

## **CHAPTER ONE - Irian Jaya and its People**

This chapter will provide background information on the culture and way of life of the Dani people of Irian Jaya. The history of Western contact with Irian Jaya generally, leading up to missionary contact and the situation of the early national church, will be discussed as it provides a context in which to place the experience of the Western Dani. The information provided in this chapter is intended to acquaint the reader with certain aspects of Irian Jaya's history that will assist in the understanding of other topics to be discussed throughout this thesis.

### **Cultural Background**

The most striking aspects of Irian Jaya are the physical contrasts between the low and highlands and the cultural diversity of the inhabitants. Officially there are at least 250 different ethnic groups in Irian Jaya,<sup>20</sup> of which three are found in the Baliem Valley. The cultural, linguistic, geographical and climatic differences between the coastal lands and the highlands, and also within these areas themselves, are immense. Even amongst the Dani there is a distinct contrast between the Grand Valley Dani and the Western Dani. They differ from each other in a number of ways, one being in their attitudes. The Western Dani have the reputation of being more friendly and accepting, while the Grand Baliem Dani are said to be more aggressive and defensive. The Western Danis over time have moved from the Grand Valley up the North Baliem probably as a result of conflict and in search of new land for gardens, in an attempt to better their lives. In this way they tended to move away from the main centre of warring and also to have contact with other cultural groups such as the Uhundi or Damal groups. Hayward ascribes to the Western Dani a pioneering spirit, as a people who are not afraid of change, while those in the Grand Valley are conservative upholders of tradition.<sup>21</sup> The "aggressive" approach of the Grand Baliem in contrast to the Western Dani, the "friendly" mountain people, noted by numerous pioneer missionaries, is seen to have been a determining factor in the reluctance of the Grand Valley Dani to

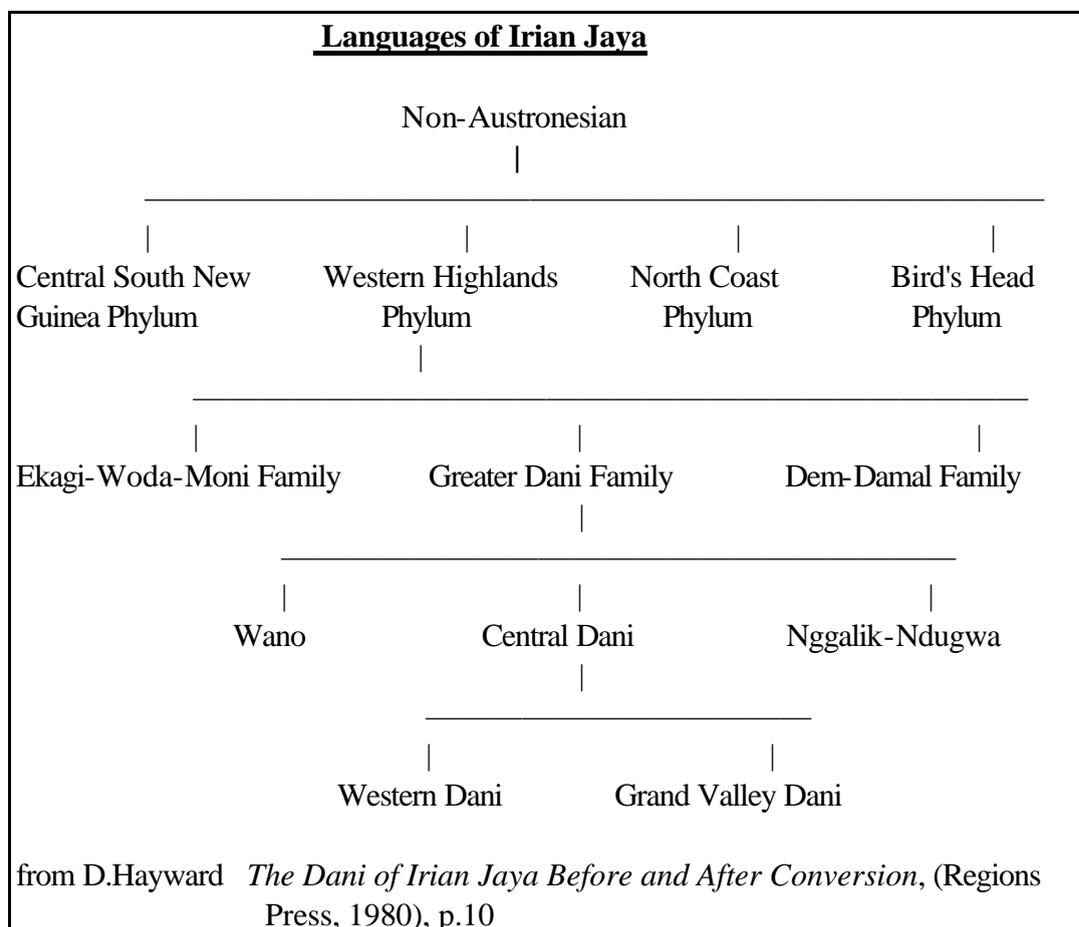
---

<sup>20</sup> Provincial Government of Irian Jaya *Irian Jaya: A New Frontier for Trade, Investment and Tourism*, (1993), p.23

<sup>21</sup> D.Hayward *The Dani Of Irian Jaya Before and After Conversion*, (Regions Press, 1980), pp.105-106 & D.Scovill *The Dani World View*, (Unpublished Paper, 1984), p.8 & D.Pickell(ed.) *Indonesian New Guinea: Irian Jaya*, (Periplus Editions, 1994) p.48

respond positively to missionaries or any other newcomers.<sup>22</sup> Language is another distinguishing factor, with distinct Western and Grand Valley dialects. (See Figure 2) There are also variations in such areas as clothing and rituals.

