JEWISH CHRISTIANS

To be sure, there was a new dynamic brought about by the new reality of their allegiance to God along with the fact of a now indwelling instead of accompanying Holy Spirit. And this dynamic expressed itself in many “care and share” cells, but their worship still focussed on the temple and the sacrificial system. This to us would seem to be a repudiation of the efficacy of the death and resurrection of Christ, but in reality, it seems likely that this continued to be a part of Jewish Christianity until the destruction of the temple in A.D. 70.

(B) PREACHING TO THE JEWS

In the sermons addressed to the Jews in the book of Acts, as well as in the book of Hebrews, Jesus is seen as the fulfillment of the Jewish hope; not a denial of it. Admittedly, there was re-interpretation at points, but still a re-interpretation of **their** hope. The opposition that came prior to Paul’s taking the Gospel to the Gentiles came primarily as a result of two different interpretations of the one hope, with both of the groups being thoroughly Jewish. The conversion of the Jews was not a matter of accepting new cultural forms, but rather a change of allegiance.

GREEK NEW TESTAMENT FORMS

This same line of thinking is also seen in the forms used in the writing of the New Testament. The New Testament writers were primarily Jewish, thinking in Aramaic and Hebrew thought forms, but expressing themselves in Greek, due in measure to the greater ease of writing in that language, and in the case of Paul, due to who his target audience was. But in expressing their thoughts in Greek, surely they would have to be very careful to avoid the use of heathen forms. Christian forms would need to be used exclusively for the project or it couldn’t possibly be successful. But not so! We will only examine two of the many examples that exist:

1. In their selection of a form to convey the Christian meaning of “God,” it was the pagan Greek word “Theos” that was used. In Greek mythology, Theos had been thought of as head of the poly-

theistic pantheon. But in real life, more attention was focussed on the lesser gods. This pagan form, even on a subject as crucial as the Name of God was taken and used. But to make sure it carried the Christian meanings, qualifiers were used to help show who was really meant, and by that process, eventually change the meaning of the word “Theos” in the Greek language. Probably one of the clearest example of how this was done can be seen in Ephesians 1:3: “Blessed be ‘Theos’, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ.” So we see again that even on crucially important issues like this one, the cultural form was not the focus, but rather the meaning and the allegiances were the issue in point.

2. In their selection of a word for God’s love, a similar thing was done. The word chosen, “agape” was originally the most insignificant word of the three forms that were available. But by using that rather insignificant cultural form and using it continually in a context of God’s love, along with the definitions of that love as are in the scriptures, “agape” came to be regarded as the highest expression of love possible. Meaning and allegiances became the focus, not the form.

ALLEGIANCES

Before pursuing this case study any further, we must pause to refresh our memory on the terms we are using, especially as to what is meant by “primary allegiance.” The whole matter of allegiances is best described in the words of Jesus in Matthew 22:37-39 (T.E.V.) “Love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your mind. This is the greatest and most important commandment. The second most important commandment is like it: Love your neighbour as you love yourself.” What we see here is that our allegiance to God is to be an allegiance of love involving all of heart, all of soul and all of mind. By definition then, this is the primary allegiance. If this allegiance is genuinely held to, then in its own terms it must be primary and can allow no conflicting allegiances. However, it does not preclude all other allegiances. Other allegiances that do not conflict with this are allowable, and what is more, in this same statement two others are actually required. Acceptance of this primary allegiance includes

acceptance of the secondary allegiances. They cannot be separated.

That these can also be termed allegiances is obvious from the statement; “The second most important commandment is like it.” So as a secondary allegiance, a Christian is required to put love allegiance to others and love allegiance to self together in equal position. The relationship of this secondary allegiance to ethics is shown by Paul in Romans 13:10 (T.E.V.) “If you love someone, you will never do him wrong: to love, then, is to obey the whole law.” Hence, due to the scope and inseparability of the two allegiances, we are back to our starting point. Christianity comprises primary allegiance: not cultural forms.

MINISTRY TO GREEKS

It is one thing to talk about allegiances rather than forms when reviewing Christianity in a Jewish context. After all, the Old Testament was the heritage of the Jews, and the promises of the Old Testament are fulfilled in Christ. But what about when the Gospel steps outside into an atmosphere heavy with the smell of paganism? Surely there'll be some difference here? What's more, Christianity had been around for a while by this time and so had its sacred forms worked out, which would be a great safeguard against the rampant heathenism which could so easily engulf it if the boundaries were not clearly marked off by Christian forms. However, once again, a careful reading of the New Testament leaves us in the cold without a blanket, if forms is what we are looking for. Instead it is primary allegiance that is being talked about.

A. PREACHING (Acts 14 and 17)

Let us look first of all at Paul's preaching to Greeks in their own context in the book of Acts. That is, at Lystra and Athens. First of all, Lystra. Here we find Paul speaking exclusively to the level of the first allegiance we have mentioned. Now admittedly, the message recorded for us here was not given in the composed setting of Sunday 11 a.m., consequently, it is possible that the circumstances limited the things he could have said. But in this crisis situation, he did nevertheless speak about primary allegiance, not cultural forms. Or at least that is how I interpret “We ... preach the Gospel to you in order that you should turn

from these vain things (offerings to other gods) to a living God ... ”as Paul put it (14:15).

Secondly, Athens: Here too, we can't say much more than where Paul began, as his message was concluded rather than having a conclusion. But in that beginning, again it is primary allegiance that is spoken about. In Acts 17:13 Paul does say that God commands all men to repent, but here we must ask what they must repent from in the context given. Surely, as it is only primary allegiance spoken of till this time, it is wrong allegiance, not wrong behaviour per se that is being spoken of. Or if behaviour did come to the minds of the hearers, it would have been behaviour about which their consciences were already convicting them, as Paul had brought no other new light to bear on behaviour.

B. EATING MEAT (e.g. Romans 14)

To gain more insight into our question of cultural forms and allegiances, let us look specifically at several of the passages about cultural forms. First there is the question about eating meat. If a cultural form was the requirement in this case, surely Paul would have said straight out that it was either right or wrong. But instead, he said in effect: “Some people feel that eating meat conflicts with their primary allegiance. But to others this is not the case. But in the latter case, to eat meat in such a way as to offend a person in the former category is actually a failure at the level of the secondary allegiance, which is after all a part of the primary allegiance.” Hence, in this case, either person could be wrong to eat meat, not because of the cultural form of eating meat, but because of the allegiances involved.

C. IDOLS

But what about the question of idols? Paul said that the Thessalonians had turned from idols to the True and Living God, (1 Thes. 1:9) and also told the Romans to “keep away from the worship of idols.” (1 Cor. 10:14) So at last we have a cultural form being judged in its own right. Or do we? I don't believe so. Instead, this is interpreted in verses 19 and 20. That is, the idols themselves, the cultural form are really nothing, but they represent demons and demons represent an allegiance that is in outright conflict to primary allegiance to God. So once again it is primary allegiance, not cultural form that is being discussed.

D. MEAT OFFERED TO IDOLS

In 1 Corinthians 8, there is a passage that I found very difficult to relate to until I came to see it as a question of allegiances. In verse 10, we have a picture that is the logical outcome of the first part of the chapter. In discussing the question of whether a Christian can eat meat offered to idols, Paul makes the point very strongly that the idol really is nothing. So the Christian who knows this could eat meat offered to idols without any problem to his primary allegiance. Consequently, in verse 10 we see a Christian actually eating meat that has been offered to idols right in the temple cafeteria without a problem, as this does not conflict with his primary allegiance. To him it is simply food, as the idol is simply nothing. But not every Christian has this knowledge experientially, so, Paul says, he shouldn't do that on account of his secondary allegiance: Love for his brother or sister. So once again the question isn't cultural forms but allegiance.

Before we leave this point however, it is necessary that we refer to this same point as it was addressed in the edict from the Jerusalem Council in which eating meat offered to idols was mentioned, along with the related topic of "things strangled and blood" as food. Regarding this requirement, note that the things included in that letter were included because "the law of Moses has been read for a very long time in the Synagogues every Sabbath, and its words are preached in every town" (Acts 15:21 T.E.V.). It then appears that these were sacred forms that were being spoken about. What did Paul do about that? He was after all a delegate and special envoy to the Jerusalem Council. When Paul moved further afield from the pale of existing Judaism, he didn't make an issue of the things he considered to be in the category of Jewish cultural forms. Apparently he only emphasized these when near the Jews so he wouldn't cause his Jewish brethren to stumble, but not when he was away from Jews. This is obvious from the Corinthian correspondence. If he had emphasized these Jewish cultural forms, then the Corinthian question which Paul replied to in 1 Corinthians 8 would probably never have been asked. Or if it had been asked, then 1 Corinthians 8 would have taken the form of a reminder of that edict from the Jerusalem Council rather than the form in which it was written. But to Paul, the matter of primary allegiance was too important to

even be overruled by a Jerusalem Council edict.

CONCLUSION

To pursue our theme to a satisfactory conclusion would require a detailed examination of the whole New Testament from this perspective, but unfortunately this is not possible in this chapter. However, the point has been sufficiently made to enable us to read the New Testament ourselves, examining it from this perspective to assure ourselves that it is a truly Christian perspective which will be signally helpful to all of us as we address ourselves to the common question to which the Church must address itself.

Does this mean then that there will be no distinction between the Christian and the world? Is to be in the world and of the world synonymous? God forbid! And has forbidden! Rather, as the primary allegiance is changed, this change in allegiance will actually be dysfunctional and incongruous to the rest of culture at many points. So as a result of that change in allegiance, many changes in culture will result. Then as growth in grace and the work of the Holy Spirit brings about new evaluation of every aspect of culture in the light of the new allegiance, and as every aspect of culture including cultural forms, attitudes, assumptions and values, is consciously submitted to that primary allegiance to God in Christ, further changes will result.

The result of all of this will often be the exact external changes that Missionaries and Pastors and older generation Christians wanted to see take place originally. Well does that mean that "I told you so" wins another battle? If externals are the object, then that could be true. But if there is a difference between faith allegiance to God in Christ and fear allegiance to changes in cultural form, then I think we will all agree that the former is indeed our goal. And that there is a difference is clear from both the New and Old Testament.

NOTES - CHAPTER 9

1. *Part of the words of a song sung by the Australian group, "Family."*

FURTHER READING

Kraft (1979)

CHAPTER 10

MY ROLE IN THE CONVERSION OF PEOPLE OF ANOTHER CULTURAL CONTEXT

In this Chapter, we'll first take a closer look at Conversion in its cross-cultural dimension, and then focus on my role as a cross-cultural witness in the conversion of peoples in a cultural context other than my own, this time, the peoples of the Sepik River of Papua New Guinea. As a Christian missionary, the conversion of the people to whom and amongst who I minister, must be and is my goal. And as profitable as it may seem to be to endeavour to understand my role in the fulfillment of that goal, gaining this understanding is not necessarily easy. First of all, I must understand two basic elements:

- (1) Conversion, and
- (2) The cultural context in which
this conversion will take place.

Then the understanding of my role in this comes out of an understanding of the dynamics of the interplay and outworking of these two, along with my own personality, perspectives and goals.

Anthropologically, conversion could be termed "culture change" in which case my ministry could be termed that of "an agent of directed culture change." The culture being changed we have noted, (i.e. the Sepiks) The direction in which we intend this change to go, has also been stated, (i.e. Conversion to Christ) while the agent in this case is myself.

CONVERSION

Conversion is a well used word in Evangelical Christian circles. However, its very familiarity compounds our problem in the context of trying to understand it, as, (a) it is used far more often than it is understood, and (b) The word “conversion” has developed such sacred “aura” around itself that our tendency has been to protect it, rather than analyze it objectively.

The view of conversion which I held prior to beginning any of this enquiry was one which I had imbibed from both personal experience and from interaction in a Christian community of one sort or another since birth. From that background, I, and I feel many others, when asked to give a definition of conversion would have had to reply with another equally un-understood expression like “born again.” Normally these terms would have brought to mind a picture of getting “convicted” while listening to preaching sometime, and at that time, or soon afterwards, going forward in a meeting to publicly confess Christ as Saviour, and once that was done, the saints in the Church would then simulate angelic joy over the sinner who had repented.

Looking back at this view, from the pragmatic perspective of its effectiveness within my own culture, I see that this was effective in that it resulted in myself, and many others becoming a genuine part of God’s family. But our understanding of what took place was sadly lacking. This lack of understanding is hardly satisfactory in our own culture, but then to export this same fuzziness to another cultural context only compounds the problem in trying to bring people of that culture to “conversion.”

In trying to understand what conversion is really all about so that I can understand what my role is in trying to bring this phenomenon about in another cultural context, I have been greatly helped by the work of five men in particular, each of them opening up a particularly helpful, yet otherwise lacking dimension of my understanding of conversion.

William Barclay’s discussion of the Biblical data on the terms translated “convert,” “conversion,” etc. is the first of these I would like to discuss. After examining Old and New Testaments, Barclay concludes,

So, then, the basic fact with which we begin is that conversion is a

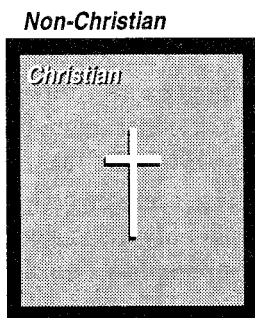
turning of a man's mind and heart and life in the direction of God (1964:25).

This then sets the direction and boundaries of any investigation into the subject. But notice that it does not give us a cut and dried supra-cultural pattern of what conversion "looks like" which then has to be strictly adhered to. Rather, what Barclay speaks of here is content and meaning rather than form and shape.

The second of these works I have found so helpful is Hiebert's discussion of "bounded and centered sets as cognitive categories." Hiebert points out that in the English language, as in Greek, most of the nouns are grouped in what I'd call "go / no go" categories. Either something is an apple or it isn't. We'd have infinite difficulty in calculating the average of 5 apples and 3 oranges, unless of course we were to talk of another distinct category, "fruit salad." This requirement for distinct categories is what Hiebert calls a **bounded set**. These sets are static, and the important thing is the boundary.

In contrast then, Hiebert points out that in many other languages (e.g. Hebrew) their world is arranged by defining a centre and describing the relationship of things to that centre. This is then known as a **centred set**. These sets are dynamic, with the relationship between the centre and the object, both in proximity and direction of movement of the object as the important thing (Hiebert:1978a).

BONDED SET



CENTRED SET

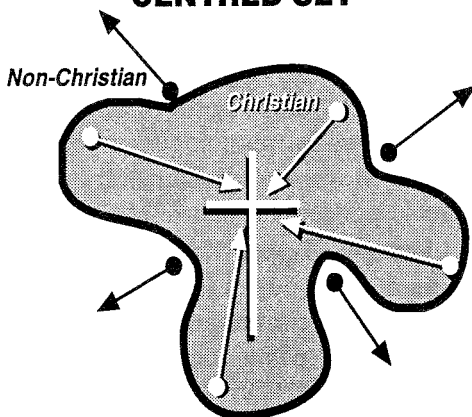


Diagram 1: Bounded and Centered Sets (Adapted from Hiebert 1978a)

Understanding these cognitive categories has helped me to understand why we in the West have emphasized the **point** of conversion far more than the **process** of conversion, and also why any discussion of "conversion" in a way which questions any of our norms, is met with horror from Western Christian leaders in general. With a bounded set worldview, to discuss conversion seems to be bringing the boundary, the all important point of our theology up for discussion, and we feel threatened.

On the other hand, the important point of focus when discussing conversion in a centred set world is Jesus, the Centre, and our relationship to Him, both in how close to Him we are, and whether we are moving towards Him or away from Him. This concept then has helped me to understand conversion, both in my own, and in other peoples contexts.

Thirdly, J.O. Fraser's concepts of reaching the minimum autonomous social unit for the Lord as a unit, is of crucial importance. In Fraser's ministry among the Lisu people of Southern China, this had meant winning whole families to the Lord as units.

He had come to see that what was needed was the liberation of whole families from bondage to demon worship. The clan system was so strong that unless the elders approved, the family spirit-altar and sacrifices would not be effectively done away with. So it was for the turning to Christ of whole households - men, women, and children - that he prayed with increasing longing (Taylor 1964:129).

This then increased my understanding and faith vision to see the potential of applying the same principle in the winning of Sepik clans and villages for the Lord. Of more recent times, this process has come to be known by missiologists as the winning of Homogeneous Units in People Movements to Christ, by means of multi-individual mutually inter-dependent decisions (McGavran 1970, Tippet 1967, 1977a).

Fourthly, Tippet's work on the stages in the process of conversion as seen in this model (see diagram 2) emphasizes not only the various stages in the conversion process, but places special emphasis on the crucial intermediate steps, using Van Gennepp's Rites of Passage analogy (Tippet 1977).

This has helped me to conceptualize where people are at in the proc-

ess of conversion, as well as enabling me to see what will be involved for them to move from one stage to another. Consequently, I’ve been able to suit my ministry to the particular stage which the group I’m ministering to is at far better.

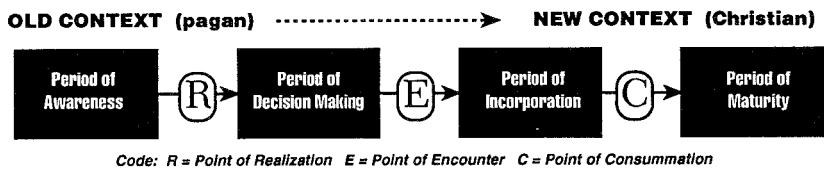


Diagram 2. Conversion as a Dynamic Process
(Adapted from Tippet 1977)

Tippet’s concept of Power Encounter is one that has been theoretically interesting and has helped me to understand what I’ve already been seeing in the conversion process of the Sepik River Peoples. But in practice it is being able to suit my ministry to the stage that the people are at that has been the most important. A Power Encounter has been the natural outcome of that correctly geared ministry rather than something I’ve had to consciously work towards.

Fifthly, Kraft’s re-application of Tippet’s model has been particularly helpful. Kraft places emphasis on the process factors of conversion. While recognizing the key stages and transitions of Tippet’s model, Kraft goes beyond this to highlight the multitudinous decisions that are involved in each stage of the process. Kraft sees that process as beginning long before our spiritual entry into the Kingdom of God, and as only being complete after our physical entry into that Kingdom.

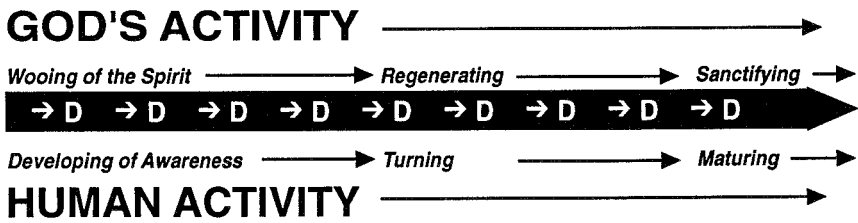


Diagram 3: God’s and Man’s Activity in the Conversion Process

Kraft's model which describes the process of each individual decision within the total framework is also helpful to see what is involved in working conversion out into life. The stimulus, the beginning of that decision making process, may be whatever means the Holy Spirit chooses to use to endeavour to move us God-ward, and from there, it is our response to that stimulus which determines the direction in which we actually progress. My additions to this model help us to see how repeatedly making the same decision leads to the formation of habits, which is the mode in which we live most of our lives (Kraft:1979).

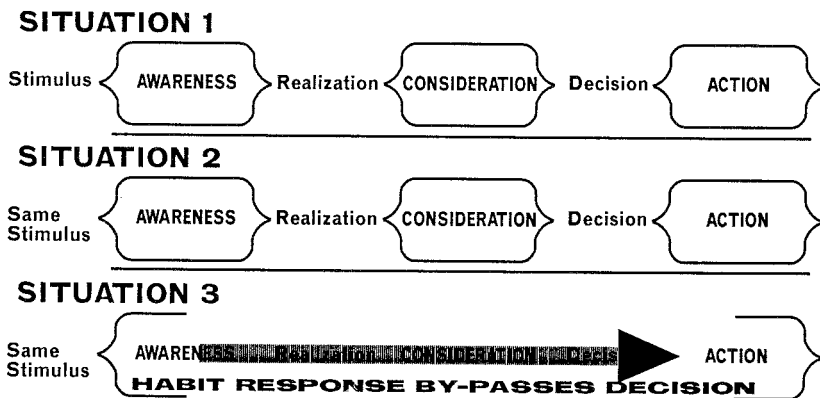


Diagram 4. Model of a Decision Making Process

This then helps me to understand more clearly the battle we are continually involved in, thus emphasizing that a person's **ongoing** Christian life, or in Kraft's frame of reference, the continuation of the conversion process, is just as important as the moment of becoming a Christian. Kraft himself says that "the most important decision in the life of a person, as far as their relationship to God is concerned, is the next decision they are to make, no matter what subject that is to be on."¹ (Kraft in lecture on Conversion, FTS, SWM, 1977) Although I have previously given lip service to the importance of an ongoing Christian experience, nevertheless, it is a matter that, due to my "bounded set" perspective on the world, I tended to overlook in practice, by continuing to fix my attention on the boundary.

DEFINITION

Thus, after all that preamble, I feel I can now define “conversion” as I understand it, and as I want to see it take place in another cultural context, and in the light of which I will have to fulfill my role:

Conversion is the process by which a person turns from whatever was his/her primary allegiance to place God in that position. This process, by the grace of God, begins long before the person is consciously aware of it, and continues throughout the whole of life. It is only made possible by Christ’s death and resurrection, and is effective in a saving sense (regeneration) when that person consciously acknowledges that allegiance to God. From the time that primary allegiance has been changed, each decision and attitude will be subject to that allegiance, and the outward expression of this God directed life with all its ramifications will therefore be in the forms that best express those meanings in that society.

In societies where multi-individual mutually interdependent decision making is the norm, it is to be expected, and is most times desirable that the decision to change the primary allegiance of the group will likewise be made in the same way.

It is the outworking of this definition in the lives of people on the Sepik River of Papua New Guinea to which we now move.

CULTURAL CONTEXT

Obviously, in just one chapter, an ethnographic study of even one of the twelve language groups or four main cultural groupings that I’m working amongst will be impossible, not to mention a study of each. Instead, I will describe some aspects of culture that:

- (a) Seem to be common to all of the groups I’m involved with,
- (b) Seem to be important in their value system, and
- (c) Seem to have particular bearing on our subject, that is, either on their conversion, or on my role in their context.

A. GROUP ORIENTATION

Societies are arranged patrilineally, while the minimum social unit is primarily the extended family. The integration of the extended family, totemic clans and village is very strong, so the autonomy of the

extended family is limited by this. Consequently, Multi-Individual Mutually Inter-dependent Decision Making is **the** decision making process. The importance of group solidarity that this implies can be seen by the Bahinimo definition of sin: Sin = working against the group.²

B. AGE ORIENTATION

Within the extended family, clans and village, leadership is shared by the elders. Their individual authority within the power structure depends upon their (a) age; (b) village achievements; (c) number and range of family; (d) number and range of creditors; (e) reputation with magic and sorcery (*pawa*), (f) traditional knowledge and (g) oratory. Accordingly, young men have very little real say and authority in the village, even after initiation.

C. SPIRIT ORIENTATION

Animism in the form of control and or placation of specific spirits is the main form of their religion, although this is basically on the pragmatic level of every day needs. (Provision, Protection and Healing). Ability with magic is considered to be of greater importance than a wife.

D. MALE ORIENTATION

Women are the economic strength of the society, being responsible for most of the day to day food production. This subservient role is maintained and reinforced by the religious and social privileges afforded to the men.

E. MARRIAGE ORIENTATION

Polygyny is considered to be the ideal form of marriage. In the one village for which I have compiled statistics, 40% of all the marriages are polygynous.

F. ETHNIC ORIENTATION

Many of the groups under consideration were traditionally head-hunters, but even where head-hunting wasn't an institution, inter-village rivalry and warfare were very common. This has now mostly been stopped by government control and in some cases friendly links have been established by peace ceremonies where there were rivalries. Even where the rivalries did occur, many times there were institutionalized trade contacts and partnerships between individuals within opposing

groups. However, while recognizing these friendly contacts, we must notice that each village is very much a unit and there is a very definite pride in one's own group.

G. NATIONAL ORIENTATION

Papua New Guinea has been independent since September 16, 1975. Even prior to that time and especially since there has been strong pressure from the government which has been moderately successful, for Papua New Guineans to preserve their traditional culture. Unite (*Bung Wantaim*) has been the watch word, while the emphasis on culture has been "keep it because it's us, but remove it if it harms people" (The last comment is a reference to sorcery).

H. EUROPEAN ORIENTATION

Some of the Sepiks were contacted by Europeans just prior to 1918. Others have only been contacted within the last 15 years. On the whole, the initial contact was with Government Officers, or managers on the coastal Coconut Plantations, where many Sepiks had gone to work as indentured labourers on two year contracts. Secondary contact has been with traders, anthropologists, missionaries, etc., but the mould had and has been set by the previous contact. The European, due to his "boss" role and his abundance of material "wonders" is thought of as being basically a mystery, but one who it pays to co-operate with, at least while he's around. But to cope with this in the long term, there is also the policy of endeavouring to minimize the amount of impact which Europeans, with their ideas, suggestions, laws and etc. have on real life.

UNDERSTANDING MY ROLE

Now in endeavouring to understand my role within the framework already established, I will state several other fixed points which are going to have to be kept in mind for this understanding as described here to be complete.

First of all I am talking of **my** role - not the Holy Spirit's! My role is a variable, which I can do something about, so my understanding this should make me more effective in that role. However in this process I will be assuming the work of the Holy Spirit to be a constant factor, and for that reason will not be endeavouring to describe His

role, as important as that is.

Secondly, I see a tendency in the activities of some missions to see Israel's conquest of Canaan as being the "Missionary Handbook" on how to deal with pagan cultures. However, when looking at the purposes of God as revealed in His Word, I feel an "ideal" that is more compatible with the whole of Scripture would be that of God's dealing with the Israelites. That is, the continuance of a culture, while bringing about a change of their primary allegiance as we saw in chapters eight and nine. God did not require the people to replace their culture. He worked in and through the culture they already had. But beginning with Abraham God began a process that made Abraham break with his heathen Gods to follow Yahweh. Note, however, that the Hebrews were not truly monotheistic until during the exile. This second model has already been presupposed in our definition of conversion.

My method of examining my role in the light of the perspective we have drawn together will be to consider conversion as the goal towards which we are working, while I will be relating my role to the cultural orientations already listed, in what would be a logical sequence in the process.

Role, according to Loewen, is the

behavioral expectation assigned to a status by a society, while status defines a persons positional relationship within the social hierarchy (Loewen, J.& A. 1967:145).

A. INITIAL CONTACT

As can be seen from the Loewen's definition, my status with its accompanying roles will normally be assigned by the group I go to, although there is a good chance that I will know nothing of this. And due to their orientation to Europeans previously mentioned it is to be assumed that this is the status to which I will be assigned. Furthermore, previous missionaries tended to fit into this status/role at least sufficiently to fulfill their expectations, so initially I can assume that to be the role I will be cast into as well.

However, this is not a satisfactory status/role to be able to bring about any significant change at the world view level. Although a European (*masta*) is expected to put pressure on for change, the pre-programmed response to "*masta*" (European) pressure is "submersion"

(Tippett 1961). That is putting a veneer of change over their real values, which remain but are submerged. Or to describe this in more concrete terms, if I base my ministry on the status afforded me due to the role into which I am cast, my success will be limited, as status can give orders, but only human beings can communicate good news.

So first of all, I will have to establish relationships with people that will cast me in a different role. This will require four things in particular:

- (1) Spend large amounts of time with Papua New Guineans in their situation (men's houses "*hausboi*" and homes)
- (2) While there, listen far more than talk.
- (3) Heartily accept, eat and request food and be prepared to reciprocate.
- (4) Adopt a totemic clan.

Doing these things will first of all bring confusion as I'm not fitting the *masta* role. But as my behaviour persists I will then be re-cast into some other role that will be far more suitable for communication of good news. But the first communication must be from them to me, because my empathetic understanding of them, their worldview and its outworking in custom and life. This can only come by listening and observing and is going to greatly influence my ability to be an effective agent of directed culture change in their situation.

B. A CHANNEL FOR THE GOSPEL

In many Sepik villages the role of empathetic white foreigner (non-*masta*) has advantages even over national Christians in initially communicating the gospel, unless the national is following his kinship lines in informal contact. This is especially true where traditional animosities existed between his and their group. In my case, most probably the role I would be cast into would be in the category of an information source. But for me to be effective, I must keep the group, age and male orientation of Sepiks in mind in selecting my audience. If I begin with young folk or women I belittle the Gospel in the eyes of the people. If I only deal with individuals, I am not dealing with a decision making unit. So I will need to make my approach to the group which will mean working through the power structure. From experience, I've found that this has to be in formal meetings backed by lots of informal discussion

for them to make a decision. But prior to the actual formal decision, I have found that three weeks of daily evangelistic teaching meetings spread out over about two months to be necessary for a significant decision with the resultant worldview change. At least this is the case in villages of about 300 people. In bigger villages it would take longer. As a non-*masta* I can't request these meetings. I have to be prepared to use tactics in line with my new role to get the village to the point where they "request" me to inform them about Christianity in formal meetings. What this has meant in my own experience and the people movements so produced is described in detail in chapters 17 and 18.

C. NURTURE

Thinking of a People Movement to Christ as we have just described in the anthropological framework of "culture change" can actually be very helpful to determine proper ways to nurture and deal with the group so involved.

What has happened is that the core of that culture, the primary allegiance has been changed and this will produce major changes in their worldview. This is distinct from a change in religion as a small compartment of their lives. Instead where possible it is desirable that their allegiance to God will actually be demonstrated through their traditional religious practices. However, there will be some changes even in these forms. That is, it is quite possible that the new Christians as they examine their own culture in the light of God's Word, may feel that there are some aspects of their culture that are so loaded with meaning from their previous allegiance, that they cannot be used to express their new allegiance. At that point, my role of "information source" is again useful in being able to suggest alternative solutions that Christians from around the world have applied to similar problems, so that with these suggestions as a stimulus, they can choose or construct an alternative that to them is in line with God's will and their culture. At the same time my role of information source limits me in expressing any value judgments on the decision that they make. This I feel is an advantage as it helps them to learn to be sensitive to the leading of the Holy Spirit even when I'm present so this can be an ongoing experience when I'm not present.

Referring again to our culture change analogy, we can see that it is

not just one unrelated segment of culture that is being changed. Therefore, the degree of change at any point is limited by the linkages between that part of culture and all the other parts. If the degree of change exceeds this “elastic limit” the culture will be torn apart. Presuming that our goal is to bring a person or a group of people to a relationship to Christ within their culture, it is very important to notice that everything cannot be achieved in that initial turning to Christ. That change at the core of culture will be as radical as the rest of culture will allow, but the other segments of culture will have to readjust to fit the new centre. Once this readjustment is reasonably complete it is then possible for a revival or some other means to precipitate further changes which, while personally reaffirming, revitalizing and readjusting the individuals relationship with God, the culture itself will also be changed to be more in line with God’s will as revealed in Scripture. For this reason I will have to continue to exercise my role of information source/catalyst (and hopefully, God will raise up emic (insider) prophets also) in the conversion of Sepiks in helping to stimulate continuous positive responses to God to make these revivals a part of the ongoing life of these villages, community and churches.

D. BIBLE TRAINING

As this means that I will be working with the traditional leaders as the leaders in the church, I will also have to provide Bible training for these men. Notice I said Bible training as distinct from leadership training. These men are already leaders, but would be seriously lacking in Bible knowledge. What’s more, the majority of them would be non-literate. So I’ve had to revamp my concepts of Bible training to meet this functional level. Chapter 19 describes the attempts we have made to meet this need.

As another complication, quite a number of these men will be polygynous. But this doesn’t present an immediate problem as the leadership level we are talking about is shared leadership, with no formal positions declared. If and when it becomes necessary for these churches to appoint formal leadership positions, there may be monogamists who will have enough respect and authority to be able to take that position.

CONCLUSION

In conclusion then, I would like to briefly mention two other roles that I fill, that are essential in the conversion of Sepiks.

One is within our Mission/Church structure. Due to the fact of my living on a houseboat in Sepik villages for the last ten years, I've been able to have more unstructured contact with non-Christian Papua New Guineans than many of my colleagues. This has helped me to realize that some of the regulations and structures within our organization are actually stumbling blocks to the conversion of Sepiks. Consequently, I have assumed the role of "critic of the system," as far as these structures are concerned and, due to the graciousness of my colleagues some of my suggestions have been taken seriously, enabling some of the more detrimental parts of the system to be altered already.

The second is a role/status that I was given by God. Just prior to going to work on the Sepik River, I felt very specifically that God challenged me to claim the peoples of the Sepik River for Him by faith. After much heart searching I accepted that challenge and now I am filling the role of "believer of the promise" in the social hierarchy known as "the Kingdom of God." I take this role very seriously and my attempts to put works along with this faith are a part of the dynamic that has resulted in many of the strategies outlined in this book.

NOTES - CHAPTER 10

1. *From C.H. Kraft Conversion lecture notes.*
2. *Information from Wayne Dye, Wycliffe Bible Translator among the Bahinimo.*

FURTHER READING

*Hiebert (1978a), Tippet (1975), Kraft (1979),
Loewen (1975).*

SECTION FOUR

PAPUA NEW GUINEAN CHALLENGES TO CROSS CULTURAL CHRISTIANS

SECTION FOUR

PAPUA NEW GUINEAN CHALLENGES TO CROSS CULTURAL CHRISTIANS

SECTION SUMMARY

Our study now appears to look away from the general cross-cultural question to issues more particularly focussed on Papua New Guinea. We have Papua New Guinean worldview summarized for us in Chapter 11, while Chapters 12 and 13 respectively look in more depth at Animism and Cargoism in Papua New Guinean Sepik worldview.

However, instead of actually looking away from the world scene, what we are really doing, is laying the informational foundations in anticipation of the case studies on effective cross cultural ministry that we will be dealing with in the following section. And as case studies, they become invaluable learning tools for anywhere.

CHAPTER 11

PAPUA NEW GUINEAN WORLDVIEW JUXTAPOSED

In this chapter we will utilize the insights of worldview study to help cross-cultural Christians achieve the maximum effectiveness in their ministry, while minimizing problems that they may encounter, that is, both for the cross-cultural Christian and for those to whom he/she is trying to minister. To do this, we will list a summary of the worldview of the indigenous societies of the East Sepik Province of Papua New Guinea, which we can then compare with the Western missionary worldview summary from Chapter 5. By doing this, both the “consonance” and “dissonance” between these two worldviews will become obvious. This will then make it possible to compensate for the areas of dissonance at both the structural and personal levels, while the areas of consonance will be able to be utilized to greater advantage. At the same time, where change in existing methods, strategies and attitudes is indicated, it will also be possible to ascertain the direction these adjustments will have to take.

MISSION SOCIETY AS A CULTURE

Although in times gone by, there were some people who naively thought that traditional societies such as are found in the Sepik Province of Papua New Guinea (Papua New Guineans in this chapter) were not legitimate societies in their own right, it is to be doubted that any such people will be reading this. But to talk of a mission organization as a society in its own right, with its own culture and worldview that can then be analyzed and compared to the traditional society amongst whom it works is another matter. The validity of, and the rationale for

this assertion has been shown quite clearly by Foster:

We must begin with the recognition that a bureaucracy of substantial size is simply another kind of social grouping, with most of the same structural and dynamic features found in such "natural" communities as a tribe, a peasant village, or a city. Like these, it is composed of members of both sexes, with a wide age spread, organized according to functional tasks, in a hierarchy of authority, responsibility and obligation. In other words, just as with a peasant village, a bureaucracy has a social structure that defines roles, relationships, and statuses of all members of the group vis-a-vis each other. New members are continually introduced into the system (through recruitment rather than birth); they are socialized and enculturated to accept the fundamental premises, values, and goals of the organization; they perform their professional assignments as long as they remain with the group; and through retirement, resignation, or separation (rather than death) they leave the organization, thereby making room for newer and younger members who are essential to organizational viability.

A bureaucracy resembles a natural community in other ways as well, including structural integration, institutional and individual behavior based on explicit and implicit premises, and personality and psychological variation among employees. As with all structurally integrated systems, no change comes about in isolation: New goals, new programs, new modes of operation imply rearrangement of role relations within the organization, bringing increased authority and status for some and lessened power and prestige for others. Bureaucrats, like all other human beings, jealously guard their traditional perquisites and positions and willingly surrender vested interests only in exchange for something good or better. Consequently, rearrangements in role relations, which favor some and threaten others, always meet with resistance. In bureaucracies this leads to organizational inflexibility, which makes it difficult to meet changing conditions and new needs. In other words, structural integration may be just as much a barrier to change in bureaucracies as in peasant villages. This problem is, of course, widely recognized in government and private organizations; that it is so difficult to cope with is evidence of the monolithic quality of well-established cultural forms (1973:178).

Since a Mission Society in the field situation fits Foster's definition of "bureaucracy," it seems that we would be justified in applying some of Foster's suggested application of this realization to a mission situation. The most crucial of these is that,

Only today are we beginning to realize that major barriers to change, and to efficient directed-change programs, lie in the structure and dynamics of innovating organizations and in the culture and psychology [i.e. the worldview] of the people who staff them (Foster 1973:177 brackets mine).

Consequently, for the purpose of analysis, we will be regarding a mission or mission staff as a society in its own right, with its own culture and worldview, which, when placed alongside the cultures and worldviews of the traditional societies among whom it operates, brings a whole range of dynamics into play, quite apart from the specific goals for which the cross-cultural Christian has come to that location.

PAPUA NEW GUINEAN WORLDVIEW ASSUMPTIONS

We will begin our description of worldview at the level of assumptions, and then move on to themes and allegiances. Unfortunately, within the limits of this chapter, we will not be able to deal with the interpretations or the behaviour arising out of the assumptions that we mentioned. Also, we will not deal with assumptions about flora and fauna as such. A knowledge of these is important for a person to see the world as another person sees it, but it seems that they are not as important to the essential goals of a cross-cultural Christian as the other categories of assumptions we will be dealing with.

