

**THE EFFECT OF THE DAYAK WORLDVIEW, CUSTOMS, TRADITIONS, AND
CUSTOMARY LAW (*ADAT – ISTIADAT*) ON THE INTERPRETATION OF THE
GOSPEL IN WEST KALIMANTAN, INDONESIAN BORNEO**

by

Larry Kenneth Thomson

B.A., University of Calgary, 1977

M.Div., Acadia University, 1980

**Submitted to the Faculty of Theology, Acadia Divinity College,
in partial fulfillment of the requirements for
the degree of Doctor of Ministry**

**Acadia Divinity College,
Acadia University
Fall Convocation, 2000**

© by Larry Kenneth Thomson 2000



**National Library
of Canada**

**Acquisitions and
Bibliographic Services**

**395 Wellington Street
Ottawa ON K1A 0N4
Canada**

**Bibliothèque nationale
du Canada**

**Acquisitions et
services bibliographiques**

**395, rue Wellington
Ottawa ON K1A 0N4
Canada**

Your file Votre référence

Our file Notre référence

The author has granted a non-exclusive licence allowing the National Library of Canada to reproduce, loan, distribute or sell copies of this thesis in microform, paper or electronic formats.

The author retains ownership of the copyright in this thesis. Neither the thesis nor substantial extracts from it may be printed or otherwise reproduced without the author's permission.

L'auteur a accordé une licence non exclusive permettant à la Bibliothèque nationale du Canada de reproduire, prêter, distribuer ou vendre des copies de cette thèse sous la forme de microfiche/film, de reproduction sur papier ou sur format électronique.

L'auteur conserve la propriété du droit d'auteur qui protège cette thèse. Ni la thèse ni des extraits substantiels de celle-ci ne doivent être imprimés ou autrement reproduits sans son autorisation.

0-612-54506-7

Canada

Table of Contents

Abstract	vii
Dedication	viii
Acknowledgements	ix
Chapter One: Introduction	1
Methodology	13
Scope and Limitations	18
Chapter Two: Description of the Setting and the Ministry	23
Geographic Setting	23
Historical Background	25
The Dayaks	29
History of KGBI Cross-cultural Ministry to Dayaks in West Kalimantan	40
The National Ideology and its Effect on the Ministry	42
Summary	46
Chapter Three: The Dayak Worldview	47
Animism and Adat	47
Unity of the Natural and Supernatural	52
Ceremonies and Rituals- examples	82
<i>Balalak</i> - Closed village	85
Farming	87
The Harvest Festival	91
Passages	93
Crises	102
War and violent conflict	102
Sickness	105
Prophylactic safety precautions	108
Taboos	111
Personal power, occult, manipulation	112
Modern Issues: Pressure on the Worldview	114
Chapter Four: Areas of Conflict	122
The Name of God	124
Balalak	126

Farming	132
Naik Dango	139
Gawai	140
Passages	142
Marriage	143
Death and Funerals	149
Crises	153
War and Violent Conflict	153
Sickness	156
Ritual Prophylactic safety precautions	159
Kampunan	159
Fetishes	160
Customs and Culture	162
Music	162
Dancing	163
Arts and Crafts	164
Betel Nut	164
Goods considered common property	165
Prayer	167
Resolving Conflicts	168
Summary	170
Chapter Five: Conclusion	173
Appendix A: Questionnaire	191
Appendix B: Map of KGBI Ministry Area	193
West Kalimantan	193
Appendix C: <i>Adat-istiadat</i> and Christianity (English)	194
The Issue: Conversions to Christianity that do not endure crises, and the persistence of traditional beliefs along with Christianity	196
Goal of traditional beliefs	197
Goal of Christianity	199
Farming	201
Regulation of Community life	201
Social Life	202