**Figure 2**



The former beliefs and world view of the Dani people are quite complicated but will be mentioned briefly. The Dani world, the Baliem Valley, is believed to have been created by the now inactive deity Mbok whose steps formed the valleys and the mountains out of flat ground. An imprint in the shape of a human foot on a rock at Tiom is seen as one of his footprints. Mbok also created the great rivers that run through the valleys but had nothing to do with his creation and played no part in the appearance of the world's inhabitants.<sup>23</sup> Rather, two men and two women emerged from a hole in the ground and

<sup>22</sup> N.Draper "ABFM Becomes Involved" in *Baliem Beginnings* (Camden Baptist Church, 1976), p.27

<sup>23</sup> E.Wendaneby *Penyembahan Roh Orang Mati dalam Kepercayaan Tradisional Suku Lani*, (Unpublished Paper, 1993), p.33 & D. Scovill *The Dani World View*, p.64

from there moved westwards.<sup>24</sup> The story of the coupling of these men and women also illustrates the necessity of what are called *moiety* groups amongst the Dani.<sup>25</sup> There are two main patrilineal groups, *Wenda* and *Kogoya*, and numerous clan names are collected under one or the other of the two streams. (See Figure 3) Marriage within a single moiety would be incest in the eyes of the Danis and as such punishable by death.<sup>26</sup> So a man of the *Wenda* moiety can only marry a girl of the *Kogoya* moiety and vice-versa.

**Figure 3**

<b><u>Moieties and a selection of clan names</u></b>	
<b><u>WENDA</u></b>	<b><u>KOGOYA</u></b>
Yigibalom	Tabuni
Wakerkwa	Wanimbo
Murip (Morip)	Telenggen
Wenerengga	Yoman Nenda
Wanena	Kulua
Kiwo	Yugu Tabuni
Yanengga	Wandik
Enumbi	Nggoma
Nggena	Weya
Yikwa	Nggire
Nggumbo	Towolam
Yanuno	Wogobera

from Weripen Wenda *Suatu Tinjauan Alkitabiah Terhadap Tradisi Pemilihan Pasangan Hidup Dalam Kebudayaan Suku Lani*, (Unpublished paper, 1993), p.11  
 & Hayward *The Dani of Irian Jaya Before and After Conversion*, (Regions Press, 1980), p.43  
 \*Enos Wendaneby states that altogether there are 58 clans under the Wenda moiety and 54 clans under the Kogoya moiety. *Penyembahan Roh Orang Mati Dalam Kepercayaan Tradisional Suku Lani*, (Unpublished paper, 1993), p.21

The Dani world view does not distinguish between spiritual and secular, but rather everything is determined by the spirits who are all potentially evil and as such need to be placated and worshipped.<sup>27</sup> This is not an act of devotion, but rather a system of averting

<sup>24</sup> Wendaneby *Penyembahan Roh*, pp.8, 67 & Hayward *The Dani of Irian Jaya*, p.41

<sup>25</sup> Hayward *The Dani of Irian Jaya*, pp.41-42

<sup>26</sup> *Ibid.*, p.50 & R.Pangendahen *Suatu Analisa Teologis Alkitabiah Terhadap Persembahan Korban Dalam Kepercayaan Tradisional Suku Dani di Irian Jaya*, (Institut Alkitab Tiramis, 1988)

<sup>27</sup> Hayward *The Dani of Irian Jaya*, p.100 & I.Gruber "A Personal Account" in *Baliem Beginnings*, p.60

disaster and manipulating the spirits in order to achieve or obtain what you want, personally or for your community.<sup>28</sup> The Danis are extremely community minded as their personal wants are generally in keeping with the good of the community.<sup>29</sup> There are two main types of spirits, those of recently departed ancestors and the nature spirits who inhabit the trees, rocks and rivers.<sup>30</sup> Spirits were constantly feared as they were thought to cause death through eating the liver, the essence of the human being.<sup>31</sup> Deaths could also be initiated by a spirit specialist on behalf of an enemy.<sup>32</sup> For the Dani there is no life after death, they do not consider spirits to be alive as they cannot experience or take part in life.<sup>33</sup> Accordingly, death was a time of extreme grieving, expressed by wailing, covering themselves in mud and mutilation that consisted of the amputation of finger joints mainly among girls, as the boys needed them to use a bow and arrow properly, and the splitting of ear lobes following the death of a male relative. With numerous relatives dying, girls could end up with no good fingers.<sup>34</sup>

Wars and battles were an important part of Dani culture and seem to have happened quite regularly, mainly over the issues of loss of life, pigs, women or land. They were undertaken to get revenge against a village, not the actual individual, who had murdered one of their own, stolen a pig or a wife or disgraced a woman of the village.<sup>35</sup> The Danis were, and are, subsistence farmers, their staple food being sweet potato. The pigs, which were rarely eaten except at their large feasts, were important economically and ritually.<sup>36</sup> The women tended the gardens and the pigs as well as providing children.<sup>37</sup> It is understandable then, why these were the causes of conflict amongst the Danis. The

---

<sup>28</sup> Wendaneby *Penyembahan Roh*, p.75 & Pangendahen *Suatu Analisa*, p.58

<sup>29</sup> Hayward *The Dani of Irian Jaya*, pp.131, 176

<sup>30</sup> J.Godschalk & A.Dumatubun *Bangunan Baru dan Fondasi Tua: Suatu Studi Kasus Tentang Kargoisme di Dani Barat*, (UNCEN/Bapeda Tingkat I Irian Jaya, 1989), p.16 & Wendaneby *Penyembahan Roh*, pp.33-38

<sup>31</sup> Personal communication with Makki inhabitants. There may be variations on this aspect as Hayward, who was in Mulia, speaks of the heart being the essence.