A. TIME

Time as we know it has been an unknown concept to Papua New Guineans. Events rather than minutes and seconds were the things in focus, and so the passage of time was remembered by favoured events. This results in a lack of time depth and consequently, a telescoping together of past events. This Papua New Guinean time reckoning is what I'm calling "encapsulated time" (see diagram 1 below).

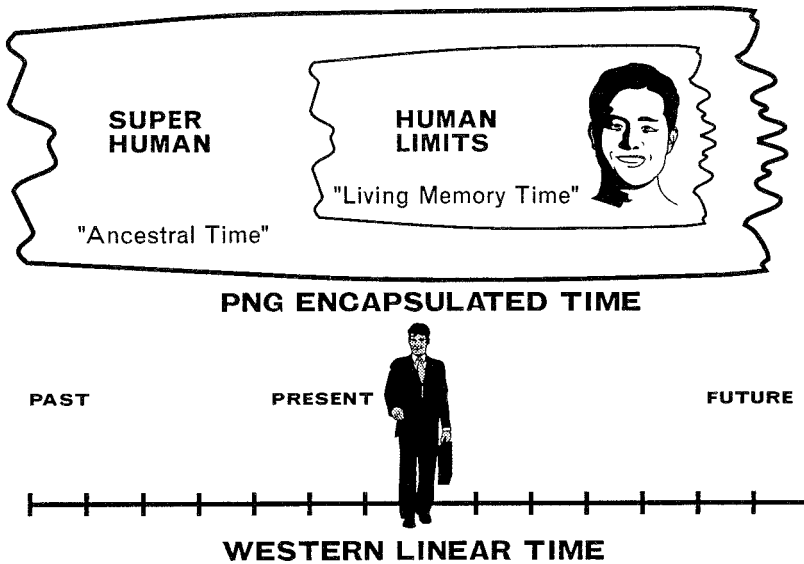


Diagram 1: Papua New Guinean and Western Concepts of Time

This time is encapsulated in two distinct but merging capsules. The inner capsule is “living memory time” that begins with “not yet” (*bihain*). This in our categories, covers both the fairly immediate future and as many generations into the past as can be remembered by the living members of a community. “Living memory time” is in the realm of the human, the natural, and as such is bound by normal human limitations unless these are transcended by some other means. Beyond the rather indefinite boundaries of “living memory time” is “ancestral time” (*tumbuna taim*). It is in “ancestral time” that we see the telescoping of events most vividly. From centuries and millennia back in history only a few events are remembered, so events just beyond the range of “living memory time” historically appear to exist side by side with events from the beginning of time. “Ancestral time” is considered to be in the realm of the super-human.

Myths are actually a part of “ancestral time” and all the characteristics of that time period apply to them. Consequently, myths and legends that portray the most incredible or grotesque events seem to be “operations as normal” due to human limitations not applying to that period. Also, due to the super-human aura of that era, myths provide

validation from “ancestral time,” the realm of the super-human, for activities carried out in “living memory time.” At the same time, ritual makes it possible for people in “living memory time” to actually participate in the benefits of “ancestral time,” at least for the particular need to which they were applying that ritual.

As a result of this concept of time then, we see the focus being on the past, the ancestral, while the aged are greatly respected. Also, due to “ancestral time” completely surrounding “living memory time,” we find that Cargo Cults have a very logical rationale: If those in the cult can move out of “living memory time” either into the past by using aspects of their traditional systems (Nativistic Movements), or into the future by the use of pseudo-twentieth century technology (Messianic Movements), they will then be in “ancestral time” with all its attendant blessings.

The routine passage of days, moons, weather and farming seasons, traditionally had no chronological significance as such although this has changed to some degree now. But even today, the use of time is subservient to events, which in turn are subservient to relationships, both to fellow humans and to the super-human.

B. SPACE

Space to a Papua New Guinean is measured by favoured points, i.e. rivers, trees, valleys, mountains, villages etc. More important than measurement however is its division among totemic clans, the validation for that is preserved in legends and mythology. Also tied to the mythology, we find many places that are considered sacred due to the residence in these places of super-human beings. Distance is perceived to be a barrier to humans but super-humans are not limited by it as much. Space is subservient to relationships - relationships to both human and super-human. For example, sacred places are not desecrated so as not to offend the super-human, while the description of distances can be altered from “far away” to “nearby” without hesitation if it is perceived that the person being spoken to would be happier with the latter description.

C. HUMAN

Human beings are seen primarily as part of their group (extended family, clan, village etc.) of which their ancestors, deities and spirits

etc. are also a part. Consequently a person's most important obligation is to build up and maintain his/her own group.

This is seen first of all in life itself. Life is defined sociologically. At birth the baby is not named immediately as they are waiting to see if it will decide to stay. Later on, sometime during the first 18 months it is agreed by the family that the baby has decided to stay so it is then given a clan name, and from then on is regarded as being a person. Traditionally, infanticide during that interim period was not considered to be murder, as the child wasn't "alive."

Also, when someone is sick, but doesn't respond to any form of treatment, and then finally goes into a coma, he/she is then considered to be dead as he/she can no longer function sociologically. Therefore, it is quite in order to proceed with the burial. After death, the ghost of the dead will remain in the vicinity of the village for a period of months, (the actual time varies from group to group and with circumstances) and then departs to enter the ranks of the ancestors. Growth is also thought of sociologically and is shown by rites of passage ceremonies in that the whole community participate.

Secondly, this can be seen in their traditional justice system that is therapeutically oriented. The object of the court and justice system is to get the parties together again, not to ascertain who was right or wrong as such. Likewise, one of the punishments that can be meted out to a deviant who refuses to put the relationship right between himself and the person he has offended will simply be that he will be rejected by the rest of the group. The isolation that results is usually more than the culprit can bear so he quickly comes back into line again. Operating on the same dynamic, gossip is one of the main channels of social control.

Thirdly, dissension within the group is to be avoided at all costs. Hence, decision-making is by consensus so that no dissension occurs at that level. Parables are used in speaking about controversial topics for the same reason. Equality is the goal, so there is practically no specialization of labour except in the area of magic and the very distinct division along male/female lines. Truth is perceived of as "what our group believes." It therefore can be altered to keep relationships in balance. Such competition as exists is usually ritualized to prevent outright competition that would also tend towards dissension. Children

are not allowed to fight nor allowed to cry if their needs can possibly be met.

Fourthly, marriage is seen as a perpetuation of the family, and so children are a focal point of marriage. The woman is chosen by the husband's clan, as she is important to the economic strength of the clan in addition to her value as a child bearer. Children are seen as social security for their parents. As marriages are arranged between exogamous moieties, relationships with in-laws are of absolute importance, to ensure wives for succeeding generations. There is no place in the society for unmarried women of marriageable age. The behaviour of any such is suspect.

Fifthly, property, whether personal or group owned is thought of inclusively. That is, it is freely shared with fellow community members. Privacy likewise is thought of communally. As much privacy as is normally needed is given by others, rather than demanded by individuals (as we do when we close doors or build walls between ourselves and others). Houses of relatives are entered freely without formalities.

Sixthly, a person looks to his/her society for ultimate values. Society in this regard includes the ancestors among the living, also includes the past of the society as embodied in their legends, lands and community.

Other worldview assumptions about human beings includes the belief that they are considered a dichotomy (i.e. body and spirit). It is therefore possible for the spirit to temporally leave the body even during life. Dreams are interpreted in this way. Also, through ritual, it is possible for a person to change his/her bodily form into that of an animal, bird, or plant, or even to become invisible. Through ritual and magic, it is also possible for a human to control the super-human for his/her own purposes.

There is a sharp distinction made between male and female in almost all aspects of life, and at least formally, it is the male who is considered dominant. Sexual contact is thought to be dangerous to a man, even in marriage. Consequently, contact between the sexes is minimal. Men normally avoid or ignore women completely, except for their own wives or those from the same clan or moiety, who are re-

garded as sisters and therefore not potential spouses. However, sex temptation is considered to be as a result of magic by the other party and is therefore irresistible.

The kinship system has multitudinous statuses, but the most pervasive of these is the polarity between a relation and an enemy. A relation is considered to be a person that can be related to on the basis of the kinship system. This includes the totemic clan system, as well as “fictive” kinship arrangements (e.g. brotherhood arrangements made between non relatives). An enemy is anybody else. There is no continuum between these two polarities. They are simply opposite poles. And basically it is reciprocity that makes the difference. Any serious disagreement immediately results in the enemy polarity being assumed, even among people who are technically related. Reconciliation by the resumption of reciprocity under the direction of the elders then immediately results in the relationship affinity again. This also applies in establishing relationship with outsiders. If they will participate in reciprocity, then they are included in the relation category by some fictive kinship term. If not, the enemy category is the only alternative.

Personal prestige for the sake of the clan is also highly desired by the men. This is acquired by age, generosity, hard work, ability with the super-human, knowledge of myths & legends, oratorical ability, skill and bravery as a warrior and ability as a peacemaker. These things usually provide him with followers that then makes him a leader. Money is highly prized for its prestige value and for what it can buy, but is not essential for life so is freely squandered in line with the other worldview assumptions.

D. SUPERNATURAL

In describing assumptions about the Supernatural in the Western and Papua New Guinean worldviews, we must first notice that we are actually describing two different things. That is, Western assumptions will relate to a supernatural category, but the Papua New Guinean assumptions will relate primarily to super-human beings within the same category inhabited by humans. In the villages where a Supreme Being concept is known, this being is ordinarily completely ignored, so will not be featuring significantly in this description.

These assumptions are: The people and geographical features of a village's traditional land were created by their clan or village super-humans. At that time, way back in ancestral time, these super-humans revealed to the ancestors of that clan or village the knowledge of how to produce and use all aspects of their traditional material culture. Consequently, a person has the right to these same super-human beings by birth into that clan and later being given a clan name. Clan names are actually esoteric knowledge in code form. It is also possible to purchase the esoteric knowledge of other super-human beings from other groups. These super-human beings, and the ancestors who have now joined them, usually live somewhere in the known universe of that group in a quasi-human type of existence. At times they can become visible in the form of humans, animals, birds etc. These beings are local and not omniscient. They do notice a lot of things however, especially breakdowns of interpersonal relationships, local morals and civic responsibilities. When they notice these things, sickness or other trouble within the group will result.

The super-human noticing village problems and then taking the initiative themselves to draw attention to the problem is not the only reason for sickness and trouble. On the other hand, sickness and trouble is always the result of super-human activity of some kind, but this can happen in the following ways:

- (1) Super-human intervention by their own volition due to either village problems or human offense against them.
- (2) Super-human intervention at an enemy's request.
- (3) Intervention through impersonal super-human power activated by the breaking of a taboo.
- (4) Through sorcery or black magic.

At the same time, it is assumed that the cause of all events can be known by correct contact with the super-human. And once the cause is known, it is then possible to control or evade the cause by the correct use of ritual. In fact, the whole of life is dependent on the correct use of correct ritual and esoteric knowledge. This applies to all aspects of life: gardening, hunting, fishing, fighting, gambling, trading, lovemaking, development of children, fertility of wives, fertility of animals, divining trouble, divining causes of death, house building, canoe carv-

ing, drum carving, etc., etc. If the help of the super-human is not guaranteed by ritual, then human effort is of little effect. Any breakdown in this process is seen to be a human failure with the ritual rather than a failure of the super-human.

Due to the interaction of all these forces, powers, and spirits, the universe is unpredictable. Therefore, the only real protection a person can have is ability with the super-human through ritual in order to maintain or re-establish harmony with the super-human. Almost everything in the universe has some aspect of impersonal super-human power associated with it, and is accordingly categorized on a “hot” (super-human) <—> “cold” (human) axis.

The claim to human allegiance by any particular spirit or deity is predicated on the effectiveness of that spirit or deity. While it either helps or harms humans, it will receive human attention. Once it is uninvolved, it will not be thought of very much.

The super-human communicates with humans through omens, possession states and dreams. All dreams are potentially thought to be in this category. Supernatural validation is needed for leadership, melodies, rituals and dances. Most times this validation would be in the form of a dream. There is also the basic assumption that like produces like. This is then the basis for sympathetic magic. Furthermore, the well-being of a person is seen as being related to the well-being of things with which he/she has intimate contact. This is then the basis for contagious magic. What’s more, wealth is considered to be a sign of efficiency with the supernatural, presumably by ritual.

THEMES

Out of the multitudinous worldview assumptions of any culture, some few are valued more highly than the rest, and so have a very strong influence on that culture. These prioritized assumptions are known as themes.

Out of the Papua New Guinean worldview assumptions we have listed, we can crystallize the ones on which they have laid more stress as the themes of the Papua New Guinean culture. To help us with the comparison we wish to proceed with, we will include the list of Western missionary cultural themes from chapter five in a parallel column.

With regard the Western missionary’s themes, some of these come from his/her cultural background, some from his/her Christian orientation. These could well be separated out for the purpose of analysis. However, I am combining them to show the Western missionary as an integrated being because the distinction between the two is seldom made in life and ministry.

<u>PAPUA NEW GUINEAN</u>	<u>WESTERN MISSIONARY</u>
(a) A person’s most important obligation is to build up and maintain his/her own group.	(a) God demands primary allegiance to Himself.
(b) The super-human is involved in all of human life, especially trouble.	(b) Self is very important.
(c) Ritual and magic are efficient for the provision of human needs.	(c) An individual human life is valuable in and of itself.
(d) Life is event oriented.	(d) Everything is judged by a twofold value judgment.
(e) Ancestral time is super-human and therefore information from that time is both correct and important.	(e) Technology is very important.
(f) All people are either relatives or enemies.	(f) Life is time oriented.
	(g) Life is future oriented.
	(h) Monologue preaching has special power to bring people to Christ.
	(i) Property is personally owned.

ALLEGIANCES

Each culture then prioritizes its themes even further, until one or two, or maybe a few of these become the total focus, or to use the terminology that we have become familiar with, allegiances of that given culture. As we look at Papua New Guinean culture, we can crystallize their most dominant themes, that is, their allegiances to be as follows. Once again, we will include the Western missionary allegiances from chapter five for comparison.

<u>PAPUA NEW GUINEAN</u>	<u>WESTERN MISSIONARY</u>
(a) Primary allegiance is to ones own group (clan/village) including all members both living, dead and yet unborn.	(a) The primary allegiance is a faith allegiance to God.
(b) Secondary allegiance is a fear allegiance to the super-human of the clan for the sake of the clan.	(b) Secondary Allegiance is to ones self.
	(c) Third allegiance is to the sanctity of human life.

CONSONANCE AND DISSONANCE

In the following lists we will endeavour to highlight areas of consonance and dissonance between the Papua New Guinean and Western missionary worldviews. In the section on dissonance, we will differentiate between dissonance on a cultural level and dissonance with regard to the goal of the Mission. This distinction is important to notice, as areas of dissonance from the Papua New Guinean side when looking at the goals of the Mission, presuming they are right goals, will then require changes from the Papua New Guinean perspective. But dissonance in cultural aspects that do not clash with basic goals on Biblical grounds will then require changes from the Mission Perspective. The areas of consonance both of culture and goal should be utilized to the maximum.

A. CONSONANCE

PAPUA NEW GUINEAN

- (a) A firm belief in the super-human and an acknowledged need of super-human help for all of life.
- (b) The unity and equality as emphasized in Papua New Guinean culture are also Biblical values.
- (c) There is a relationship between interpersonal relationships and sickness.
- (d) There is a relationship between spirit involvement and sickness.
- (e) To be a part of a family/clan carries certain obligations. This should naturally apply to God's family also.
- (f) Event orientation gives much scope for meaningful church services / religious activities.
- (g) Ancestral time is regarded as super-human and therefore authoritative.

WESTERN MISSIONARY

- (a) The genealogies in the Bible effectively place the Bible stories in ancestral time.
- (b) The Bible is comprised mostly of stories which if used correctly take on the authoritative function of the myths.
- (c) Belief in Divine Healing is a potent sign and a readymade functional substitute.¹
- (d) The belief in the imminence of the Holy Spirit is also very meaningful.²
- (e) The belief in the operation of the Gifts of the Holy Spirit will also provide some functional substitutes, especially in the area of divination.

B. GOAL DISSONANCE

PAPUA NEW GUINEAN

- (a) Primary allegiance to group must become secondary and subservient to allegiance to God.
- (b) The basic understanding that "Truth is what our group believes" undermines Biblical authority.
- (c) If a concept of super-human only is held, with no genuine supernatural concept, then basic concepts of God will need modification.
- (d) Effectiveness being the criterion for allegiance to the supernatural is unsatisfactory.
- (e) The assumption that ritual and magic can control the super-human will be contrary to their new primary allegiance.
- (f) Basic assumptions e.g. "Like produces like" and "wealth is a sign of effective ritual" which then underlie a lot of Cargo Cults are potential problems.
- (g) The belief in the spirit leaving the body before death, with its attendant acceptance of all dreams is a potential problem.
- (h) The assumption that the causes of all trouble being able to be discovered by divination is a potential problem.
- (i) The assumption that sex temptation is caused by magic and therefore irresistible will also cause problems.
- (j) Belief in the whereabouts of the spirit of a person after death is contrary to Biblical statements.

WESTERN MISSIONARY

- (a) Monologue preaching has special power to bring people to Christ.
- (b) Supernatural help and human ability are mutually exclusive.
- (c) A missionary's personal leading is more important than group goals.

C. CULTURAL DISSONANCE

PAPUA NEW GUINEAN

- (a) Life is event oriented.
- (b) Time is past oriented.
- (c) Space is flexible.
- (d) Space is a barrier.
- (e) Primary orientation to one's own group.
- (f) Life is defined sociologically.
- (g) No place for un-married women.
- (h) Relation <—> Enemy polarity.

WESTERN MISSIONARY

- (a) Life is time oriented. Time is a commodity.
- (b) Time is oriented to the future.
- (c) There is a distinct division between work and play.
- (d) Space is inflexible.
- (e) Space is no barrier.
- (f) The group is oriented to the individual.
- (g) Human life being what it is, it should be:
 - 1) preserved, and
 - 2) not allowed to suffer.
- (h) Life is defined biologically.
- (i) Unity is good but not essential and equality is unimportant. Frankness of speech and consistency are greater values.
- (j) There is a place in the society for un-married women.
- (k) Property including money is personally owned and should be used frugally.
- (l) Privacy is demanded.
- (m) Interpersonal reconciliation is by words and handshake only.
- (n) Every part of life seen or experienced is subjected to two-fold value judgments.
- (o) Justice is punitive, based on objective truth.
- (p) It is expected that children will cry, fight and be punished.
- (q) Sex sins are the greatest sins.
- (r) Leadership is appointed, not earned as such.
- (s) Majority rule and written regulations are the means of formulating rules.
- (t) Knowledge is available to everyone, therefore education is important rather than age.
- (u) Interpersonal relationships are on a continuum, from relative to stranger.
- (v) Action is better than non-action.

IMPLEMENTING GOALS OF A CROSS CULTURAL CHRISTIAN

We come now to the question of how to implement the goals of a Cross-Cultural Christian in the context of the Papua New Guinean worldview we have already described. First, we must remember that it is the Holy Spirit who is the spiritual dynamic in the process of turning to God, and the worldview changes turning to God will entail, while prayer is the God ordained means of releasing the power of the Holy Spirit in individual situations. As has been previously stated, we are accepting this work of the Holy Spirit as an irreplaceable but constant factor. This then will make it possible for us to look at the factors that God has made us responsible for, and over which we can have some effect. These factors then can either help or hinder the work that the Holy Spirit is wanting to perform.

Secondly, we must realize that a person's worldview was learnt in a community, by interaction, mutual feedback and reinforcement with and by the other members of that community, especially the more senior members. And the continuing stability of any society depends on the continual mutual feedback and reinforcement of their worldview assumptions from within their community. Therefore, to be able to advocate culture change without producing disorientation and disintegration, the changes must be advocated at the level of the group of intimates to whom the individuals being approached usually refer for mutual feedback and reinforcement. When this group then mutually agrees to modify their worldview assumptions or more importantly, their allegiances, the change itself while being just as great, will not be so traumatic, and therefore the change can be more effective. This is because the group together will continue to get their feedback and reinforcement from each other, and, presuming that the direction of the change has been agreed upon, there will be the mutual stimulus to ensure that the change is carried to its completion. Likewise, any cultural stress that is produced by the change will be able to be dealt with by the group, thus letting the ramifications of the change in worldview ripple out to the perimeters of the culture without producing unnecessary or harmful stress.

Thirdly, a factor that is very important in the above, yet sufficiently

separate to require separate mention, is the factor of assisting the group that will be innovating & implementing the change to understand as much as possible about the change prior to endeavouring to implement it, as well as allowing them as much time as necessary to consider both the extent and possible ramifications of that change. This is important, not only to make the transformation as smooth as possible, but also to build an internal dynamic into the change process that will keep the pressure on from within, to ensure that the change is implemented to its full extent. The assistance here suggested would probably be in the form of teaching/discussion, and would need to be directed toward areas of felt need.

Fourthly, referring again to the idea of felt needs, this will require a very empathetic advocate, as very often the felt need that will eventually be addressed will not be on the immediate level of consciousness of the group being approached. Special attention will need to be given to specific areas of need and felt need with regard the super-natural, but we will reserve the specific suggestions on that topic for chapters twelve and sixteen.

DECREASE CULTURAL DISSONANCE

As has been noted earlier, a change of allegiance in the Papua New Guinean worldview is the basic goal of a cross-cultural Christian or mission, while at other points of dissonance, it is the responsibility of the messengers of the Gospel, the members of the mission, to understand, be empathetic, and as far as possible, identify with the worldview of the Papua New Guineans. If this is done, it reduces the amount of “static” interfering with the real message they are trying to bring and reduces the chances of stumbling blocks to the acceptance of the Gospel. For specific details of the forms these adjustments will need to take, the areas of cultural dissonance need to be examined carefully and deductions drawn from these. However, within the limits of this paper, I will simply point out some of the steps we need to be taking in the light of this cultural dissonance.

A. MISSION ORGANIZATIONAL CHANGES.³

One of the steps we will need to be taking in the light of this cultural dissonance will be to re-evaluate our methods to see what sort of meth-

ods will best achieve our goals. However, due to the amount of freedom that is usually allowed, or is taken by individual missionaries as far as methods are concerned, there is no way within our present system to implement a common approach to our work. But considering the importance of this to our work, it is imperative that all staff be using methods that take our primary goal seriously and so find specific workable ways of achieving this within the Papua New Guinean context. Due to the Western Mission worldview assumptions about leadership, it is very unlikely that legislation would effectively produce changes of methods. Instead, a program to train missionaries to be sensitive to worldview differences and how to bring about worldview change would be more effective. As the worldview sensitivity of all staff increases, it would be possible for seminars etc. to mutually arrive at a strategy that would focus our work squarely on our goals.

A second change that needs to be seriously considered is that of the leadership structuring of the Mission. Final decisions being made as remotely as Melbourne at six monthly intervals is a little incongruous when compared to and anticipating some measure of harmony with the people oriented, consensus decision making norms of the Papua New Guinean worldview.

B. MISSIONARY ADAPTION

When one considers the lists of cultural dissonance factors along with the point that has already been made, that the responsibility of adapting to reduce the dissonance lies with the missionary, it seems that the lot of the missionary is going to be very traumatic indeed. But before we look at ways and means of helping missionaries fit well into the situation with a minimum of trauma, we will look at five hierarchical steps or stages suggested by Kraft that a missionary may be in and or should go through in order to be an effective cross-cultural communicator of the Gospel (1977). The first of these is:

- (1) "Understanding." This must surely be a first step and one that this study on worldview can help us with. In this case, understanding not only Papua New Guinean worldview, but also the Western worldview as well.
- (2) Next comes "empathy." That is, understanding the Papua New Guinean worldview and making judgments from their point of view.

- (3) Then we come to “identification.” Not just in externals but in thought patterns as well. In other words, worldview identification.
- (4) Next is “participation.” This does not mean “going native” but rather, being involved in activities that are scheduled by their life and culture, not by our interests and programs.
- (5) As a final, we come to “self exposure.” That is openly sharing our “human-ness” with Papua New Guinean friends.

To be able to go through each of these stages on the worldview level could make us very effective communicators. Then with the added dynamic of the Holy Spirit as we communicate the Gospel, we can become very potent missionaries indeed.

C. MISSIONARY TRAINING

In helping missionaries to understand both their own, and Papua New Guinean worldviews plus how to effectively communicate the Gospel in that situation, there are two possible ways:

- (1) Let each individual try for himself. This must work, as we’ve seen a measure of success in our work to date, and that is the method we’ve used in the main. Or else,
- (2) Schedule training for field missionaries to make them aware of the worldview levels of consonance and dissonance that exist, often well out of sight to the busy missionary. Then as worldview is brought to the level of awareness, it can be taken into account in the lives, plans and ministries of missionaries. At the same time, worldview awareness must be an integral part of training for all new staff arriving on the field.

If this latter approach is chosen, there will be two very positive results. Obviously, the effectiveness of the missionary society in reaching its primary goal will be greatly enhanced and, the trauma of missionary adjustment, including culture shock and culture stress will be greatly reduced. This may seem paradoxical, but it is true nevertheless. The trauma experienced on the field stems most times from either culture stress, where one doesn’t understand the fine points of what is going on around, or else from frustration at lack of success and fulfillment in one’s assignment. That both of these causes are linked closely to one’s understanding of worldview is very obvious. So to get to understand the Papua New Guinean and Western worldviews and to actually get involved with the Papua New Guineans in their worldview frame of

reference makes it possible to achieve the greatest possible effectiveness with the least amount of trauma.

CONCLUSION

In conclusion then, it should be noted that although the dynamics of the interaction of the Western worldview juxtaposed with the Papua New Guinean worldview, as well as the implications of these dynamics for effectiveness in mission has been the object of this chapter, the significance of this type of study takes us far beyond the geographical, social and cultural confines here described. As I have thought through the interpretations of these worldview assumptions as they meet us at every point of our work in the field situation, it is apparent to me that juxtaposed worldview studies should be the format of missionary training manuals of the future for all mission boards in all cultural situations.

NOTES ON CHAPTER 11

1. *Missionaries from a Pentecostal perspective would seem to have an advantage at this point.*
2. *Missionaries from a Pentecostal perspective would seem to have an advantage at this point.*
3. *This section is referring in particular to the Assemblies of God Mission in Papua New Guinea, but the principles involved would have relevance for other groups as well.*

FURTHER READING

Hiebert (1976), Tippet (1967), Mbiti (1969)

CHAPTER 12

ANIMISM IN THE SEPIK WORLDVIEW

In the last chapter, we looked in some detail at Papua New Guinean worldview, or at least the worldview of the people of the East Sepik Province of Papua New Guinea. In this chapter, we will pursue that perspective a little further to look at the folk religion or animism in the Sepik worldview,¹ and then to focus in particular on the implications of this worldview to Christian ministry in that situation.

Due to the piecemeal way in which the given examples were collected the material here presented cannot make any claim to be scientific, therefore we will illustrate rather than cover the subject at hand, although I will use as broad a spectrum of examples as possible.² From these examples it will be very evident that there are sufficient commonalities in folk religious practices for us to refer to “Animism in the Sepik Worldview” and thus to make it valid to draw certain deductions about the implications of this worldview to Christian Missions.

Although I will be focussing on Sepik folk religions, it is worth making the point first of all that folk religion or animism is very active at the popular level, not only of virtually all the people groups in Papua New Guinea, but also of all the major religions on earth. So the broad lines of the implications we discover will have import far beyond Papua New Guinea.

ANIMISM

My definition of animism as we are referring to it “the deep awareness of the Spirit world in everything, with this spirit world playing a real part in all of life.” In the case of the Sepik worldview under discussion, we will exclude High Gods from this definition. This is more a theoretical exclusion than a functional necessity as, of the groups under analysis, only the Abelam, Iatmul and Manambu have any concept of a high god. And even the high gods they know of are thought to have

long since ceased being involved with the real life of the people and so are afforded but little attention.

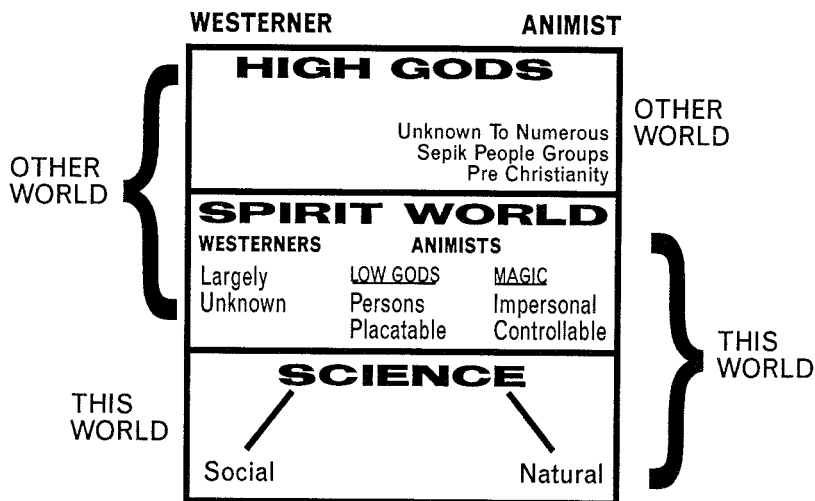


Diagram 1: Western and Animistic Perceptions of the World
 (Adapted from Hiebert 1976)

Diagram 1 will help us to understand our definition and, additionally, to visualize some of the problems confronting western missionaries in endeavouring to communicate Spiritual truth to people on the Sepik River or elsewhere who conceptualize life in an animistic frame of reference.

Two things in particular need to be pointed out. Sepiks regard all of the spirit world other than high gods to be a part of “this world,” the empirical world of everyday life. In contradistinction to this, Westerners regard the material world only to be the “this world.” While they theologically regard the spirit world to be “other world,” trans-empirical, in fact this area is basically unknown to them. The problem this poses for Westerners in trying to understand animism and folk religions is very great indeed. Furthermore, the fact that Westerners don’t understand what Sepiks regard as being so important is obvious to all Sepiks. This then results in real problems for the credibility of the Westerner, and the relevance of the message he brings.

EXAMPLES

Using the preceding diagram as a frame of reference, we will divide our examples up into two specific areas. (a) Those dealing with this impersonal world of magic. This will include the matter of attempting to control these impersonal spirit forces by ritual. (b) Those dealing with personal spirits or gods in the spirit world. This will include discussion of evidences of contact with and placation of these spirit beings. To help us understand this, we will need to constantly remind ourselves that to Sepiks all of this which we are discussing is regarded as being part of "this world."

A. PAWA THE IMPERSONAL WORLD OF MAGIC.

What we are discussing here as *pawa* aligns to some degree with what Codrington refers to as *mana* (1891:118-121) which we discussed in chapter three. As there are some differences between *mana* as he described it and what the Sepik Pidgin term *pawa* indicates, we will use the Sepik term. For one thing, the forces of *pawa* are not impersonal. They have similar emotions to humans only are more volatile and backed by supernatural zap.³

1. White Magic

By far the biggest area of *pawa* is the field of magic. If the following lists of purposes of magic and taboos associated with it are looked at closely, we see that this touches the daily lives of Sepiks at almost every point. So the brevity of treatment of this aspect of *pawa* in comparison with the others does not in any way show its importance in real life. Detailed examples are too many and too varied to be able to give any dimensions to this field in this treatment. Magic can be either White Magic or Black Magic.

White Magic is almost a daily occurrence in one form or another. This ranges from elaborate rituals for garden magic on the community level, to brief personally owned chants which are whispered over fishing lines. Rather than go into specific details of ceremonies I will simply list purposes for which magic is used, the types of paraphernalia used in and taboos that are observed. The list, while representative will not be exhaustive. Most of the paraphernalia and taboos listed are used for each of the purposes listed at some stage or another, or in some particular ritual or another.

<u>PURPOSE</u>	<u>PARAPHERNALIA</u>	<u>TABOO</u>
Fishing	- crocodile	oil
	- fish	leaves
		chant
Hunting	- pigs	victory leaf
	- crocodiles	ginger plants
	- possums	wild taro
		potions
Gardening	- yams	bark
	- tobacco	betel nut
Healing		
Make dogs good hunters		
Make pigs fat		
Love		
Counter sorcery		
War and fighting		
Memory development		
Controlling rain		
Fertility		

2. Black Magic

While not used as frequently as white magic, black magic is constantly feared and suspected. It largely takes two forms: (a) the one relies on sympathetic or contagious magic or potions and chants to induce sickness and death. (b) the other involving metamorphoses tending towards lycanthropy⁴ is used for ritual murder (known as *sanguma*).⁵ In these cases, the sorcerer has the ability to take on the form of a crocodile or bird, snake, cassowary, pig or possum either to avoid detection or to enable him or her to travel distances and or to places which would not be possible in human form. Some even have the ability to render themselves invisible for this purpose.

Once the sorcerer is in location, he/she mesmerizes the victim. Changing back into human form, the sorcerer ritually cuts the body of the victim open, removes the heart, stomach or other vital organs and replaces them with stones or other rubbish. The date of death is then pronounced, the body is "sewn up," resurrected and sent on its way not knowing anything has happened till he dies at the appointed time. The rest of the preceding information is subsequently discovered by divination.

Using a similar listing to the white magic, we have:

PURPOSE	PARAPHERNALIA	TABOO
Death	part of victim's body	food
Sickness - (specific	part of " belongings	sex
sorcery for specific	replica of victim	family
sickness)	victory leaf	water
blindness	ginger plants	sago-
joint malfunction -	potions	cutting
especially knees	chants	
breathlessness	wild taro	
problems with child birth	bark	
Weakness in enemies	betel nut	
Produce infertility	leaves	

The chants mentioned in (a) (above) are usually the opposite number to healing magic (white). That is, often a person who has white magic for some purpose can use a modification of that ritual to produce the opposite result. It is quite common for items connected with Black Magic to be handled with the left hand only. Although this is not universal for Sepiks, it is sufficiently prevalent to make it worthwhile for outsiders to cultivate the habit of only handing things to people with the right hand.

3. Taboo

A common example of taboo would be the ritual uncleanness (taboo) that applies to a woman during her monthly menstrual period. She can't enter the unfinished house of a non-relative or it will deteriorate fast and become rat infested. She must not sit in a canoe unless she sits backwards, and she must not prepare food for her husband lest he suffer from breathlessness and die young.

4. Spirits in Geographical Locations

- (a) The most common evidence of spirits in geographical locations on the Sepik would be the creator spirits, *masalai* who are resident in every *pasis* (deep spots on the channel side of each bend on the river). These spirits are recognized first by the turbulence they cause in the water and, secondly, by the number of canoes which they capsize. They have occasionally been seen in the form of crocodiles or humans. If perchance a person foolishly tries to kill

one of these, even though unsuccessful in his attempt, someone of his family or clan will soon sicken and die. In the same way swimming is just not done in these places.

- (b) A second geographical location would be banyan and ironwood trees. When these are small no spirits live in them but as they grow and begin to look formidable you notice that as you approach you get goose flesh. This shows that a spirit is now resident in the tree. Consequently if a person gets sick after having been near one of these trees, an offering (sometimes food, sometimes blood) is taken and put on a platform built beside the tree. If it was the spirit of the tree that caused the sickness, that person will then get well. If perchance a person wishes to make a garden on a piece of ground where one of these trees is, he would first sacrifice a chicken at the base of the tree, and then respectfully ask the spirit to leave. The tree can then be safely chopped down.
- (c) Some rocks, ravines, mountains, caves and thick jungle are also dwelling places of spirits.

5. Spirits in Natural Phenomena

- (a) During an electrical storm, all lamps should be turned down or out, and cooking fires should be left unstoked or extinguished. If not the light of these things will attract the spirit of the lightning and the home where these things are is likely to be struck.
- (b) When wind and rain storms are brewing, it is quite common for men to blow and move their fingers in the direction the storm is coming from, accompanied by a chant. When this is done, the storm will recede.

6. Spirits in Ordeals

- (a) When there has been stealing or some other offense in the village, and the wrongdoer has not been discovered by any other means, the leader of the wronged clan will sit near one of the spirit houses and each member of the village will have to come and touch a shell and feather ornament he is wearing around his neck, and swear that he/she didn't commit the crime. The *pawa* of that ornament will then attack the wrongdoer who swears falsely, making him sick and if restitution is not made in time, eventually kill him.

- (b) Ordeals can also be tied to totemism, if the enquiry is within a totemic family. This requires substituting a totemic symbol for the ornament and the same process occurs, this time enforced by the ancestors, or other powers of that clan.

7. Evil Eye

For several months following the birth of a child, it is specially protected, and with some groups, will even be kept inside an enclosure built under the home during the day, or in the home at night. The primary reason for this is to protect the infant from the possibility of anyone other than immediate family looking at it and causing it harm (evil eye). While the baby is being so protected, if the mother does have to travel for any reason than the child will be completely covered and placed inside a string bag that is carried from the head of the mother. Once the child is felt to be strong enough for the evil eye to be of no effect, it will then be carried publicly.

8. Omens

- (a) In sleep the spirit leaves the body and travels around seeing, hearing and doing things. For that reason every dream is potentially important, has to be interpreted, and will come true. Anything predicted in a dream then is taken to be an omen and plans will be adjusted accordingly.
- (b) If when preparing to leave the village on work or on a journey, a person kicks his or her toe in a particular way, it is known that the journey would be ill fated so is postponed.

9. Divination

When someone is ill or dies, it is most important to ascertain who caused the misfortune. (Divination of cause of death will be dealt with under spirits of dead).

- (a) In the case of illness, a witch doctor, clairvoyant, or medium will be consulted. Trance or possession are the normal mediums used to validate their divination.
- (b) When divination is required for other matters, it is common to perform ceremonies to have a spirit possess a canoe or bamboo of which questions are then asked. An affirmative answer will be shown by a rocking canoe or a shaking bamboo pole.

B. SPIRIT BEINGS AND LOW GODS

Now we progress on to the area of the spirit world dealing with low gods and spirits as persons. As the means of transition, we will deal with totemism.

1. Totemism

All Sepiks are arranged patrilineally in totemic families, from which they actually descended or with which their ancestors had some particular association. It is interesting to note that most (but not all) of the people can kill or eat their totemic animal, bird or plant. Some however would have taboos if the animal was caught as a result of ceremonies performed by members of that totemic family for the proliferation of the species.