Passages	203
Healing from disease or injury.....	204
Personal Power and Invincibility	205
Inviting people to become Christians	205
Appendix D: <i>Adat-istiadat</i> and Christianity (Indonesian).....	207
Tujuan-tujuan Kepercayaan Lama.....	211
Tujuan Agama Kristen.....	213
Pertanian	214
Pengaturan Kerukunan Desa.....	215
Ramah-tamah.....	216
Peralihan Hidup	217
Penyembuhan.....	218
Kekuatan Gaib	218
Menjadi Orang Kristen	219
Glossary	220
Bibliography	222

Abstract

Personal, family, and community affairs of Dayaks, the indigenous people of West Kalimantan (Indonesian Borneo), are regulated by bodies of social and cultural norms, laws, ceremonies, and rituals called *adat*. *Adat* is founded on, and intertwined with animistic beliefs. Dayaks traditionally live in small isolated villages in the tropical rainforests of Kalimantan where they subsist primarily through swidden (slash-and-burn) agriculture. *Adat* is relied upon to provide guidance for surviving in the face of the many challenges posed by the environment. *Adat* provides guidance for deciding on the time and place to clear forest for planting, and when to plant and harvest. It includes regulations that guide interpersonal and community relationships and activities. Preservation of physical health, avoidance of injury, and healing from disease and injury when they occur is an important function of *adat*.

Adat is based on a view of the world as consisting of visible (physical) and invisible (spiritual) elements. There is interaction and mutual influence between these two realms at every level and in every aspect of life. It is essential to maintain harmony between the visible and invisible realms. When there is discord of any kind – between people, or between spirit forces and people – the spirit forces might express their displeasure by interfering for ill in human affairs. When misfortune occurs it is often diagnosed as caused by an offence against some spiritual beings or forces that must then be appeased with appropriate rituals, payments, or taboos. Spirit beings and forces also rely on attention and care from humans and thus can be negotiated with to influence human events for good in exchange for favors. The primary role of the Dayak traditional belief system as embodied in *adat* is to ensure survival and well being in the physical realm.

Many Dayaks have readily adopted Christianity. Frequently, however, they resort to traditional beliefs and practices in times of personal, family, or community crises. This may happen because Christianity, which conflicts with many traditional Dayak beliefs and practices, does not purport to be a system for ensuring physical subsistence, health, and safety. The absence of adequate medical care, appropriate modern farming technology and inputs, combined with a worldview in which physical events are caused by spiritual elements, leads many Dayak converts to Christianity to respond in traditional ways during times of crises.

In the presentation of the Gospel, and in subsequent discipleship and teaching, Dayak Christians need to address the issue of the different goals and expectations of Christianity and traditional Dayak beliefs, specifically that Christianity does not purport to be an avenue for ensuring physical subsistence. When Dayaks hear the Gospel, the message is filtered through their worldview, which is embodied in *adat*.

An Indonesian language study guide based on this examination of the differences between traditional Dayak beliefs and Christianity was circulated among Dayak church leaders. The study guide was intended to catalyze discussion about the different intentions of Christianity and traditional beliefs, with the hope and expectation that Dayak Christians themselves will develop a biblically based theology appropriate to their particular cultural setting.

Dedication

This thesis is dedicated to Dayak pastors serving in the churches of the *Kerapatan Gereja Baptis Indonesia* in the province of West Kalimantan, Indonesia. Their dedication and persistence in ministry in humble and difficult circumstances has been an inspiration to me.

It is my hope that this thesis will facilitate the development of a truly biblical Christian theology that honours and protects Dayak culture and identity.

Acknowledgements

Without the personal friendship and support of Indonesian colleagues, pastors, and church members it would not have been possible to collect the information about Dayak culture that forms the basis of this thesis. I am grateful for those who hosted me on my trips to their villages. Without the guidance of my Indonesian colleagues, seminary students, and pastors who traveled with me, I would not have found my way to or from many places. I am indebted to all who shared with me their knowledge of their culture and customs, and who entertained my many questions.

I am obliged to Dr. Bruce Matthews for his wise counsel and cultural sensitivity as he guided me first through a study of Islam in Indonesia, and then through the research and composition of this thesis.