<sup>32</sup> Hayward *The Dani of Irian Jaya*, p.74

<sup>33</sup> Wendaneby *Penyembahan Roh*, p.55

<sup>34</sup> I.Mattinson *The Word of God and Wholistic Ministry to the Dani of Irian Jaya*, (Perth Bible College, 1988), p.31

<sup>35</sup> G.Larson *The Structure and Demography of the Cycle of Warfare Among the Ilaga Dani of Irian Jaya*, (Unpublished Doctoral Dissertation, 1984), p.176 & N.Melzer "Notes on Dani Culture" in *Baliem Beginnings*, pp.73-74

<sup>36</sup> Pangendahen *Suatu Analisa*, p.31

<sup>37</sup> N.& S.Draper *Daring to Believe*, (ABMS, 1990), p.227 quoting Miyaawarak

regularity of these battles allowed the victims to let off steam and to get revenge, evening up the situation before the tensions could develop into a full scale, potentially disastrous and furious war.<sup>38</sup> While there were wounded from these battles there were few deaths, and when deaths did occur, it resulted in a courting party being held for the young people from both sides.<sup>39</sup> This meant that the young people whose villages had been involved in a battle would gather together over the dead body and proceed to pair off, with the result that a number of wedding preparations would be made, once the parents' consent had been obtained.

Pre-marital relations were accepted, but were rare amongst the Danis given the fact that the marrying age of girls was about twelve years old. The men got married at about the age of twenty. The difference in age basically resulted from the need for the man to earn and collect the high bride price.<sup>40</sup> Polygamy was also allowed in Dani society but was rare as a result of the expense of paying for more than one bride and providing each with a house and garden to tend to. Then there was the problem of being able to maintain peace between the co-wives. Officially there was no limit to the number of wives a man could take, but for practical reasons polygamous marriages were generally limited to two wives and only entered into by rich, powerful men, leaders of the community.<sup>41</sup>

Leadership amongst the Dani was not hereditary but rather depended upon individual attributes including wealth, ability in battle and charisma.<sup>42</sup> There were also spiritual leaders, including the shaman, healer, sorcerer and sorceress. The shaman and the healer were respected as they used their powers for the good of the community, while the other two groups were feared as their activities encompassed causing harm to others. The shaman, who was always male, looked after all the ritual requirements of the community. He was seen to have the most intimate contact with the spirit world and to intercede with the spirits on behalf of the community by ensuring the rituals were carried out correctly. The healer was generally a woman. Sickness was believed to be a result of the spirits eating the

---

<sup>38</sup> Larson *The Structure and Demography*, p.318

<sup>39</sup> Draper *Daring*, p.213 quoting Amonen

<sup>40</sup> Hayward *The Dani of Irian Jaya*, pp.53, 56

<sup>41</sup> *Ibid.*, p.52

<sup>42</sup> Pangendahen *Suatu Analisa*, pp.24-25 & Y.Yanengga *Kepemimpinan Suku Lani Sebelum Masuknya Injil di Daerah Makki*, (Unpublished Paper, 1993), p.57

essence of a person and so those who were able to heal were believed to hold special, spiritual powers. Sorcerers were a select group of men who could be approached in order to put a curse on, or initiate the death of, an enemy. Sorceresses were potentially very numerous as every woman was believed to have the capability to become a sorceress.<sup>43</sup> As such, women were feared to some extent by men and excluded from the spiritual aspects of village life. In the North Baliem, this led to regular witch hunts.<sup>44</sup>

### **Discovery of Irian Jaya**

Irian Jaya, as it is now called, is situated directly north of Australia and constitutes half of the New Guinea island, the other half of which is Papua New Guinea. At the western end, the island sweeps up towards the Indonesian archipelago, and its shape has earned it the name of the "Bird's Head". (See Map 1) The people of Irian Jaya and Papua New Guinea are ethnically Melanesian but are divided by an artificial border that was established last century and has led to dramatically different political situations in Papua New Guinea and Irian Jaya.<sup>45</sup> Unlike many of the other Melanesian cultures, the Irianese have had relatively little contact with the outside world. Even those on the coast who were most accessible have only really had substantial contact in recent years.

The most obvious reason for the lack of attention paid to Irian Jaya is that it offered no alluring spices or exotic produce.<sup>46</sup> With the famed Spice Islands that are now a part of the Indonesian Republic as neighbours, it is not surprising that the island of New Guinea was by-passed by the early explorers. The coast was discovered in 1511 by two Portuguese, Antonio d'Abreu and Francesco Serrano who were searching for the Spice Islands.<sup>47</sup> Numerous explorers made incidental sightings of New Guinea, including Jan Carstenz whose name links him to events that were to take place in the Baliem Valley. He was the first to sight the equatorial snow-capped mountain and it is after him that the "highest peak in New Guinea, Mt. Carstenz is named."<sup>48</sup>

---

<sup>43</sup> Hayward *The Dani of Irian Jaya*, p.86

<sup>44</sup> *Ibid.*, pp.57, 100 & Draper *Daring*, p.227 quoting Miyaawarak

<sup>45</sup> Hayward *The Dani of Irian Jaya*, p.4

<sup>46</sup> D.Brown "History of Irian Jaya" in *Baliem Beginnings*, p.2

<sup>47</sup> *Ibid.* & Provincial Government of Irian Jaya *Irian Jaya: A New Frontier*, p.8

<sup>48</sup> Brown "History of Irian Jaya", p.2

Those who did visit the island with ideas of trade, exploration or possibly colonisation were soon repelled by the malarial, swampy coastal lands and so never ventured inland to the forbidding mountains.<sup>49</sup> Some coastal groups did have some contact with Tidore as they were in a vassal relationship with its Sultan, but this relationship was fairly superficial. In the age of colonisation, it seems inevitable, from our point of view, that New Guinea itself would one day be colonised, despite the natural barriers that, to a large degree, had served to shield it from the outside world. Finally in 1714 part of the island was included in the Dutch colonial lands, inherited from the Sultan of Tidore.<sup>50</sup> While this part of the island was supposedly under Dutch rule, the Dutch in fact had very little to do with Netherlands New Guinea and did not even establish a post, most probably because of the unfriendly environment and the apparent lack of economic potential.<sup>51</sup>

In 1826 an official proclamation was made by Holland regarding its position on the island of New Guinea. Yet it was not until 1883-1884 that Holland established "factual control" of Netherlands New Guinea, with a treaty in 1895 officially dividing the island in half along the 141st east longitude.<sup>52</sup> (See Map 2) Posts were set up at Manokwari and Fak-Fak in 1898, and four years later at Merauke.<sup>53</sup> Hollandia, the present day capital, Jayapura, was established in 1910.<sup>54</sup> Considering the amount of land that the Dutch claimed to be governing with four posts, it is obvious that little contact was made with the people as a whole and only minimal contact with the coastal people living in the immediate area of the Dutch government posts. So, until recently, contact with the outside world was either non-existent or fairly restricted for the inhabitants of Irian Jaya.