By means of extensions of the totemic system, the whole known universe is divided up between clans of each village.

This system has ramifications on (a) inter-village visiting patterns. It is possible to locate a brother in even an unknown village. (b) Marriage patterns. Totemic families are then grouped into exogamous moieties. (c) Means of taking an oath. To jump over a symbol of ones own totem means that no return is possible along that route. This is often the form used to signify divorce etc.

2. Spirits of Dead

- (a) Following death, the spirit of the dead person stays in the vicinity of the village for a time, the duration of which differs from village to village. During this period it is not uncommon for the spirit of the dead person to be heard, especially in or near the grave yard. These spirits have often been seen by villagers although they disappear on being apprehended. During this period these spirits are feared by everyone, although they are thought to only be malevolent to those who have harmed them in life. At the conclusion of the mourning period (1 month to 1 year after death) a feast is held after which it is assumed that the spirit will leave the village for the place of the dead.
- (b) It is common for people away from home to be informed in a dream of the death of a loved one by the spirit of the dead person.
- (c) When someone has died usually the whole clan or village is in-

volved in ascertaining who caused that persons death. A bamboo pole is used. Either (1) this is taken to the grave of the deceased at sun-down and the spirit of the dead is requested to enter the pole. This pole which is carried by several men, then becomes heavy. The dead person is then asked to show very clearly who it was who caused his/her death. The pole then flies along forcing the carriers to go to the house of the person responsible. Usually it hits the house in such a spot to make it very clear as to who is responsible, i.e. near an individuals mosquito net or fireplace etc.

- Or (2) the spirit of the dead is requested to come and show them, through the pole who is responsible. Individual yes/no questions are asked, and, when the correct village, clan, family or person is mentioned the pole will roll from side to side to indicate the affirmative.
- (d) Cause of sickness is often revealed in dreams to be an ancestor who is upset at the state of interpersonal relationships in the village. In this case some sort of reconciliation is indicated for the estranged relatives. This would make the ancestor happy and the illness would recede.
 - (e) Prayer to spirits of the dead. On entering the jungle while hunting, it is common to speak personally to ancestors who are known to be responsible for that part of the jungle, to ask them to bring game near and to make it blind so it will not run away.

We will discuss the relationship between the living and the dead in greater detail in a separate section.

3. Low Gods: *tambaran*

As our last example, we move to the area of low gods, which in Sepik Pidgin are known as *tambaran*. We as missionaries have found it easier to identify this aspect of attitudes to the spirit realm probably because it aligns most closely with our concept of God. But we must be aware of the fact that unlike the aspects of *pawa* which are controlled at a personal level, *tambaran* is the concern of the village as a unit. It is important to note this distinction as far as our ministry is concerned.

Tambaran is identified with the *haus boi* (men's cult house) which is the men's sitting house when no ceremonies are in session, but then

is barricaded when worship and placation or male initiation ceremonies etc. are in progress. Actual ceremonies and even the forms and use of the *haus boi* varies so much from group to group that it is difficult to give a summary description other than “male cult.” But as the purpose of these examples has been to illustrate the fact of animism in Sepik villages and as we as missionaries have been most alert to *tambaran*, the point has been sufficiently made.

IMPLICATIONS

Now we come to discussing some of the ways that this animistic worldview can (a) help or hinder our purposes, and (b) ways in which we can utilize their understandings of the spirit world to make our ministry effective, and (c) aspects of it that will require special attention.

A. FIRST CONTACT

We'll begin with first contact. On first meeting one of their own people, the question uppermost in the mind of Sepiks is “what totemic clan is he or she from?” This is so they will know whether to respond to them as parent, child, sibling, maternal cousin or in-law. Primarily, the only other traditional slot they had was “enemy” or else just not part of this universe. Consequently, this is a question that a western missionary is going to have to face early in the piece. Will he claim a totemic family for himself (the complications of this aren't too serious if the system is learnt and followed carefully), or be a “nothing” at best or else a *masta* (European), which unfortunately is not an effective slot for communication at the worldview level where animistic attitude reside.

1. What Language?

Then we come to communicating the Gospel to people within this animistic worldview context. But the area of perception (see Diagram 1) that we are dealing with here is one that doesn't really exist for us. We can't sidestep the issue by saying that it didn't exist in the Bible as there are many worldviews mentioned and addressed in the Bible, the majority of which were somewhat animistic in outlook. So we will have to take the time to learn as much as we can about this aspect of their worldview so our communication to them can be in terms they can understand.

At least in the Sepik Province where Pidgin is so well known, I feel that effective communication is possible in Pidgin or in vernacular, if we take one other easily overlooked factor into account. If the communicator has learnt the language merely as a means to communicate at a minimal level, then he/she probably won't be able to make much progress. But "if" learning the language has been a vehicle for learning culture, which means learning the worldview as well, which means learning animism from their perspective, then real progress is possible in any language that allows close enough contact. At the same time, using the vernacular doesn't guarantee good communication at the level of animism either. Once again, it is the in-depth understanding behind the words that makes the difference.

2. Problems of the Pidgin New Testament

While saying that the Pidgin language is a satisfactory medium for communication about animism, it is worth noting some of the weaknesses and pitfalls of the use of Pidgin in the Pidgin New Testament. Of the rather extensive range of vocabulary and terminology available in Pidgin to describe the area of animism, this being one of the better developed areas of Pidgin, the Pidgin New Testament has only used a scant proportion of the available range. My point here is not to critique the translation however, as things like dialect differences in Pidgin have a bearing on how much allowance can be made. But by being aware of the problems as far as Sepik Pidgin is concerned, then this vagueness can be overcome in preaching, teaching and counselling by being specific ourselves.

Some examples of these inadequacies would be;

- (a) The Pidgin New Testament uses *spirit nogut* / *spirit doti* for evil spirits (Mark 1:23; Mark 9:18 etc.). *Spirit nogut* are known of in most villages, but are considered to be remote from human beings. I have only ever heard of physical attacks by them, not possession. This then renders the Gospels rather meaningless rather than being the dynamic Power Encounter narratives they should be. Most of the instances of possession that I know of have been by spirits which are considered to be in the category of "good," and most of this possession is voluntary. However, it is known that sometimes good spirits behave bad. But usually remedial rituals are known

with which they can induce the good spirit gone bad to behave itself. Most of the other types of spirits with which the people are familiar are regarded as being specific types of spirits, and their specific category is normally stated when they are being spoken of. In Pidgin, I have had up to 40 different types of spirits described in one discussion session with Papua New Guineans, with the average being more than 30 in a 15 minute discussion on the topic. Hence *spirit nogut* / *spirit doti* simply do not communicate when used with other than a very restricted group of well trained Christians.

- (b) *Posin*. In Pidgin, *posin* is used exclusively to describe one specific form of black magic using contagious magic. Unfortunately this term is used to translate “sorcery” in Rev. 21:8 and Gal. 5:19. But to the Papua New Guinean, it leaves the other aspects of black magic plus the whole range of white magic unmentioned. This is most unfortunate, as with no Old Testament to show God’s displeasure with all forms of black magic as well as white magic, divination etc. as is included in the range of meaning of the English and Greek words used in these passages, the church is left with a complete blank in their present scriptures on this vital point. This is a very serious lack in the light of the positive attitude in the Papua New Guinean worldview towards black magic to some degree, but especially to white magic, divination etc., when placed in contrast to the very negative attitude seen in the total scriptures to these things. Hence this point needs to be brought out very clearly in teaching to Papua New Guinean Christians.

B. WHAT TO SAY

Having now chosen a language and found ways to make it communicate effectively, what is going to be said and how?

- (1) First of all, Sepiks probably won’t have a consciousness of sin against a supreme being as we know it. Their religion has been basically centered around the pragmatic issues of here and now. To get around this potential communication problem, the suggestions made in Wayne Dye’s excellent article; *Towards a Cross-Cultural Definition of Sin* are invaluable (1976). If we are going to begin with the known and then progress on to the unknown, fail-

ure to achieve their own cultural ideals will be the nearest to our own concept of sin which would be familiar to them.

However, as a result of quite an amount of mission influence over a long period of time in many of the Sepik groups, it would be possible to begin with a God concept, but the sin concept as such should definitely be left for a period, as what is understood in this area is so distorted that almost complete re-education is needed, and this will have to be a worldview level change. I have found extensive teaching sessions geared to making Biblical truth applicable to an animistic worldview to be very effective.⁶

(2) Secondly, in endeavouring to bring people to the point of committing their lives to Christ, their animistic worldview will influence our plans in two ways:

(a) Multi-Individual Mutually Interdependent decision making. Due to the interplay on the animistic worldview level of totemism, belief in the continuing interest and action of the dead in village activities, the importance of harmony in relationships within clans, moieties and villages on the sociological level and group identification, a persons own group is of primary importance to Sepiks. Therefore, due to these above factors, decisions of any sort are usually made by discussion and consensus in order to maintain the unity of the group. Consequently, as we endeavour to reach Sepiks for the Lord, we need to go about it in such a way that these factors can be tilted to our advantage rather than tilted against us. We can't afford to have the Gospel rejected just because "we couldn't do it together."

This is also crucial for the future of the church as it develops. Many of the worldview values and concepts which the Gospel will "judge" as people begin to live it, will be group held values. So to bring about real change this will necessitate the group being able to evaluate these things and agree to replace their previous values with the insights gained from God's Word. This is so important we will look at again in greater depth in a later chapter.

(b) Power Encounter. Due to the fact that various aspects of animism that are contradictory to Christianity are part of the worldview of the people, and due to the fact that their "belief" in these things is usually on the pragmatic level of manipulating them for their own pur-

poses, or fearing for their own safety, reasoned debate is not able to change this worldview. This can only be done on its own terms in what is known as Power Encounter.

This applies to the Sepiks in the same way as Tippet describes its application to the Tongans of over a century ago:

Here are people in a mana (*pawa*) orientated society, for whom there can be no possible change of faith without a change of mana. There must be a demonstration, physical or symbolic, but at least ocular - a Power Encounter. This is a picture of dynamics in the primary meaning of the word. This is how the islanders saw themselves situated. If we see these demonstrations within the cultural matrix and philosophy of life of the island people, we must admit their behaviour was quite meaningful (1971:82).

This is why our teaching has to be extensive and well informed in this area of life. As they can accept Christ as Lord of their lives in the areas where they now know and recognize supernatural powers, there will then be a willingness to learn and put into practice everything they can of genuine Christianity, as it is contextualized in terms that are relevant to them. As they come into relationship with God by accepting Jesus, the only way to God as Lord of Power, the other concepts which are so important to us due to our individualistic orientated society, i.e. Jesus as personal Saviour etc. can also become meaningful to them.

Prayer for the sick will also need to be a part of the new church, otherwise the door would be left partly ajar for magical practices to creep back in. Sickness is seen as a spiritual problem so we must have a Christian spiritual answer to meet this continuing felt need.

C. PRODUCING A CHURCH

Once people have accepted Christ as Lord, what then? Obviously they are going to have to be formed into a group for shepherding. If they have become Christian as a group as we've suggested they can, and in many cases, should, then the group is already formed, leaders and all. But whether this will mean training leaders of an already existing group for them to teach the new converts or whether we are involved personally with the new converts, the basic implications of them being part of an animistic worldview will be the same.

First of all, their new faith will have to meet the needs of every day life as their traditional beliefs did, or else unmet felt needs will result in syncretism, as they try to meet some of their needs by the only form they know; i.e. magic and the help of spirits. It will be imperative to provide functional substitutes for the whole range of white magic as we have listed previously. The basis of each of these substitutes will be prayer to God, either group or personal, to meet their particular needs. Some sort of culturally significant and satisfying form will also have to be found. The role of the missionary in this process should be that of (a) catalyst, i.e. helping the Christians to start thinking of the need and possibly of a substitute. (b) Information source. Missionaries will have a good knowledge of God's Word. This knowledge should be used to make the new Christians aware of what God's Word says about a particular subject. But then it is important to trust the Holy Spirit in the new Christians to help them to arrive at the correct interpretation or equivalent action in their culture. Also, as an information source, the missionary should know what other Christians in similar cultures around the world have done in similar situations. This would give them new alternatives which they could prayerfully consider.

THREE AREAS OF NEED

There are three specific aspects of the Sepik animistic worldview that we will consider in the context of developing a church. We won't be discussing these because they are necessarily more important than others, but because I feel we have made less progress in helping Sepiks find Christian solutions to these problems than we have in other areas like healing etc. Healing and the like have been easier for us to grapple with due to our Pentecostal background. These are: (a) love potions, (b) divination, and (c) attitudes towards ancestors.

A. LOVE POTIONS

Love potions have been a stumbling block to many young Christians who have not been shown any other specific way to be able to ensure acquiring a spouse. To help overcome this problem I'd suggest help at two levels. The first is that we should specifically prepare material and specifically teach single Christians on the theology of finding a spouse: Basically this would be something like "God wants you to

have a compatible spouse, therefore prayer in this area is effective. At the same time, the person using the love potions actually decided on the spouse and then used magic to achieve their wishes. The difference between this attitude and Christian prayer where God is in control will have to be pointed out. Secondly, there will need to be specific teaching to parents on their responsibility in acquiring a spouse for their children. This was traditionally done right across the board, but the current attitude amongst Christian parents of *laik bilong yangpela* (let the young choose) is not conducive to Christian behaviour either in the area of magic or morals.

B. DIVINATION

When it comes to matters of persistent illness, death or guidance in decision making, the Church on the Sepik River to date has provided no satisfactory substitute to the universal human desire to know causes. And to Sepiks, this is more than just a curious desire, because in their worldview, illness and death arise from spiritual causes which are imperceptible to the five senses. This is very evident by the number of Christians who will revert to pre-Christian, sub-Christian practices to get the guidance or insight they feel they need.

Before we suggest a possible Christian alternative, we must note a few points from the Bible:

- (1) God is against mediums (*man i gat was*); necromancers (*glas man*); omens (*skelim bel bilong kakaruk, pret long sta na singaut bilong sampela pisin*); divination (*askim mambu, askim kanu*).
- (2) God realizes our need for guidance. In this regard, notice that in Deuteronomy 18:9-22, God not only denounces and forbids all these traditional forms of divination, but also promises a Prophet (Jesus) to reveal God's plans and gives the criterion by which a true human prophet of God can be judged. In recognizing our need of guidance, it seems to me that the point God is stressing is that only He can rightfully be our source of trans-empirical knowledge.
- (3) The ordained use of the urim and thummim would show this same point (Ex. 28:29 cp 1 Sam. 14:36-42).
- (4) In the Old Testament, the amount that the prophets operated in this "divination" area, i.e. direction from other than human insight,

is quite substantial (1 Sam. 9:6; 2 Kings 6:9; Jer. 42:1-4).

- (5) In the New Testament, three gifts of the Spirit (1 Cor. 12:8,10) Prophecy, Word of Knowledge and Discerning of Spirits) are within this area, as well as one of the ministry gifts given by Christ, the Prophet (Eph. 4:11).

Hence I feel that we could be quite within bounds to recognize the potential for good of this and have formal askim save long God (request knowledge from God) services which would enable the church to be called together in special times of need to corporately seek the mind of the Lord. In that situation then, with the safety of numbers to guard against excesses or personal tangents in interpretation and application, I think it would be reasonable to have faith in God to give the necessary insight through the gifts and ministries He has ordained and placed in the church. This would need to be surrounded by good teaching to help them to understand clearly where the borders of legitimate problems and human curiosity divide, as well as how to implement this without magical overtones. But the positive benefits of having a concrete form to meet this deep felt need will be many indeed.

One point that will require special attention in instituting divination services is the matter of divination as to the cause of death. One must understand the Papua New Guinean meanings at this point: The real question they are asking is not "What caused death?" but rather, "Who caused death?" And the reason for asking this question is that they want to be able to take revenge. So I think the reason for expressing caution at this point should be obvious.

C. ATTITUDES TOWARD ANCESTORS

For starters on this topic, we need to establish some fixed points that will guide our thinking:

- (1) Many of the Sepiks attitudes toward ancestors are going to be changed by Christianity in the long term.
- (2) Our western attitudes toward ancestors is not a satisfactory substitute to the Papua New Guinea worldview in this regard.
- (3) Our western attitude towards ancestors are not exclusively from or totally in line with Scripture.
- (4) Our normal view of Sepik attitudes to ancestors is not totally accurate.

In the light of these factors, I would like to suggest that we need to look at this afresh from the view point of the Sepiks themselves, and then look at God's Word from that perspective to see what it has to say. To arrive at any conclusive suggestions would take us far beyond the possible scope of this paper, so instead we will only indicate some of the weak and strong points of each position which should be a guide as to the direction that further enquiries should follow.

It has normally been assumed in our circles that "ancestor worship" is the meaning of Papua New Guinean actions towards ancestors. However, this has recently been questioned by a number of researchers, some of the most vocal of whom are born again Christians. Therefore, somehow we really need to find out what Sepiks themselves really feel their actions mean. This will be difficult for us to do for the same reason that it is important that we should do so. This reason is the fact that the term "ancestor worship" according to our western Christian worldview has all sorts of negative connotations. Thus, once an action is glibly branded "ancestor worship" we are prevented by our worldview from further objective analysis of what we are really seeing. And for this same reason we have been prevented from being creative in helping Sepiks find viable Christian solutions to this problem.

Tentatively, I would like to suggest that the Sepiks worldview sees ancestors not as gods but as living members of their community who through death have entered into another form of life. And just as these people had obligations and privileges in their relationships while on earth, now in their new status a different set of obligations and privileges apply, but it is still perceived as being a reciprocal relationship between living members of the community. Thus the food given to the ancestors and the help expected (and received) are seen to them to be an extension of human relationships rather than worship. Respect or veneration would possibly be a more accurate description of the attitude felt. The aspect of fear that is seen in that relationship I think is also an extension of the fear that is felt towards elderly powerful people in the village, especially by children, and so in itself does not indicate worship as such. Further research to check this hypothesis is going to be very important.

At the same time, the belief that so much help (or retribution) comes

from the ancestors will have to be subjected to the judgment of Scripture, which no doubt will bring changes in that belief. But in helping them to do this, we need to understand their attitudes toward ancestors so we can be far more realistic and creative in helping them to find solutions. If on the other hand our attitudes come across as being negative, then it is very likely that their belief in ancestors will go underground and so therefore will be hidden from us. But more seriously still, in hiding these from us, they will be persisted in without bringing them to the scrutiny of God's Word either.

We must be careful not to destroy respect for ancestors as the continuation of any society is dependent on the respect for parents which is closely related to respect for ancestors in Sepik society.

Our own complete disregard for ancestors is something that is not necessarily good, and is definitely not a Scriptural attitude, although it has probably been given Scriptural credence by the command not to communicate with the dead etc. But the living believers linkage with the Christian dead, and interest of the dead believers in the welfare of living Christians is not even considered. On the other hand, passages of Scripture like Heb. 11:40; Heb. 12:1 & 23 which tell us about this, plus Jesus' comments about God as the God of the living and the dead (Luke 20:37-38), open up concepts that we find very hard to understand, let alone explain or be comfortable with. The fact that the Old Testament many times refers to God as the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, who were in fact the dead by that stage should help us to realize that not all the thinking on the subject has been done already. While looking for new directions, the verses mentioned above would provide a good place to begin rethinking both ours and the Sepik's attitudes toward ancestors in an endeavour to come up with a truly Christian, yet truly satisfying attitude toward ancestors.

CONCLUSION

In conclusion then, as we have shown the pervasiveness of the animistic worldview amongst the Sepiks and the implications of this to Christian Missions, both in general and in specific situations, it seems addressing one further situation could be necessary. That is, the training of Sepiks for ministry. This training has been done basically by us

as westerners and has unfortunately although largely unavoidably included a lot of our western worldview instead of Christian Sepik worldview. As we come to understand this subject more, may God grant us the grace and the wisdom to put that understanding to work in both our preaching and training so that the supra-cultural Gospel will develop Papua New Guinean roots, thus making its fruit, the Church, indigenous to Papua New Guinea.

NOTES ON CHAPTER 12

1. *The term "Sepiks" here designates the following culture groups: Iatmul, Manambu, Yessan, Iwam, Semiol, Wogamusin, Pei, Sanio, Bahinimo, Abelam, Boikin and Arapesh.*
2. *The examples cited will be from personal observation or elicitation and were gathered during the period 1972 - 1978.*
3. *For further insights on pawa, see Ahrens (1977).*
4. *Metamorphoses: Change form, structure or substance by witchcraft or magic.*
Lycanthropy: to change from a man to an animal (especially wolf) by magic.
5. *According to Mihalic's Dictionary and Grammar of Neo-Melanesian.*
6. *See Appendix B for the list of subjects and suggested order for evangelistic teaching in Sepik villages.*

CHAPTER 13

UNDERSTANDING CARGOISM

MILLENARIANISM AND THE DISCIPLES

The disciples had been with Jesus for three years, sharing both the joys and sorrows of His life and ministry, hearing His public teaching, plus privately having it explained to them in depth. They witnessed both the trauma of His death and the frightening victory of His resurrection. As if that wasn't enough, there was those forty days after the resurrection during which Jesus appeared to them and spoke to them about the Kingdom of God. Surely no one could misunderstand Jesus and His purposes after all that. But what was the response of the disciples? "Lord, is this the time when you will re-establish the Kingdom and restore it to Israel?" (Acts 1:6 Amplified)

Can you imagine what it must have done to Jesus to have heard that statement? But I'm so glad it got included in the Biblical narrative. After three years of such teaching they still had completely erroneous concepts of "The Kingdom of God" and God's purposes. Therefore it gives us hope when we see Papua New Guinean Christians getting involved in Cargo Cults or when a Papua New Guinean whom we've come to know and trust, whom we've invested our lives in, says "Now will you tell me how to get Cargo?" When we consider the end result of the ministry of those disciples who had it wrong after that sort of teaching, we can afford to take heart.

The disciples had believed in Jesus as the Messiah, the Son of the Living God. That was no problem. Everything they saw proved that beyond a doubt. But the problem was that the "new information" (what they saw in and heard from Jesus) had to be interpreted in the light of the "old information." That is, in the light of the assumptions that had become a subconscious, unconscious part of them as a result of their upbringing in Jewish culture. The basic assumption about the Messiah

within Judaism at that time was that He would come to free Israel from the Romans and return political power to the Jews. That Jesus didn't quite fit all the previous assumptions about how He was to come or what He was to do, was no reason to disbelieve the basic assumption about the Messiah's "reason for being." And so, right up until the day of the ascension, the disciples had held erroneous Millenarian hopes.

This then brings into question a statement we had previously made. That is, "Surely no one could misunderstand Jesus and His purposes after all that." It seems we'll have to modify it at least to say, "No one, except the disciples." But as we realize that the disciples misunderstood because of a basic assumption or presupposition that had been taught them as part of their culture, it seems that we may have to modify that statement even more. Let's say "surely no one could misunderstand Jesus and His purposes after all that, except of course, those who have learnt basic assumptions and presuppositions as part of their culture." Or to put it more simply "Surely no one could misunderstand, except human beings." Worldview level assumptions and presuppositions, taught to us as children and lived in adulthood are a fundamental part of our human-being-ness.

MISSIONARIES AND CARGO CULTS

To talk about "Understanding Cargoism" as missionaries and or Europeans, brings us to the question of missionaries' relationships to Cargo Cults in the past. In the broad spectrum of Papua New Guinea we find some Europeans who were believed to be deities who brought cargo.¹ Others have been seen as prophets.² Others have been ignored by cultists while yet others have been persecuted and suffered physical violence and the threat of death.

Yet for all Westerners in Papua New Guinea both missionaries and other Europeans, there has been an aura of mystery, a touch of the exotic to say the least, about Cargo Cults. This no doubt accounts for the proliferation of literature on the subject especially of a descriptive nature.

Basically, there have been two attitudes to Cargo Cults as far as Europeans are concerned: Mystery and Fear. It is important to notice at this point that these two attitudes are inter-related. Fear is rooted in

mystery, and mystery is fed by fear, and what's more fear is counter productive to well thought out action. Or to state it mathematically, mystery and fear are in direction proportion, while these two together are in inverse proportion to well reasoned action. Consequently, if the goals of this chapter were to be stated simplistically it would be to "reduce the mystery of Cargo Cults" realizing what the results of this would be within the formula we've stated.

PREVIOUS STUDIES

There is a vast amount of published material available on Cargo Cults, beginning with the first documented Cargo Cult of 1857³ to the present day. In the preparation of this chapter alone I have dealt with some 93 books, articles and papers relating to Cargo Cults or other millenerian or nativistic movements. These materials group fairly naturally into three categories:

1. description
2. interpretation
3. theorization

By far the greatest bulk of material has been on the description of Cargo Cults and has focused primarily on the "cult" aspect. The overt behaviour within the cult. Obviously, these descriptions have been the work of people living in areas of Cargo Cult activity. Quite an amount of this material has been produced by missionaries.

The second category of literature, interpretation, is also quite extensive. But here we see an interesting factor entering in. Many of the people who have been involved in "interpreting Cargo Cults" have not been in actual contact with Melanesians in their real life situations, at least not for any extensive period of time. Furthermore, many have come from the "scientific objectivity" of the social sciences that automatically makes native explanations of a particular phenomenon suspect where these explanations include the supernatural as part of their explanation.

The third category, theorization, has also been the work of "objective scientists" with the same limiting presuppositions as the interpreters. These people like Wallace and Linton have spent time in field situations and have then tried to see the typology, the broad lines of simi-

larity in movements from around the world. The benefits, insights and limitations of their work will be examined later.

OUR FOCUS

Over and above the three categories previously listed, there is an essential category that only a few writers have dealt with at all⁴ and none have given it sufficient treatment or importance in my estimation. That category is the basic thinking and assumptions about cargo that are consistent amongst Papua New Guineans today.⁵ This is what we will be referring to as “cargoism”⁶ in this chapter, as distinct from Cargo Cults. By reflecting on what we outlined in chapter 11 as traditional worldview assumptions, tracing them through the contact with the Western world to the present day, it will be obvious that:

- (1) Cargo Cult is only the tip of the iceberg called cargoism.
- (2) Cargoism is the logical outworking of Papua New Guinean worldview assumptions in the face of the changed external circumstances brought about by culture contact in general, and especially the intense and traumatic culture contact of the last 100 years.

DEFINITIONS

To guarantee clarity in the matter we are discussing, it would be in order at this point to define some of the terms we’ve been using.

(1) Cargo

The term Cargo comes from the English word cargo, meaning - goods or merchandise, the freight of a ship or vessel, and is applied in this context to the food, clothing and other manufactured goods that are believed will be in abundant supply as the result of any particular Cargo Cult. However,

this word is an inadequate translation of the Pidgin word ‘*kago*’. Included in the concept of ‘*kago*’ may be such things as food, clothing, and other goods, economic development, money, technological advancement, release from oppression, knowledge, peace, social justice, status - in fact, whatever is thought to be necessary for the good life (Strelan 1977:11).

(2) Cargoism

Cargoism “refers chiefly to the Cargo beliefs, the Cargo myths and

ideology, that Cargo philosophy if you like” (Strelan 1977:10). Or the interpretation of the new situation on the basis of traditional worldview assumptions as we will be discussing it.

Recognition of the fact that there is such a thing as cargoism helps one to avoid the cargo/non-cargo dichotomy which seems to have vitiated some discussions of Melanesian Religious movements. Cargoism in Melanesia is endemic; it exists even when and where there is no overt Cargo movement or Cargo activity (Strelan 1977:10).

(3) Cargo Cult

Each movement, with its particular leaders, beliefs, rituals and forms designed to bring about the new Utopia, to produce the Cargo is a Cargo Cult. As such each of these are distinct and can only be understood in their entirety and recurrence by understanding the concept of cargoism.

WORLDVIEW Vs. BELIEF

In the Chapter 11, we looked in depth at Papua New Guinean Worldview, its assumptions, themes and allegiances and especially highlighting the differences between the Papua New Guinean worldview and the Western worldview that we looked at in Chapter 5. We’ll now proceed on to look at the implications of these worldview differences in the context of cargoism. But before we do, there is one important distinction we must notice. Namely, the distinction between worldview and belief.

Belief especially in Western Christian thinking has come to be associated with those things we consciously know and give mental assent to. Into this category falls much of our doctrinal formulations etc. But as we have found out to our horror, behaviour and beliefs are often quite inconsistent if not contrary to each other. Beliefs are on the level of conscious thought and can have a bearing on reasoned action. However, most of our human behaviour is “reaction” more than action, or at least action not on the basis of reasoning but more on the basis of the central assumptions, concepts, premises and values, which we have learned as part of our enculturation into our respective cultures. These central assumptions are more or less widely shared by the members of our communities. This is what we are referring to in this paper as worldview. It is these worldview assumptions that we will be discussing in regard cargoism, rather than beliefs as previously defined. To

illustrate this difference from the subject of sorcery, we find that

In the same way the villager does not believe in sorcery. He KNOWS that it is there. His system of thinking is sharp, logical, sound, ... but it is based upon another view of the world around him, and so he sees things differently. IF WE WANT TO HELP, WE MUST UNDERSTAND HIS WAY OF THINKING (Hueter 1974:131; emphasis his).

CULTURE CONFRONTATION

As long as Papua New Guineans with this worldview only came into contact with people, cultures, technology and worldview similar to their own, this worldview accounted for all the variables. But then into that world came people who were not accounted for. Or were they? As we'll see, they had to be, and were accounted for in that worldview.

The confrontation of culture contact is often explained in terms of advanced western technology and dominant colonialism. But it has to be realized that cargoism and Cargo Cult are a result of an honest attempt to interpret the new situation in the light of the traditional worldview. The problem was compounded not just by the advanced technology but just as importantly, by the different worldview of the Europeans. Many of the worldview assumptions of the Europeans were so different from the Papua New Guinean worldview assumptions as to be inconceivable to Papua New Guineans. The result was that Papua New Guineans have had difficulty relating to Europeans as "people."

CARGOISM - A WORLDVIEW LEVEL RESPONSE

At the time of initial contact, Papua New Guineans were confronted with two possibilities. Either the new comers were "people" or they were super-humans. That is deities, spirits or returned ancestors. To find out why this was so, we'll refer to some of the worldview assumptions pointed out earlier.

A. SUPER-HUMAN

1. Humans are part of a group. But often the first Europeans were very small groups, therefore their isolation would tend to categorize them as deities.
2. Individualism, especially in decision making, with the decisions being made on the basis of a different worldview, would make

them seem capricious, another attribute of the super-human.

3. The seeming great wealth and technological supremacy of the newcomers was definitely a sign of supernatural power and could easily mean that the Europeans were themselves super-human.

Thus we have stories of men like Maclay on the Rai Coast of Papua New Guinea who was regarded by the Papua New Guineans as one of their own deities (Lawrence 1964:244).⁷

B. HUMAN

However, the most popular response of the Papua New Guineans has been to eventually regard the Europeans as at least semi-human. And it has been the attempt to fit this information into their worldview that has resulted in cargoism. Presuming the Europeans were human, then according to Papua New Guinean worldview the Europeans culture including its technology and how to make and use it, was revealed to them by the Supernatural. From their worldview perspective they could see much in the European that would appear to the Papua New Guinean to mean ongoing supernatural connections. First there is the matter of European specialization. In Papua New Guinean culture the only specialization is in dealing with the Supernatural. Of their material culture, everything they needed they could make and repair for themselves. But not so the European. Not only did we have specialists to use and repair our technology but what's more, spare parts always had to be ordered from "overseas," which is reinterpreted in Papua New Guinean thinking to mean "the land of cargo," or, "the land of ancestors."

Furthermore, European attitudes towards manufactured goods, such as their habit of continually updating plus generally being careless (an attitude that was especially emphasized by the disregard of war surplus materials after World War II) have emphasized the assumption that it must have come from some supernatural source. Surely if it was personally manufactured or worked for they would take more care of them.

Different assumptions about ownership rights and privacy have also added to the assumptions about supernatural connections. The European emphasis on exclusive personal ownership plus their constant demand on privacy have often been interpreted as secrecy. And secrecy is interpreted as implying supernatural connections. What is more,

these exclusive attitudes have not done much for interpersonal relationships that are so important to Papua New Guineans. Combine this then with conflicting assumptions about justice i.e. Papua New Guinean justice is therapeutic, the object of which is to get people back together again, while European justice is punitive, with the goal of repaying the wrongdoer, and the stage is set for strained relationships. To the Papua New Guinean, the way to restore strained relationships was to resume reciprocity. However, the European didn't respond to that either. This left the Papua New Guinean the option of regarding them as an enemy, which is their only other category, but they didn't act like enemies either. The end result has been confusing to say the least and is more likely to be interpreted as capriciousness or secrecy again suggesting supernatural connections.

RELATED ASSUMPTIONS

At this point we need to take our bearings on several other Papua New Guinean worldview assumptions. First was their "encapsulated" view of time, which did not allow for such a thing as development. Any particular item was either from Ancestral time, which by definition had to be "revealed" to those within Living Memory time or else it did not exist. The normal validations for this revelation in the past were the village myths, or in the present tense it was possible for the spirit of a person to travel around during sleep and thus to receive information from the realm of Ancestral Time. Secondly there was the assumption that ritual is effective in bringing the benefits of Ancestral Time into the sphere of Living Memory Time.

Thirdly, as with any worldview, it had to explain all the phenomena it came into contact with or else the society would disintegrate. What's more it had to explain it in its own terms or with the use of any other acceptable information that may have been available. Nevertheless, it had to be explained, and in the case of the question of European manufactured goods the question was - "Why should they receive them rather than us?"

PAPUA NEW GUINEAN EXPLANATIONS

The explanations provided by Papua New Guineans to answer the above question have been many and varied. The explanation that has

been written about the most has been the adjustment of traditional myths to explain the Europeans as part of their group, long since departed and now returned (Burridge 1960) The departure and subsequent blessing of the other “brother” or whatever motif is used, is then explained as the “normal” life that the Papua New Guineans have been deprived of due to some “mistake” that their ancestors made. Often this has been equated with Bible Stories such as the cursing of Cain or the cursing of Ham with the cursed being the Papua New Guineans, and the uncursed being the Europeans.⁸

One other explanation suggests that Europeans and Papua New Guineans are two distinct groups and at the time of creation, God revealed “factories” to Adam, the European’s ancestor, which then included the ability to make money and manufactured goods, etc. This view, however, is not widely held.

A third explanation that has some acceptance on the Sepik River is a myth about a “cosmic parliament” where material goods were to be distributed, to which both the Europeans and the Papua New Guineans sent a representative. During the time of the parliament the European representative, Kung Kung had a fight with the Papua New Guinean representative, Samakun. In the course of the fight, Kung Kung broke Samakun’s arm so that Samakun was not able to grasp firmly or carry any large proportion of the Cargo away. As a result Papua New Guinea is technologically underprivileged.

A fourth explanation is based on the further assumption that Jesus was a European. This is understandable when all Europeans refer to Him a lot, either in preaching (missionaries) or in blasphemy (administration and business people). The story as it is understood by the Papua New Guineans is that Jesus (the European) came to His own people and began travelling around extensively within the confines of His own country proclaiming the “Good News” (what could be better news than how to get the Cargo). In the course of His lifetime, He never left His own country (Europeans only have Cargo) and was finally killed by His own people (the Europeans) even though He’d done nothing wrong. He was killed because they were jealous. (Obviously because He wanted to continue preaching the “Good News” to Papua New Guineans.) This explanation that is quite widespread, presents some very big barriers to

internally distorted: the elements are not harmoniously related but are mutually inconsistent and interfering.

- (4) The Period of Revitalization ...
 - (a) A supernatural being appears to the prophet-to-be, explains his own and his societies troubles as being entirely or partly a result of the violation of certain rules, and promises individual and social revitalization if the injunctions are followed and the rituals practiced.
 - (b) Communication ... The dreamer undertakes to preach his revelations.
 - (c) Organization. Converts are made by the prophet, organization develops with three orders of personnel: the prophet; the disciples; and the followers.
 - (d) Adaptation ... The movement is a revolutionary organization and almost invariably will encounter some resistance, and will have to use various strategies of adaption: doctrinal modification; political and diplomatic manoeuvre; and force. Where organized hostility to the movement develops, emphasis shifts from cultivation of the ideal to combat against the unbeliever.
 - (e) Cultural transformation ... The population comes to accept the new religion, a noticeable social revitalization occurs.
 - (f) Routinization ... Once the desired transformation has occurred, the organization contracts and maintains responsibility only for the preservation of doctrine and performance of ritual.
- (5) The New Steady State ... The culture of this state will probably be different in pattern, in organization, and in traits from the earlier steady state. It will be different from that of the period of cultural distortion (pp. 268-275).

THE LEADER

To an outsider looking in, it often appears that out of nowhere, a person experiences some supernatural visitation either in vision or dream, proclaims it and a Cargo Cult is begun. But it must be realized that there can be no Cargo Cult without the endemic cargoism to start with. And once that is there, remembering the Papua New Guinean assumption about leadership validation i.e. supernatural contact, it is possible for a cult to begin even without the undue cultural distortion. No doubt, though, there has to be some cultural distortion (as there is

in any culture) and presumably the greater the distortion, the greater will be the acceptance of the cult. This is summed up well by Worsley

The emphasis on the importance of the leader distracts us ... from focusing on the social significance of the leader as a symbol, catalyst, message bearer (1968:XVII).

The ongoing validation of the leader depends on his continuing ability to predict the outcome of confrontation situations. If his original prophecy was general enough so as not to be immediately or irrevocably invalidated, and presuming he can predict the outcome of conflict situations, then there is a good chance that the original prophecy will be able to be modified sufficiently to allow for an ongoing movement.

At the same time we must remember that the fact that any individual does not participate in a cult does not ordinarily or necessarily presuppose the absence of cargoism in the mind of that person. Rather it indicates that a particular ritual being used is not regarded by that person as being efficient.

