The Contextualization of Cargo Cult Beliefs and the Christian Message in Irian Jaya, Indonesia

Michael L. McDowell
B.B.E. Western Bible College May, 1983
M.A. Dallas Theological Seminary May, 1986

Approved by

__________________________________
Research Advisor

__________________________________
Committee Member

__________________________________
Dean

A Dissertation Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy

Oxford Graduate School
July 20, 1994
# Table of Contents

**Chapter I  The Problem of the Cargo Cults**

Introduction to the Problem...............................1  
Statement of the Problem.................................8  
Background of the Problem................................10  
Area and Geography.......................................10  
    People...............................................11  
    Government........................................12  
    Religion..........................................13  
    Language........................................13  
Brief History of Indonesia...............................14  
History of Cargoism in Irian Jaya......................16  
Cargoism and Conversion...............................19  
Purpose of Research on the Problem.......................22  
Significance of Research on the Problem..................24

**Chapter II  Literature Review**

Introduction.............................................27  
Terminology of the Cargo Cults...........................31  
Causation and Interpretation of the Cargo Cults........36  
    Socio-political Interpretation.....................40  
    Christian-ethical Interpretation...............43  
    Cultural-historical Interpretation............47  
    Economic Interpretation........................53  
    Synoptic Interpretation........................54  
Conclusion...............................................57
Chapter III Cargo Cult Mythology

Cargo Cult Mythology...........................................61

Koreri, The Biak Cargo Cult Myth.........................62
  Background of the Myth......................................62
  Manamakeri Leaves Sopen.................................65
  The Journey of Manamakeri...............................68
  Manamakeri and Family at Wundi........................69
  Manamakeri Leaves Wundi Island.......................72
  Mansar Goes to Numfor...................................73
  Manamakeri's Journey to Raja Ampat..................75

Bapak Ukut-Kado, The Hatam Cargo Cult Myth............77
  Origin of the Myth..........................................77
  Kado Gains the Secret of Eternal Life................77
  Kado's Miracles.............................................79
  The Journeys of Kado......................................82

Tigomang, The Sougb Cargo Cult Myth.....................83

Sawapacu-Ataphapkon, The Sawi and Auyu Cargo Cult Myth...85
  The Finding of the New World............................85
  Nunas and the Great Flood................................93
  Abu the Prophet..............................................94
  The War with the Simiki Tribe...........................95
  The Division of the Tribes...............................97
  The Promise of Ataphapkon..............................101

Proliferation of the Myths................................103

Mythological World View..................................109

Chapter IV The Contextualization Process

The Development, Usage and Meaning of Contextualization.118

Issues in Contextualization in Irian Jaya..............129

Illustration of the Contextualization Process.........131

The Church in the Contextualization Process.........135
The Risk of Syncretism...............................145
Positive Contextualization........................146

**Chapter V Research Design**

Introduction........................................148

The Social Sciences and the Scientific World........149
Presuppositions of the Research.....................153

Social Sciences in Relation to Missiological Research..161

Research Hypotheses................................163

Null Hypotheses......................................164

Definition of Terms..................................164

Assumptions of the Research.........................168

Scope and Limitations of the Research...............168

Research Methodology and Descriptive Data..........169
  Analysis of the Data..............................177
  Primary Null Hypothesis Results..................178
  Secondary Null Hypothesis Results...............179
  Implications for the Church and Mission..........191
  Factors in Perpetuating and Overcoming Cargo Cults.194

Conclusion.........................................199

Appendix I
  Survey (Indonesian)..............................202

Appendix II
  Survey (English).................................207

Appendix III
  Western Financial Aid and Non-Western Churches....211

Bibliography........................................222
Figures

1. Contextualization in Process......................... 9
2. Contextualization.................................133

Maps

1. Irian Jaya....................................... 11

Tables

1. Christian Beliefs.................................171
2. Cargo Cult Beliefs...............................172
3. Animistic Beliefs.................................174
4. Tribal Mentality.................................175
5. ANOVA Whole Survey..............................185
6. ANOVA Biak Tribe.................................187
7. ANOVA Meyah Tribe..............................188
8. ANOVA Sougb Tribe..............................188
9. ANOVA Hatam Tribe..............................188

Charts

1. Percentage of Positive Responses...............186
2. Positive responses Among Tribes...............189