### **Discovery and Exploration of the Baliem Valley**

The first substantial contact with foreigners for those on the coast was through Dutch missionaries who arrived on the coast at Doreh Bay on February 5, 1855, forty-three years before the first Dutch government post was set up. In 1872 the missionaries

---

<sup>49</sup> *Ibid.*, p.1

<sup>50</sup> *Ibid.*, p.3

<sup>51</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>52</sup> *Ibid.* & Mattinson *The Word of God*, p.24

<sup>53</sup> Brown "History of Irian Jaya", p.4

<sup>54</sup> Provincial Government of Irian Jaya *Irian Jaya: A New Frontier*, p.9

established their main station at Manokwari.<sup>55</sup> Their work initially bore little fruit and it was not until more than fifty years later that the efforts and convictions of the first missionaries showed in the large numbers of coastal people converting to Christianity.<sup>56</sup> This was happening around the same time that the interior was first entered by explorers whose aim was to reach the summit of the snow capped mountains. The first attempt, made in 1907 by a party headed by H.A.Lorentz, failed as a result of illness and native hostility. In 1910 attempts were made by both Lorentz and a British party to reach the summits of Mt.Wilhelmina and Mt.Carstenz respectively. The British party failed while the Lorentz party managed to reach the snowline of Wilhelmina at an altitude of 14,786 feet.<sup>57</sup> Several more attempts were made before Captain Herderche managed to reach the summit of Wilhelmina in 1913. Meanwhile it was 1962 before Carstenz was successfully climbed.<sup>58</sup> An expedition led by Captain Van Overeem 1920-21 was the first to meet the Dani whom they described as being "proud, arrogant, warlike people".<sup>59</sup>

The following year another expedition was made to the Baliem Valley, this time led by Captain Kremer, a surveyor who had been a member of Van Overeem's party. Van Overeem had encouraged Kremer to lead a party through the Swart Valley to the summit of Mt Wilhelmina for the purpose of scientific research. The significance of this expedition lies in the negative impact it had on the people by exposing the Danis to bacillary dysentery, resulting in widespread sickness and death through the valley.<sup>60</sup> While the Danis were no strangers to dysentery, bacillary dysentery was something they had not yet encountered. These initial expeditions to the snow capped mountains had minimal contact with the people, in whom the explorers had little interest. Any meetings were incidental and lasted a couple of days at the most.<sup>61</sup> The Dani first received this title as a result of the 1926

---

<sup>55</sup> Brown "History of Irian Jaya", p.6

<sup>56</sup> Hayward *The Dani of Irian Jaya*, p.114

<sup>57</sup> Brown "History of Irian Jaya", p.6

<sup>58</sup> *Ibid.*, pp.7-8

<sup>59</sup> *Ibid.*, p.8

<sup>60</sup> *Ibid.*, pp.8-9 & Draper *Daring*, p.215 quoting Amonen

<sup>61</sup> Hayward *The Dani of Irian Jaya*, p.114

Stirling expedition, which had contact with the Moni people who referred to the inhabitants of the Baliem as the Ndani.<sup>62</sup>

Missionaries from the American Christian and Missionary Alliance and Holland, had been at Enarotali, on the outer edges of the highlands since 1933, but had not yet managed to enter the Baliem or have contact with its inhabitants.<sup>63</sup> The first major exploration of the Baliem was undertaken by a team led by the American, Richard Archbold in 1938-39. Archbold spent a year in the Baliem exploring and studying the valley and its inhabitants. In 1941, following his expedition, he had an article published in National Geographic, which brought the Grand Baliem Valley and its isolated inhabitants to the attention of much of the world.<sup>64</sup> For the duration of the second World War, any further exploration or research of the Grand Baliem and the Dani people, was suspended.

In 1942 the Japanese had occupied Ambon, cutting Netherlands New Guinea off from the Indies and in 1943, because of the Japanese presence in Western New Guinea, the CAMA missionaries from the Wissell Lakes area at Enarotali were evacuated.<sup>65</sup> Finally in 1944 the Allies overcame the Japanese in Dutch New Guinea and established themselves near Hollandia.<sup>66</sup> While here a pilot, sighting the Baliem Valley, gave it the mythical name "Shangri-La" and the Shangri-La Society was established. Flights were conducted for those who wanted to see Shangri-la and its inhabitants from the air.<sup>67</sup> The next bout of publicity that Netherlands New Guinea received resulted from the tragic crash of one of these joy flights on Sunday the 13th of May 1945.<sup>68</sup> Two members survived the crash and huge rescue operations were undertaken to retrieve them from the valley. Once again the Baliem Valley had managed to attract the attention and imagination of the world.<sup>69</sup>

### **Political History**

---

<sup>62</sup> *Ibid.*, refers to K.Heider *The Dugum Dani*, (Wenner-Gren Foundation, 1970) p.303 & M.Bromley "Ethnic Groups in Irian Jaya" in *Irian Bulletin of Irian Jaya Development*, UNCEN, 1973, Vol.2 No.3 p.3

<sup>63</sup> Provincial Government of Irian Jaya *Irian Jaya: A New Frontier*, p.9