The details of the Peli Movement in the Sepik Province provide an example of these points. Yaliwain had predicted that there would be no government intervention when they removed the survey marker from the top of Mt. Turu on July 7, 1971. This came true (confrontation situation), so the unfulfilled prophecy of cargo was able to be modified to greater productivity of garden and jungle. However, when Yaliwain was unable to bring the National Government to its knees when he was elected to the House of Assembly, combined with Daniel Hawina's subsequent arrest and imprisonment at Maprik, it was obvious that the validity of their leadership was then suspect. As a result, there has been a cooling off of the Peli and Seven Associations while the general community are back to a level of cargoism that could be motivated as easily or more easily by leaders other than Yaliwain and Hawina. What's more, even while the cult was in progress there were many people whom I know personally who were not involved in that particular cult while still holding onto their basic cargoism. The reason for this we have pointed out above.

RITUAL CHOSEN - POINT OF TENSION

The rituals chosen in each of the hundreds of Cargo Cults have been

distinct from each other. However, there have been many broad similarities, and many of these are explainable by the similarity of worldview and the similarity of stimulus in the individual situations. But why the difference? For example, the ritual in one cult that I have some information on in a Sepik River village, consisted primarily of organized wife swapping, and clearing the grave yard where the cargo was to arrive at night. And this was prior to extensive western contact. A.R. Tippett in discussing Cargo Cults in the Solomon Islands gives some clues about this.

The distinctive features of the movement will suggest those aspects of the culture contact in which the frustrations are most keenly felt - social, economic, political or religious. It therefore follows that the same distinctive features would also suggest the area in which effective remedy must be found for the situation (1967:215-6).

However, notice that the distinctive features will suggest the areas of frustration. That is, it is not necessarily immediately apparent. As in the case mentioned above, not only was the graveyard an obvious place for contact with ancestors, but it was only a short time previously that the government had forced the people in this village to bury their dead in one location outside the village instead of putting them on platforms near or in their homes. Secondly, as the ancestors were vitally concerned with interpersonal relationships and the majority of village conflicts arose from charges of adultery, the obvious solution was to routinize the behaviour while removing the charges. However the wife swapping soon resulted in even greater conflicts and so the whole cult was abandoned.

So we can conclude that the form the cult takes should be taken notice of, but should not be interpreted on face value. It is the underlying meaning behind the overt symbolism that must be found and where a remedy will need to be applied.

SUCCESS OR FAILURE OF A CULT

From all that we have said so far, it must be obvious that from the perspective of the people involved, the success or failure of the cult is measured by standards other than the arrival or non-arrival of the Cargo. More importantly, however, we as missionaries must be very aware that even the 'failure' of a cult does not challenge the basic cargoism

on which the cult is built. It may make the people a little more cautious about the ritual they follow, because they will realize that the ritual was ineffective. But this will not challenge the efficacy of ritual to produce cargo.

There are too many variables by which the failure can be explained. What's more, an unsuccessful cult is probably as detrimental to black/white relationships as a successful one would be, as one of the major reasons given for unsuccessful cults is that Europeans were working against them. And this explanation fits their worldview very well since the Europeans had the better *pawa* (supernatural enablement) to get the cargo in the first place, so it is only logical that they could also overcome Papua New Guinean ritual and render it ineffective.

On the other hand, or at the same time, some Cargo Cults have brought some of the basic frustrations to the notice of authorities thus making the long term situation of the Papua New Guineans better than before. What's more they have found ways to remedy some of their own internal frustration points and thus to produce a "more satisfying culture" has been the result (Wallace 1956:265).

Also, with Papua New Guinean use of time being oriented to event rather than time, the Cargo Cult activities have indeed been an event, so have been fulfilling in that regard also. But as the basic cargoism has remained intact, and has actually been reinforced in many cases, "continuity of the cults" as Worsley calls it (1968), is often the result.

NOTES ON CHAPTER 13

1. *For Maclay's experience, see Lawrence 1964:61-67.*
2. *For details, see Janssen 1974:162-166.*
3. *See Kamma 1972:105-107 for details.*
4. *Lawrence 1964 & Hueter 1974 are two significant exceptions.*
5. *Worsley, in his introduction to his 1968 edition of "The Trumpet Shall Sound," commenting about his earlier edition of that book admits: "My book ... pays insufficient attention to the source of the beliefs which inform the dominant responses to that situation." (page lix)*
6. *This term is from Strelan, 1977.*
7. *In the situation with Maclay mentioned earlier, as he was thought to be a deity, we would expect to hear of ritual directed to him, which however, is not the case. Lawrence points out a satisfactory reason; "As*

long as the bestowal of services and gifts produced the responses desired, there was no need for ritual activity" (1964:244).

8. *There is a lot of material published on this, but I haven't footnoted it as I had previously come across this concept in my own work on the Sepik River.*
9. *In the village of Mowi, I was told the story of a vehicle that is supposed to have come to Port Moresby on a ship with a man's name on the windscreen. When a man by that name went to the custom's office to collect it, they refused to give it to him, and later scratched the name off. Apparently it would have been the consignment code with letters that spelt his name. However, to the people who told me, it was further proof of their assumptions.*

FURTHER READING

Lawrence (1964)

SECTION FIVE:

SURMOUNTING
CROSS CULTURAL
BARRIERS

SECTION FIVE:

SURMOUNTING CROSS CULTURAL BARRIERS

SECTION SUMMARY

Practical suggestions on how to be successful in ministry in Papua New Guinea is the theme of Section five under the title of “Surmounting Cross-Cultural Barriers.” These practical suggestions then become case studies, providing inspiration for and reflection about ministry anywhere in the world. This section covers a wide range of topics: Response to Cargoism (Chapters 14 and 15), Ministering to Spirit World Problems (Chapter 16) Potential for People Movements (Chapter 17) with case studies of same (Chapter 18), Training Non-Literate Church Leaders (Chapter 19) and Urban Papua New Guinea: Strategy for Evangelism (Chapter 20).

CHAPTER 14

RESPONSE TO CARGOISM

(PART ONE)

In this section, we will be looking at practical ways of ministering in and through the problems presented to cross-cultural Christians by the Papua New Guinea situation. We'll begin by looking at some practical suggestions for ministry in areas of endemic cargoism.

WORLDVIEW TRANSFORMATION

As a response to Cargo Cults I am proposing that we need to deal primarily with cargoism. To do that, I am proposing that both missionaries and pastors need to come to a real empathetic understanding of Papua New Guinean worldview and then orient their ministry to bring about worldview transformation. This change will need to begin in the areas that have to do with primary allegiance and come to involve other worldview assumptions that may hinder normal Christian development. To emphasize what I'm saying, I'll include several quotes from men of vastly different persuasions who, although stating it in different terms, are essentially saying the same thing. First, A.R. Tippett, Methodist Missionary Anthropologist, summing up an analysis of Cargo Cults in the Solomons Islands.

The eccentric group behaviour, ... was an expression of something deeper ... the attempt to explain these experiences away in terms of western psychology was unacceptable to the Melanesians, ... It convinced both the schismatics and loyalists that the Europeans did not understand the Melanesian position and had no real solution to offer to meet their needs (1967:266).

Secondly, Peter Lawrence, a secular Anthropologist writing of the Rai Coast area south of Madang says:

The net result of the first seventy-nine years of contact was that the

values and concepts of the indigenous culture were totally vindicated in the people's eyes. They had, of course, to grapple with the problems caused by the impact of occupation, but their solutions could not be other than entirely traditional (1964:231).

John Strelan, a Lutheran Missionary writing after 15 years of experience in Papua New Guinea, says,

Men and women will be weaned away from Cargo Cults not when they have all their immediate desires granted, but only when they experience a complete change of heart and mind. Only a radical change in outlook and thinking of people will effect a change in attitude toward cargo cults (1977:102).

So in the foregoing statements we find each of these men from very diverse backgrounds and situations talking about the change in worldview as being the ultimate remedy for cargoism. In talking about worldview change, we must first remember that because of basic cargoism a missionary dealing with non-Christians has real problems being heard, because they are continually listening to see if he will perhaps give some clue to the "key" to Cargo. I suspect this also applies to the way non-Christians listen to Papua New Guinean pastors. Or, if it doesn't, it is because it is assumed that they haven't been told the "key" as yet by their white colleagues, so therefore are not worth listening to seriously.

SEPIK CARGOISM

Cargo Cults and endemic cargoism are no new phenomena in the Sepik Province where I've lived for the past 14 years, or on the Sepik River where I've been specifically involved in ministry for the last ten years.

Just recently, I was interviewing one of our first missionaries to the Sepik Province, who confided to me that in retrospect, he felt that the initial invitations that our missionaries had received to visit various villages in the early 1950's were basically motivated by cargo interests.¹

Then by 1958, two separate movements were flourishing. One was led by a man by the name of Kepebange who was from the Sepik Plains near Pagwi. His movement spread to the north towards Maprik and was firmly entrenched in the Wosera area before the Government

clamped down on it and jailed a number of his followers as a result of an assault on several policemen by cultists.²

The other movement was led by Kungwianmeli from Yambon village 10 miles up river from Ambunti. This movement was originally focused on cult activities within the Catholic Churches in the villages of Yambon and Malu. After extensive periods of prayer, the sacred objects from the Men's Ceremonial Houses were carried off to shelters prepared for them in the jungle. This was then followed by further night vigils of prayer, which, according to Kungwianmeli, proved to be almost successful. "it got to the stage" he told me, "where each night we could hear the engines of the cars, trucks, planes and ships. As we continued our vigil, they got closer each night. But just before they began to materialize, the Government intervened and put me in jail, and that was the end of that. If only the Government hadn't intervened, we'd be right now."³

This movement spread in fairly autonomous forms at least 120 miles up river, and produced very strong movements in Aum,⁴ Tauri,⁵ and Mowi⁶ villages that I know of. Incidentally, this was prior to any significant European contact and prior to any mission contact in these three villages.⁷

In 1962, when Assemblies of God Missionaries first began to visit Mowi, sentries were posted to the graveyard each night the missionaries stayed in the village to make sure that they didn't collect the goodies that the Mowi's had been working so hard for.

Then in the early 1970's, with its climax on July 7th 1971, the Yaliwain Movement drew a large following from the middle Sepik as far upstream as Yambon. Furthermore, this created a lot of fresh Cargo interest in the villages which were too far away to become actual members in the movement.

MY SEPIK EXPERIENCE

Then in 1972, I came to minister in this situation, knowing but little of Cargo Cults in their overt form, but knowing even less of the pervasiveness of cargoism, both geographically and diachronically, as the mainspring of Cargo Movements.

But I quickly became aware of one thing. Invariably, when I got

down to involvement with older men in talking about Christian things, I found that what I was saying was not being listened to in its own right. Rather, it was being listened to very selectively to see if I, either intentionally or accidentally, was going to reveal the secret of how to get cargo. Initially I didn't realize what was going on, except that when we'd get down to discussion, the questions asked and the comments made didn't seem to be on the same subject as I'd been talking about. As it was, they weren't wanting to hear what I was saying, and I wasn't saying what they wanted to hear. So this left me frustrated, as there just had to be some way for those big men to genuinely hear the Gospel.

In the mean time, I'd begun the new program of Church Planting Evangelism described in Chapter 18. As we wanted the opinion leaders to feel comfortable, the meetings followed a village meeting format. As far as getting the right people to participate, this format worked just fine. But as this put me into even more open discussion of key issues with village elders, I found myself with the same frustrations all over again, only heightened by the closer contact of these meetings.

BIBLE GENEALOGIES: RELIEF IN SIGHT

It was about this time that Wayne Dye, a Wycliffe Bible Translator working on the Sepik River introduced me to a Genealogy chart that he'd been using in National Translators Courses as a means to communicate concepts of time and development to Papua New Guineans. Basically, their tool was a sheet of paper with a line up of very small human figures zig zagging across the page. Each figure represented a 25 year generation, and it covered the period from Abraham to Jesus and then, as a time line, on to the present day. On the way it highlighted various Old Testament characters and also certain technological discoveries and inventions on the A.D. period. Wayne told me that this chart had produced a lot of excitement amongst the national translators he'd explained it to, and that other Wycliffe Translators⁸ had found that Bible Genealogies constitute a very significant proof of the authority and reliability of the Bible. Without realizing what I was bound for, I decided that this could at least be helpful. So I stayed up very late that night and made up a replica of Wayne's chart, only much bigger, for use in our meetings.

On first using this chart, I got two very different responses from two of the groups represented. From the older folk in the meeting I got polite smiles and blank looks, so obviously it hadn't helped them. But from a group of men who had graduated from three years of Bible school there was intense interest and numerous questions. One of their first questions was, "Where is Adam (who wasn't shown) in relation to Abraham (who was shown)?" This then indicated one modification which would be necessary, that is, extend the genealogy back to Adam.

By the next meeting we'd extended the sheet to include an extra 83 generations which then placed Adam arbitrarily at 4000 B.C. But despite the interest from the younger men, indicating that this was a potentially great tool, we still had to find a way to make it usable with older, non-literate people. Obviously pictures of men on a paper chart wasn't the way.

THE STICK THAT TALKS

Several weeks later, one of our Papua New Guinean friends tied his canoe up to our houseboat and came for a visit. As he was leaving, my wife noticed a section of a sago palm branch in his canoe. The bark had been stripped off the back of it and a series of short sticks were pushed into the inner pith, making something that looked somewhat like an oversize comb. I'd seen it already, but knowing that it was a traditional receipt for bride price, with each of the short sticks representing some part of the payment, I hadn't taken any notice. But, as my wife hadn't seen one of these before, it caught her attention. Soon after, she suggested that we should try to use an extended one of these to portray these genealogies. Thus the idea of the genealogy stick, - "The Stick That Talks," - was born.

The stick itself is the rib of a branch from the sago palm, about 18 feet long. The hard bark is peeled off the back of the rib, exposing the pithy interior. The bark is then split into a total of 240 small sticks of four different lengths. The longest of these, represents Jesus and is about 18 inches long. The next length (20 sticks), represents all the historical figures from the Old Testament and historical events from Jesus to the present day that we will be dealing with as distinct stories in the meetings. The third length (67 sticks), represents all the characters named

in the Luke 3 genealogy. The fourth length (152 sticks), represents unnamed generations. The rationale for the unnamed generations is the fact that if David is dated at 1000 B.C. and 25 year generations are used, the genealogy between David and Christ is seen to be complete. Using this 25 year generation as the basis then, and by arbitrarily dating Adam at 4000 B.C. these unnamed generations are interspersed with the named generations between David and Adam to keep the time depth perspective of the stick consistent. Then the same 25 year generation criterion is applied between Jesus and the present day.

As soon as we began using this method, we found that the older people could immediately relate to it. From that point began my education about cargo concepts.

Each time we used this method there has been rapt attention for the 8 hours or so it took to get through the various aspects of the stories portrayed on the genealogy stick. As time went on, I found that each discussion tended to follow certain set patterns, although virtually every time some new question was asked revealing another facet of cargoism. Stories, examples, questions, names, rituals came to be shared. But more than that, I found that once many of these issues had been discussed openly and empathetically, then there was an openness I'd never encountered before to genuinely listen to the Gospel. Once we were using this method extensively, the fame of the genealogy stick spread far and wide, and I was receiving invitations from the elders of villages some of which I'd not been allowed to visit before.

WHAT? HOW? WHY?

At the time of beginning to use this, I did not understand its full significance. I have however, since found that other people had been reflecting on the importance of concepts of time before me.

There is one major area in the thought patterns of the people which, if changed or updated, would permit a greater absorption for the things they see and hear. This is the area of 'time' and 'history'. Traditional methods of reckoning time were unaffected by contact with the Europeans, but the old chronological system could not contain the concept of technological process (Hueter 1974:134).

However, I had some big questions. "What is this genealogy stick

really doing? Why do people want to listen? How does it open their minds to the Gospel as it does?" So in the six years since then I've been exploring these questions for myself and have come to the following conclusions:

A. IMPACT OF BIBLE GENEALOGIES

First, as far as the attitudes to the Bible itself is concerned, I guess it sounds like a cliché to say simply that the "genealogies prove that the Bible is true." This however is a true statement and interestingly enough, this also applies to groups who themselves don't keep long genealogical records. As a matter of fact, most communities where I've used this can remember back only seven generations, even when the experts compare notes. The record to date was one old man who, unaided, could list his pedigree back sixteen generations.

So why are genealogies proof of the authenticity of the Bible? First, just the fact of such a long and well ordered genealogy as the Luke 3 account indicates to Papua New Guineans that Jesus was no ordinary man.

B. ENCAPSULATED TIME⁹

Then there are the implications springing from Papua New Guinean concepts of time. To help myself understand these concepts, I've developed the diagram we looked at in Chapter 11 of what I call "Encapsulated Time" (See Diagram 1 Below).

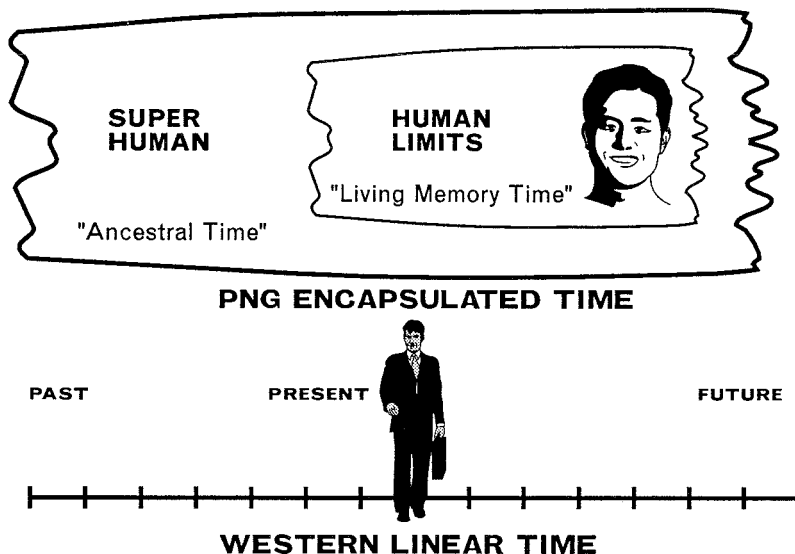


Diagram 1: Papua New Guinean and Western Concepts of Time.

As we saw in Chapter 11, this comprises two capsules, one inside the other, with the larger capsule completely encircling the smaller. The inner capsule represents “living memory time” which begins with the “not yet” (*bihain*) that is what Westerners regard as the fairly immediate future and extends for a number of generations into the past. As far as the past is concerned, “living memory time” is the sum total of events remembered by the living members of a community as living events. This could take them beyond their own experience at least to stories they’d heard from other eye witnesses. This “Living Memory Time” is regarded as the realm of the human, the natural, and as such is bound by normal human limitations unless these are transcended by some other means.

Beyond the rather indefinite boundaries of “living memory time” is “ancestral time,” (*tumbuna taim*) which is considered to be in the realm of the super-human. For that reason, information coming to the present time from “ancestral time” is considered to be the real source of values, mores etc, for daily living. Myths, which are considered to be the stories of “ancestral time,” are one of the key sources of this information. On the other hand, Bible narrative is often regarded as being in

“living memory time.” I’ve often had the death of Jesus dated by Papua New Guineans as “that great earthquake” or “that great epidemic” of about three or four generations ago. Possibly it’s the accuracy and intimacy with which Bible narratives are handled that tends to give this impression.

But then when they see from the Genealogy Stick that even the most recent parts of the Bible were written 78 generations ago, combined with the impact of seeing that the earlier parts are recounting stories from a minimum of 240 generations back, their own criterion for importance and relevance to living makes the Bible a very important book indeed.

WHY HAVE PEOPLE WANTED TO HEAR

Why have people wanted to hear? First of all, village elders don’t like to get just the “outside story.” On virtually any matter they discuss, they prefer to go to as great a depth as possible. And the meetings focussed around this genealogy stick do indeed go to great depths. That in itself makes the elders want to listen. Also, as I’ve only discovered since adopting this method, the idea of using sticks to represent stories or events is a normal procedure when discussing important things in many Sepik villages. Additionally, the importance of the information is perceived to be far greater just because it is directed to the village elders. This also makes people want to listen.

HOW DOES IT OPEN PEOPLE'S MINDS TO THE GOSPEL?

How does the use of this Genealogy Stick open peoples minds to the Gospel? Apart from the high prestige of the message as outlined above, the information shared in the discussion sessions effectively raises aspects of their normally held Cargo presuppositions to a conscious level. The discussions then include new information that calls into question the validity of some of the previously held presuppositions. Prior to this, they are often seen as the only way of explaining certain things. Yet all of this is done in a way that comes across as non-threatening, and so doesn’t get rejected out of hand.

An illustration of what I’m saying here would be the basic Cargo

presupposition that Jesus was a European. This understanding is quite understandable from a Papua New Guinean perspective. They think of Jesus as having lived approximately three or four generations ago, and it was about then that culture contact began. We could summarize their understanding of the facts as follows:

THE FACTS

1. Europeans have Cargo
2. Europeans know a lot about Jesus, as shown in Missionaries' preaching and non-Christian's blasphemy.
3. Jesus brought good news
4. Jesus preached the good news
5. Jesus was unjustly killed by his own people.

THE LOGICAL CONCLUSION

- A Supernatural connection.
- Jesus must have belonged to their group.
- What could be better news than how to get the Cargo?
- Jesus was happy to share the secret.
- His fellow "Europeans" didn't want him to give the Papua New Guineans "good news."

On the Genealogy Stick, however, they see that the Gospel reached the Anglo Saxons, the ancestors of most of the Europeans they are familiar with in 596 A.D., some 23 generations after Christ. That, then, rather innocently raises big questions. Then to help them get the feel of this even more, we go through the story of the spread of the Gospel during the early centuries of the Church, and continue on to the story of Augustine first carrying the Gospel to Anglo Saxon England.

In line with this is the oft asked question as to why the Gospel has, by comparison, only just arrived in Papua New Guinea: "Surely the Gospel (implying the cargo secret) must have been kept hidden by someone, or else it would have come straight to Papua New Guinea as well. Why the 1,840 years wait?" So we include the story of the "world is flat" legend which had hampered shipping until the invention of the magnetic compass in the West. Following on from that invention, then, is the story of continuing European exploration until we get to the European discovery of Papua New Guinea (1512) and then the German discovery of the Sepik River (1885). So, again, reasonable alternative answers are given to their questions.

Then there are two closely related assumptions: First it is assumed that western technology was revealed by ancestors or deities in the same way their myths recount how their technology was revealed to

them. Therefore, it is assumed that western technology must have also been revealed as a complete system. This revelation is variously thought to have been given to Adam, the descendants of Abel, or of Shem, and or of Japeth¹⁰ or through Jesus or maybe at some other crucial point in history. But then , as the stories on the Genealogy Stick are discussed, they can see on the stick, and hear the detailed story of the invention / discovery, and the subsequent development of numerous items of technology which they would regard as “cargo.” As they see these inventions / discoveries scattered throughout history, “earth tremors” begin at the level of their cargo assumptions.

KEY STORIES

As a result of the questions and discussions I’ve encountered while using this stick, I’ve come to settle on the following list of important items that need to be looked at with each presentation:

Government Minted Money	European discovery of P.N.G.
Greek Alphabetical writing	Engine Powered Ships
Gospel to England	Cars / Trucks
Mass Smelting of Iron	European discovery of the Sepik R.
Magnetic Compass	Planes and Outboard Motors
Gutenberg’s Press	Second World War
Machine made Cloth	

Although the stick for each of these items is put at the approximate generation when the technology on its present recognizable format was first used, in story form we trace the development of these technologies back as far as possible. For example, with money, we begin with stories of barter as a form of trading without money. We then discuss the use of traditional wealth such as theirs as a form of money. The story of Abraham buying land to bury Sarah is a Biblical example of this (Genesis 22:4-16). We then progress on to the stories of Government minted wealth as first used in Turkey. From there, we trace the development of those sort of economic systems which are of most concern to Papua New Guineans: minted money with wealth in reserve, paper money, and finally, international trade including balance of payments.

USING THE GENEALOGY STICK AS FOCUS OF VILLAGE MEETINGS

The Bible Survey made possible by the use of the genealogy Stick, greatly helps people to be able to understand the Bible narrative. This in itself then makes the Christian message more meaningful, and as such, more attractive and acceptable to village elders. Then the interest factors built into the issues dealt with by the Genealogy Stick presentation, it isn't hard to get a hearing using this aid.

However, to use this aid simply as a response to cargoism without capitalizing on the increased openness to teaching of God's Word which it produces, would be to be a poor steward of the grace given to us. Hence I have developed a basic body of teaching covering 25 topics crucial to a person having a well rounded understanding of his/her faith in the Sepik River Papua New Guinea cultural context. These then are presented in such a way as to minister to felt needs, and then to take them beyond these felt needs to basic needs, which are often below the level of consciousness. Within these topics, the Genealogy Stick is only one topic, even though it takes far more time to cover than any other one topic. Typically, I would take approximately 1 - 2 hours on each of the other topics, but approximately 8 hours on the Genealogy Stick. (The complete list is in Appendix B)

MAKING THE CONCEPT AVAILABLE TO OTHERS

As I've had the opportunity, I've been able to teach Papua New Guinean Pastors in numerous situations how to use the Genealogy Stick concept. As a result, I've had pressure put on me to make this material available in some permanent form, so that they can use it for themselves. This has resulted in two productions. The first is a Pidgin book of approximately 50 pages entitled *Adam inap long Yumi* (Published by Christian Books Melanesia, Wewak, PNG). The first part of the book tells how to make and use the Genealogy Stick, while the second part is most of the extra-Biblical material used in the presentation, listed out in story form.

Furthermore, when Kristen Kaset, a subsidiary of Gospel Recordings, heard of this concept, they approached me about making the Genealogy Stick material plus much of the Bible teaching I give with it in

village meetings available in Pidgin on cassette. This has now been done and comprises three cassettes entitled *Ol Stik Bilong Stori*. These have been very well received where they have been used. To date, I've had good reports of the overall usefulness of this concept from people in various forms of ministry in numerous parts of Papua New Guinea.

NOTES ON CHAPTER 14

1. *M. Hovey - Personal interview 7/79.*
2. *Malken - Story told at History Workshop 4/82.*
3. *Kungwianmeli - Personal interview 1976.*
4. *Information on Aum 1, Peter Ogm.*
5. *Information on Tauri, David Imar.*
6. *Information on Mowi, David Wakuri.*
7. *This movement began in Aum 1 in 1961, while the whole region which extended 90 miles east of Aum was still restricted territory. This Restriction was lifted in 1962.*
8. *For example, Des Oatridge who was working near Ukarumpa, E.H.P.*
9. *Lawrence 1964 and Mbiti 1969 have been helpful to me in arriving at this model, however the model is my own.*
10. *Cain and Ham are often thought to be the ancestor of Papua New Guineans, with the curse which was placed on them then being the reason Papua New Guineans don't have Cargo.*

FURTHER READING

Tippett (1967)

CHAPTER 15

RESPONSE TO CARGOISM

(PART TWO)

MEANINGFUL RELATIONSHIPS

In discussion of the theoretical advantages of using a Genealogy Stick or any other method to communicate the Gospel past cargoism assumptions, there is still the basic question of whether any of the new information is believed when the original information is so deeply ingrained. And if believed at all, whether it is believed enough to make any appreciable difference.

My own basic goal in using this method is not to “shatter cargoism” as such, but rather to be able to get fresh Biblical information past the grid of their cargoism assumptions. I set this as a goal, as I firmly believe that the Gospel, when properly heard, understood and received, does in fact set people free from all forms of bondage, including such logical delusions as cargoism. So the primary goal is to get a good hearing, and then to be able to present the Gospel in clear relevant and challenging ways. As big as this task seems, it is a less radical yet more focussed part of worldview transformation than “changing their cargo assumptions.”

But to even bring about this lesser goal as a satisfactory response to cargoism, I have found another key issue to be that of establishing meaningful relationships. In the context of the Papua New Guinean worldview, relationships are based on reciprocity, which in turn is related to their available resources. So it is only logical that when Papua New Guineans sense strained relationships, they desire to relate, which produces a desire for wealth. As a result of both worldview differences and even racism at times, Papua New Guineans have sensed that their relationships with Europeans are strained. At least what they regard as

normal relationships operating between themselves and Europeans are very rare indeed. Hence it is logical that the sort of wealth that is meaningful to a European would be the sort of wealth felt desirable to help establish relationships with Europeans. Bernard Narokobi, a Papua New Guinean from the Sepik Province, describes the strained relationships from his perspective as follows,

There never was any genuine person to person contact as such to enhance Melanesian self-respect, identity and initiative in interpreting and understanding the new environment. In brief, the white man saw the Melanesian as an inferior being, and all his practices confirm this (1974:99).

As has already been said, worldview level differences and the behaviour they produced could account at least in part for the behaviour that Narokobi here interprets as inferior/superior, but that this attitude also existed cannot be denied. The implications of these strained relationships as far as cargoism is concerned is described by Mary Douglas:

The present crisis is caused by the coastal Melanesians finding themselves in a relation with rich foreigners with whom they cannot transact because they have nothing to offer in exchange. They are therefore unable to enter into reciprocal relations with Europeans. Cargo, then, is not wanted for its own sake, but for the new relationships it will permit, when Papuan can exchange with European on fair and equal terms (1970:166-7).

In this regard it is important to note that in the situations where we have used “the stick that talks” in dealing with cargoism in a conscious way, we have been involved with members of those communities in reciprocal relationships. It is not unreasonable to suggest that the effectiveness of this teaching aid is also related to the mutual satisfaction derived from these reciprocal relationships.

Dr. A. R. Tippett in *Solomon Islands Christianity* also points this out to be a problem while highlighting perhaps in a way that is not necessarily pleasant to consider, what a solution to the problem is going to take.

In the last analysis such problems are not solved by equipment and foreign funds, or by hard work by the people themselves. If human relationships are wrong, and attitudes are wrong, and situations of wrong relationships have been built up through misunderstandings over a pe-

riod of years, the only ultimate solution is the correction of these relationships, attitudes and misunderstandings themselves (1967:209).

A word to the wise is sufficient!

FURTHER CONSIDERATIONS

In the overall context of ministry in Papua New Guinea, including situations where cargoism is endemic, there are several other issues that I've come to see as very important.

A. POWER ENCOUNTER

The first of these, Power Encounter, we have looked at, and will look at in other contexts, but its implications in relation to cargoism are important to notice. Christian conversion, in order to be genuine and long lasting in power oriented Melanesia, has to also include what Dr. Tippet has called Power Encounter. By Power Encounter is meant to confront the traditional powers with the power of God in some visible way, so that at the end of the contest, the winning power is evident. This has to be done by the guardian of that power, and will often mean the death of the guardian and or his family, unless God protects them. But as the power of God is supreme, He does protect them, thus rendering the traditional power powerless. Unless Power Encounter is part of Melanesian conversion to Christianity, then the road is open for reversion to traditional practices once the new way is thought to be ineffective.

However, when a person and or a community does engage in Power Encounter, then the central allegiances of their worldview, that is, the allegiances to the clan and its supernatural powers, are challenged and changed. This change at the core of worldview then has a rippling effect through the balance of worldview, thus making significant change at other levels of worldview possible, including assumptions about cargoism.¹

B. WORK WITH GROUPS

In speaking about Nativistic Movements from a Christian community, A.R. Tippet points out that:

Situations which lead to nativistic movements are usually also situations open for revival, provided the Christian forces act before the neopagan (1971:35).

That the same readiness for change has to exist in a non-Christian community for a Cargo Cult to occur, is also true. So in both Christian and non-Christian situations, there is a vital part that Christian missionaries can play in preventing Cargo Cults. But to be able to do this, the missionary involved must be very empathetic, which implies first of all a very intimate understanding of the situation. Also, as Cargo Cult is basically a worldview level problem, that missionary will need to know how to bring about worldview change. In addition to some of the specific strategies suggested above, there is a fact that has not been emphasized in writing on Cargo Cults and cargoism to date which I would describe as follows:

That a person's worldview was learnt in a community, by interaction, mutual feedback and reinforcement with other members of that community, especially the opinion leaders. The continuing stability of any society then depends on the continual mutual feedback and reinforcement of their worldview assumptions from within their community.

Therefore, to be able to advocate culture change without producing disorientation and disintegration, the changes must be advocated at the level of the group of intimates to whom the individuals being approached normally refer for mutual feedback and reinforcement. When this group mutually agrees to modify their worldview assumptions, the change itself will not be so traumatic, and what is more, the change can be more effective. This is because the group together will continue to get their feedback and reinforcement from each other. And presuming that the direction of change has been agreed upon, there will be mutual stimulus to ensure that the change is carried to its completion. Likewise, any cultural stress that is produced by the change will be able to be dealt with by the group, thus letting the ramifications of the change in worldview ripple out to the perimeters of the culture without producing unnecessary or harmful stress.

Also, as decisions in Papua New Guinea are always made by consensus within social units, be they family, extended family, clan, moiety, or village, it is only logical that these groups should be the places to which the new information is directed. Furthermore, as is common in any society, information is often rejected, not on the basis of its intrinsic merit but rather on the basis of who it came from, who it came to first, and how it was presented. These factors combined stress the im-

portance of dealing with groups especially with a matter as tense and as vital as cargoism.

C. INDIGENOUS AUTONOMY

When planting and working with churches, we must keep in mind the fact that Cargo Cults are not the only types of unchristian and anti Christian millenarianism or nativistic movements that can occur. To guard against any of these possibilities, autonomy of the churches resulting from our ministry is essential. But this autonomy must be indigenous. That is, it should reflect the social structure, leadership patterns, economy and life style of the people as they are at that time. The implications of indigenous autonomy in the long term are summarized by A. R. Tippett:

A church which establishes itself with indigenous autonomy is unlikely to be seriously worried about negative movements away from its ranks. But a mission that remains a foreign and ruling body, creating an economic complex that can never be handed over to an indigenous church and never opening up its highest offices to indigenes, and establishes legal prohibitions of pre-Christian cultural elements without functional substitutes, may well expect in the second or third generation an emergence of some negative People Movement (1971:216).

D. ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

It may seem strange that economic development be given so little attention so late in the piece in a study of cults that emphasize economic development so much. However, while not denying that economic deprivation has had some effect on Cargo Cults, I feel that without the basic assumptions of cargoism, even economic deprivation would not produce Cargo Cults. Hence if economic deprivation was not such a widely accepted cause of cargoism I would not even include it in this study. Or to use the words of Hueter:

While economic conditions may have some influence over the practice and strength of cult activities, they are not the basic cause. It is a religious, a theological problem ... -if we begin economic projects in order to combat Cargo Cult, we are on the wrong track. [Economic Development Projects] may alleviate conditions which aggravate the symptoms of cargo cult, but they will not root out the basic cause. They may even be dangerous, in that they cause us to think that we are doing something about Cargo Cults, when we really aren't (1974:125-6).

Having raised the subject, we will simply point out two aspects of economic life that need to be kept in mind.

- (1) The economic system of the churches must reflect the economics of the community. In subsistence economies without specialization, as we have in Papua New Guinea, we need to examine carefully the degree to which we can orient our church structures around full time pastors. I have written elsewhere on ways to encourage tithing in a meaningful and satisfying way in a situation like this.²
- (2) The importance of wealth in the traditional worldview both as evidence of “traditional spirituality” and as a prerequisite to leadership must be kept in mind while thinking of leadership functions in the churches. If these traditional values are felt to be incompatible with Christian leadership, then worldview change will have to be brought about at this point also, as to simply ignore this without providing a new base for the authority of the “poor” Pastor is to guarantee problems in the future.

At the same time it is only logical that churches will encourage their members to engage in economic activity which will further their economic development. Additionally, churches should maintain contact with the appropriate government departments who are responsible for economic development. Within the framework of the relationships so developed, the churches put pressure on these departments to insure that their development goals become a reality for the more remote areas where churches are often the only powerful voice of the people.

However we must also be aware that heavy emphasis on economic development, especially if it gives one group a far greater economic advantage than other nearby groups, or works within a framework of heavy subsidy, can actually confirm cargoism both in the group being worked with and in surrounding groups. Thus in endeavouring to alleviate economic deprivation, it is possible to reinforce cargoism that then is the root cause of Cargo Cults.

Functional Substitutes to replace traditional means of supernatural help in economic activity must be found immediately, and made a formal part of church and community life. If this is not done by the church then it is only to be expected as has been found many times before, sub-Christian or even anti-Christian patterns will continue to be used.

WHAT SORT OF MOVEMENTS?

Before concluding, I'd like to address one last issue, by combining two issues raised by Dr. Turner (1978) and Dr. Tippet (1971) respectively. Dr. Turner has suggested that we may have to live with new religious movements of one kind or another for a long time to come, while Dr. Tippet has pointed out that situations which are open to new religious movements of a type which the church would regard basically as negative, are situations that are also open to revival, provided the Christian forces act before the neo-primal. The situations here referred to by these scholars of New Religious Movements and Primal Religions could be summarized as people wanting change. If then, we take our Christian responsibility seriously, it would be true to assume that we would prefer to see revivals in the Christian sense rather than cargo cults. And so it is in that context that I trust the suggestions presented in this chapter will provide us with ways in which we, as Christians in Melanesia, can influence situations and people so as to see New Religious Movements and New Religious Experiences which are Christian nature and eternally positive in impact.

CONCLUSION

In conclusion, I'll include two paragraphs from Strelan's work on Cargo Cults in Papua New Guinea. It is possible that to anyone who has not had in depth exposure to cargoism, that his words may seem a little too polemic or sombre to be a suitable conclusion. However, his words express my sentiments accurately, and I trust will be taken seriously enough to be translated into action in Papua New Guinea.

The fact is, however, that it is the Gospel alone which, from the Christian point of view, effects the radical change which is necessary to combat cargoism. To excommunicate cargo cultists (which in Melanesia often means exclusion from worship services, and even social ostracization) is to cut them off from the only means the church has of changing their hearts. Excommunication as it is practiced in many parts of Melanesia is similar to throwing a sick man out of hospital and telling him that he may return only when he is healthy. Excommunication for cargo cultists (for anyone for that matter) is valid only if it achieves that which excommunication is truly intended to achieve, that is, to draw the attention of the Christian community to certain ones who are to be the objects of the

community's special concern.