<sup>64</sup> Hayward *The Dani of Irian Jaya*, pp.115-116

<sup>65</sup> Brown "Chronology - Irian Jaya" p.16

<sup>66</sup> Provincial Government of Irian Jaya *Irian Jaya: A New Frontier*, p.9

<sup>67</sup> Hayward *The Dani of Irian Jaya*, p.116 refers to G.Souter *New Guinea: The Last Unknown*, (Angus, 1964), p.195

<sup>68</sup> Brown "History of Irian Jaya" p.12

<sup>69</sup> *Ibid.*, pp.12-13 & Hayward *The Dani of Irian Jaya*, pp.116-117

Following the war, as the independent Indonesian nation was established, Holland lost its sovereignty over most of the former Dutch East Indies. The proclamation of independence was made on the 17 August 1945, but was not realised until 1949 as Holland struggled during the intervening years to retain its colony. Following this four year struggle Holland finally agreed to grant official independence to the area that had formed the Dutch East Indies, with the exception of West New Guinea, whose future was to be determined at a later date. With the newly independent Indonesian nation setting its sights on it as well, the Dutch became more active in Netherlands New Guinea, with the aim of preparing the people for self determination.<sup>70</sup> Unfortunately, with the possible exception of Mohammad Hatta, the leadership of Indonesia, employing the slogan "from Sabang to Merauke", was determined to take Netherlands New Guinea from the Dutch.<sup>71</sup> The reasons the Dutch gave for their belief that it would be inappropriate for the western half of the island to become part of Indonesia included the obvious ethnic, and as such cultural, differences between the Melanesians of Dutch New Guinea and the Austronesians who inhabited the Indonesian archipelago. The Dutch also showed concern over the ability of the young Indonesian nation to incorporate and rule another country, a country that as a result of isolation was *masih terbelakang* or still backward in its way of life.<sup>72</sup>

Despite Holland's determination to retain West Papua, Indonesia was not discouraged and countered Dutch arguments of the incompatibility of Indonesia and Netherlands New Guinea with accusations of the obvious colonialist position of Holland in West Papua,<sup>73</sup> when colonialist regimes were being brought to an end throughout the world. The irony of this argument is apparent when it is realised that Indonesia itself was placing itself in a colonialist position, as an Austronesian nation aiming to take over and administer a group of Melanesian people with whom there was no unity or affinity.<sup>74</sup> Other

---

<sup>70</sup> R.Z.Leirissa et al. *Sejarah Proses Integrasi Irian Jaya*, (Depdikbud, 1992), p.27

<sup>71</sup> K.Lagerberg *West Irian and Jakarta Imperialism*, (C.Hurst & Co., 1979), p.21 & R.Osborne *Indonesia's Secret War*, (Allen & Unwin, 1985), Ch.3 especially p.13 Hatta was one member of the minority group that voted against the inclusion of West Papua, and who claimed that those who voted otherwise were being "expansionist and imperialistic". Sabang is situated in Sumatra and Merauke in Irian Jaya and they represent the two extreme points of the land Indonesia believed should be in its possession.

<sup>72</sup> Leirissa et al. *Sejarah Proses Integrasi*, pp.7, 15

<sup>73</sup> *Ibid.*, p.15

<sup>74</sup> see Lagerberg *Jakarta Imperialism & Osborne Secret War*, p.13

arguments used by Indonesia to show the validity of the incorporation of West Papua included the supposed historical link with the area as part of the famous Javanese Majapahit kingdom and more recently of the Sultanate of Tidore, which was now itself a part of Indonesia.<sup>75</sup> In both these cases only a small section of West Irian, which takes its present form in any case because of Dutch colonisation, had had contact with Java or Tidore. Indonesia also claimed the existence of emotional links between Indonesia and Irian through Tidore<sup>76</sup> which is unlikely from what has already been stated. At this time Indonesia was preparing to obtain West Irian through diplomacy 'backed by military power' and in the process obtained artillery supplies from Russia.<sup>77</sup>

Finally after much public discussion and debate, largely initiated and fuelled by Indonesia, a secret meeting was arranged by J.F.Kennedy, who had supported Indonesia in its campaign since he became President of the United States in 1960. The meeting was held in America in 1962. It began in March and was concluded on the 15 August in the form of the New York Agreement.<sup>78</sup> In the final negotiations, each nation had a criterion that had to be fulfilled by the other. Indonesia's was that the Dutch hand over West Irian, and as the Dutch could do little else, they agreed to do so on the condition that it was to be the will of the people of Irian to become Indonesian citizens. This was to be determined, after an interim period, by consulting the people themselves. On the 1 October 1962 the administration of West Irian was handed over to UNTEA, the United Nations Temporary Authority, with Indonesia's trial period starting on the 1 May 1963. The "Act of Free Choice" or *Pepera* that Indonesia was obligated to carry out was done in 1969, supposedly under the watchful eye of the United Nations delegate Fernando Ortiz Sanz.<sup>79</sup> This resulted in a final, unanimous vote, which has been seen by many as being fixed, that welcomed the Indonesian government and resulted in West Irian becoming the twenty-sixth province of Indonesia.<sup>80</sup> The Act of Free Choice has become known among critics and

---

<sup>75</sup> Leirissa et al. *Sejarah Proses Integrasi*, p.8

<sup>76</sup> *Ibid.*, p.9

<sup>77</sup> *Ibid.*, pp.23, 26

<sup>78</sup> *Ibid.*, pp.34, 54

<sup>79</sup> *Ibid.*, pp.54-58 & Provincial Government of Irian Jaya *Irian Jaya: A New Frontier*, p.5

<sup>80</sup> Leirissa et al. *Sejarah Proses Integrasi*, pp.60-65

cynics as the "Act of No Choice".<sup>81</sup> Since then, Indonesia has been attempting to stabilise its position through the increased presence of military and civilian Austronesians.

### *Missionaries in the Baliem*

Amidst all this rapid change that was taking place in Irian Jaya, the missionaries acted as a cultural buffer.<sup>82</sup> They had been active in Irian Jaya since 1855 on the coast, as has already been mentioned, and since 1954 in the highlands of the Baliem Valley. After the war, attempts were made by several mission organisations to enter the Baliem and set up mission stations. A number of exploratory treks were made. On one of these treks in 1952, Rose and Titaheluw, accompanied by two Dutch government officials, arrived at a ridge overlooking the Grand Baliem Valley, but were not able to enter the valley as the Dutch Government had forbidden anyone to enter the area. So the group had to turn back.<sup>83</sup>

Finally in 1954 the Dutch government, in contrast to the Australian government regulations in East New Guinea, granted mission organisations permission to enter and establish stations in areas where there were as yet no government posts or protection for those entering.<sup>84</sup> As a result of this situation in the Baliem, the Protestant missionaries brought the first substantial contact any Danis had with the outside world. The first missionaries in the Baliem Valley amongst the Dani people were from the Christian and Missionary Alliance or CAMA who entered the Baliem Valley in 1954.<sup>85</sup> Following CAMA, APCM or the Australia-Pacific Christian Mission made an exploratory trek from the CAMA base in the Baliem Valley to Lake Archbold.<sup>86</sup> In 1955 members of the Australian Baptist Missionary Society - ABMS, Regions Beyond Missionary Union - RBMU<sup>87</sup> and APCM formed a team which was taken to Lake Archbold by Dave Steiger, a pilot for the newly opened branch of MAF or Mission Aviation Fellowship. From here they trekked for four hard days to a possible airstrip site, which was relatively level, that

---

<sup>81</sup> Lagerberg *Jakarta Imperialism*, p.3, 118

<sup>82</sup> Pickell *Indonesian New Guinea*, p.50 & J.McBeth "Mission Impossible" in *FEER*, 17 February 1994, p.26

<sup>83</sup> Hayward *The Dani of Irian Jaya*, p.120

<sup>84</sup> Draper "ABFM Becomes Involved", p.22

<sup>85</sup> GIII *Sejarah Gereja dari Gereja Injili Irian Jaya*, (Recent pamphlet put out by GIII), p.2

<sup>86</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>87</sup> "Regions Beyond" Missionary Union. An interdenominational mission society that focuses on regions beyond the already established mission fields.

had been spotted from the air.<sup>88</sup> They stopped here to make the airstrip of what became the APCM station of Bokondini. The respective mission groups had agreed that each should develop a designated area and so, after completing the airstrip, they went their separate ways. (See Figure 4) RBMU moved to the Swart Valley to the west, while the ABMS members went south to the Grand Baliem Valley, to Pyramid Mountain, where, together with CAMA, they established another airstrip.<sup>89</sup> Pyramid, a CAMA station, is at the entrance to the North Baliem and is home to Western Danis, although bordering on the Grand Valley Dani.<sup>90</sup> Those who were in Pyramid have noted that the word '*mbabi*', meaning enemy, was constantly on the lips of the people who were always on the lookout for enemies and were often fighting with the Grand Valley Danis.<sup>91</sup>

**Figure 4 (a & b)**

<b><u>Designated Areas of Each Mission</u></b>
<b>ABMS</b> - Upper regions of the North Baliem
<b>APCM</b> - North slopes of the Hablifloerie River system
<b>RBMU</b> - Swart Valley Area
<b>UFM</b> - Upper regions of the Rouffaer/Nogolo region
<b>CAMA</b> - Central and South Baliem Valley, Ilaga Valley and Sinak Valley

<sup>88</sup> Draper "ABFM Becomes Involved", p.23

<sup>89</sup> Draper *Daring*, p.202

<sup>90</sup> Larson *The Structure and Demography*, p.12 & Pangendahen *Suatu Analisa*, p.15

<sup>91</sup> Gruber "A Personal Account", p.64

<b><u>Mission Stations Established in the Baliem from 1954-60</u></b>					
	<b>CAMA</b>	<b>APCM</b>	<b>UFM</b>	<b>RBMU</b>	<b>ABMS</b>
1954	*Hetigima				
1955		Lake Archbold			
1956	Ilaga Pyramid	Bokondini			Tiom
1957	*Tulem *Seinma	Wolo		Karubaga	Makki
1958	*Pugima *Ibele		Mulia		Yugwa
1959	Sinak	Kelila			
1960	*Sinatma		Ilu	Kanggime Mamit	
*Baliem Dani in contrast to Western Dani Stations Figure a & b from D.Hayward <i>The Dani of Irian Jaya before and after Conversion</i> , (Regions Press, 1980), pp.123-124					

After the establishment of the Pyramid airstrip, the ABMS missionaries made an aerial evaluation of the North Baliem in an attempt to find a possible airstrip site. One was selected at Tiom, which was to become the first Baptist mission station.<sup>92</sup> Norm Draper, Ian Gruber, Hein Noordyk and Myron Bromley, the linguist and missionary, made the initial trek to Tiom, with the first three members returning on a second trek to make the airstrip and finally by November 1956 ABMS was established in Tiom.<sup>93</sup> From here ABMS was to open stations at Makki and Yugwa or Danime and Pit River or Pirime.<sup>94</sup> Other Baptist outstations opened later included Kwiyawagi, which, at an altitude of 9,000 feet, is the coldest inhabited area in the highlands. In general the Danis live between 4,000-7,000 feet.<sup>95</sup> (See Map 3)

<sup>92</sup> Draper "ABFM Becomes Involved", p.35

<sup>93</sup> O.Kogoya *Perkembangan Gereja-Gereja Baptis di Wilayah Tiom*, (Unpublished paper, 1993), pp.7-9

<sup>94</sup> B.Kogoya *Suatu Penilaian Terhadap Perkembangan Gereja-Gereja Baptis di Wilayah Danime*, (Unpublished paper, 1992), p.1