Now, today, the church must learn to make use of Law and Gospel - especially the Gospel - in its ministry to cargo cultists. That might seem to be a simplistic solution to a complex problem, but it is essentially the one response the church makes which distinguishes it from responses made by the government and its agencies, or by the social sciences and the humanities. In the final analysis, the proclamation and use of the Law and the Gospel is the only means the church has to carry out its task of turning men away from trust in themselves, or their ancestors, or their secret knowledge, or anything else, to trust in Jesus Christ as Creator, Redeemer, and Lord. But, just because these are the only tools the church has, it is essential that the tools are used properly and appropriately. Christian teachers and preachers must adapt the message to the intellectual wavelength of the hearers. The message must be formulated in such a way, and with such imagery, that it can be fully understood and appreciated for what it is: the Word of the Lord for Melanesians. If the church does not use the Law and the Gospel with all the skill and ingenuity at its disposal, and if it does not communicate Law and Gospel in language which Melanesians will recognize as their own, then there can be no doubt as to the eventual outcome of the confrontation between Christianity and cargoism: cargoism will triumph (1977:103).

NOTES ON CHAPTER 15

1. *In this context, it could be argued that many Cargo Cults to date have occurred in areas where people have become Christian, thus raising questions about my thesis here. However, as I have examined records of conversion experiences in Papua New Guinea, very rarely have I come across records of Power Encounters at both a community and personal level.*
2. *In an unpublished article, "I've Taught Giving," I've looked at various ways to make giving to the work of the Church more effective and less painful in Subsistence Societies.*

FURTHER READING

Tippett (1967)

CHAPTER 16

MINISTERING TO SPIRIT WORLD PROBLEMS

TWO WESTERN PERSPECTIVES

In Chapter 12 we looked at Animism in the Sepik worldview and its implications for the missionary and church scene in Papua New Guinea. In this chapter, we will extend this discussion to look at the interplay of Western and Papua New Guinean understandings of the spirit world as cross-cultural Christians are involved in ministering to spirit world problems.

Within the overall mission scene in Papua New Guinea we find two different perspectives coming to bear on the subject of “the spirit world and how to deal with it.” First of all, there are those who have come from Church backgrounds where the whole area of the spirit world hasn’t been addressed at a conscious level very much. Secondly, there are those coming from Church backgrounds where there has been conscious involvement with the spirit world. But neither of these perspectives has a ready made solution to help Papua New Guineans deal with the spirit world and its problems as they know it.

For people from the former position, even to find that to the Papua New Guineans the spirit world is everywhere, all of the time, produces some big questions, not the least of which is: “What spirits?” The logical solution to the problem of spirits from that perspective has been to prove to Papua New Guineans that their “superstitions” are wrong, so that they can enjoy the freedom we Westerners have. But to Papua New Guineans, the whole area of the spirit world is not just an informational thing that can be challenged and dealt with at an intellectual level. I am yet to meet a Papua New Guinean who simply believes in spirits. The reality of spirits is something they *know*, and have experi-

enced. So reasoned debate will not get us very far at all.

Those coming from the second perspective I mentioned are, I feel, better equipped for ministry in Papua New Guinea. But they still cannot assume that they have all the necessary answers simply because of their background. Their Western understandings of the spirit world often do not fit the Papua New Guinean scene. I recall my own attitude when I came to Papua New Guinea. Coming from a Pentecostal perspective, and having read many missionary stories, I expected to see frequent examples of demon possession so had mentally prepared myself for this. But as I got involved in life and ministry in Papua New Guinea, I found myself surprised, bewildered, and almost disappointed to find that spirit possession in the classical sense is not common in Papua New Guinea. There have been occasions when I have seen people who have been demon possessed in the classical Biblical sense of the term. They could only be helped by someone intervening from outside. And on those occasions I've seen some really tremendous victories in the Name of the Lord. But the thing that was amazing to me was the fact that demon possession wasn't evident everywhere as I had expected. So at that point, my background hadn't prepared me for what I found.

This raises the question of why there is not much evidence of spirit possession in that classical sense. I have come to the conclusion that, due to spirit involvement in magic, initiation and other areas of ritual life within many traditional Papua New Guinean cultures, many of the people are in fact so much where Satan wants them that it pays him not to muscle them around too much. If he did, they would begin looking for a way out which would be defeating his purposes. For that reason it suits him not to push them around. They, in turn, are quite satisfied to be a part of the system without ever knowing what his evil intentions are in the long term.

PAPUA NEW GUINEAN UNDERSTANDINGS OF THE SPIRIT WORLD

To look at our subject, we need to understand the way Papua New Guineans see spirits interacting in their daily lives, so that we can see how we as Christians can help them deal with the spirit world and its

problems. Then, as we understand this, we can also help the Papua New Guineans whom we're working with and training to be able to pastorally help their own people to deal with spirit issues.

The basic information from this chapter can become a good foundation even for a person who has not previously had much experience with the spirit world. Then by talking with Papua New Guineans about it and thus understanding the spirit world from their perspective, he/she will come to see whole new areas of need to which they can minister.

But it is very important at the same time to get an increased appreciation of the power to deal with the spirit realm that we have in Christ by virtue of His absolute victory on the cross. This is important as we cannot afford to get informed about the spirit world and then become afraid of what we find. We do in fact have the victory in Christ even though it may be an area we have never considered very much before. So faith in Jesus rather than fear of spirits can be our response.

A. NON-VOLUNTARY VS VOLUNTARY SPIRIT CONTACT

Papua New Guineans do, or at least have tended to have a lot of contact with the spirit world. For the sake of analysis, I group this contact into two categories:

1. Voluntary contact
2. Non-voluntary contact

Voluntary contact is the way that many Papua New Guineans are actively involved with the spirit world, but they live in continual dread of non-voluntary contact. Not only are these two different activities, but to a Papua New Guinean, they are two very different mental categories. Voluntary contact is desired, and with it there is a feeling of power and control. While using it, it is acceptable to harm people by its use. But non-voluntary contact is feared and avoided, and brings with it a feeling of helplessness. Likewise, the dynamics involved in each type of contact present the Church with different problems and require different forms of ministry. We will begin our discussion by looking at voluntary contact.

1. Voluntary Contact

In the area of voluntary contact with spirits and spirit powers, there

are four main aspects we need to list:

- (a) Ancestors
 - (b) Gods
 - (c) Magic
 - (d) Spirit possession
- (a) Praying to ancestors and or asking for their help is done mostly on a personal basis. This is quite informal, similar to extemporaneous prayer. This can also be done at the community level, but is then usually in response to some major problem, so is more formal and ritualized.
- (b) Contact with gods is always in the ritual sense, and usually via a priest. The purpose of the contact may be the fulfillment of prescribed religious activities on a regular basis, or else, special rituals to meet specific needs.
- (c) Instead of magic, a better description of this area of activity would be *pawa* manipulation. That is, the use of magic, chants, fetishes, potions etc. The purposes for which the *pawa* is manipulated can be good or evil, and the result is achieved by ritual.
- (d) Spirit possession¹ on a voluntary basis is a very common thing in Papua New Guinea. In fact it is a focal part of the majority of healing divination rituals.

For voluntary spirit possession to happen, a person acting as a medium, makes himself (or herself) available to be possessed by a particular spirit, be it the spirit of an ancestor, the spirit of the recent dead or some other familiar spirit. The person so possessed by this spirit would go into a trance state, and then the spirit speaking through the individual would reveal the needed information. This could be about problems in the village, sickness, famine or similar situations.

Once a spirit has entered a person, that person loses all control of himself, and is therefore not responsible for his own activities, actions or words during the period of possession. Often it will take 4 - 8 people to hold a possessed person down to stop him hurting himself, or someone else or from destroying a house or whatever. Possessed persons have incredible physical strength at that time.

At the end of the divination ritual, the spirit leaves the person and

he is no longer possessed by this spirit. If at the conclusion of these ceremonies the spirit tries to remain, then the people supervising the ceremony have special rituals already prepared with which to drive away that spirit. They do this because they know that a spirit being in a person leaves that person absolutely useless within the community except for the purpose of divination.

2. Non-Voluntary Contact

As we now look at non-voluntary spiritual contact, this will help us to see what is going on in the minds of many Papua New Guineans as far as their understandings of the spirit world are concerned. Non-voluntary contact with spirits, to a Papua New Guinean will mean that the person so contacted will be sick or have some physical deformity or defect, or display classical symptoms of spirit possession as a result. Where none of these symptoms are present, then it is assumed there has been no non-voluntary spirit contact.²

For the purpose of discussion, we will group the types of spirit forces with whom non-voluntary contact is likely as:

- (a) Gods and spirits
- (b) Sorcery and Magic
- (c) Ancestors
- (d) Other

(a) Gods and Spirits

Under our heading of gods and spirits, the Papua New Guinean categories of beings would be : Creator Spirits (*masalai*), Bush Spirits (*spirit nogut*), low gods (*Tambaran*). Non-ritual contact with any of these beings results in sickness or some other physical problem. Some of the ways that this could come about would be:

1. If a person was to violate the abode of a Creator spirit (*masalai*) or other sacred place.
2. If an uninitiated person goes to the spirit house or breaks the ritual taboos associated with the low gods they would be attacked by the low gods (*tambaran*) that will result in sickness or infirmity in the offenders family.
3. Bush spirits physically assault without provocation. Fortunately, this is fairly rare.

(b) Sorcery and magic

Sorcery and magic are generally described by the Pidgin terms: *posin*, *marila*, *pupulu* and *sanguma*. We have included these under the heading of non-voluntary contact, as when someone else is using sorcery against an individual, the person being attacked by that sorcery is being involved with the spirit world but in a non-voluntary sense. But notice again, there will be physical evidence of same; pain, sickness and eventually death.

(c) Ancestors

Ancestors (*ol tumbuna*) are believed to bring sickness of their own volition. However, this is normally considered to be discipline as a result of their clan members experiencing a breakdown of relationships, breaking traditional taboos or generally upsetting the equilibrium of the good old days.

(d) Other

Papua New Guinean understandings of the spirit world do not line up easily with our categories, so under this heading of "other," we will discuss other aspects that would otherwise fall between the cracks. For example:

Spirit contact is not the only thing that can cause sickness however. Interpersonal problems, anger, arguments, etc. can sometimes make people sick. When this happens, they see it as being a spiritual problem, rather than a spirit problem, but the basic routine to effect a cure is the same.

There is one other form of non-voluntary spirit involvement that we need to discuss. That is possession. When this occurs, it could be any one of the previously mentioned spirits that take possession. I have stated that this is not common. From my own experience in Papua New Guinea, I can recall only four cases that I have been involved with in which Papua New Guineans have in fact been non-voluntarily possessed by a spirit. Again this highlights the point that the Papua New Guineans understanding of non-voluntary contact with the spirit world, sees it basically as causing sickness, infirmity, deformity and death.

3. Expected Cure Rate

Before we talk about expected cure rates for any particular spirit

related problem, we need to realize that all such problems are carefully diagnosed by Papua New Guineans. This is done by divination. Before healing rituals are begun, there will be some form of divination ritual to find out what is causing the problem. Only when the cause of the sickness is found can anything be done to effect a cure. From their background of diagnosis in this way, they have acquired a knowledge of what they consider to be the likelihood of recovery.

The actual detail varies from case to case, but a general outline would be as follows:

- (a) When a creator spirit is suspected as having caused the problem, this is considered able to be remedied sometimes by correct sacrifices to appease the offended spirit but one can't be sure of the recovery.
- (b) When ancestors are the suspected cause, putting the relationships right will normally solve the problem.
- (c) Bush spirits usually have no long term effects once they have left off their physical assault.
- (d) Damage done by the low gods is considered irreversible.
- (e) With sorcery, the likelihood of survival depends on what type of sorcery was involved, who has performed it, and whether these things can be determined. There are three basic variations:

With *marila and pupulu*, it is ginger plants, chants, potions etc. that are used. If it can be found who has used these against the afflicted and if they can be persuaded by payment to withdraw it, then survival is likely. If not, then not.

Posin means normally taking a part of someone's clothing, finger-nail clippings, hair, or some other part of their "belongings" and placing it over a cooking fire after bespelling it. As the object dries out so does the life of the person to whom it belonged. Or sometimes it can mean making a little doll, or a picture of those people, poking thorns into it at the appropriate spots and that will cause illness and pain in those spots and eventually death if the thorns are not withdrawn.

Once they have ascertained who has done the dastardly deed, the problem will sometimes be able to be alleviated by buying off the sorcerer and settling the dispute that precipitated the sorcery. However, a sorcerer normally will not admit to having performed sorcery, so the

chances of him (or her) accepting payment are very slim. If he did, it could be used as evidence against him.

Sanguma, on the other hand which *Mihalic's Dictionary* defines as "ritual murder" is mostly considered irreversible and quickly results in death. In the Sepik Province I have come across only one group of people who have counter powers to counter *sanguma* from within their group. But if it is *sanguma* activity from another group even they cannot do anything about it. One of the reasons for this seems to be that their own *sanguma* practices use potent poisons to actually do the killing for which apparently they have antidotes as well, while the other forms of *sanguma* kill by supernatural power alone.

- (f) When interpersonal problems have caused sickness, then ascertaining the problem by divination will indicate how to bring healing. Under these circumstances, once the problem has been corrected then healing is expected to come naturally.
- (g) When non-voluntary spirit possession is the problem, there is no ready made cure. Numerous traditional healers and the like are sought, and their rituals will be employed, but no final cure is expected. However, this is not considered fatal.

MINISTRY TO SPIRIT WORLD PROBLEMS

A. PROBLEMS FOR THE CHURCH

1. Problems From Understandings of Voluntary Contact

Papua New Guinean understandings about voluntary spirit possession present some unique problems for the Church which we need to be aware of.

(a) Lack of Control

As we pointed out earlier, to a Papua New Guinean, being indwelt by a spirit means that the person so possessed will be out of control, and sometimes almost uncontrollable. In revival movements this Papua New Guinean understanding of spirit possession manifests itself in a different yet equally harmful way. When people have experiences with the Holy Spirit in a greater way than they have ever known before, they interpret the new experience in the light of what they have previously known. For a start, when they feel the Holy Spirit coming on

them, they will not be anticipating controlling themselves. On the contrary, they will anticipate that as this is a Spirit coming into them they will be out of control. When “spirituality” is being measured by these experiences with the Holy Spirit, as it sometimes is in revival movements, then people will intentionally do “out of control” things to prove that they have had such an experience. Also, they will often go into trance states during this time as that is what they expect of a person when they are possessed by a Spirit, even if it is the Holy Spirit. This has caused real problems in many revival movements in Papua New Guinea.

Also, the active intention to lose control of themselves when the Spirit comes upon them has resulted in all sorts of manifestations during revival movements, many of which are then been attributed to evil spirits. This then produces big theological problems, especially when it is mature Christians who have lost control in this way. It raises questions, not only about the lives of those people, but also about the effectiveness of the work of Christ. However, from my own experience I have come to see that a lot of these negative manifestations are due to people not realizing that they have to keep control of themselves and so they just do anything they like. By teaching from the known to the unknown on this subject we can be very helpful to Papua New Guineans. The statement Jesus made in Luke 11 can give us a lot of confidence when dealing with this subject. He asked; “If a child asks for an egg will it be given a scorpion?” To which the obvious answer is “No!” “How much more then,” He concluded, “will your Father in heaven give the Holy Spirit to those who ask Him!” We can get a lot of mileage out of that verse to give us confidence when dealing with sincere Christians who are manifesting things that we would be inclined to feel uneasy about.

(b) The Spirit Leaves

The Papua New Guinean understanding that a person possessed by a spirit cannot function normally in the community also leads to problems. Because of this, the very basic Christian concept of the indwelling Holy Spirit living within all Christians all of the time is very hard for them to grasp. To them, if a spirit was within a person, that person will be uncontrollable, and in fact could not participate in normal life. Be-

cause Christians are able to control themselves and participate in a normal life, therefore it is assumed that the Holy Spirit is not within them. Consequently, Papua New Guineans don't realize the potential that is theirs by the power of the indwelling Holy Spirit, and Christian mediocrity becomes the norm.

(c) Receiving the Holy Spirit

A further evidence of the correlation between traditional spirit possession and the infilling of the Holy Spirit in the minds of Papua New Guineans, is the shaking and other physical gesticulations that can be observed at times when people are seeking God to be filled with His Holy Spirit. This is due to the Papua New Guinean understanding that the way to induce a traditional spirit to take possession is by shaking. Often this will begin with the shaking of a hand or arm or leg, and will gradually increase until it is the whole body shaking, and from there the person will go into a trance state after which the spirit will begin to speak through him/her. So it is easy to see why they would continue on with this if they haven't been taught otherwise when they are seeking the infilling of the Holy Spirit. So we really need to give positive teaching on this subject in which we will emphasize that it is not what we do physically that opens the way for the Holy Spirit to fill and empower us, but rather it is the attitude and condition of our hearts, our openness and response to Him which makes the difference.

Missionaries who are not familiar with manifestations of the Spirit as we have been discussing can do a lot to equip themselves for ministry in this area by doing a thorough yet open minded study of 1 Corinthians 12 and 14. This could apply especially with regard the control of the gifts of the Holy Spirit and control of the person operating the gifts of the Spirit. For example, I have seen revival movements take on a whole new dimension of vitality and productivity just through empathetic studies being given on 1 Corinthians 14:32 "The spirit of the prophet are subject to the control of the prophet." especially when this was taught by contrast to their own spirits and their operation. Prior to receiving this teaching, the people realized that things seemed out of control, but did not want to be guilty of quenching the Spirit. Also, being informed in this way will help us to be positive to the good things of what we see happening at times like this. For us to be nega-

tive about something that the Christians know is of God has rather serious implications for the validity of our overall ministry.

2. Problems from Understandings of Non-Voluntary Contact

Papua New Guineans understanding of how the spirit world manifests itself presents us with one additional problem. If when praying for a person with some problem or sickness, the person praying glibly addresses an evil spirit when there are none of what Papua New Guineans regard as normal evidences of same, then this is regarded as a very serious accusation. Consequently, what was meant as therapeutic ministry turns into debate and accusation and potential insult in the minds of the person or persons being prayed for and the community as a whole.

B. DEALING WITH VOLUNTARY CONTACT

In the West when people are breaking with occult contact and involvement renunciation is the method used. But in Papua New Guinea, renunciation is insufficient. In the same way as Papua New Guineans don't know love apart from giving and sharing, so they don't know power apart from action. And the action that tells of renunciation is what Alan Tippett has termed Power Encounter which we have looked at briefly in other contexts. A simple definition of power encounter would be for a person who traditionally has had some sort of supernatural power and has been involved with that to destroy the power of the thing in the Name of the Lord in such a way that if God doesn't protect him, he will be killed by that power. The spirit power will attack him, but because God does protect him, then he is safe. This is Power Encounter.

For a Power Encounter to be genuinely that, there are some essential ingredients: First, it must be the owner or guardian of that particular power who confronts it in the name of the Lord, destroying whatever needs to be destroyed, doing what needs to be done, and eating whatever needs to be eaten. If the power is personally controlled, then it must be personally dealt with. If it is communally controlled then the community must participate in the power encounter.

Secondly, the challenge needs to be in the terms of reference of that power. By that I mean, if someone has to observe certain taboos in order to use and control a certain power, then he will need to break those specific taboos in order to confront that power. Most times the guardian of

a certain supernatural power will already know what would need to be done to destroy its power. And this will vary from power to power.

Sometimes it is possible, and even advisable to destroy the power of some power object while not destroying the object itself. This is important to know as some power objects in some countries are cataloged as national heritage. In those cases, if the Christians were to actually destroy the object itself, they would produce quite a bit of official displeasure for themselves. But if the taboos associated with a given power are broken by its guardian in the name of the Lord, and the guardian and the community remains unharmed despite this action, then the power of that object is broken even though the object may still be in tact. Once this has happened, the object can never be resurrected as a religious power as its powerlessness has already been demonstrated.

As Power Encounter is the only culturally appropriate way for Papua New Guinean Christians to effectively break with their voluntary spirit contacts, we are then faced with the question of how we can precipitate Power Encounters while at the same time not wanting to be iconoclastic. From my own experience, there is no need to focus only on the negative aspect of God's displeasure with these things, as clearly stated as that is in the Bible. We should rather focus on the availability of God's power to help them with any of the worthwhile tasks for which they had previously relied on their traditional powers. Thus the truth of God's power eclipsing their traditional power will make the break worthwhile. Then by focussing teaching on God's power to protect us against all comers, we will make the break possible. For Papua New Guineans will not normally offend the powers of which they are the guardians primarily because they are afraid for their lives. They believe that if they go against these powers they will be killed by them.

Another important thing is to demonstrate God's power and His love. An ideal way to do this is in believing prayer for the sick resulting in their being healed. This strengthens their faith so that they will be able to trust God with their life in a Power Encounter experience. As it is a life and death situation, it really takes some faith to know that God is in fact going to protect regardless of the power arrayed against that person.

However, the fact of healing in itself does not normally constitute a Power Encounter, nor does it indicate automatically that a person who

is not already a Christian, once healed will want to follow the Lord. Supernatural healing traditionally had nothing to do with allegiance. Once the healing was complete, the healer was paid the required amount, and that was the end of that, with no ongoing obligations. And next time, they could just as easily go to some other traditional healer without any thought at all about the previous one. So in the same way, I've often seen non-Christians healed by prayer, who then come to Church once or twice, presumably to put their "payment" in the offering, and that is the end of that. This doesn't mean that we shouldn't pray for the sick. Rather it means that we have to very thoroughly follow up on the person so prayed for. We need to take the opportunity of openness created by God's intervention in their lives, to press home relevant Bible teaching, and through that be able to lead them into an experience with Christ.

Beyond this, we need to be supportive of the people involved in the Power Encounter with our faith and prayers and leaving it up to God from there. They are His children after all.

C. DEALING WITH NON VOLUNTARY CONTACT

To be able to really help Papua New Guineans deal with the problem of non-voluntary spirit contact, we have to begin a long time before they feel they have a problem in this area. This is because their understandings of non-voluntary spirit contact and the cure and survival rates associated with this are so deeply ingrained that by the time a person is felt to be the subject of such contact, the inevitable outcome is known and openly voiced by all. By the time the whisper of "*Sanguma ya! Sanguma!*" goes through the group of relatives crowded over a sick person, the chances of any one of them having faith in God to see a miracle of healing is very slim indeed. The negative faith called fear or, more accurately, dread, is already too actively at work.

So to be able to have any real impact, we must start a massive re-education campaign. That is, we need a lot of solid Bible teaching about these very areas, especially focussing our teaching on the imperviousness of victorious Christians to any such attacks from the spirit world.

A five point series of teaching I use a lot in this regard is as follows:

- (a) Genesis 15:1 At a time when Abraham was a minority amongst people who were renowned for their sorcery and fighting ability,

God's message to him was, "Do not be afraid, Abram. I am your shield." And when God is our shield, then we are indeed impervious to any attacks.

- (b) Psalm 91:1-7 Psalm 91 describes very accurately the unseen harmful forces as understood by the Papua New Guineans. In that situation God promises to protect us as chickens under hens wings. The imperviousness thus indicated is then illustrated in the examples given, all of which have non-voluntary spirit contact connotations to Papua New Guineans.
- (c) John 10:27-30 Jesus is talking about us as being both in His hand from which no one can remove us, and in the Father's hand from which no one can remove us which provides a perfect picture of security to Papua New Guinean Christians, even when thinking of the activities of the spirit world from their perspective.
- (d) 1 Corinthians 6:19 The fact that the all powerful, all seeing, all knowing, ever present Holy spirit lives in us as Christians has to be good news to Papua New Guineans who normally fear what they can't see and feel powerless against.
- (e) Hebrews 1:14 Then as if the four preceding points are not enough, the fact that angels are present to minister to those of us who are the heirs of salvation is like icing on the cake.

So by emphasizing, and re-emphasizing this sort of teaching, it is possible to make considerable progress in helping Papua New Guineans see sickness, suffering and death as not the only alternatives left once they suspect non-voluntary spirit contact.

To keep this in balance, we need to realize that there is a valid case for a Christian genuinely having problems from evil spirits if knowingly and intentionally their lives are not right before God. If there is sin in their lives that they are intentionally trying to hide rather than bringing it to the surface before God, but then outwardly make as if they are opening themselves to God's Spirit, then there can be danger which we need to be aware of. But notice I made the other very strong statements first, because it is very easy to withdraw too quickly. Instead, I think a much more sound policy would be to use the positive perspective of "Carry on folks, but make sure your hearts are right with God at all times."

Before leaving this subject, probably one further word of caution about terminology would be in order. To use "spirit possession" terminology glibly as we sometimes would in a Western context can have a very detrimental effect, as the Papua New Guineans already know their vulnerability to the onslaughts of the spirit world just too well. So instead of reinforcing that feeling of vulnerability by un-thinking use of terminology, we need to teach them of their safety in God from spirit world attacks. When then, there are cases that are distinctly spirit possession in the distinctly Biblical sense of the term, then both our faith and the faith of the Papua New Guineans with us can be at its highest to be able to cast out the offending spirit in the name of the Lord.

CONCLUSION

I think the point should be obvious by now. We as outsiders must become very much aware of both Biblical and Papua New Guinean understandings about the spirit world. We as Westerners come to Papua New Guinea with a tremendous weakness - our rather total non involvement and lack of knowledge of the spirit world. So when we get involved in a situation like this we feel out of our depth. At the same time, Papua New Guineans have another problem which is almost the opposite of ours. That is, the amount of knowledge they have about the spirit world. This becomes a problem because they interpret all of the new experience in the light of the old experience, and so often come to wrong conclusions.

If we were to approach our own culture with a teaching ministry about the spirit world, as long as we substantiate our teaching from scripture, it would produce few ripples as, to a large degree, we would be speaking into a vacuum. However, in Papua New Guinea, any teaching we give on the spirit realm is like pebbles being thrown into a pond already full of water. The ripples go everywhere, because that's how wide the water goes. We need to know a lot about Papua New Guinean spirit understandings in order for us to have a really meaningful ministry in this situation.

In conclusion then, we could summarize where we've been by highlighting again the fact that Papua New Guinean and Western understandings of the spirit world are very different, and both views are de-

ficient when considered in the light of the Bible. But because the spirit world is such an important reality to Papua New Guineans, then we must come to understand the spirit world from their point of view if we are going to have a vitally relevant ministry in Papua New Guinea.

But also, we need to come to the place of a vital yet balanced walk in the Power of the Holy Spirit, and through our own experience, leading and teaching, help Papua New Guineans to come to this position too.

In power oriented Papua New Guinea, Christianity without real evident power can only be a ritual, while a quest for power outside of Christ will not and cannot be Christianity. Papua New Guinean Christianity, in a vital daily sense means to know Christ as Lord of all Powers.

NOTES ON CHAPTER 16

1. *In Anthropological literature, what we are referring to as spirit possession will often be referred to as possession states or trance states. These terms carry more psychological than spiritual overtones, and so better suit their frame of reference, although basically meaning the same thing.*
2. *The only exception I know of would be the rare occasions when a spirit reveals itself to a person in order to provide them with magic, a chant or something similar.*

FURTHER READING

Stephen (1979)

CHAPTER 17

POTENTIAL FOR PEOPLE MOVEMENTS IN PAPUA NEW GUINEA

PAPUA NEW GUINEA CHALLENGE

In previous chapters, we have spoken several times about Papua New Guinean decision-making procedures, and the importance of cross-cultural Christians taking these processes into account in the way they go about their ministry if they want to be successful in Papua New Guinea. In this chapter we'll look at this in more detail as well as giving an account of how we arrived at our conclusions on this subject. Then in the following chapter we'll review some case studies that show these principles in action.

A. PROBLEM - STAGE 1

By the end of my first term in Papua New Guinea, I was seeing something that concerned me: Up until that time I was engaged in support work, and so was only involved in ministry part-time. Nevertheless, the problem was evident. In retrospect, I would summarize this problem by saying that a lot of our efforts in evangelism were reaching young people for the Lord. This was good and at times involved reasonable numbers, but beyond this I was seeing one of two things happening; The young people so won would revert¹ or, if they did remain true, they had virtually no impact on the rest of their group or village. No doubt you'll readily agree that these two things are the very things that cross-cultural Christians don't want to see happening.

B. PROBLEM - STAGE 2

Consequently, on my return to Papua New Guinea for a second term,

this time in full time ministry on the Sepik River, I was determined to reach the older people, especially the men. This meant that I spent as much time as I could in the Men's Sitting Houses witnessing to individual men as I had opportunity. This approach, then, very effectively solved the reversion problem, since reversion is impossible prior to conversion, and very few conversions resulted from this style of ministry.

C. PROBLEM - STAGE 3

Confronted with this total impasse, I was driven to seek the Lord for direction, and it was at this point of desperation that several books and magazines came to my notice, certain aspects of which really caught my attention. The first of these, *Behind the Ranges* by Mrs. Howard Taylor, is the story of James Fraser's work amongst the Lisu people of southern China. As I read of Fraser's gradual realization of the importance of winning the social unit² to the Lord as unit if ever he was to have a Lisu Church, something of the similarity of his frustration and mine came clearly into focus. So I was at least prepared to consider his solution.

At that time, I also began receiving the *Church Growth Bulletin* and there read articles written about this same concept by others³ in a more contemporary setting. As I read, the possibilities of using this concept to overcome the problem that I'd been seeing in our work began to formulate in my mind.

SOLUTION - STAGE 1: PEOPLE MOVEMENTS

Since then I have studied a lot of the literature on the subject, thought a lot about the possible implications of this as far as Evangelism / Church Planting is concerned and discussed it at length with missionaries and nationals here in Papua New Guinea. As a result of this, I've been working on programs of Church Planting using these principles and now feel confident that this is the way the Holy Spirit has worked, is working and will work for the ingathering of multitudes of disciples in Papua New Guinea.

These principles are aimed at producing People Movements. People Movements are more technically known as Multi-Individual Mutually Inter-dependent Decisions for Christ (McGavran 1970:302-3) A

People Movement as described by Donald McGavran

results from the joint decision of a number of individuals ... whether five or five hundred ... all of the same people, which enables them to become Christians without social dislocation, while remaining in full contact with their non-Christian relatives, thus enabling other groups of that people, across the years, after suitable instruction, ... to come to similar decisions and form Christian churches made up exclusively of members of that people (McGavran 1970:297-298).

“Multi-Individual Mutually Interdependent Decision” actually refers to virtually any decision worth making in a face-to-face society such as we have in Papua New Guinea. In the past, this sort of decision making has often been referred to using the unfortunate terms, “Mass Decision” or “Mass Movement” which conjure up the mental picture of a blind stampede. Such a concept is far from the truth. Instead, it is a decision by a group, made up of individuals who each have a mind of their own, hence the term “Multi individual.” However, these same individuals make all decisions in league with the rest of the group they relate to all of the time, whether that be some few intimates, or their family, or a clan, or the whole village, or even the whole community, depending on the gravity of the decision to be made, hence “Mutually Inter-Dependent.” The various decision making levels are:

- (1) Matters of no importance or which affect no one else are decided on a personal level.
- (2) Matters of importance, but not affecting the whole village are decided on the extended family level.
- (3) Matters of importance that affect the whole village are decided at the village level.
- (4) Matters of importance that affect the whole multi- village community are decided at that community level.

In any of the meetings, be it formal or informal that are required to make such decisions at levels 2, 3 or 4, the pattern is fairly standard. Every man in the group has free expression on the subject while the women listen on the side lines if they are allowed to be present, and sometimes are allowed to voice an opinion on a matter that they feel very strongly about. After the topic has been discussed thoroughly, one of the elders, who probably has been an almost silent listener up to this

point, will voice the consensus feeling as a decision and the individuals within the group will decide whether or not to go along with that consensus decision. Any worthwhile decision is made in this way. However, as outsiders, it is important to notice that the amount of influence an individual has in these discussions depends totally on the amount of respect and prestige that person has in the community. Normally this will be on a continuum, from older males → younger males → older females → younger females. But attitudes to a person can be either above or below their expected position. The factors which would make the difference would be: (a) Achievements for the community, (b) Cooperation with the community, (c) Traditional knowledge, (d) Oratory skill, to name just a few.

In any society such as we have in Papua New Guinea where this type of decision making is the norm for decisions of any import, to endeavour to have people make decisions for Christ in any other way is counter-productive to say the least. At best a decision for Christ against the group can make the Gospel seem un-important. What is more likely, however, is that it will make the person accepting Christ in this way appear rebellious, and thus not a likely example to follow in a society that favours togetherness.

A. PEOPLE MOVEMENTS IN THE WEST

Although this process is completely foreign to our present individualistic western way of thinking, which is the reason it takes us missionaries so long to recognize this as a pattern and then come to use it, it is nothing new, either to Christianity or even to our own society. The majority of our western ancestors originally came to Christ in the great People Movements by which the Gospel spread across Europe and England (Latourette 1953:351, 391, 395). As a matter of fact, the individual decision as we know and treasure it today has only been a part of western society since the fragmentation of families and society in general that has resulted from the mobility required by the Industrial Revolution and made possible by the Transport Revolution of recent centuries.

Also, due to the high regard we have for our ability to make individual decisions, it is easy for us to forget the effect social pressure can have even on our own individual decision making processes. This can

be either “pressure” by advertising, the “opinions” of our peers, or the “advice” we get from counsellors in various spheres.

B. PEOPLE MOVEMENTS IN THE BIBLE

As far as Church history is concerned, People Movements are as old as Christianity itself. Jesus commanded His followers to “disciple the nations” (Matthew 28:19). The Greek word for nations here is *ta ethne* from whence we get our word “ethnic,” which is better translated “groups,” or “peoples.” Let’s take a look at what happened in the New Testament.

- * John 20:19-22 The first disciples were all Jews and mostly from Galilee.
- * Acts 2:41 3,000 Jews became Jewish believers at one time.
- * Acts 4:4 Now 5,000 Jewish Believers.
- * Acts 8:6 Samaritans gave attention to Philip with one accord - as a group.
- * Acts 9:35 All the people in Lydda & Sharon turned to the Lord.
- * Acts 9:42 Many at Joppa turned to the Lord.
- * Acts 10:44 cp 11:13-14 An angel told Cornelius that the Gospel would save him and his household.
- * Acts 16:14-15 Lydia and her family became Christians.
- * Acts 16:29-34 The warden and his family became Christian.

From this we can safely draw the conclusion that we won’t be displeasing to God if we work towards this end.

THE PROBLEM IN CLEAR RELIEF

A. YOUNG DECIDE FOR CHRIST

So at last I started to see that the problems I’d been concerned about were actually social problems with spiritual ramifications, rather than theological problems. In seeing mostly young people making decisions for Christ, the fact was that by not focussing our evangelism particularly, but rather emphasizing the “whosoever will” we reached those who were most able to accept change, i.e. the young people and within that group, mostly the renegades. But these same young people were a part of a society in which they had no authority due to their lack of age or village achievements. Consequently, they were unable to be effec-

tive agents of change to bring the rest of their people to Christ.

Then in deciding individually for Christ, they were now acting on a personal decision for probably the first time in their lives. So this left them isolated in a way that usually quickly sapped any spiritual dedication they may have had.⁴ Or, on the other hand, if they did remain true to the Lord, they had no impact on their own group, because, (a) Being young they had no authority, or (b) As they were acting on a personal decision, they could not relate to the rest of their kinsfolk in a meaningful way, because their kinsfolk knew that any decision that was worth making was always made at the Multi Individual Mutually Inter-Dependent level.

B. OUR GROUP IS IMPORTANT

This then led in my thinking to a second stage that had devastating implications for this means of evangelism. In Papua New Guinea villages, the most important responsibility of any person is the responsibility to build up his/her own group. This can be seen in:

- (a) Their willingness to adopt children as this will give them an extra group member,
- (b) The importance of child bearing in any marriage relationship,
- (c) The great respect shown to in-laws. In a society where marriages are arranged between groups or clans which can only get a spouse from outside their own group, the in-law relationship is the only relationship which, if severed, could lead to the ultimate extinction of the group.
- (d) The definition of sin as in the Bahinimo language. Sin to them means “working against the group.”⁵

Consequently, if a person dares to step out of line with the group and its normal decision making processes, that person is immediately branded as “bad” which isn’t exactly the best “bumper sticker” one can display when trying to “sell” Christianity.

C. YOUNG AS EVANGELISTS

Add to this the fact that we as missionaries had been taught that Nationals can do the job of evangelizing better than we can, and so were wanting to establish an “indigenous church” as quickly as possible. The logical conclusion was that we should always be on the look-

out for converts who showed potential who could then be sent out as evangelists to take the Gospel to other areas, or be trained for the ministry. As we have already seen, the converts were generally the young. Logically, then, those showing potential were also from this age group, who were supposed to provide ministry for all age groups. With these young people there were sometimes factors other than the appeal of the Gospel involved in their "conversion." Sometimes it was a legitimate way to rebel against their own society and its social structure, especially the authority it represented. This rebellion then also carried over into their new found role as evangelists. So as they moved out with the Good News, they often didn't show the respect they should have for the elders in the communities to which they went. By the grace of God, we can find lots of exceptions to this rule, but the dangers I'm pointing out here are very real.

Joshua Daimoi, himself a Melanesian church leader once said that it is a fact that "Papua New Guinean men will not accept spiritual truth from a woman or anyone whom they consider to be younger than themselves" as age and village achievements are the basis of authority. Consequently, the chances of these evangelists winning whole villages or social units to the Lord were very limited as they were looked upon as "young" and "rebels," and these are the very things that would diminish any potential authority they might have had. The outworking of this during the years has been the fact that any results enjoyed by these evangelists have mainly been from their own peer group. This then has in fact been a hindrance rather than a help in seeing whole communities turn to the Lord.

D. MEN WON'T DECIDE INDIVIDUALLY

The reason my approach to individuals elders was unsuccessful was that I was trying to reach the men who comprised the power structure. That in itself was right strategy. But my approach was still on the level of myself as an individual asking them as an individual to come to Christ. Hence, it had absolutely no appeal, or should I say, was incomprehensible. Although I was talking to those in the power structure, I was talking to individuals, not the group. Being in the power structure, these men could have initiated discussion with the group on the subject of turning to Christ. But as it was something as radical as a change of

allegiance, no individual would normally be prepared to take the risk of stepping out of line with the group to suggest it unless they sensed that the group was already in favour of the change. I won't repeat the end result.