<sup>95</sup> Hayward *The Dani of Irian Jaya*, p.6

This initial period was a tense time for the missionaries and the people until they got used to each other. The missionaries were still grappling with the language as well as dealing with suspicion, thefts and the constant mention of either '*mbabi*' - enemy, or '*kugi*' - spirits. There was a mixture of attitudes towards the missionaries, as some welcomed them willingly, while others plotted to kill them. The spiritual leaders of certain communities created difficulties for the missionaries as they saw their position in society being threatened by their presence.<sup>96</sup> Missionaries were well aware of the dangers they faced and a few of them were murdered by hostile groups.<sup>97</sup>

Meanwhile the Danis were also attempting to deal with the situation. They had been isolated by the mountains and also by the continual warfare which restricted movements outside their own communities.<sup>98</sup> It was with this restricted world view that the Danis confronted the white missionaries, who were initially considered to be ancestral spirits. As such they were much feared, as in Dani culture all spirits were essentially and potentially evil.<sup>99</sup> Fear also stemmed from the legacy of the Kremer expedition, a belief that white men brought death with them. This legend almost cost missionaries their lives. They were saved, however, because of the inconsistency between the legend and the actions of these white men who were now curing people with their 'magic', their penicillin shots.<sup>100</sup> In some areas, like Tiom, there was a mixture of fear and acceptance where the people regarded these newcomers as spirits who had come to enforce peace. This belief resulted from the initial flight made into the North Baliem Valley when the pilot buzzed a battle that was taking place. The people took this as a sign from the spirits to stop their fighting, which they did immediately.<sup>101</sup>

Another aspect of Western Dani culture that led to the acceptance of the white skinned missionaries was the myth relating how the Danis lost the secret of eternal life or '*nabelan-kabelan*'. It centred around a small black bird and a snake. The snake's knowledge of the secret of eternal life enables it to change its skin. In various versions of

---

<sup>96</sup> Draper "ABFM Becomes Involved", pp.31-32 & *Daring*, p.203

<sup>97</sup> S.Dale *The Valley and the Vision*, (RBMU, 1969), p.36 & Hayward *The Dani of Irian Jaya*, p.125

<sup>98</sup> Draper *Daring*, p.250 quoting Yakya/Yambonep

<sup>99</sup> Gruber "A Personal Account", p.60 & Melzer "Notes on Dani Culture", p.70

<sup>100</sup> Draper *Daring*, p.203

<sup>101</sup> *Ibid.* & O.Kogoya *Perkembangan Gereja-Gereja Baptis*, p.2

this legend, the Danis lose their chance at eternal life either through the bird scaring the snake off when it was about to divulge the secret,<sup>102</sup> or deciding to believe the bird's lie that eternal life could be obtained through smearing yourself with mud. Danis claim that this was why at funerals they smeared themselves with mud as they remembered how they chose unwisely and in doing so chose death.<sup>103</sup> The essential message is the same - the snake had the secret but because of the part played by the bird it was lost to the Danis. Apparently this legend justified Dani children catching these small, black birds and torturing them to death in reprisal for their offence against the Danis.<sup>104</sup> There was also an aspect of hope in this legend as the people waited expectantly for someone to come, bringing the secret of eternal life with them. The missionaries' white skin led to the belief that, like the snake, they had discovered the secret to eternal life and had been able to shed their black skin. This belief seemed to be confirmed in their teachings about eternal life.<sup>105</sup>

The awareness of this teaching on eternal life had filtered through the Baliem Valley from the CAMA mission station at Ilaga, which was ten days trek from Tiom.<sup>106</sup> This led to the acceptance of the missionaries but also to some problems. The Dani expectation of eternal life was of eternal life on earth, a golden age free of all fear and sickness, while the message the missionaries brought taught eternal life in the hereafter.<sup>107</sup> Confusion over this aspect led to the emergence of certain millenarian or Cargo Cults, as those who had heard the missionary message retold it with certain alterations that resulted, in most instances, from a lack of understanding and the mixing of the missionary message with their cultural understandings of eternal life.

One of these messengers, Yakya, also known as Yambonep, is today a highly respected leader and preacher. He had heard of what was happening in Ilaga and so decided to make the dangerous journey there, through areas that were at war. Upon arriving he stayed a few days and heard some of the teaching through friends in the village and Gordon Larson. The effect of the gospel on the people in Ilaga and the message he

---

<sup>102</sup> Wendaneby *Penyembahan Roh*, p.79

<sup>103</sup> Hayward *The Dani of Irian Jaya*, p.103

<sup>104</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>105</sup> O.Kogoya *Perkembangan Gereja-Gereja Baptis*, p.11

<sup>106</sup> Draper *Daring*, pp.203-205

<sup>107</sup> Godschalk *Bangunan Baru dan Fondasi Tua*, p.63 & Hayward "Time and Society in Dani Culture" in *Irian Bulletin of Irian Jaya Development*, UNCEN, 1983, Vol.XI, No.2-3, p.42

heard impressed him greatly. On his return to Makki, he proclaimed what he had heard and continued on to Pyramid, doing the same there. As a charismatic leader and speaker, many followed his teachings.<sup>108</sup> This resulted in missionaries having to take the situation in hand and explain clearly the distortions that had emerged, to both Yakya and the people. These corrections were accepted by some of the people and the leaders, like Yakya, who retained their enthusiasm for the Christian message, while others found they could use the distortion of stories to their own advantage.<sup>109</sup> These cults incorporated the belief that with this new life would come all sorts of material goods, like those of the missionaries, which would be brought in by the planes. They did not understand that the supplies had to be paid for but believed they arrived as a result of secret knowledge on the part of the missionaries.<sup>110</sup> This confusion worried the missionaries as many Danis were claiming to be Christians and were burning the fetishes of their animistic past, while in fact they had not yet understood the Christian message. In the North Baliem these fetish burnings were discouraged by the missionaries who did not feel that it was achieving anything for the people or themselves. Yet the people felt that they needed to be rid of them and so a compromise was reached where the fetishes - items such as stones, spears, bows and arrows which were believed to possess magical powers - were tied up in anticipation of burnings being held. After gaining a greater understanding of the gospel the people were then encouraged by the missionaries to burn their fetishes.<sup>111</sup> The missionaries did not want the Danis to destroy all they had in case they did not accept the gospel, which they did fairly rapidly. They felt the people needed more teaching on the nature of Christianity.