FIXED POINTS OF PEOPLE MOVEMENT CONCEPT

So much for the problems. But where do we go from here? First of all, let me state several fixed points on which the rest of our conclusions can be based:

1. God desires to have people groups become His disciples as groups (Matthew 28:19). Therefore, we can believe and work towards this knowing that the Holy Spirit is with us in this task.
2. It is possible to win people groups to the Lord if this is done about correctly.
3. People Movement churches, if properly instructed and led produce the strongest churches, win the most people to the Lord and are the least costly to produce when calculated on a resources per person disciplined basis (McGavran 1970:296-301)

TO PRODUCE A PEOPLE MOVEMENT IN PAPUA NEW GUINEA

I'd like to list my own summary of what will be some of the essential factors required to produce people movements in Papua New Guinea communities. Although these are put into logical order for the recording, as we apply them in practice we will see that the Holy Spirit will bring about variations in their order that He sees as necessary to produce groups of disciples in a given society and situation.

1. All the responsible people in the group must hear the Gospel.
2. The decision makers must come to an understanding of the Gospel and its implications for their personal and community life. This must eventually be handled in a "formal" group session(s) to allow and precipitate a formal decision on the part of the group.
3. The attitude, "Christian is good" must be fostered. In the early church, we see examples of this in Acts 5:13.
4. Someone from within the power structure must become the advocate to the rest of the group.

5. We must be prepared to devote time and effort as necessary to allow the first four points to “gel.”
6. There has to be a demonstration of the Gospel. That is, a miracle or some other happening to show that God is greater than the Ancestral Spirits and that His power is available to help those in His family.
7. The natural leaders in the group who are influential in bringing the group to the Lord must be the leaders in the new church.
8. We must allow and assist the new church to genuinely experience and express Papua New Guinean Christianity.

SOLUTION STAGE 2

By the time these fixed points had begun to crystallize in my mind, I was already into my third term in Papua New Guinea, so I was more than anxious to find ways to put them into practice in our work on the Sepik River.

For all this though, I was still apprehensive. If we concentrated on the big men, the elders, was it likely that the women and young people would really follow them in becoming Christians? Was this just another idea that looked good in theory to me as an outsider but wouldn't even raise a polite smile from a Papua New Guinean Christian? So I discussed it with a couple of our local Pastors. The first replied with an excited; “This is what we've been waiting for! Why haven't we done it this way before?” The second answered my first doubt with a parable as is the customary Papua New Guinean way to deal with important information: “When I fell a big iron wood tree in the middle of the jungle,” he replied, “it brings all the vines and saplings in the vicinity crashing down with it.” I had my answer. At last I felt sure enough to have a try. Some of the stories of the attempts are in the following Chapter.

PEOPLE MOVEMENTS NOT NEW IN PAPUA NEW GUINEA

Although I have been emphasizing the pressing need for us as missionaries and national pastors as well, to realize the potential of, and put into practice the Multi-Individual Mutually Interdependent approach

to conversion, we must realize that people movements are not new in Papua New Guinea. As I have moved around Papua New Guinea and heard descriptions of what has happened in many villages in years gone by and read some of the missionary accounts of Papua New Guinea (Keysser 1980), I find that People Movements have already been a very common phenomenon in mission work in this country. This can be seen by the number of whole villages that have decided to follow Christ in years gone by, or by common statements like "Next Sunday, my family plus these people and myself will all become Christian." To this, the usual reaction from the missionary has been one of abject horror, thinking, "This can't be for real. It has to be a personal decision." And so this has been discouraged. In the cases where they have been taken seriously, we have then gone about our teaching or church establishing as if it were a number of individual converts in one of our home churches. Instead we have an already functioning social structure which can be utilized to facilitate discipling by the normal enculturation processes of peer group pressure, however in this case, used by the Holy Spirit to fulfill His purposes.

Also, in the case of the incredible People Movements in the Lutheran Church in the years of Christian Keysser's ministry in Papua New Guinea, the missionaries seem to have had the problem of equating what they saw as a result of the people movements with the State Church situation they knew from Germany. They thus felt satisfied rather than challenged by what they saw and the movements weren't cared for as they needed to be for their long term strength and stability. Consequently, the end result has been that very little of the potential fruit from these moves has been preserved and the nominal Christianity that remains from these movements have given a lot of people negative attitudes to people movements in Papua New Guinea.

However, the fact that people movements have occurred in many parts of Papua New Guinea without us even recognizing them, let alone encouraging or working towards them surely emphasizes that there is real potential for People Movements in Papua New Guinea. As we have shown, if these are encouraged, actively worked for and then nurtured and cared for in the right way, they have tremendous positive potential for the Kingdom of God.

HOW TO CARE FOR A PEOPLE MOVEMENT

Once again, fine for the problem, but what of the solution. The biggest part of the solution in caring for People Movements is for missionaries to:

- (a) Accept People Movements as legitimate realities,
- (b) Get to understand Multi-Individual Mutually Interdependent decision making
- (c) Develop skills in using this decision making concept.

This then will not only relate to how people make decisions for Christ, but will also related to decisions in daily life, especially those that have a bearing on the establishing of an functional indigenous church. This will then mean that when, by the grace of God we are confronted with a People Movement, we will be able to face it with thanks to God, positive faith and an attitude that makes logical sense to the people wanting to become Christians. These three things are important, as the real work in these situations is about to begin so we will be needing all the resources we can muster.

It has been proven by case studies around the world that the quality of Christians resulting from some particular ministry is not dependent on the reason and circumstances involved in that person coming to the Lord, but rather on the follow up done subsequent to that decision. This is important to realize, as often when people movements are referred to, it is said that they produce second rate nominal Christians who soon revert (McGavran 1955:74). If we look at the surface without looking for reasons, then in some instances this would seem to be the case. But when we look for reasons, I think we can pinpoint the problem most times to what happens after that moment of decision. The strategies listed above can make a big difference to that.

ATTITUDES TOWARDS LEADERS

Once we have grasped this concept for ourselves, the next step in ensuring the long term stability of People Movement Churches is that the natural leaders in the group must be the leaders in the new church. This may sound very simple, but it does present some very real problems to our traditional attitudes and approaches as far as these natural

leaders, the Elders is concerned. First, we must remember first of all that these men are at present leading the village because of their ability as leaders and therefore have the respect of and authority over the village. As such, they deserve our respect. On the other hand, as we utilize them in leadership, we must remember that their proven competence to lead is within the framework of the group. We must not let the pressure of Church structures force us to utilize these leaders in an individual leadership role. They are effective leaders in their own group, but individual leadership is an entirely new role in which they may or may not succeed.

NEED FOR REVIVAL

There is one other element of Papua New Guinean society that can be detrimental to the life of any church and possibly more especially to People Movement Churches, as they are so naturally a part of the society. This element is the fact that Papua New Guineans regard relationships to be more important than anything else, including right and wrong as such. In any church in Papua New Guinea this fact makes discipline very difficult as nobody wants to administer the discipline at the risk of severing relationships. But additionally, in People Movement Churches, there is the risk that nominalism will be allowed to creep in for the same reason. Now let's not think that nominalism is a problem only of People Movement Churches, but at the same time we must be aware of the dynamics that make them prone to this. Therefore, as part of the plan for the planting and establishing of People Movement Churches, we should work towards revival within these churches some time after their establishment. If this is planned for from its inception and then worked and prayed for later on, the fruit from these Multi-Individual Mutually Interdependent decisions for Christ will be preserved and Christ's purpose in choosing us, that is, bearing fruit that will remain (John 15:16), will have been fulfilled.

CONCLUSION

In conclusion, let me say that I think that the main reason we haven't seen more folk come to the Lord in People Movements and seen more permanent results from the People Movements that have occurred, has

been a lack of understanding on the part of missionaries, primarily about the dynamics of village level decision making, and then the fact that this same decision making process was a normal practice during New Testament times. Hopefully this study will help to clarify our understanding of this somewhat.

Lastly, I do not believe that any of what I've said here is contrary to or will replace the work of the Holy Spirit in the discipling of Papua New Guineans. It simply means that we as reflectors of God's grace will at last be shining where people are looking so as to be able to get their attention.

NOTES ON CHAPTER 17

1. *Either by involvement with the heathen system or by immorality.*
2. *In the case of the Lisu, the family.*
3. *Hogan, Hostetter and Swanson (1974)*
4. *In a questionnaire given to a group of 15 Bible School students from various parts of the country, they unanimously indicated that if a person presented a new outside idea that they were interested in to a village meeting, and it was rejected, they would definitely not go ahead alone.*
5. *The Bahinimo are a group living to the south of the Sepik R, PNG. Information from Wayne Dye in personal interview.*

FURTHER READING

McGavran (1980), Keysser (1980).

CHAPTER 18

PLANNED PEOPLE MOVEMENTS

PEOPLE MOVEMENT DYNAMICS AT MALU

It was April 1977. I was visiting Malu which gave several of the men the opportunity of asking me what our 'New Life Forum' meetings in the neighbouring village of Avatip had been all about. The basic program we'd used, as I explained to them, was to have forum meetings for the big men in a marquee every night. The women and children were only allowed in to sit at the back if the elders gave their permission. The goal was to teach them what God's Word really means so they could intelligently decide whether or not they wanted to become Christians. As I finished the explanation, I commented jokingly, "How about we have the same here?"

Malu had always claimed to be totally Catholic but very obviously, even to an outsider, only very nominally so with only about 5 out of the 200 people in the village attending church regularly. But as a result of this nominal allegiance I wasn't surprised when, on a subsequent visit, a scowling elder who hadn't been in our previous discussion greeted me with what sounded like a rather angry question. "What's this I hear about you bringing a tent here to have meetings?"

So to get out of what seemed to be a sticky situation, I carefully explained again what we had done at Avatip, but then went on to stress that I'd only jokingly mentioned having meetings in their village. Therefore I was surprised when the same scowling elder, with the same scowl replied; "I think our people would like that. I'll ask them next meeting." A week later the same elder, still scowling, met me at Ambunti with the statement: "Bring the tent. It's all approved."

So the tent went up on the first of June, and meetings started on the second to run for 21 nights over a period of 24 nights. These meetings were styled on normal village meetings: To open the meeting, a good

hearty cough gets attention and the meeting is declared open by one of the elders. Then it is over to me for evangelistic Bible teaching. I'd speak for 15 minutes or so on a point, and then sit down which allowed time for questions and discussion. This continued for a minimum of an hour with some meetings 2 1/2 hours long. Attendances averaged 73 (27 men, 27 women & 19 children).

In the case of Malu, we used the same basic outline for teaching that I had developed for this type of meeting. But I modified them to major on name studies (*Stori Bilong Nem*) because in Manambu culture, of which Malu is a part, names are considered to be a very important part of real property. Each clan has its own set of names that can only be used by that clan, so the legends and myths that explain how and why each name is the property of a given clan are considered to be very important as well. These stories are in fact the title deeds to the use of these names, and are the focus of all debates that are convened to settle any disputed usage of names. So the concept of the stories behind names was well established. Capitalizing on this, we used name studies such as Jesus/Saviour, Cursed/Righteous (Gal. 3) (In the Pidgin New Testament, these are translated as proper names), Lucifer/Satan, God the Provider, Holy Spirit as the paraclete, God the Healer, God is Love, etc.

No altar calls as we normally think of them were made in the meetings, but the men were encouraged to discuss the implications of what they were hearing with their families, clan members, etc. because I would eventually be asking them to voice their decision as to what they intended to do with what they'd heard. God also confirmed the Word by healing several people who came in faith to God the Healer.

Consequently, the last night was decision night. I spoke briefly and then left it to the people to voice their decisions. A lot of people came for counselling during the discussion time that preceded the decision. It is an exciting although taxing experience watching 80 people huddled together in groups discussing whether they will follow the Lord or not.

Eventually, Mongu, the leader of the Sun and Moon Clan stood and coughed. His white hair, white flowing beard and determination demanded respect.

You all know me as the elder from Malu. When many of you became Catholics years ago, I wasn't interested. I've only been interested in following the ancestral spirits. But now I realize that I am absolutely filthy in God's sight. The name "Cursed" fits me fine. But I want God to clean me tonight, remove the curse from me and put me into His family.

After some more, less vocal, expressions we asked those who really wanted to follow the Lord to stand so we could pray together. All the men stood, along with most of the women and children, amounting to about 60. A few of these were committed Catholics, a few more were renegade Catholics, and a lot, especially the men, were in Mongu's category having previously been resistant to Christ's claims. Now they stood and prayed together, asking God to make them a part of His family.

Several weeks after the meetings, as part of a report, I wrote of the situation as I saw it:

To some of these, this will mean continuing on as practicing Catholics, but for all I believe, it will mean the beginning of a daily walk in communion with Jesus Christ. The Wednesday night following decision night, we had the first of what will be regular, functional devotional meetings. They are yet to ask a whole village meeting about building a church. So 30 of the group who had responded on the Saturday met in the moonlight. In the time of prayer at the end of the service, Mongu prayed (for the first time in his life as such); "Papa, we're your kids now and you know fish are scarce. Help our womenfolk to catch sufficient for our needs." A younger man prayed that God would take the tempers and frayed relationships away from the Christians and fill them with love. So practical, but then, that is Christianity!

At about that time, several other People Movements occurred on the Sepik. This put commitments on my time which meant that I wasn't able to devote sufficient time to Malu to establish a church out of the results of the forum meetings as we'd hoped. However, the thing that excited me most about what we saw at Malu was that the results we predicted after having examined to some degree the social structure of Papua New Guinean villages were indeed what we saw.

AN INVITATION TO YESSAN

*Yessan Village
Via Ambunti. E.S.P.
December, 1977.*

*My dear friend Kevin,
Would you please come to our village and teach us about
God's Word. We have a small men's house here which would
be satisfactory for the meetings.*

*Your friend,
Councillor Jonatan Bala.*

This was my formal invitation to come to the Sepik River village of Yessan. My first involvement with that village was June 1977. At that time men from all the villages in the Yessan/Mayo language group were at Ambunti checking a translation of the Scriptures into their language, under the auspices of Wycliffe Bible Translators. For want of a better location, the Assemblies of God Church was used as the venue for the checking sessions. Fortunately for Alata, the main representative from Yessan, he wasn't baptized as a Catholic when most of the rest of the people in the village had been, so at least this made him feel a little better about being in the A.O.G. church. But he knew that sentiment in Yessan still ran high against the A.O.G.s. As a matter of fact, just a few months before some of the A.O.G. folk from a neighbouring village had come to preach in Yessan and had been chased out on threat of violence.

But then, half way through the checking sessions the unbelievable happened. The Catholic priest came to the A.O.G. church to talk to the checking committee, spoke for quite some time telling of the importance of God's Word. What he said was quite impressive. But — but ? How could the priest possibly step into an A.O.G. church? Weren't they enemies?

Then, the following day, I had been asked to speak to the group. As this was while I was having the village meetings at Malu, I took along the genealogy stick that I'd been using there, and with the aid of this stick spent an hour talking about Bible genealogies. Consequently a few days after the men had gone home, I received the message by bush telegraph that Alata wanted me to come and teach the elders in his village about God's Word using that genealogy stick. Knowing the prejudice that had existed, I made the comment, "let it ripen," realizing full well that this message would get back to Alata, although not sent formally. As it turned out, it was as well that I did.

By September, the local government councillor for Yessan, Jonatan, was threatening court action against me as a result of a nearby village turning to Christ and destroying their fetishes. The fact that I was 80 miles away when they made their decision to do this, and was only there when it happened by their invitation didn't seem to be the point. But by the grace of God, in the following three months I was able to send Jonatan a letter, visit him at home once and at another time both of us spent two whole nights together at mourning ceremonies at a nearby village. The above letter was the outcome of the relationship established in this way. What is more this letter was the result of a village meeting that Alata the originator of the interest didn't bother attending. I gathered from him later that he figured that he had applied enough pressure already so had left the final decision to the rest of the group.

MEETING FORMAT

When I went to Yessan to find out what the real significance of the above letter was, I found that they had decided on three weeks of teaching sessions so that they, the elders could understand well what God's Word was all about. As I didn't have three weeks to spare in one block, we scheduled the program to be in three one week slots. Their request for the meetings was based on reports they'd heard of the evangelistic teaching meetings at Avatip and Malu as previously mentioned.

On arriving at the village to begin the meetings, I found first of all that there had been a change in venue. Instead of the small men's house belonging to the Hawk Clan that had been originally offered for the

meetings, we were now to have the meetings in the village owned men's ceremonial house. I was very pleased about this, as Yessan consisted of two exogamous moieties which could easily have polarized if the meeting had been sponsored by just one moiety.

Once again, I endeavoured to follow village meeting format for these meetings. This is signified in the official name used for the meetings "New Life Forum" (*Nupela Laip Kibung*), with the forum aspect being dominant. The meeting time is set the afternoon before by the men in the meeting in accordance with the next days activities. This meant that most afternoons we began between three and five and went through till the mosquitoes invaded at dusk (7 p.m.), while on Sunday we began mid morning after they had finished Mass and went through till late afternoon.

While waiting for the men to gather, I would elicit myths and legends, supposedly to keep us all awake, but at the same time proving very informative to me. When enough men had gathered, the meeting was declared open by an elder and then the teaching began. After several meetings, they requested that we include prayer as we opened the meetings, so that God could help them to understand better. I was glad to do this, and was even happier that the suggestion had come from them.

It is still amusing to recall the reactions to the first meeting at Yessan. First in the introductory session, I announced that I wanted smoking and beetle nut chewing in the meetings. I saw this as important so they would feel at home in the meetings, which were theirs anyway. Also, this would mean that they could sit comfortably through the long sessions I was anticipating. But the stereotype for A.O.G. missionaries was to be very negative towards such things. So to announce that I wanted them present was quite a surprise. Secondly, after I'd spent about 10 minutes on introductory matters about the meetings I went and sat down again and requested interaction. Nobody knew what to do. They were expecting all out monologue.

But fortunately, for a third point, amongst the introduction I'd brought up the matter of whether women could attend the meetings or not. Their discussion of this soon got around their expectations about monologue. I'd suggested that I'd be happy if the women stayed away

if that suited the men best. I had put it that way to make it obvious who I was aiming the teaching at. I could see advantages of the women not being there if the men wanted it that way. That would have made it possible to be more specific while discussing village deities and other power factors as these are normally kept secret from the women. However, they decided to allow the women to sit around the perimeters of the house and listen, so that was fine too. When that discussion was over I stood up and went on with one part of the story of pre-creation. Having finished that, I sat down again. Once again, silence for a short period and then they got to discussing it and asking questions on any parts not clear. So that part of the format was set. Actually, to make this possible I would only prepare generally for the topics I felt we needed to cover each day and would allow these discussions periods and questions to finally shape each session.

Fourthly, there was the realization that these were really “their meetings.” I had to really discipline myself to fit into this, but as far as setting the time for the meetings as well as allowing them to open the meetings when they were ready, that was how it had to be. My natural reaction was that the message I had was very important and “the King’s Business requires haste.” The fact that I managed to keep this tendency in check also seemed a bit of a surprise to the Yessans and actually did waste time unnecessarily until they eventually got the message through feedback that I would not take the initiative myself to begin a meeting. In my mind I really wanted them to feel at home in the meetings, not just so they would come back but so that by using their format, the format could be out of focus, making the message prominent.

Fifthly, by the time that first meeting was over, even the ex-catechist for the village agreed that the Bible stories I was telling were the same as they’d heard from the Catholics so I couldn’t have been so bad after all. One other really significant part of the format was the “Modified Pentecostal altar call” at the close of each session. In this, I would ask “is God’s Word really speaking to you? If so, go home and talk it over with your family, fellow clansmen, and other intimates. Before the meetings are over you’re going to have to express what you’ve decided.”

Once again, the teaching in these sessions used the basic list of 25

studies as in Appendix B using the Genealogy Stick as a focus. This material was then presented in such a way as to minister to their felt needs, and then to take them beyond these to their basic needs, which are often below the level of consciousness.

DISCUSSION

The discussion times that punctuated all of the teaching sessions were also very interesting to observe. Both the Yessans and myself were bilingual. We all speak New Guinea Pidgin fluently and this was the medium for the meetings. But for our other language, mine was English and theirs was Yessan/Mayo. And it was in this language that they discussed the teaching amongst themselves. But at the same time, it was imperative that I know what they were talking about, — first of all, so I could know if they were understanding each point satisfactorily, and secondly to be pre-prepared for the next question, whatever that might be. But the fact that they were talking a language in which I barely knew greetings, left me with non-verbal communication as the only means available except the few Pidgin words that were occasionally interlaced in their vernacular as the means of feedback in these discussions. This then made for rather taxing concentration even when I wasn't formally involved, which made me very glad to see evening on the days when these meetings lasted all day. But I was rather surprised at how much I was able to follow by this means. It seems that the Yessans were also surprised as they often jokingly made reference to my knowing their language, which we all knew wasn't true.

EXTRA-CURRICULA

It was after the conclusion of the meeting each day however, that some of the real work began. This did not involve me, but usually was led by Alata who, very obviously by this stage, had himself become an innovator of the ideas I was presenting. In these informal sessions now Alata was functioning as a cross-breed between an internal advocate and a “winch truck!” I say that, as he was determined to see his people come to the Lord, hence the “winch truck.” But he was also using the traditional decision making procedures to bring about that change.

One other factor was that of healing. In the meetings where we dis-

cussed healing, we also prayed for the sick, and saw some rather remarkable healings. As a result, while I was away following the second week of meetings, they responded quite differently when the men from another very powerful village came to offer pig sacrifices in Yessan. Normally the Yessans lived in fear of this village due to their prowess with sorcery, but this time, the Yessan men asked them to leave and not bring pigs back again. "We want to follow new stories now" they explained, pointing to the genealogy stick still hanging conspicuously in the men's ceremonial house.

DECISION DISPLAYED

In my mind, I had set the last day of the third week as "decision day." On that day, I had planned to allow them to formalize what their decision was with regard to the things we'd been discussing in the meetings. Did they want to follow Christ with all that would mean in the way of allegiances and its resultant changes? After the meeting on the second last afternoon, I inquired as to the meeting time next day.

"Early morning." I was told.

"Early morning?" I asked. I asked because they had planned an all night dance that night.

"Early morning." was the reply.

At 8 a.m. Councillor Jonatan came to see me. "We're almost ready." he said, "We're just waiting for a few more men to bring their stuff."

"What stuff?" I asked.

"Their magical ginger plants, potions, oils, human bones, and things." he replied. "We're going to follow Christ now, so we don't want to be involved with those things any more. We want you to come and pray with us, then we're going to throw this stuff in the river."

This is exactly what did happen. So I never did get around to doing what I had planned for "Decision Day." But despite that disappointment, by the time I left Yessan the next day, I was confident that this was the most successful cross-cultural communication experience I had been involved in to that date. Or to put it in the terms of some of the Yessan men, "The Catholics taught us the Ten Commandments, but you taught us how to live as Christians in a practical sense."

"Thanks Lord!"

It has been interesting to see the result of these meetings on Church life in Yessan. About 6 months after the meetings, Alata and some other men who weren't Catholics decided to build an Assemblies of God Church. But the majority of people at Yessan have continued going to the Catholic Church. Unfortunately, the Catechist there was from another village and so didn't attend the meetings or realize the significance of what had happened, so his flock was not followed up as they might have been. As a result, their church has not received the full benefit it could have, and because we refused to confront on denominational lines unnecessarily, neither did our Church receive all the benefits it could have. But the benefits have been significant nevertheless, and at least part of the potential for People Movements in Yessan has been realized.

CHAPTER 19

TRAINING NON-LITERATE CHURCH LEADERS

LEADERS EXIST - LET THEM LEAD

Leaders exist in every community. To find, help and get out of the way of these is one of the best pieces of work to which missionaries can address themselves. Abundant proofs can be found of the capacity of these leaders to do the work required ... The most difficult task before the missionary is perhaps to get out of the way. ...

To be able to distinguish natural leaders, to give them the fullest opportunity to lead, to encourage and support them in their leadership, is one of the chief services a missionary can render (Clark 1928, quoted from Tippet 1967:334-5).

This chapter is a description of an attempt to do just this in the Upper Sepik River and its southern tributaries in Papua New Guinea. The attempt described here however was not done in order to follow Clark's advice, but rather "evolved" as a result of several factors exerting pressure on us to change our Church leadership styles.

The first of these factors was the sparsity of population (approximately 20,000 people over 2,000 sq. miles) in a primitive situation. This has meant that using any form of itinerant ministry, even in the early stages of Church planting, is difficult and not very productive.

Secondly, the preponderance of women and children in the already established Churches indicated a lack of community respect for the present Church leaders. Thirdly, quite a number of People Movements had occurred, four of which involved whole villages. So this required some special form of leadership training if these People Movements were to be consolidated.

Fourthly, while thinking, worrying and praying about one of these People Movement Churches, I had been particularly impressed with my need to trust the Holy Spirit for their well-being as these were God's children that I was dealing with. This, then, freed me up sufficiently to be able to look for some new approaches to leadership training.

All of these factors combined, indicated that we should find some means of training traditional leaders or village recognized leaders to be the leaders of these young churches rather than training men who we hoped would some day become leaders. But the men who were recognized leaders in their villages were mostly non-literate, or even if marginally literate, were members of communities where memory and oratory skills were far more important than reading skills. So we set about organizing a church leaders training course based on non-literate skills.

GOAL

We called the program "*Kos Bilong Bosim Lotu*" (Course to Lead Church Services). The goal was "the training of village leaders to conduct meaningful services in their own villages." We set this as our goal because the religious aspects of their traditional cultures were

- (a) meaningful - i.e. geared to felt needs,
- (b) available in the village,
- (c) participated in by the community, and
- (d) led by the village leaders.

Therefore if Christianity was to be virile without unacceptable syncretism and at the same time be attractive to non-Christians, it would have to meet the same criterion.

LITERACY IMPLIES ACCULTURATION

To organize a leadership training program for non-literates faces one major problem which is not faced to the same degree in a program for literates. That is, the training program for non-literates has to take traditional culture seriously. The reason for this is that openness to literacy skills usually indicates that a person is willing to change, while the acquiring of those skills has usually resulted in some degree of acculturation. This then means that a leadership training program based on literacy can lead people far from traditional patterns of thinking,

learning and communicating (even though it may be quite enjoyable to those participating in it). The problems faced by the people so trained while endeavouring to put what they have learned into practice is outside the scope of this paper, but does merit some attention.

On the other hand, a training program for non-literates has to cater for the traditionally oriented segment of the community and so has to take cultural matters seriously within the organization of the program.

An example of this would be our concentrating on memory skills during the course. This was done because Papua New Guineans feel that remembered facts are important facts in a similar way to the way we feel that written facts are important facts.

Another example is the fact that one of the first things we did in the course was to establish the antiquity of the Biblical record. This was done because Papua New Guineans feel that only stories coming to them from ancestral time are reliable sources of values. Other aspects of the course described later will also illustrate this point.

PRACTICAL THEORY

Before progressing with the rest of this chapter I need to raise several issues that, though somewhat theoretical in nature, are nevertheless, very practical in their outworking when considering the pros and cons of a Church Leadership training program for Non-Literates.

The first of these is the importance of the use of the “eye gate.” Not that I wish to question the fact that the use of the eye gate as well as the ear gate improves retention, but rather to look at this realistically in a non-literate situation. First, I’m sure that the difference in retention of material received only by the ear gate and material received through both the ear and eye gate combined is not as great in non-literate societies as it is in literate societies.

Secondly, we must remember that the ability to repersonalize what is read only comes with an extremely high level of literacy. The ability to remember what pages of print, including the individual words look like requires an even higher level of familiarity with reading. But until both of these skills are attained, material received by reading cannot be considered to be a part of eye gate reception as we often think of it in our literacy based society. Rather it is only a second rate ear gate. By

this definition, many of the people who we would even define as functionally literate, i.e. able to read or write anything they can say,¹ are still in the position where reading is only a second rate hearing. Therefore, for the sake of immediate retention, focusing on literacy skills can actually be a disadvantage rather than an advantage.

Secondly, there is the question of the ability of the human mind, especially that of a 'primitive Papua New Guinean' to be able to memorize the sheer quantity of information necessary for a responsible Church leader, without the use of literacy skills.

In 1936, Gregory Bateson's *Naven*, a study of the Iatmul people of the Sepik River, was published. Incidentally, some young Iatmul men participated in the course we are here describing. The following quotes should leave us in little doubt as to the reasonableness of what we were expecting.

We have already seen that vast and detailed erudition is a quality which is cultivated among the Iatmul. This is most dramatically shown in the debating about names and totems, and I have stated that a learned man carries in his head between ten and twenty thousand names. Further it would seem that rote memory plays a rather small part in the achievement of these feats of memory. From the continual alteration of the order in which the names are given we may deduce that the mental process used is not chiefly that of rote memory (1958:222-3).

Thirdly, I would like to list in chart form some basic differences between societies like our own, which have for centuries been oriented to literacy, and societies like those of Papua New Guinea where literacy is only a marginal skill of a relatively few people.

LITERATE

1. Conservate use of time and money.
2. Flexible goals and inflexible methods.
3. Stress individual experience.
4. Passively receive messages.
5. Segmented lineal perception.
6. Data preservation, print dependent.
7. Takes outsider's view of events.
8. Creates bureaucratic structures.

NON-LITERATE

1. Casual use of time and money.
2. Flexible methods and inflexible goals.
3. Stress group experience.
4. Actively receive messages.
5. Global contextual simultaneous perception.
6. Data preservation, memory dependent.
7. Takes insider's view of events.
8. Creates monarchic or autocratic structures.

(Primrose 1974:16-17)

These differences are so pervasive that they cannot be disguised. Hence, a leadership training program which follows the literate route tends to be oriented in the direction of the literate segment of the society. Now this in itself is not bad, except that as Klem points out, oral literature “is intimately related to the sense of identity of many of the people” (1977:vi). Therefore a program based on literacy tends to be rejected by many people simply because it is regarded as an invasion into their world. They seldom reject it on the basis on any reasoned judgment of its adequacies or inadequacies.

To state this in another way, we find that within Papua New Guinean culture traditional legends and myths, in which literacy has no part, are at the very core of the belief and value system. Hence to endeavour to introduce new beliefs and values as a system based on literacy means that so many parts are new that the new doesn't seem to be a replacement for the old, but rather a threat to its very existence (Tippett 1961). This then must be seen as a contributing factor in the ultimate rejection of Christianity by many members of the older generation, especially village leaders.

By contrast, if we look at Christ's ministry in the light of these principles, we find that,

Christ's choices of language, teaching style and modes of communication must be seen against the background of the social meanings these policies had for His listeners. These choices of methodology did much to shape our Lord's public identity and the place He took among men. This in turn helped some segments of the people to accept His message and scandalized others. Only when we appreciate the social implications of Christ's communicational policies can we hope to wisely apply His principles and techniques in parts of the world where there are similar competing systems of communication, fraught with similar social implications (Klem 1977:57).

By comparison we find that as

communications and language are at the very core of a society's culture ... if a denomination in a predominantly oral society depends primarily upon written materials for most of its Bible study and teaching ministry, then at the heart of its ministry such a church is not indigenous (Klem 1977:162).

LITERACY - PROS & CONS

From a worldwide perspective it is obvious that literacy does not just happen. As Klem points out

Though literacy first appeared in the ancient Near East over 5,000 years ago and writing came to Europe over 2,000 years ago, as late as 1850 less than half the adults of Europe were literate. Of every 100 adults only about 40 could read at all, and half of the 40 would have only marginal skills (1977:9).

On the segment of the Sepik River for which we were planning, 90% non-literate would be a conservative estimate with most of the 10% being younger than 30 years of age. A factor that contributes to this is that most of the selling points for literacy, i.e. letter writing, keeping abreast of Government policies, development, handling official business, etc, can be fulfilled quite satisfactorily by having one literate person per family, or even per village in smaller communities.² Therefore few adults seem to see enough advantage in literacy to motivate them to endeavour to acquire and maintain it.

At the same time, literacy with its ability to preserve data and make it usable again, definitely is an advantage to Church leaders as long as they can acquire literacy skills without hampering oral communication skills which are by far the better way to communicate in their societies. Therefore in conjunction with the other aspects of this course, literacy classes were made available to the non-literates who participated.

SELECTING PARTICIPANTS

How to select participants for the course was one of the first questions we had to grapple with. Since approximately 1965 there had been a number of young Sepik men who went away from the Sepik to attend a full time Bible school. So the stereotype of Bible training being for the young was already well established. But we were particularly concerned about the People Movement Churches that had come into being. To nurture these properly it was of critical importance to use locally recognized leadership. What's more, we had seen that the lack of locally recognized leadership was a problem even in our more established churches. So we decided to send word out to the villages concerned asking them to select the men to come. We emphasized the se-

lection of older, non-literate men, to endeavour to break the stereotype mentioned above. We also emphasized them selecting who they wanted to send, so that they felt responsible for the behaviour and attitudes of even younger men who came to accompany the older men.

As far as our allowing younger men into the course, we could see literacy as a useful tool in the long term, and realized that the younger men would have a better chance of becoming satisfactorily literate. The major difference in this course then was that we refused to make literacy a requirement for Church leadership or to use literacy skills as the main medium for teaching in the course.

Papua New Guinean village leadership is informal leadership and is not centered in any one individual. Therefore, we required that two men from each village attend the course together. This made it possible for them to interact with the material at the course in a more meaningful way, while providing a safeguard for accuracy of transmission of information back to the village. Furthermore, it meant that we were not formalizing the leadership roles of any of the participants. This was important to us at this stage because Church and Mission regulations under which we operated did not allow polygynists to hold office. But the nurturing of the People Movement churches in some cases required that polygynists continue to take leadership in the church that they had worked hard to bring into being.

THE CURRICULUM

The next problem we faced was what to teach. The subjects decided on were:

A. BIBLE STORIES

B. COMMUNION SERVICES

C. SERVICE COMPONENTS

D. CATECHISM

E. LITERACY

F. CHRISTIAN LIVING

A. BIBLE STORIES

In the past I had tried to encourage older men to take a leadership role in the services, but without success. It seems that the reason for them not doing so is the importance of stories, legends and myths in Papua New Guinean culture. Great prestige is afforded a man who knows a lot of these stories, as these stories are really the title deeds to much that they consider to be real property, e.g. land rights, the right to the use of clan names, access to ancestors etc. Also contained in these

stories are the regulations that control the village, e.g. marriage regulations, incest taboos, etc. At the same time these stories enable them to make sense out of the world around them. For example, the first incidence of most of the natural phenomena in the world around them is told of in these legends. These natural phenomena are, therefore, tied into the totemic system of the village so that they can feel at home with them. In this way, these stories are in fact, philosophy in oral form (Stanner 1956:272).

A second aspect of these stories is the way the stories themselves are a means to control the factors mentioned above (Lawrence 1964:30). I won't elaborate on this, except to say that a man who knows the stories is considered to be very important, while the man who doesn't know the background stories of a particular matter would never consider taking a leading role in the exercise of that matter. Consequently, these older men would feel terribly ashamed taking a leadership role in services unless they knew the Bible stories that would give them the necessary background.

So Bible Stories became a major part of the curriculum. The stories we chose to teach in these three week sessions were a modified and expanded series of the Bible Stories that Jacob Loewen had used to great advantage amongst the Choco Indians of Panama (1975:374). A summary of some of the advantages Loewen had found and which we also confirmed are:

1. It permitted a relatively whole message in simple form.
2. The narrative form permitted us to meet the demand of cultural relevance in both form and content, while avoiding a number of theological problems that would have hindered comprehension for a novice.
3. It provided the expansible framework that permitted us to "anchor" the message of the Gospel.
4. It has apparently prevented serious and harmful restructuring of the new message.
5. The narrative simplicity offered a personal encounter with a challenging and already culturally accepted, relevant message.
6. It provided a form of the message that so closely paralleled their own legends that everyone could immediately begin re-telling and sharing the Good News with others (Loewen 1975:374-6.)

As a further help to put these stories in a meaningful context and tie them together in a chronological framework which could further limit harmful restructuring of the stories, we centered these stories around the “Genealogy Stick” that we had previously developed to help in teaching Bible Stories and to counter Cargo Thinking in village meetings as mentioned in previous chapters. In practice, this Genealogy Stick proved to be very useful as the story matrix for getting these stories across accurately and in order.

To further enhance the learning of these stories, we spent the evenings during the course in one of three activities. The first was dramatization of the story learnt during the day, The second was to have the men divide into their language groups (7 in all) and re-tell the stories amongst themselves in their languages, using the shared story telling style that they use in all story telling in their villages except in story debates. As a third we had men from each group tell legends from their own villages that covered similar material. Apart from the benefits that exposure to these legends was to myself, comparing them to Bible stories did raise important theological differences to the level of consciousness so that they could begin to be dealt with. Also the effect of two-way sharing on the subject heightened the communication impact of these stories.

B. COMMUNION

With “Meaningful Services” being the goal of the course, we were faced with the question of what would be the focus of these services. Preaching as we know it, which is usually the focus, is largely dependent on reading skill for preparation. George Patterson’s experience in Honduras helped me at that point.

New believers should not preach. They can sing, pray, read the Bible and give testimonies. Until there is someone ready to preach, the Lord’s Supper should serve as the center of their worship. It will not corrupt new believers to serve the Lord’s Supper, but it will swell their heads to preach. Let their preaching develop naturally out of their witnessing. First they win their friends by humbly presenting Christ with their own Bibles. Soon they begin telling their friends Bible stories. Then they teach simple Bible studies using the reteachable extension materials. Gradually this practice in communicating the Word evolves into preaching, avoiding the stilted preaching manner provoked by pre-

mature pulpit assignments (1974:4).

After observing communion services as I had seen them practiced in some of our other church areas, I concluded that in many churches, communion services and the communion emblems were regarded as having magical power. This was a result of the restrictions on who could lead or participate in a communion service. These had been introduced as safeguards to guide new Christians, but were interpreted as taboos by Papua New Guineans coming from their animistic background. The existence of taboos therefore proved that communion itself had supernatural power. The following “rule of thumb” will show the presuppositions that led to that conclusion.

- (a) Supernatural power (*pawa*) can both help or harm. Many times this is governed by whether the right ritual has been performed or whether the particular taboos required for possession of that power have been followed carefully.
- (b) The more powerful the *pawa*, the more taboos are likely to have to be observed. Many of these taboos do not seem to have a “common sense” reason for them, but are observed carefully so that the *pawa* may be controlled.
- (c) Magic is practiced by religious specialists (*saveman*). No one else would consider trying to perform the necessary rituals since a mistake could be fatal if the spirit became vindictive.
- (d) Things public are powerless. Secret things are powerful.

To correct this problem, we decided on three remedial steps we could take: The first of these began with a re-look at 1 Corinthians 11, especially the judgment verses mentioned in verses 27, 29 and 30. While doing this I began looking at the “therefore” of verse 27 to see what it was there for. As a result of this re-examination, I concluded that it connects the “preaching” (proclaim) of participation (eat and drink) in verse 26 to the judgment of verses 27, 29 and 30. Therefore, to emphasize the point at issue for the Papua New Guinean context, we could paraphrase this concept in this way: “If we participate in this remembrance of the death and resurrection of Christ without His death and resurrection being effective in our lives, we tell a lie in the name of God, and so are liable to judgment and or punishment. But that judgment is not caused by the magical powers of the communion emblems

themselves, but is sent by God himself to chasten and correct the careless one.” So, on the basis of this, we felt we should concentrate on leading people into a closer walk with God, and let Him deal with their sanctification on a personal basis. In that way we felt we could go a long way towards getting around the thought of ceremonial taboos.

The third step was based on the assumption that the Bible does not tell us in specific terms who can administer or partake of communion, presuming that all present are believers, with their hearts in right relationship with God. Therefore, with proper instruction and proper opportunity for heart searching given at each communion service, there should be no reason for any one person to judge another, or for only certain people to be able to administer communion. This would enable us to be able to keep communion very public and thus combat the assumption that the communion emblems in themselves have magical power.

On the basis of this then, I felt that it would be very beneficial to institute communion on a very public basis as the focal part of village services. In that way a non-literate wouldn't find it difficult to lead these services. Or, if a younger person was to lead, he wouldn't be in the limelight as he would be in monologue preaching so this could avoid a reaction from the older people.

In the course, we spent a lot of time discussing the form we would use to convey the correct meanings of the communion service. It was agreed that in villages where coconuts were plentiful that they were ideal. The coconut milk would represent the Blood of the Lord and the flesh of the coconut to represent His Body. In the more remote villages where coconuts are scarce, they decided to use the juice from sugar cane to represent the Blood of Christ, with cooked sago or root vegetables to represent His Body. For communion glasses, leaves from a tall ginger plant (*gorgor*) were used. In actual fact, we were teaching both the form and the meaning of communion. But because the form used was locally available, it could be out of focus so the meaning, “In Remembrance of Me” was able to be dominant.

C. SERVICE COMPONENTS

Apart from the communion service, the men were also taught songs they could sing. Some of these, like “Jesus Has Told Us Not To Fear”

were specially composed to deal with specific problems. Others had been composed by local men and set to Papua New Guinean tunes. Personal testimonies were encouraged and prayer and spontaneous worship were also taught and encouraged.

D. CATECHISM

Coming from a Pentecostal background with our lack of emphasis on forms and rituals, I was rather surprised to find the Shorter Catechism printed in Pidgin and in general use in many of our Churches when I first came to Papua New Guinea 15 years ago. As it turns out one of our earlier Field Leaders had had previous experience with non-literates in India, and had felt that this Catechism memorized by all Christians would provide a basic theology that would repel false teaching. His view is supported by Tippet when writing of the Solomon Islands.

Where there are no creeds, prayer-books or catechisms to serve as a theological frame of reference, there may well be dangers of too much freedom in exposition. ... It is in ... [the face of false teaching] that a creed and catechism stand by the victim and at least make him cautious (1967:306).

Hence this Shorter Catechism in Pidgin was memorized in the course and all participants were given a copy of it.

E. LITERACY

On the first day of each course, the non-literate men were asked if they wanted to learn to read. Interestingly enough, all of them indicated that they wanted to try, although some seemed to say “yes” to go along with the group. This, however, is normal Papua New Guinean procedure. So I gave them two options. The first was that I, a fellow big man, would endeavour to teach them to read. But as I wasn’t experienced at this, it probably wouldn’t be successful. The second option was that I, a fellow big man, would give orders to my wife to come and teach them how to read. As she had had experience, this would probably be successful. Normally a Papua New Guinean man resents a woman trying to take authority over him, but in this case as they realized that the option was for a woman obeying a big man to help them, they agreed to this. In fact, I have never seen rapport between a white woman and Papua New Guinean big men at such a high. Even when

some of the younger ones stepped out of line a bit, the question “do you do that to Kevin?” was all that was needed to restore the desired law and order. Apart from the other lesser results, one 45 year old man learnt to read reasonably well in three weeks as well as mastering the other materials in the course.

It seems that the high motivation of a new Christian to learn to read, plus the fact that “familiarity with the Christian message gained through indigenous media prepares for the use of the Bible in written form” (Klem 1977:xvii) and the positive attitude towards the class as described above had contributed to a high result from minimal input.

F. CHRISTIAN LIVING

In the class on Bible Stories, we did not teach interpretation with the stories. As much interpretation as was taught was taught in a very practical class on Christian Living. In this we dealt with many areas of Papua New Guinean felt needs, especially those dealing with the Spirit world. Whenever possible, the Bible stories already learnt were used to get across the point in the teaching. By doing it this way, we were able to follow traditional usage of their own stories. These are referred to when discussing certain types of behaviour, and then points from the stories are applied to condemn or condone the behaviour being discussed. I guess this was our theology class, but it was designed to be lived, not just learnt. As traditional education and communication techniques have been used for centuries to develop moral values, it seems appropriate that the Church that is aiming at the same ends should also use these methods (Primrose 1974:5).

EVALUATION

In an endeavour to evaluate the effectiveness of this type of course, I will take some examples of specific incidents from later contact with participants.

At the village of Oam 1 the emphasis on the older people immediately brought renewed interest in the church services. Then, soon after the second course, one of the younger men who had been sent to the course was charged with adultery. Previously when this sort of thing happened it was virtually the end of the church because the person we had selected and trained had done something wrong. This time, they

were the ones who were ashamed of his behaviour as they had sent him to the course, and the incident had little effect on the Church services.

At Pei, which is a People Movement church with their own non-literate people taking the leadership, I heard them telling people from another village: "We have God's Word and we intend to keep it. Anytime you want it just come and get it. We have it in our minds." Hence the advantage of a non-literate use of God's Word.

For the Yapatois, getting home involved a day and a half in a motor powered canoe plus a day's walk through a swamp. On the first Sunday after the course they came to have their service including communion and realized that they didn't know if children could participate. So some of them walked to Pei and back to find out for sure. The very fact that this was thought of indicated to me that they were looking at meanings not just forms.

Mapisi and Swano had been interested in Christianity, and some had become Christians but they were waiting for a "Pastor" to come and conduct services for them. When they came to the course, they brought extra people to make sure they had enough voice power to convince people at home that what they heard was right. And they have been conducting their own services ever since.

When I visited both Mayo and Mowi villages some weeks after the course, I received most profuse apologies from the men who had been at the course. They were very sorry that they hadn't had time to teach their people everything that they had learnt at the course. This then highlighted a distinct advantage of short courses in non-literate situations. That is, in a long term course a lot is forgotten, and what is remembered remains mostly with the participants in the course. In short term courses like these, however, the information spreads out over a much broader base.

So as a summary evaluation, I would say that this program, while not being able to do everything that a long term full time literacy based Bible School program can do, can do many of the same things well. It is, furthermore, capable of doing some very important things that are impossible in the other type of course.

FURTHER REFINEMENTS

From the perspective of the present, there are several things requiring attention to help with the further training of non-literate Church leaders here on the Sepik. This additional training in turn will result in the more effective discipling of the Christians under their care.

The first is to work on setting Bible stories to rhythm and or music as suggested by Primrose.

To make the material memory-prone, it would need to be given appropriate rhythm and music settings. In fact, all material which must be remembered exactly may need musical and rhythmic settings to render them memorable (1974:30).

Even more important than the memory proneness of material set to music is its ability to resist change, an automatic process in the relaying of information in a non-literate situation (Goody & Watt 1968:30). Primrose, quoting Lloyd Binage, claims that musical materials are the only oral communications accurately transmitted over extended periods of time in East Africa (1974:30).

Some of the young people in our area have begun doing this to some Bible stories, but a lot more work remains to be done. More research into ways of telling myths and legends could show us what local poetic idiom is really like and give us ideas on how to use it. The name songs of the Iatmul are an example of what could be done, as no doubt, these songs account for them being able to remember so many names. As Tippet has said, "If folklore is best taught in poetic idiom, most probably this would be the best way to teach the Bible" (1979b). Furthermore, this needs to be done with traditional tunes for each group involved. Once this is done, the catechism we were using as well as the list of Bible stories all need to be set to these tunes and put to work as soon as possible.³

A second step needing to be taken is to make communion, at least on some occasions, a meal, a part of a feast, as it was when first instituted. This is important in societies such as we have in Papua New Guinea that are oriented to events rather than to time. It seems that Primrose was expressing a similar feeling when he observed that in African Independent Churches, "the sacraments become communal actions [events] or they cease to exist" (1974:36).

On the Sepik, we are working on Christian feasts as a means of using tithes of food in accordance with Deut 14:22-29. This being the case, it shouldn't be difficult to incorporate communion into these feasts. The only problem that will need to be watched in this context is the ritual meaning of giving sago in most Sepik villages as a sign of guaranteed protection. This could possibly be a source of some wrong attitudes, such as once again thinking of communion as a fetish for protection. If this problem is recognized, however, it should be possible to deal with this to make it a teaching point rather than a stumbling block.

CONCLUSION

In conclusion, I'd like to include the following piece entitled "If Jesus Had Used Television." To understand its significance in this context, we must note that even comprehension of television requires literacy skills.

Sometimes I hear people saying wishfully 'If only Jesus had been able to use television. Think of how many people he could have reached.'

I take the opposite view. I think that if Jesus had had TV, if Paul had had a printing press, Christianity might never have survived. The early Christians would have been tempted to leave the job of evangelism to the communications experts.

More people might have **known** about Christianity

But far fewer would have been **converted**.

The media may be able to prepare the ground by influencing attitudes and values, by making people aware. In a few rare cases, they may even be able to plant a seed or two. But the media's built-in limitations make it almost impossible to nurture those individual seeds into flowers. That kind of phenomenon happens only when someone clutches your lapels with urgency, or is present to put an arm around your shoulder in support, or cares enough to express sympathy.

Fortunately, the early Christians had no choice. They had to witness personally to their faith, even at the risk of persecution and death. And the church **grew**.

But the mass media don't have that personal contact, and they can't convert the world. Only **people** can (James Taylor from *WACC ACTION* quoted in Christian Publishers and Booksellers Association Newsletter, Dec. 1979).

I believe that in evangelism and in leadership training we must focus on non-literates, including village leaders. To do this, we must use methods that capitalize on the strengths of oral communication which exist in non-literate societies. In doing this, we will indeed be putting people in contact with people in ways that they will feel comfortable with. The result of this will be that the Gospel will be heard. And the result of this in a receptive area like the Sepik River area of Papua New Guinea will be a church that is growing in every dimension of its life.

NOTES ON CHAPTER 19

1. *Definition by Sarah Gudschinsky of Wycliffe Bible Translators.*
2. *From DYE, Wayne in a lecture on PNG Challenges to Literacy Ukarumpa, August 1976.*
3. *For further suggestions in this vein, see "Developing Hymnology in New Churches" in Practical Anthropology Nov, Dec. 1962 Vol 9 No 6.*

FURTHER READING

Klem (1982)

CHAPTER 20

URBAN PAPUA NEW GUINEA: STRATEGY FOR EVANGELISM

URBANIZATION IN PAPUA NEW GUINEA

By the end of the twentieth century approximately 80 per cent of the earth's population will be urban (Greenway 1976:12).

This was the prediction made in 1976 by Roger S. Greenway in the first chapter of the book he edited entitled *Guidelines for Urban Church Planting*. But will this be true for Papua New Guinea? In 1969 the House of Assembly made the following statement:

The administration is seeking to develop a comprehensive program to counter drift to the towns and also for the strengthening of village life (House of Assembly 1969:2103, quoted from Seifert 1975:50).

To answer the question we have posed for ourselves, perhaps we should let the statistics of two Papua New Guinean towns speak for themselves. In 1935 Port Moresby, the capital, had an indigenous population of 2500. Just 35 years later, in 1970 that population figure stood at 50,000 (Seifert 1975:50). This represents a decadal growth rate of 135%. In 1960 the indigenous population of Wewak was listed at 1,000 (Missionary Enterprise 1960:8). By 1977 the health survey figures show the resident indigenous population of Wewak to be 3,046. This represents a decadal growth rate of 92%. I would estimate however, that at any given time there would be at least another 1,000 people in Wewak unaccounted for within the quoted statistics. If so, the decadal rate would be 127%. In the country overall, 8.5% of the total population was urban in 1971, while 13% of the population was urban by 1978 (World Population Data Sheet 1978).

So what went wrong with the government plans? I don't know that anything went wrong *per se* but there are things that obviously militated against the success of their plans. Unfortunately, each of these factors involved other government plans.

The first of these was the establishment of government control with the resultant cessation of inter-tribal warfare. People could now safely move out of their valleys for the first time in centuries.

Secondly, the government has established roads. The result of this is well described by Alan Tippet,

To build roads is to invite travel. There is no such thing as a road **to** a village. As far as the local people are concerned, it is always a road **from** a village (1963:14).

Thirdly, there is western schooling. The 1977 statistics show 50% of all school age children in school. 30% of those who reached standard 6 went on to high school, and from there probably to work in the towns. Another 2% went to vocational schools (Wiesner 1978:10). The rest were left without enough schooling to secure a job. But they have been out of the village routine too long and have seen too much of the potential of the outside world to easily settle back into the village.

Fourthly, there was the introduction of cash crops, e.g. coffee and rice. This was expected to provide cash for villagers while at home in their rural villages, thus making them content to stay there. The end result, however, has been to whet their appetites for a regular income as a wage earner. This usually means migrating to some urban centre.

Fifthly, the "strengthening of village life" mentioned in the House of Assembly statement has included programs like subsidy for the construction of community centres to provide places of entertainment in villages to encourage young people to stay at home. Also village electrification schemes have been implemented where possible for the same reason. But once again, these things have had the opposite effect. The occasional evening's entertainment or some decent lighting in the village seem rather to have made the bright lights of town even more attractive and attainable.

So we can rightly conclude that whether Papua New Guinea reaches the 80% figure by the year 2000 or not, urbanization as a trend is firmly established. The importance of this to Papua New Guinea is well stated

by Seifert:

Compared to other parts of the world the growth of towns in Papua New Guinea and other countries of Melanesia is perhaps not very significant. Nevertheless, in terms of social, political and economic consequences for the people involved it has major ramifications (Seifert 1975:47).

Consequently, any present or future plans made by missions or churches for Papua New Guinea, must include strategies for urban evangelism, as distinct from the strategies for rural evangelism that have been the appropriate norm until recently.

URBAN PAPUA NEW GUINEA

A “rule of thumb” definition of the urban population to which our strategy for evangelism will apply is, (a) residents of towns who are living on property which was not theirs by ancestral right, (b) those who do live on their ancestral land outside the towns but are employed in the town and are living with other town workers.

The population of Papua New Guinean towns that falls within the confines of this definition is extremely diverse. By world standards, these towns are quite small. In a town like Wewak, there are only 3 - 4 thousand people but I would suggest that within this number there are at least nine main classes of people based on race, economic level and type of employment. These nine classes live in seven distinct types of residential areas. Within one of these, the squatter settlement however, there are at least eleven additional groupings. These eleven groupings are based primarily on area of origin but each of these eleven groupings will further break down into smaller more homogeneous groups along linguistic and village lines. The following chart will give the detail of this breakdown.

A. NINE MAIN CLASSES

1. Government white collar workers
2. Government blue collar workers
3. Business sector permanent workers (blue or white collar)
4. Business sector non permanent workers
5. Europeans

6. Chinese
7. Non workers
8. Rascal” (unemployed youth operating as gangs)
9. Students

B. TYPES OF RESIDENTIAL AREAS

1. Squatter
2. Government Housing, both colonial houses and compounds.
3. Government resettlement areas
4. Private residential - big houses
5. Business
6. Institutions
7. Single quarters

C. MAIN GROUPINGS IN SQUATTER SETTLEMENTS

- | | |
|-----------------|-------------|
| 1. Wewak locals | 7. Lumi |
| 2. Yangoru | 8. Wosera |
| 3. Wingei | 9. Sepik |
| 4. Maprik | 10. Angoram |
| 5. Dreikikir | 11. Murik |
| 6. Nuku | |

Of all of these people in urban centres, the 1971 national employment figures showed only 23% were actually employed. Present day figures may show a slightly higher percentage than this. But a large proportion of those employed would be employed by the Government.

There are also some specific problems that are very much a part of any Papua New Guinean urban situation today. These will, therefore, have to be faced realistically in any urban evangelism strategy we devise. First in the area of sex mores.

Even where traditional standards did align with Biblical standards, the means of enforcing this standard has been drastically weakened if not totally annihilated in many town situations, especially in regard to pre-marital relationships. This is then heightened by girls getting education and employment and so remaining single longer. Another factor is that courtship as a pre-marriage association of just a couple without

sexual relationship was unknown traditionally. This was because marriages were arranged, and the girls were married very young. So, as young people, particularly in towns, are allowed together with no traditional background to give them a basis for behaviour in a new situation, moral laxity is the result. So for Christian young people, unless Christian morals take over to give the necessary moorings, then they are like ships without anchors in a very storm tossed sea. This could be illustrated by the Pidgin term *singel laip* (singleness) which in towns means a sexual free for all (Hovey 1978:2).

Due to traditional hospitality obligations it is common for villagers to come to town looking for work, planning to stay with relations in the interim. However, the much sought for employment seldom materializes leaving the "country cousin" who hasn't sufficient cash left for his return fare living with a relative in town who himself has very meagre resources and is possibly already supporting a number of other relatives. Extreme poverty, privation and hunger is the primary result, with the young rascal gangs of the towns and ever increasing crime and burglary rate as secondary results.

Thirdly, gambling, although outlawed, is seen in the urban world view as being a legitimate form of employment. This, combined with the amount of money spent on drink, results in a very large number of urban bread-winners having very limited resources left with which to care for their families. Fear of both sorcery and violence is another very grave reality in the town, while secularization threatens to swallow up any spiritual interest or fervour that may have existed in anyone when they first arrived in the town.

URBAN EVANGELISM STRATEGY TO DATE

When Evangelical mission staff have been located in urban centres in Papua New Guinea, it has often been to provide a base for outreach into the rural hinterland and a logistics centre for rural missionary activity. The main aspects of ministry within the town have been regular church services with the rural Christians who have migrated to the towns, extensive religious instruction programs in schools, jail chaplaincy and hospital visitation.

Urban evangelism, when it has been specifically engaged in, is often centred on open air film showings combined with preaching in vari-

ous compounds around the town, open air meetings in the markets, as well as evangelistic services and campaigns within existing churches. The basic strategy of all this has been to bring individuals to Christ and then channel them into the life of the existing town churches. Some churches have used mid week home Bible studies in the squatter settlements. But once again the strategy has been to make contacts and converts and then channel them into the regular church services. For all of these programs quite an extensive transport program has to be maintained to transport members from long distances. But at night, even extensive transport is not sufficient to make large numbers of national adults willing to attend services.

FOUR MISCONCEPTIONS

Before we get down to discussion of future strategy for urban Papua New Guinea, we need to look at four concepts which often underlie urban strategy planning. However, in the case of urban Papua New Guinea, these concepts are actually misconceptions.

The first of these concepts is belief "the urban is the key to the rural." In urban Papua New Guinea in general, the majority of town's folk still consider themselves to be villagers. Even the most permanent urbanites maintain, at least to a token degree, their reciprocal obligations and privileges with their relatives back home. They go home to their villages for special ceremonies if they can and definitely return home for extended leave or retirement. This amount of village contact has appeared to many as a natural bridge for the Gospel. In reality, however, this is seldom true. The villages are considered by both village and town residents to be the "Mecca" of orthodox belief and practice. What is more, this orthodox belief and practice is considered to be orthodox and therefore important, just as long as it can resist change. Continuity with the past is its main claim for allegiance. Therefore shock waves from the liberal city are not considered positively at all and are often actively resisted.

The old men in particular who are the trustees of the traditional religion are often most indignant about the breakdown in traditional values that they see in the town. This makes them even more resistant to new ideas coming from the towns. Consequently, reaching these

village elders requires someone who is conversant with rural worldview and values, making a direct approach to them with the Gospel. This will need to be in a manner that seems to them to be a fulfillment of their culture rather than a sellout to the evils of the town. Indeed, reaching the rural villages in this way is more likely to have significant repercussions on the urbanites than vice versa. However, it is conceivable that if a large enough group from any one village could be brought to the Lord in the town, and then encouraged to go home for a period to discuss their new found faith at length with their village elders it might be possible to reach the villagers in this way. But reaching the urban situation is definitely not the key to reaching the rural situation per se. At the same time the urban situation should and must be evangelized for its own sake.

The second misconception has to do with the supposed dramatic changes in worldview that come as a result of living in the urban situation. On the contrary, however, I would estimate that people who were brought up in a village or even a squatter settlement situation for the first six years of their life, will experience very little alteration in their basic orientation to spirits, magic, and the supernatural unless they have been to at least ten grades of schooling. Even after that, the western orientation to sickness and disease is largely a veneer. The core presuppositions of an animistic supernaturalistic worldview, once learnt are seldom "lost." They are rather changed to something else when a person's faith in them is shattered. But urban Papua New Guinea is still basically animistic in perspective, so simply living there won't significantly change traditional orientation to spirits, magic sorcery and the like.

Another aspect of traditional orientation that is as alive in urban Papua New Guinea as in the villages, is the orientation to multi-individual mutually inter-dependent decision making. Because village community does not exist in the way it does in the rural scene, this can easily mislead an outsider to assume that they will make decisions individually now, "just like us." The fact is that when their traditional group does not exist to any great degree in the towns, their group alliance and allegiance is redirected to other pseudo-relationship type of association, be it work mates, sports club or institutionalized friend-

ship (*kawas*) etc. Sometimes this misleads us into thinking that the core values have changed but this is not the case. The distinct village and even clan lines that can be seen in squatter settlements is further evidence of this point. This then means that the principles of people movement dynamics which we discussed in previous chapters still apply very specifically in the towns, even though they will have to be used differently in the urban situation.

A third misconception is that any evangelistic strategy has to be considered archaic if the use of mass media is not included. To see the problems with this concept, we will discuss four types of media.

First of all, all radio in Papua New Guinea is government owned and controlled and radio time cannot be bought. They will broadcast Christian news and have allocated some free time to be used on a rotation basis by all the churches in a given province. Television is as yet non-existent anywhere in the country. Literature is a viable means of communication, but as everywhere free distribution of literature has to be handled carefully to avoid the stigma of propaganda. Literature also requires personal contact to produce results. Literature for sale actually shows quite some promise in urban Papua New Guinea, but once again the personal contact factor cannot be ignored. Films are good for gathering a crowd, but in the minds of the people are definitely thought of as entertainment and so not considered to contain life changing information. This was illustrated to me recently by an urban Papua New Guinean Pastor who, when listing the things that proved to be stumbling blocks to the spiritual life of urbanites felt that secular movies didn't have any negative effect on his congregation, as they weren't considered relevant to life. Also, the ability to be able to understand the message of a film requires skills acquired with literacy, so this rules out the effectiveness of films for the non-literate segment of the urban population.

The fourth misconception we need to be aware of is the belief that the Holy Spirit is all we need to make any plans effective. Notice that I have emphasized the any here to reiterate that it is human irresponsibility I'm addressing myself to, not the work of the Holy Spirit. The desire and power of the Holy Spirit in bringing men and women to himself is constant. Then as our availability to Him becomes a way of

life, it then makes good sense to develop strategies that will overcome natural barriers to the communication of the Gospel. It is on the human side of the proclamation of the Evangel that the variables occur, and so it is to the developing of a strategy for evangelism in urban Papua New Guinea that we now direct our attention.

STRATEGY GUIDELINES

G.A.Torney's definition of strategy is a very good guiding light in our task.

Strategy is defined as a careful plan or method for advancing towards a goal ... a framework or master plan upon which specific tactics are based. It involves decisions by persons and groups with ability to judge what is important and authority to act on priorities. Strategy exists either by deliberate action or by default, but it exists. The Christian 'call' requires deliberate, responsible, God-directed strategy, for action without direction is no better than direction without action (Torney 1970:2).

The goal towards which we wish to advance is the evangelization of urban Papua New Guinea. But the regular Sunday morning services at many urban churches are packed out. Multiple services are impractical due to the distances involved in urban Papua New Guinea, combined with the lack of public and private transport. Added to this is the Papua New Guinean disregard for time. Consequently, the transport and service organization of multiple services is almost impossible. This forces us to the first fixed point of our strategy. The evangelization of urban Papua New Guinea must focus on church planting evangelism. New congregations must be begun in many parts of the towns.

But where? Amongst whom? To answer these questions we must refer back to the list of social classes and types of residential areas referred to earlier. By listing the known characteristics of each residential area, along with the classes that live in each, we will be able to identify any possible homogeneous units and also be able to predict with some degree of accuracy the possible potential of each of these as far as church planting evangelism is concerned. Although the material discussed here relates specifically to Wewak, the basic ideas are applicable to any Papua New Guinean town.

A. SQUATTER SETTLEMENTS

In the squatter areas we find business sector permanent workers, business sector non-permanent workers, non-workers and rascals. The wives of the permanent workers are there also while the wives of the other three groups are often back in the villages. Many of the squatter settlements are built on swampy or other similarly inhospitable land. Residences range from the most primitive imaginable among the new arrivals to quite reasonable amongst some of the more settled "squatters." Also, there is a steady flow of visitors from home villages in and out (more in than out) of the settlements. Housing is distinctly grouped according to main area groupings as listed and within each of these further grouping according to language and village is to be seen.

It is a world wide fact that the most responsive people are those in the midst of social change. And in urban Papua New Guinea, residents of the squatter settlements fall into this category. But unfortunately, to date very little has been done in the squatter settlements and I know of few attempts to actually plant churches amongst them. Due to their particular life style and felt needs there is little chance of large numbers of squatters becoming active members of our existing churches. For another thing, the personal initiative and drive that has brought them to and established them in the town limits their willingness to be a part of something that they cannot take an active part in. New churches in the squatter settlements would eliminate this problem. While speaking of the need and potential for planting churches in the squatter settlements, it must be remembered that the homogeneity of the people in these settlements is very near the surface. C. Peter Wagner explains the meaning and significance of this very well.

A homogeneous unit is simply a group of people who consider each other to be 'our kind of people.' They have many areas of mutual interest. They share the same culture. They socialize freely. When they are together they are comfortable and they all feel at home.

A decade and a half of research dealing with numerous cultures in virtually every corner of the world confirms that the churches most likely to grow are those which bring together in the local fellowship those of a single homogeneous unit (1976:110-111).

Consequently, we should strategize to plant a church in each of the responsive units in these squatter settlements.

B. GOVERNMENT HOUSING

Most government workers (both blue and white collar) are in a given urban centre due to having been placed there by the government, rather than by their own choice. In the same way their transfer from that centre is imminent. They come from anywhere in the country and live in government housing and so have very few roots in town in which they live. The fact of living in government housing makes it impossible to plant permanent churches amongst them. Furthermore, to date non-Christian government workers have not proved very responsive to the Gospel. Where Christians do exist amongst them, home fellowship meetings could be profitable both for upbuilding the existing Christians as well as making contact amongst other government workers. Also, because these folk are transient, it makes it inadvisable to utilize them predominantly in church programs even when they are available.

C. GOVERNMENT RESETTLEMENT AREAS

Government resettlement areas consist of land and or homes available to the public for purchase. Some government workers who feel they have some permanence in a given town have taken advantage of this plan, but permanent workers of the business sector would be the main residents. These folk, due to their settled situation are not too responsive to the gospel, but due to their stability could be well worth while concentrating some effort on. Assigning a pastor to live and work in any one of these resettlement areas is probably not the best approach however, as this then predisposes this program to be orientated around a church paid worker. This is not conducive to growth due to the stifling of the personal initiative and drive of the residents through not having a viable channel of expression in the church.

D. PRIVATE RESIDENTIAL - BIG HOUSES

This applies to Europeans, Chinese and the limited number of Nationals in the business sector who are in top positions with housing provided. The European and Chinese are minority groups in urban Papua New Guinea who tend to keep to themselves. The Chinese are more permanent and there has been some response amongst them in the last few years. Europeans on the other hand are extremely resistant. If some of the Christians from these groups felt to arrange small group programs to minister to their own people, encouragement and training could

be given to the person wanting to conduct such programs, but this should not be concentrated on. It is a fact of life in urban Papua New Guinea that churches/missions with specific orientation to these two groups do not have great appeal amongst the indigenous community.

E. BUSINESS

This refers to indigenous business people, especially store owners and the like, who live on the premises of their businesses. Many of these small stores are scattered throughout the towns, especially on the fringes of the squatter settlements. Some of these business people were a part of the squatter communities that they now serve. They would therefore, be taken care of in evangelism to squatter settlements. And beyond this, many of them have private cars so could be catered for at the central church. However, their preoccupation with their businesses tends to make them fairly resistant.

F. INSTITUTIONS

Ministry to military establishments and Corrective Institutions is controlled by the government by the use of authorized chaplains. Young people in High Schools and tertiary institutions are proving to be very responsive. Church planting is not possible in these institutions, but an active, attractive, spiritually dynamic ministry to them is an imperative. This can involve regular church services at established churches, but must also include on campus activities. Making contact with specific individuals, leading them to the Lord, involving them in a program sufficiently that their enthusiasm and witness reaches others of their peers for the Lord is a viable way to begin in situations such as these.

Other institutions like Schools of Nursing, or Police Barracks are going to need to be reached from the inside due to their rotating shift work of these people. This limits the possibility of their involvement in regular services on a regular basis. Any Christian nurses or Police could provide the necessary contact for inside work in these institutions, while we need to concentrate on training them in how to share their faith.

G. SINGLE QUARTERS

Single quarters are another prominent feature of urban Papua New Guinea. These have a lot of potential either for good or bad. The amount

of contact and freedom allowed with members of the opposite sex in these situations is a serious temptation to young Christians moving into them. However, the freedom and searching mentality amongst a lot of the young people in these quarters makes them a wide open field for evangelism. There are already Christian young people in many of these quarters. If they could be trained more on how to share their faith they could be very instrumental in leading many of their work-fellows to the Lord. Well organized and run small group meetings within these apartments could also be a very useful tool.

DEVELOPING STRATEGY

Having now described urban Papua New Guinea, its people, and where they live as fully as possible at the moment we will turn look at strategy in more detail. Dr. Donald McGavran lists “Eight Keys to Church Growth in Cities” in his book *Understanding Church Growth* (1970:285-93) which we shall use to help us formulate the details of our strategy. These keys are:

- A. Emphasize house churches.
- B. Develop unpaid lay leaders.
- C. Recognize resistant homogeneous units.
- D. Focus on the responsive.
- E. Multiply tribe, caste [ethnic], and language Churches
- F. Surmount the property barrier.
- G. Communicate intense belief in Christ.
- H. Provide the theological base for an egalitarian society.

A. EMPHASIZE HOUSE CHURCHES

As we have already stated, evangelization of urban Papua New Guinea must be based on planting new churches. But do house churches have anything to do with this? For a start, a brief definition of a house church is “fellowship in Christ” and urban Papua New Guinea needs both fellowship and Christ. House churches can be used for three primary purposes.

- (1) For Christians to get together for more intimate fellowship, Bible study, and prayer than would be possible in a large church meeting
- (2) For Christians to get together and invite their unsaved friends, so

they can be introduced to Christians, Christianity and hopefully to Christ in a more informal atmosphere than the church, with the goal of eventually channelling these new converts into the church.

- (3) For a group of Christians from one location to get together as in (b) but with the express purpose of keeping the new converts with them so that a new congregation can grow out of a house church.

With reference to point (1), fellowship is a very necessary addition to the ministry of existing churches in urban Papua New Guinea. An hour together with other Christians on a Sunday definitely doesn't meet the very deep felt need of urbanites in Papua New Guinea. They need to feel they belong to something. After studying Papua New Guinean urban situations William Seifert of the Melanesian Institute has suggested that understanding human relationships is a more accurate and useful frame of reference for understanding and ministering to the urban situation than the models like "social change" that we presently use (Seifert 1978: 23-37). Or as Jesus said, "No longer do I call you servants but friends" (John 15:15). Meaningful human relationships are very important to everybody. As a matter of fact people are not crushed by hardships but by lack of identity and purpose. And in urban life, there are plenty of hardships that the church will probably never be able to alleviate. But if true fellowship can be part of the church life, the seeds of a satisfying life have been sown.

With reference point (2), when thinking of house churches as a half way house between the world and the church, our first point of fellowship must still be made a priority. Then these groups will seem attractive to outsiders and consequently, so will Christ the source of satisfaction. Also the renewal in the small group brought about by (1) will make the whole church more attractive to outsiders, thus making the channelling of them into the church a desirable next step.

With regard the third point, I feel that allocating personnel to consciously plant churches is the key to starting new urban congregations. In most urban churches to date, official paid leadership has been the key in whatever outreach or ministry has been undertaken. However, we will not see the evangelization of urban Papua New Guinea that we desire, if this continues to be the basis for ministry. But if house churches are utilized, these services will be in the homes or yards of responsible

Christians who, with the proper encouragement and training will take the initiative in these services. When this happens a new era will have begun. To ensure this happening, communion should become a regular part of the life of that church very early in their development, and should not depend on a visit of the pastor from the central church. Actually with a little training given to the appropriate men who are a part of existing outreach works, these outreach works could be the first of these daughter churches in a very short time. I would assume that this strategy of planting daughter churches in this way would also include big rallies at the town church on a monthly or bi-monthly basis to maintain the “celebration” atmosphere that was so prevalent in Papua New Guinean culture but has often been lacking in the church.

B. DEVELOP UNPAID LAY LEADERS

Each word of this title is important.

- (1) Develop: - God gifts people for leadership in the church, in each church. But the leaders need developing. This is important to realize as already the developed and now paid leadership in the church feels uncomfortable when lay leadership is seriously considered. This is often due to the fact that the full time leaders feel they may be threatened. But this shouldn't be the case. It is the work of these present leaders to develop these lay leaders. The most effective way of doing this would be for the existing pastors to reallocate one of their evenings each week to teach house church leaders what they should do in their small groups that week. Help supplement their weaknesses, build on their strengths and as a result we'll see again the order that Christ ordained in Ephesians 4, the gifted leaders building up the saints who then will do the work of the ministry.
- (2) Unpaid - These leaders do not go on the payroll of the church. They **give** the evening for training and the evening for these meetings. This giving speaks volumes to the people being contacted. It says “what this person has is for real.” Also, it seems to me that often, in order to ensure that things get done, missions have been too willing to subsidize workers for things that should have done without reimbursement. This has produced a false level of need for support that the church cannot meet in the long term.

- (3) Lay - for the same reasons as (2) these workers shouldn't be recognized with a workers credential or other recognition. This may occur further down the line when the group he has gathered together has formed into a congregation. But even by then, the key to growth in that new congregation will be the new generation of unpaid lay workers in that new church.
- (4) Leaders - By definition leaders lead. This must be recognized by the ordained leadership in the mother church so they will not hold the strings too tightly. In locating and developing leaders it is worth remembering that the most ardent followers of other faiths often make the most ardent followers of Christ. Also, we should utilize people who have leadership experience in other areas of life: business people, community leaders and the like. But to maintain good quality leaders we must let them lead, for the same qualities that qualify them as leaders make them poor followers. As the lay leadership from within a group is used to lead that group, they are then able to follow up their own contacts and thus their group will grow quite quickly. Also, their ministry will be meeting genuine felt needs of that group. A dog's paw knows where to scratch because it's part of the dog who feels the itch!

Being urban, these churches will have a lot of young people in them. Yet being Papua New Guinean, although older people are not prevalent in towns, they still have the respect of the community. Therefore, in selecting leaders, a balance will have to be maintained between the availability of the young, and the respect of the aged. Probably married men who already have several children would ideally be the youngest men selected as leaders for house churches. But in some of the other small groups, it would be dictated more by the age of the group than by this arbitrary requirement.

C. RECOGNIZE RESISTANT HOMOGENEOUS UNITS

As a first step in this section it is necessary to recognize Homogeneous Units. We have talked of this to some degree previously. The important thing is to realize that (1) people in a homogeneous unit do act and make decisions in conference with each other. (2) not all groups are equally responsive. As previously mentioned, I would rate Europeans and government workers, especially white collar workers and those

in the top positions of the business sector as being resistant. As far as the many homogeneous units in the squatter settlements are concerned, normally those who come from an exclusively one church village backgrounds, no matter how nominal they are, will be resistant unless some other factors come into play. One of the factors which makes just this difference has been Charismatic revitalization which proves to meet many Melanesian felt needs.

D. FOCUS ON THE RESPONSIVE

The newcomers to town are in the middle of social change. This in itself makes them open to change. Also the loneliness and frustration of urban life make many new urbanites very responsive to people who are prepared to give themselves. But this means giving time more than goods to them at this time of need. This is where the class (2) and (3) house churches can be very effective in squatter settlements.

Another potentially responsive group to be found in urban Papua New Guinea in vast numbers is nominal Christians. Many of these were Christians of some sort back in their villages. But perhaps because they had come to town while young and immature, or because they had not made contact with the church (or vice versa) on arrival in the town, they have simply let their faith slide. A contributing factor has been the many “new” temptations in the town for which their rural Christian ethics provided no answers. Drinking, sex and other such behaviour had previously simply been regarded as “no no-s,” so were never examined Scripturally. This then has left these Christians vulnerable to town pressures and temptations. But despite the toll this experience has taken on their Christian experience, these people still consider themselves Christians and would welcome empathetic Christian contact. Unfortunately, these have often been regarded as resistant because they wouldn’t attend church. But, once again, the house church concept could be effective in bringing these people back into contact with Christians. And if the Bible teaching in these meetings is applied realistically to the urban situation, these people could be helped to overcome their problems in Christ, and then brought back into the full life of the church. As part of the long term solution, the renewing impact of the power of the Holy Spirit in their lives in a Pentecostal type experience has proved to be very meaningful and very beneficial to many Papua New Guineans.