This led to the establishment of literacy and witness schools.<sup>112</sup> Here men who had been selected by their villages to represent them, men of influence, attended the schools run by the missionaries during the week. They were mainly sorcerers, shamans or apprentice shamans who were eager to learn the white man's magic.<sup>113</sup> They would learn specific Bible stories and then would return to their villages towards the end of the week in order to

---

<sup>108</sup> G.Larson & R.Bensley Unpublished interview with Yakya/Yambonep Wanyambo, November 1976

<sup>109</sup> Draper *Daring*, p.205

<sup>110</sup> Godschalk *Bangunan Baru dan Fondasi Tua*, p.32 & Melzer "Notes on Dani Culture", p.72

<sup>111</sup> Hayward *The Dani of Irian Jaya*, p.133

<sup>112</sup> J.Burt *On His Majesty's Service*, (RBMU, 1993), p.25

<sup>113</sup> Draper *Daring*, p.203 & P.Worsley *The Trumpet Shall Sound*, (Paladin, 1970), p.249

relate the stories, which they had learnt through repetition and with great care in order that no distortions would emerge.<sup>114</sup> At this stage there had been the initial people movements. This was where whole villages and clans professed to be Christian and it was through the witness schools that a second mass movement was initiated in the hearts of the people as they gained a deeper understanding of the Christian message.<sup>115</sup> At the school in Tiom a man by the name of Nawimban was to become the first Christian. As he was returning to his village at the end of the witness school week he suddenly realised what they had actually been taught and so he returned to Tiom to tell the missionaries that Jesus had turned his heart around "*An Yesus ninikme aber aret abuk lagi o*", a Dani saying meaning to have totally changed.<sup>116</sup> The missionaries were encouraged, while many of his class mates jeered when he related it to them. But he was just the beginning of the chain reaction as villagers and other witness school members had their hearts turned around as well.<sup>117</sup> Baptisms followed when the missionaries felt that the gospel was finally being understood.<sup>118</sup> (See Figure 5) Yet amongst those who did not yet understand there was still confusion over what was actually happening as rumours circulated that those who were baptised would emerge with white skin or be made young again.<sup>119</sup> These heresies were quickly attended to by the missionaries and did not last long.<sup>120</sup> Those who were baptised became ministers of numerous churches that were being established and attended Bible school.<sup>121</sup>

### **Figure 5**

---

<sup>114</sup> O.Kogoya *Perkembangan Gereja-Gereja Baptis*, p.4

<sup>115</sup> E.Smith *God's Miracles: Indonesian Church Growth*, (William Carey Library, 1970), pp.115-116

<sup>116</sup> O.Kogoya *Perkembangan Gereja-Gereja Baptis*, pp.4-5

<sup>117</sup> Melzer "Notes on Dani Culture", pp.77-78

<sup>118</sup> K.Wakerkwa *Pertumbuhan Gereja Baptis di Wilayah Pirime*, (Unpublished paper, 1992), p.6

<sup>119</sup> Hayward *The Dani of Irian Jaya*, p.141

<sup>120</sup> *Ibid.*, p.151

<sup>121</sup> Wakerkwa *Pertumbuhan Gereja Baptis*, p.6

<u>Period of Instruction Between Burnings and Baptisms</u>				
		First Burning	First Baptism	Time Elapsed
Pyramid	CAMA	February 1960	April 1961	14 months
Tiom	ABMS	February 1960	13 May 1962	27 months
Makki	ABMS	February 1960	6 May 1962	27 months

CAMA had the shortest periods of instruction while ABMS as well as APCM, RBMU and UFM (not shown here) had policies that required a longer period of instruction.

From D.Hayward *The Dani of Irian Jaya Before and After Conversion*, (Regions Press, 1980), p.146

The initial period of conversions and baptisms caused some confusion especially for those who had not become Christians and who wanted to retain their animistic beliefs. As a result the first Christians were persecuted by neighbouring non-Christian communities. The largest incident of this sort took place in Makki in September of 1962, when a group of unbelievers declared war on the believers, resulting in the death of thirty Christians. As these people movements towards Christianity continued, wars almost ceased as people no longer wanted to take revenge, and a general feeling of unity prevailed amongst communities that had formerly been enemies.<sup>122</sup> While not all the communities had converted to Christianity, the system of revenge that the battles were based on disintegrated as the Christian communities increasingly refused to take revenge. This resulted in battles not taking place as the chain of revenge was broken.

There was one period of unrest during the 1970s. It was a tense time, not because of unrest between communities, but as a result of Irian Jaya being incorporated into Indonesia. The rebel movement in Irian Jaya, which the native church took a strong stand against, had spread into the highlands, inciting the people, generally non-Christians, to fight. The church and the missionaries took a neutral position as they neither supported the rebels or the military. Apart from this period of unrest which resulted in a war of rebellion in 1977

---

<sup>122</sup> S.Horne *An Hour to the Stone Age*, (Moody Press, 1973), p.99 This dramatic change that occurred is corroborated by the Danis' own reports of the pre-Christian period.

in the Baliem, life has been much more peaceful for the Danis.<sup>123</sup> The movement by the missionaries between stations and villages also helped to bring the communities together, with more substantial tracks being made and communication increasing.<sup>124</sup> In the years to come, the isolation of the Western Dani was to become increasingly a thing of the past and their world view was to be substantially widened.

---

<sup>123</sup> Burt *On His Majesty's Service*, p.108 & J.Dekker *Torches of Joy*, (Crossway Books, 1985), pp.165-171

<sup>124</sup> Melzer "Notes on Dani Culture", p.80