I say this has long term effects as it provides a Christian replacement for so many of the sub-Christian practices of involvement with supernatural power that is still an essential part of urban life in Papua New Guinea. This would apply to practical areas such as healing, as well as the basic Melanesian need to see and know the reality of supernatural power.

E. MULTIPLY TRIBE, CASTE (ETHNIC) AND LANGUAGE CHURCHES

In talking of planting churches in urban centres in Papua New Guinea, we must plan to encourage a very high degree of ethnicity in the new churches if we are to be effective. However, this ethnicity should not be forced on them. Within church life generally, people should be allowed to fellowship at whatever church they like. Also, it is possible that even a church or a house church formed completely from one language group with their own leadership, may prefer to conduct their services in Pidgin or English. Their reasons for this must be understood and given high regard. If they feel that this is more prestigious, and due to the composition of their group, it is obvious that everybody attending understands that language well, then that could be quite satisfactory. But for their own spiritual health and for their potential in outreach to their own people, use of vernacular in services should be considered seriously by them before deciding to use some other language. But the final choice must be theirs. This freedom to choose should also apply to the type of music they use, and to the other forms used in their services.

F. SURMOUNT THE PROPERTY BARRIER

In some urban centres in Papua New Guinea, literal house churches will be a starting place. But there are problems in this approach in the long run. Papua New Guineans are reserved about visiting and being visited by non-relatives in private homes. Furthermore, in squatter settlements, houses tend to be small, and not constructed from good materials, thus making them unsuitable as meeting places. However, in many of the squatter settlements where I'm suggesting we need to start, an initial building could be put up quite cheaply, with locally available materials. My previous emphasis on giving recognition to these new churches as soon as possible, will compensate in other ways for the

difference between the main church building and their own in the settlements. In God's eyes they are the same. In helping these churches to get started, the money that the existing churches would normally think of putting into supporting workers could be better employed in helping them get a place to worship.

In situations where land just is not available for permanent buildings, there may be some sense in considering the idea used by some store owners in Port Moresby. That is, build some sort of facility on the back of an old bus or truck and put it on the corner of some Christians property as a "mobile Chapel." In practice, the mobility would only be there to make it tow-away-able if the authorities requested it. But this could be a very functional alternative as long as it was there.

G. COMMUNICATE INTENSE BELIEF IN CHRIST

When talking about an intense belief in Christ, obviously this is more than mental assent we are talking about. This is a consuming trust and commitment. In order to communicate this, the communicator himself must have this intense trust in and commitment to Christ. Then he must be in sufficient contact with those to whom he is ministering that he will know their felt needs and will be able to communicate Christ to them at that point of their need. It is then, and unfortunately, seems to be only then, that the intense belief in Christ really gets communicated. Sunday sermons, no matter how scriptural, only communicate intense belief in Christ when the person preaching knows the needs of his congregation and can relate his communication of Biblical truth to their needs. Truth as described in the Bible is not the right/wrong, true/false propositional truth that we think about so often. When the Bible speaks of truth, it speaks more of faithfulness in relationships (e.g. "Jesus as the Truth") etc. So even preaching has to be vitally related to the life of the Christians in the community where they live.

As more and more laymen are turned on to Christ and are able to share this faith, communication of faith and commitment will be a more frequent reality. However, at the present moment, I sense a need for the leadership of urban churches, as they take the challenge of urban Papua New Guinea and the responsibility of the town pulpit seriously, to even curtail some of their very good programs to allow them time to be with urban people in non-church situations. Their doing this will result in

their intense faith in and commitment to Christ being communicated by themselves and the church.

H. PROVIDE THE THEOLOGICAL BASE FOR AN EGALITARIAN SOCIETY

An egalitarian society is best described for our purposes as a society where righteousness and justice reign, especially economically. The present day importance of this to Papua New Guineans is seen in the indigenous use of sharing mechanisms, e.g. the “*wantok* system,” “*sande*” (sharing of pay packets), gambling etc. But these are not based on Christian principles and many of the better aspects of their traditional sharing mechanisms are breaking down along with the breakdown of many traditional values in the towns. Therefore, for the church to really do its job it must provide a Christian base from which this can operate. This will have hard things to say to every section of the church. To visiting migrants it will be emphasizing the necessity of working in order to eat. To big businesses there will be the teaching about loving in deed and using just scales. But it must be said for this base to be established. Furthermore, the house churches can provide the safe environment where this theology can be lived.

CONCLUSION

In conclusion, let me summarize the key points of what I believe to be a strategy for the evangelization of Urban Papua New Guinea: A strategy on which specific tactics and programs can be based.

- A. We must locate churches where people are.
- B. There must be churches in which people of that location can feel at home.
- C. These churches will then have to minister Christ to whole people. For this third point, the Pentecostals’ emphasis on healing and faith in God for the provision of needs makes a very big contribution. We must continue to emphasize these, while seeing if there are any other areas of needs that are being overlooked. The existing women’s meetings used in many churches are doing this to some degree for the women, while maybe even decentralizing this at times could make it more effective. The concept of men’s meet-

ings also probably needs to be exploited more than it is.

We must also remember that urban evangelism involves risks. As we set about starting home churches some will only last for weeks or months before some people move away and they fold up. But others will become fully fledged churches and as a result of all the efforts men and women will be brought to Christ, God will be glorified and urban life will be transformed. Urban Papua New Guinea is a present identity, bigger than any church programs, distinct from the rural, and desperately in need of Christ. We must accept the challenge under God to reach it for Christ. I trust that this analysis may be of help in seeing the need as well as the possibilities for meeting that need.

FURTHER READING

Greenway (1976), (1978) Seifert (1976b) (1978)

SECTION SIX:

CONCLUSION

SECTION SIX:

CONCLUSION

SECTION SUMMARY

In conclusion, Section Six is a summary of the material covered in the manual, under the rubric, “Points to Ponder.” Should any one decide to use this book as a text for a course, this chapter should prove a useful guide to the key issues addressed, and could even provide a framework around which a such a course could be arranged.

In particular, the Ten Commandments for Cross Cultural Christians should prove to be invaluable guidelines for ministry, as well as discussion starters for teaching sessions.

CHAPTER 21

POINTS TO PONDER

We began by suggesting that the question of how to be successful in cross-cultural ministry has been the dominant question in the minds of most cross-cultural Christians. We also suggested that often it is cultural and communicational problems that hamper that success the most. In this chapter, I would like to restate what I consider to be the main issues we have addressed. We will do this first by highlighting the theme of each chapter, and then by summarizing all of our material into 10 Commandments for Cross-Cultural Christians.

CHAPTER THEMES

- CHAPTER 1. There is no fixed relationship between success and effort expended. Beyond the normal spiritual dynamics of Christian activity, there is still a right and wrong way to do things.
- CHAPTER 2. Living cross-culturally doesn't necessarily feel comfortable. Yet it can become increasingly so if we are prepared to do the necessary learning to reduce culture stress.
- CHAPTER 3. Cross-cultural Christians tend to be pragmatic. Therefore they use whatever tools they can to get their job done. Anthropology focuses specifically on understanding people, so is a prime example of a very useful tool.
- CHAPTER 4. Understanding worldview and culture helps us to see and achieve our real goals. Without this, it is possible to notice the quaint customs of the people we work with without noticing how queer we also appear to them. Also we can easily work on making them like us rather than like Christ in their situation.

- CHAPTER 5. We learn more about ourselves and our own culture by learning someone else's culture than by any other means. Understanding our own culture makes it possible for us to understand our own reactions when confronted with other ways of thinking and acting.

- CHAPTER 6. In order to be an effective cross-cultural Christian, prepare early, prepare well, prepare in depth, get there as soon as possible, and be prepared to continue to be a learner. In doing so, it will not only be possible to be effective, but also to be "sweet" and be fresh despite the rigours of cross-cultural ministry.

- CHAPTER 7. Love your brother or sister, even if he or she is already a Christian. That may sound strange, but if that person is a member of another denomination or organization, loving them is not automatic. The rewards of this are very rich personally, very profound beyond our own circles, and provides a good example to others of God's love in action.

- CHAPTER 8. God is unbelievably patient in bringing people to follow and serve him in every way. He is prepared to start where they are, no matter where that is. His requirement is primary allegiance to Himself. This is a challenge to our patience, as well as a lesson to us not to make new Christians follow our agenda of sanctification.

- CHAPTER 9. What does a Christian look like? From the human perspective, there is no standard answer to this. But to God, who looks on the heart, there is. That is, a person who has consciously made a faith allegiance to God through Christ the primary allegiance of his/her life. The outward appearance of a Christian then works out from this.

- CHAPTER 10. Some people's or some person's opportunity for salvation depends on me. Especially as I realize that often people are repelled from accepting salvation for reasons other than their estimate of the worth of the Gospel, I'd better do my part right. That way I won't be a stumbling block.

- CHAPTER 11. In understanding people, the basic question is not “How do they think?” but rather, “What do they know before they begin to consciously think about a particular thing.” This then is at the level of what we call worldview assumptions. If I don’t understand the worldview assumptions of the people I minister to, we may say a lot of words to each other, but genuine communication will not take place.
- CHAPTER 12. The spirit world, which is basically unknown to us, to Papua New Guineans is everywhere, all of the time, influencing all of life. This has very serious implications for our ministry. As we become aware of this, we can begin to minister to what the people see as their real needs, and so be much more effective.
- CHAPTER 13. It is possible for some worldview presuppositions to effectively block the communication of the Gospel. To communicate past these barriers, we must first understand what these barriers are. In the Papua New Guinean situation, cargoism is one such barrier.
- CHAPTER 14. When worldview presuppositions block the communication of the gospel, what are we to do? In the case of cargoism, Bible genealogies and village meetings have proved to be a means of surmounting this barrier.
- CHAPTER 15. Syncretism is the use of new forms to express old meanings when the two are basically incongruous. It can wear many clothes. One of these sets of clothes is cargoism. Syncretism necessitates a multi-faceted approach if it is to be dealt with. Power encounter, good relationships, and a vital Christian experience are just a few of the important facets of successful ministry in cargoism situations.
- CHAPTER 16. Another set of clothes syncretism wears is seen in relation to the spirit realm. To bring help, once again, understanding is the starting point, while a multi-faceted approach is required. This means a lot of work for Westerners, due to our deficiency of experience or even knowledge of the spirit realm.

- CHAPTER 17. Social structure, including leadership, and that particular society's normal decision- making procedures must be taken very seriously if maximum results and maximum stability are to be seen from our work. If we disregard this, it is very possible for us to be long on "decisions" yet short on "disciples."
- CHAPTER 18. Taking social structure seriously can help people to see the good news of the Good News. It is hard for us to realize what a stumbling block other approaches place in the way of people who want to follow Christ.
- CHAPTER 19. Use of traditional learning skills enables us to utilize traditional leaders in the Church. Using traditional leaders means we can better capitalize on traditional strengths for the sake of the Church. Without this, mediocrity becomes the norm in every dimension of church life, from communication to discipleship.
- CHAPTER 20. If we apply the foregoing points in our urban strategies, good things will happen. Part of this will need to be planting of more churches. The more churches we plant, the more people we reach, and the more opportunities there are for fellowship. The more opportunities for fellowship there are, the more disciples there will be and better the discipling that takes place.
- CHAPTER 21. You are here! —> We'll go on to our next point.

TEN COMMANDMENTS FOR CROSS CULTURAL CHRISTIANS

- 1 The Lord your God incarnated Himself in your world in order to make His love known to you. Therefore as a cross-cultural Christian, you should incarnate yourself to the people you go to in order to communicate His love to them.
- 2 Thou shalt not allow mono-cultural myopia to stand between yourself and successful ministry. Therefore, prepare yourself thoroughly, understand yourself, yet get to your ministry situation without wasting time unnecessarily.
- 3 Thou shalt love thy brother, even if he is already a Christian.

- 4 Thou shalt not make unto you (or for other people) any sacred forms whether they be the forms your mother taught you or the forms which your pastor taught you. You should focus primarily on the meanings of the things you do and say. As you diligently apply yourself to this, you will be rewarded with misunderstanding, uncertainty and long shall be your frustration among the people to whom you go. Nevertheless, this frustration will not be as long as if you tried to go about your work the “easy” way. Also, the eternal results will make the effort well worthwhile.
- 5 Thou shalt take particular notice of the social structure to keep it in tact. You must be careful not to dissuade elders, or other community members from entering the Kingdom of God just because you insisted on doing things the way your culture taught you to act.
- 6 Thou shalt not substitute Christ’s victory over the spirit world for your understanding of the spirit world. Similarly, don’t substitute your understanding of the spirit world for Christ’s victory over it. Rather combine these two factors in a dynamic walk in the Spirit in order to see the people you minister amongst living really liberated and exuberant lives.
- 7 Thou shalt be as patient as God when dealing with people who are turning to Him. If you find you lack patience, ask God for it, so He can feel free to give you the tribulation necessary to produce the patience in you that you so earnestly desire.
- 8 Thou shalt focus your ministry on specific segments of the community. None should be excluded because of the difficulty in reaching them. Cargo cultists, company managers, village elders or young people, shall receive your attention and efforts. But to win them effectively, this may have to be at different times.
- 9 Thou shalt understand a people’s worldview if you want to reach, teach and mobilize them effectively.
- 10 Thou shalt not rejoice unduly about your successes. Even after you’ve done all you could have, you are still an unprofitable servant (Luke 17:10). It is only the Lord of the harvest who, by grace, dares to call you a good and faithful servant (Matthew 25:21).

CONCLUSION

As you get involved in cross-cultural ministry, it is possible for you to learn many of the things you need to know by trial and error. However, to be effective in cross-cultural ministry there are so many things to learn that it is not likely that you will live long enough to be able to make enough mistakes to learn everything you need to know by that method. As you have taken the material presented here seriously, you have been able to learn some things from the mistakes of others. This doesn't mean that you will avoid making mistakes. Instead it will mean that you can be creative and make some fresh mistakes. But at least they will be informed mistakes and so you'll learn better even from them.

Then as you and other Western Christians, begin, in increasing numbers, to blend your footsteps with the footsteps of the throngs of soldiers for Christ who are presently sparsely circling the globe, it is my prayer that this book of instructions may prove to reduce some heart-break for you as cross-cultural Christians. In doing this it will also increase the rejoicing from the people to whom you have effectively communicated the Good News. That is not to mention angelic joy in heaven over the wanderers you have been able to bring back to God.

SECTION SEVEN:

APPENDICES

SECTION SEVEN:

APPENDICES

APPENDIX A

A RELIGION OF MANA, SPIRITS AND GHOSTS

R. H. CODRINGTON

The Melanesian mind is entirely possessed by the belief in a supernatural power or influence, called almost universally *mana*. This is what works to effect everything which is beyond the ordinary power of men, outside the common processes of nature; it is present in the atmosphere of life, attaches itself to persons and to things, and is manifested by results which can only be ascribed to its operation. When one has got it he can use it and direct it, but its force may break forth at some new point; the presence of it is ascertained by proof.

A man comes by chance upon a stone which takes his fancy; its shape is singular, it is like something, it is certainly not a common stone, there must be *mana* in it. So he argues with himself, and he puts it to the proof; he lays it at the root of a tree to the fruit of which it has a certain resemblance, or he buries it in the ground when he plants his garden; an abundant crop on the tree or in the garden shows that he is right, the stone is *mana*, has that power in it. Having that power it is a vehicle to convey *mana* to other stones. In the same way certain forms in words, generally in the form of a song, have power for certain purposes; a

charm of words is called a *mana*.

But this power, though itself impersonal, is always connected with some person who directs it; all spirits have it, ghosts generally, some men. If a stone is found to have a supernatural power, it is because a spirit has associated itself with it; a dead man's bone has with it *mana*, because the ghost is with the bone; a man may have so close a connection with a spirit or ghost that he has *mana* in himself also, and can so direct it as to effect what he desires; a charm is powerful because the name of a spirit or ghost expressed in the form of words brings into it the power which the ghost or spirit exercises through it. Thus all conspicuous success is a proof that a man has *mana*; his influence depends on the impression made on the people's mind that he has it; he becomes a chief by virtue of it.

Hence a man's power, though political or social in its character, is his *mana*; the word is naturally used in accordance with the native conception of the character of all power and influence as supernatural. If a man has been successful in fighting, it has not been his natural strength or arm, quickness of eye, or readiness of resource that has won success; he has certainly got the *mana* of a spirit or of some deceased warrior to empower him, conveyed in an amulet of stone around his neck, or a tuft of leaves in his belt, in a tooth hung upon a finger of his bow hand, or in the form of words with which he brings supernatural assistance to his side. ...

1891 *The Melanesians* pp 118-120

APPENDIX B

TOPICS FOR VILLAGE MEETINGS

These topics were chosen carefully to help the meeting participants to come to a:

1. Right concept of God
2. Right concept of Man
3. Right concept of Salvation (Sogaard 1975)

These were then dealt with in such a way as to specifically meet their felt needs, and so they could understand the implications of becoming Christians before they made their decisions. This then facilitated multi-individual mutually inter-dependent decisions to be made in these meetings.

1. Angels and the spirit world to the fall of Satan.
2. Creation.
3. Fall of man.
4. Genealogies from Luke 3 plus a time line to the present day (The Stick That Talks).
5. Sin, its consequences and a solution. This is presented as a name study of “Cursed” and “Righteous” from Galatians 3:10-13 using Mark 7:21- 23 to establish what sin is.
6. New Life in Christ.
7. Fear Not!
8. How a Christian overcomes sorcery.
9. God the Healer (Name Study).
10. Christians and payback, including the payback of sorcery.
11. Satan and his forces today.

12. Angels today.
13. Defending the village as Christians:
14. The Holy Spirit: The Christian's supernatural enabler.
15. God the Provider (Name Study).
16. History of man's rejection of God.
17. Son of Man / Son of God (Name Study).
18. God is love.
19. End time.
20. Trinity.
21. "Jesus" (Name study).
22. "Emmanuel" (Name study)
23. Disciple groups! Looking at Christians' responsibility to their own people as a group from Matt. 28:19.
24. I'm a Christian and I'm tempted?
25. Gather Together! Heb. 10:25.

— End —

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GENERAL INDEX

- Abraham, 69, 175
- Acculturation, 228
- Advocate, internal, 224
- African Independent Churches, 241
- Allegiance (s), 36, 199
 - to family, 72
 - to supernatural, 116
- Ancestors, 143, 144, 190, 192
 - location of, 115
- Animism, 98, 127
- Anthropologist/ Missionary
 - attitudes to, 17, 27
- Anthropology, 18, 21, 27, 50
 - in Bible translation, 18
 - missionary contribution to, 18
- Arranged marriages, 14, 142
- Artifacts, 198
- Assemblies of God, 4
- Autonomy of churches, 183
- Bible
 - function of, 44
 - genealogies, 221
 - stories, 176, 233, 235, 241,
 - training, 103
 - translation, 18
- Black/White relationships, 180
- Body language, 11, 12, 16
- Bureaucracy as social structure, 108
- Carey, William, 18
- Cargo Cult, 111, 148, 150,
 - 159, 160, 179
- definition, 150, 151
- first, 149
- leader, 158
- literature/typology, 149
- myths, 154
- motivation for Gospel interest, 166
- Catechism, 238
- Catholic Church, 217
- Catholic/Protestant relations, 220
- Chants, 193
- Charismatic movement, 58
 - renewal, 262
- Children, importance of, 113
- Chinese, Papua New Guinea, 256
- Christ's communicational, 231
- Christian
 - allegiances, 37
 - divination services, 143
 - fellowship, 258
 - habits, 96
 - reconciliation, 63
 - power, 202
- Church
 - Growth, 5
 - Bulletin, 204
 - leaders, 103
 - planting, 140, 183, 204, 253, 258
 - structures, 183, 184
- Clairvoyant, 133
- Cleanliness, 45
- Co-operation, levels of, 61
- Cognitive categories, 93
- Commitment, 263
- Communion, 235 - 241
- Concept of God, 278
- Conscience, 69
- Consensus decisions, 182, 218
- Contact between sexes, 113
- Conversion, 36, 92- 97, 181
- Corporal punishment, 43
- Courtship, 14
- Creation, 69
- Creator spirits, 131, 191
- Cultural factors, 3, 22, 116, 35
 - awareness, 52
 - conditioning, 29
 - consonance & dissonance,
 - PNG & Missionary, 118ff
 - distortion, 157
 - forms, 38, 81
 - sub-systems, 32

- Cultural understandings, 35
- Cultural voids, 19
- Culture
 - definition, 32
 - agent of culture change, 91
 - change, 31, 91, 102, 121, 182, 224
 - Culture contact, 152
- Culture Stress, 11, 13, 15, 16, 124
- Culture, Sepik River, 97
- Daimoi, Joshua, 209
- Death defined sociologically, 112
- Decalogue, 79
- Decision making, 139
- Denominations, 57, 58, 65
- Diagrams
 - Chapter 10.1, 93
 - Chapter 10.2, 95
 - Chapter 10.3, 95
 - Chapter 10.4, 96
 - Chapter 12.1, 128
- Discipline, 43, 112
- Discipling, 182
- Divination, 115, 133, 135, 142, 190, 193
- Dreams, 113
- Dynamic Equivalence, 19
- Dynamism, 27
- Eating meat, 87
- Economic deprivation, 183
- Economic development, 183, 184
- Ecumenical movement, 58
- Elders, 203
- Empathy, 24, 38, 123
- Encapsulated time, 109, 171
 - and development, 154
- Enculturation, 182
- Enemy/relative polarity, 114
- Ethnicity
 - in PNG towns, 247
 - and church planting, 262
- European, values, 153, 154
 - discovery of PNG, 174
- Evangelical Missions, 17
- Evangelistic Bible teaching, 217
- Evil eye, 133
- Evil spirits, 137
- Excommunication, 185
- Exodus, 74
- Exorcism, traditional, 190
- Face-to-face societies, 16, 205
- Faith, 3, 104
- Faith allegiance, 89
- Family, 43
- Fear, 199
 - allegiance, 89
- Felt needs, 176
- Fetishes, 193
- Formal/informal leadership, 27
- Format, village meetings, 223
- Fuller Theological Seminary, 5, 18
- Functional substitutes, 140, 184
- Genealogies, Bible, 168
 - stick, 169, 221, 235
- Germ Theory, 30
- Ghosts, 27, 112, 134
- Ginger plants, 193
- Goal dissonance,
- Goals, 36, 119
- God, attributes, 44
 - concept of, 139
 - power, 198
- Gods, 190, 191
- Gospel Recordings, 176
- Gossip as social control, 112
- Government employees, 255
- Group decision-making, 97, 112
- Habit formation, 96
- Head hunting, 98
- Healing, 198, 224
- Health problems, 10
- Heathen religion, 38
- Holy Spirit, 3, 252, 262
 - role of, 102, 121, 228
 - in conversion, 99
 - indwelling, 196
- Homesickness, 9
- Homogeneous units, 94, 254, 260
- House churches, 257, 262

- Houseboat ministry, 104
- Human beings, 42, 113
- Humans as dichotomy, 113
- Identification, 124
- Idolatry, 38
- Idols and images, 26
- Independence, PNG, 99
- Indigenous churches, 82, 183
- Infanticide, 112
- In-law relationship, 208
- Innovator, 224
- Jesus as a missionary, 48
- Jesus' disciples, 147
- Jewish hope, 84, 147
- Justice, 42, 112
- Labour
 - specialization, 44
- Language learning, 16, 19, 54
- Languages, New Testament, 84
- Law and Gospel, 186
- Law of love, 86, 88
- Leadership, 43, 116, 233
 - Formal/Informal, 27
 - Training, 227
- Legalism, 236
- Legends, 34, 231
 - function of, 234
- Life, value of, 42
 - defined sociologically, 112
- Literacy, 232, 238
 - and acculturation, 228
 - and leadership training, 233
- Love, Display of, 15
- Love for God, 3
- Love magic, 141
- Low gods, 134, 135
- Lutheran Church, 212
- Magic, 38, 98, 129, 190, 192
 - paraphernalia, 130, 131
 - taboos, 130, 131
 - uses, 130, 131
 - power, 236
- Male female roles, 113
- Mana*, 25, 129, 276
 - in spirits, 277
 - in stones, 276
 - relevance of the concept, 26
- Maprik, 166
- Marriage, 43, 113
 - arranged, 14
- Masalai*, 191
- Mass decision, 205
- Mass media, 252
 - and message, 173
- Meat offered to idols, 88
- Melanesia, 20, 21
- Memory skills, 229
- Men's sitting houses, 203
- Mission
 - goals and strategies, 122
 - motivation for missions
 - role of the Pastor, 48
 - societies, 18
 - as a social structure, 109
 - structures, 104
- Missionaries & Cargo Cult, 148
- Missionary training, 49, 52, 124
 - Biblical examples, 48
- Money, 114
 - attitude towards, 44
- Mono-Cultural Myopia, 29
- Monologue preaching, 222
- Monotheism, 69, 77, 78
- Mt. Turu, 159
- Multi-individual mutually inter-
 - dependent decision-making,
 - 94, 97, 112, 139, 181,
 - 205, 225, 251, 278
- Myths, 34, 110, 222
- Name studies, 218
- Naming of children, 112
- National Councils of Churches, 57
- National heritage, 198
- Nativistic Movements, 157
- Natural leaders, 259
- Negative questions, 13
- New Religious Movements, 185
- Nominalism, 60, 81, 217, 261

- Non-Formal Preparation, 51
- Non-Literate leaders, 227
- Oatridge, Des, 177
- Omens, 133
- Ordeals, 132
- Orientation to past, 111
- Other gods, 73, 75
- Papua New Guinea, 4, 49
 - justice system, 112
- Pastors and cargoism, 166
- Paternalism, 19
- Patrilineal societies, 97
- Paul, the apostle, 48, 86
- Pawa*, 129, 190
- Peli movement, 159
- Pentecostal emphasis, 264
 - experience, 262
 - strengths, 118
 - and unity, 59
- People Movements, 181, 183, 204, 210
 - 218, 225, 227, 233, 251
 - caring for, 213
 - in the Bible, 207
 - in Western Europe, 206
 - in PNG, 212
 - leaders, 213
 - how to produce, 210
 - Revivals within, 214
- Pidgin New Testament, 137
- Polygyny, (polygamy) 98, 103, 233
- Port Moresby, 245
- Posin*, 138, 192
- Possession states, 202
- Post-exilic period, 78
- Power encounter, 71, 78, 79, 80, 95,
 - 139, 181, 197
- Power of Holy Spirit, 202
- Power structure, 101, 210
- Power without Christ, 202
- Prayer, 3, 44
- Preaching, 45
- Prestige factors, 98, 114, 206
- Primary allegiance, 36, 71, 78, 81, 85,
 - 97, 117
- Property barrier, 263
- Protestant Missions, 18
- Proverbs, 34
- Radio, 252
- Reading lists, 52
- Receptivity and social change, 254
- Reciprocity, 100, 179
- Reconciliation, 114
- Reducing stress in culture change, 182
- Relationships, 10, 179
- Relationships
 - human/divine, 44
 - interpersonal, 43, 44, 180
 - boy-girl, 14
- Religious specialists, 236
- Religious sub-system, 37
- Respect for aged, 98
- Respect for parents, 145
- Revitalization movements, 157
- Revival, 185, 195, 214
- Rhythmic material resists change, 241
- Rites of passage, 94, 112
- Ritual, effectiveness of, 115
- Roles, male/female, 43, 113
- Sacred and tabu, 26, 76
- Sacrifice, 3, 132, 77
- Sacrificial system, 84
- Sanguma*, 130, 194
- Saving face, 14
- Schooling, 246
- Self exposure, 124
- Sepik, 166
 - Language groups, Abelam, 146;
 - Arapesh, 146; Bahinimo, 98,
 - 146; Boikin, 146; Iatmul, 146,
 - 241, 68, 230; Iwam, 146;
 - Manambu, 146, 218; Sanio,
 - 146; Wosera, 166; Yessan
 - Mayo, 146
- Sepik River, 4, 50, 91, 97, 177, 227
- People Movements, 219
 - villages - Avatip, 217; Malu, 217;
 - Mowi, 162, 167; Oam 1, 167,
 - 239; Pei, 240; Tauri, 167;
 - Yambon, 167; Yessan, 220

- Sex mores, 248
- Sickness / spirits, 192
- Sin, concept of, 138
 - definition of, 98
- Social Dis-equilibrium, 19
 - structure, 183, 222
- Sorcery, 30, 115, 138, 192
- Spirit nogut*, 191
- Spirit possession, 188, 190, 192
 - non-voluntary, 188
- Spirit world
 - awareness in pastoral training, 189
 - understandings, 187, 188, 201
- Spirits of dead, 134
- Spirituality, 53
- Squatter settlements, 254
- Stories, traditional use of, 239
- Story telling style, 235
- Stress, Reading on, 16
- Structural unity, 61
- Study guide, 268
- Subsidy of church workers, 259
- Summary of chapters, 269
- Supernatural and geographical features, 115
 - and sickness, 115
 - help in economic activity, 184
- Supreme Being, 71
- Syncretism, 19, 228
- Taboo, (tabu) 26, 115, 131, 237
- Tambaran*, 191
- Technology, 45, 174
- Ten Commandments for cross-cultural Christians, 272
- Theological, 68, 239
- Theories of sickness, 30
- Time
 - "Ancestral", 110
 - "living memory", 110
 - attitudes towards, 13, 41, 111,
 - chronological significance, 111
 - concepts of, 110
 - concepts and cargoism, 170
 - Time management, 53
 - Tithing, 184, 242
 - Totemism, 100, 133, 134
 - Traditional, dress standards, 15
 - powers, 181
 - religion, 228
 - spirituality, 184
 - Trance states, 194, 202
 - Truth, definition of, 112
 - Understanding, 123
 - Unity, Christian 58-61
 - Unreached people, 81
 - Urban, church planting, 253
 - problems, 248
 - strategies, 249, 257
 - unemployment, 248
 - Urbanization, 245
 - contributing factors, 246
 - Value differences, 13
 - Value judgments, 42
 - Value of life, 42
 - Village leadership, 24, 250
 - Village meetings, 101, 205
 - Village meetings with Genealogy Stick, 176
 - Wantok* system, 249
 - Wealth, 184
 - Western education, 246
 - Western worldview, 41
 - Wewak, 245
 - Women, Attitude to, 14, 15
 - World Council of Churches, 61, 65
 - Worldview, 30-33
 - change, 165, 181, 251
 - how it is learnt, 30, 121, 182
 - need to understand, 30-31, 148, 152, 165
 - PNG, 109-117,
 - Western, 41-44
 - allegiances, 117
 - differences, 38
 - influenced by literacy, 230
 - Wycliffe Bible Translators, 18, 50, 220
 - Yaliwain, Matias, 159, 167

AUTHOR INDEX

- Ahrens, T., 146
 Barclay, William, 92
 Bateson, Gregory, 230
 Burridge, 157
 Clark, Sidney J.W., 227
 Clemhaut, 157
 Codrington, R.H., 20, 129, 276
 Dayton, E., 53
 Douglas, Mary, 180, 157
 Dye, T. Wayne, 104, 138, 168, 243
 Engstrom, T, 53
 Fison, Lorimer, 20, 22
 Foster, George M., 108
 Fraser, J.O., 94, 204
 Frazer, Sir James, 27
 Greenway, Roger S., 245
 Hiebert, Paul, 18, 20, 93
 Hueter, 152, 170, 183
 Kerr, 54
 Keysser, C, 212
 Klem, Herbert V., 231
 Kraft, C.H., 18, 95, 123
 Lawrence, Peter, 161, 166, 177, 234
 Linton, Ralph, 149, 157
 Loewen, Jacob, 234
 Malinowski, Bronislaw, 21
 Marett, R.R., 21, 27
 Mbiti, John, 177
 McGavran, Donald, 205, 213, 257
 Morgan, Lewis H., 22
 Narokobi, Bernard, 180
 Nida, Eugene, 18
 Patterson, George, 235
 Primrose, Robert, 230
 Reyburn, William, 18
 Scott, Waldron, 65
 Seifert, 247
 Smalley, William, 18
 Sogaard, V., 278
 Stanner, W.E.H., 234
 Strelan, John, 166, 150, 185
 Taylor, Mrs Howard, 204
 Tippet, A.R., 18, 19, 20, 94, 140, 165,
 180, 183, 185, 238, 246
 Turner, H.R., 185
 Van Gennep, 94
 Voget, 157
 Wagner, C.Peter, 254
 Wallace, A.C.F., 149, 157
 Whiteman, Darrell, 18
 Willoughby, 20, 28, 50
 Winter, Ralph, 18, 52
 Worsley, 157
 Wright, 71

SCRIPTURE INDEX

- Genesis 12:1, 72
 Genesis 12:6-8, 76
 Genesis 13:18, 76
 Genesis 14:13, 76
 Genesis 14:19, 22, 71
 Genesis 15:1, 199
 Genesis 18:1, 76
 Genesis 21:33, 76
 Genesis 22, 73
 Genesis 22:4-16, 175
 Genesis 31:13, 73
 Genesis 35:4, 77
 Genesis 39:7, 74
 Exodus 12:46, 77
 Exodus 12:8, 77
 Exodus 15:11, 75
 Exodus 28:29, 142
 Deuteronomy 12:30, 75
 Deuteronomy 13:2, 75
 Deuteronomy 14:22-29, 242
 Deuteronomy 18:9-22, 142
 Deuteronomy 29:18, 26, 75
 Deuteronomy 32:17, 75
 Deuteronomy 6:14, 75
 Joshua 24:14-15, 70, 75, 77
 1 Samuel 14:36-42, 142
 1 Samuel 9:6, 143
 2 Kings 6:9, 143
 Psalm 91:1-7, 200
 Jeremiah 42:1-4, 143
 Matthew 18:15-17, 63
 Matthew 22:37-39, 37, 85
 Matthew 24:24, 62
 Matthew 28:18-20, 53
 Matthew 28:19, 210, 279
 Mark 7:21-23, 279
 Luke 11, 195
 Luke 20:37-38, 145
 John 10:27-30, 200
 John 15:15, 258
 John 20:19-22, 207
 Acts 1:6, 147
 Acts 10:44, 207
 Acts 11:13-14, 207
 Acts 14, 86
 Acts 15, 61, 88
 Acts 16:14-15, 207
 Acts 16:29-34, 207
 Acts 17, 86
 Acts 2:41, 207
 Acts 20:29, 62
 Acts 28:7-11, 48
 Acts 4:4, 207
 Acts 5:13, 210
 Acts 6, 61
 Acts 8:6, 207
 Acts 9:35, 207
 Acts 9:42, 207
 Romans 1:18:32, 70
 Romans 13:10, 86
 Romans 14, 87
 Romans 16:17, 63
 Romans 2:6-7, 69
 1 Corinthians 10, 88
 1 Corinthians 11:27-30, 236
 1 Corinthians 12, 196
 1 Corinthians 12:8, 10, 143
 1 Corinthians 14, 196
 1 Corinthians 14:32, 197
 1 Corinthians 5, 62
 1 Corinthians 6:19, 200
 1 Corinthians 8, 88
 1 Corinthians 9:20, 38
 2 Corinthians 12:9, 16
 2 Corinthians 2:6-8, 62
 Galatians 1:8, 62
 Galatians 2:11, 61
 Galatians 3, 218
 Galatians 3:10-13, 279
 Galatians 5:19, 138
 Ephesians 1:3, 85
 Ephesians 4, 259
 Ephesians 4:11, 143
 Ephesians 4:3, 60
 1 Thessalonians 1:9, 87
 2 Thessalonians 3:6-15, 63
 Titus 3:10, 63
 Hebrews 1:14, 200
 Hebrews 11:40, 145
 Hebrews 12:1, 145
 Hebrews 12:23, 145
 2 John 10, 62
 Jude 3, 63
 Revelation 21:18, 138

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"To be successful in communicating the Gospel to peoples of a totally different worldview to your own is no simple matter. Kevin Hovey has the ability and depth of experience to so communicate, as well as to help others to understand the skills and sensitivities needed.

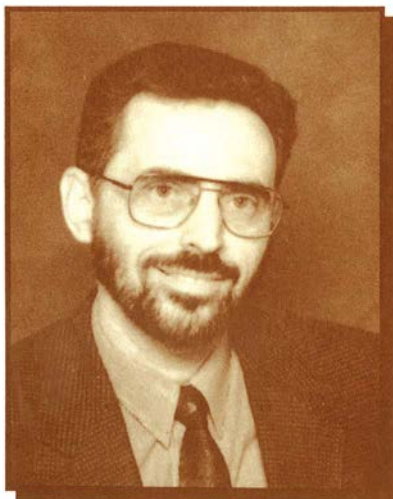
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George Forbes, Director of World Missions,
Assemblies of God in Australia.

About the Author

Brought up in Brisbane, Australia, Kev Hovey first went to Papua New Guinea in 1968 for two years as an Auto Mechanic with the Australian Assemblies of God Mission. This was followed by 15 months concentrated Bible College training in Australia, and houseboat based missionary experience on the Sepik River of Papua New Guinea. Kev's focus was on Church Planting and primary leadership training. The 10 years of grassroots living and ministry on the houseboat, plus continuing involvement in similar ministry since then has provided the down to earth insights for cross cultural ministry so lucidly described in this book.



After completing his Master of Arts in Missiology at Fuller Theological Seminary in 1983, Sepik River Church Planting continued unabated. This ministry, which included a number of Papua New Guinean Pastors in the team as they were trained, resulted in planting 24 churches by 1986. More recently, under national leadership, a further 40+ churches have been added. Increasingly involved in leadership training throughout Papua New Guinea, and missionary training and consultation beyond, he is currently Director of Training and Field Consultant for AOG World Missions, Australia.

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