Lydia Welong-Terok in Pontianak, Indonesia graciously corrected my grammar and syntax in the Indonesian language portion of this thesis.

Without the support and encouragement of my wife, Marjorie, I could not have paid as many visits to Dayak villages, invited pastors to our home for meetings and meals, nor taught at the *Seminari Theologia Kalimantan* in Pontianak where I learned much from students and faculty. I thank her for the support and encouragement that she freely gave in spite of the extra responsibilities she carried while I studied.

Chapter One: Introduction

The Dayaks, the indigenous people of the island of Kalimantan, Indonesia, like most other ethnic sub-cultures in Indonesia, have strong cultural traditions called *adat* that comprise social and cultural norms, laws, ceremonies, and rituals.¹ The *adat* of most ethnic groups is founded on and intertwined with animistic beliefs.² Many Dayaks have converted to Christianity out of this background of animism. Dayaks comprise the majority of the membership of the churches of the *Kerapatan Gereja Baptis Indonesia* (KGBI, Convention of Indonesian Baptist Churches) in West Kalimantan. If it is assumed that this animistic background affects what the Dayaks expect religion to do for them, then this background will specifically affect their concept of Christianity and what they expect from Christianity when they convert. When these expectations are not met, particularly in times of crisis, they face strong pressure to revert either to their former religious beliefs and practices, or to syncretize their traditional beliefs and practices with Christianity. Pastors and evangelists frequently deal with the question of why their converts so readily revert to their old beliefs. It could be argued that Christian theology and practice, as it has been presented to Dayaks, does not sufficiently take into account their background, worldview, and conceptions of the function of religion. When Christianity does not serve the function they expect of religion, particularly in times of

¹ See Chapter Three, (page 47), for a more extensive definition of '*adat*.'

² The term 'animism' was first coined by Sir Edward Tylor in his book *Primitive Culture* (1871). He defined it as 'belief in spirit beings.' For the purposes of this thesis I will be using this term in a more specifically defined sense, as "the belief that personal spiritual beings and impersonal spiritual forces have power over human affairs, and consequently, that human beings must discover what beings and forces are influencing them in order to determine future action and frequently, to manipulate their power." From Gailyn Van Rheenen, *Communicating Christ in Animistic Contexts* (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1991), 20.

crisis, converts often revert to their old beliefs that they believe will meet their needs in a way that apparently Christianity does not.

The KGBI churches in West Kalimantan, along with those of several other similar denominations that comprise a majority Dayak membership, were established primarily through the ministry of Indonesian and Western missionaries who introduced their own culturally influenced theology and practice of Christianity into West Kalimantan. Some aspects of Western Christian theology, held by both Indonesian and Western missionaries, stand in striking contrast to the worldview of the Dayaks of West Kalimantan. Concomitantly, some aspects of the Dayak worldview are not compatible with biblically based Christianity. Western theology, cultural expectations, and worldview significantly influence the form of Christianity as practiced in West Kalimantan and other parts of Indonesia. Indonesian missionaries, mostly from the Minahasa region of North Sulawesi, with the assistance of Western missionaries, founded most of the churches that are the focus of this consideration. Most of the KGBI Indonesian missionaries from North Sulawesi were educated in seminaries based on Western models. Their teachers were either Western missionaries, or Indonesians who were educated outside of Indonesia or at mission-operated seminaries within the country. This is to say that Western theology and forms of worship and church life have been adopted by the KGBI churches, or at least have had considerable influence on the form of the church. Sometimes this influence is quite overt and intentional. There are instances where theology and practice have been adapted to meet the expectations of Western missionaries and mission agencies who might withdraw their cooperation and financial

support if the church did not agree with certain points of theology or practice.³ The issue to be considered is the extent to which the theology and practice of Christianity, as introduced into the KGBI churches of West Kalimantan by Western and Western-educated Indonesia missionaries, is not appropriate to the Dayak context and worldview. I argue that Christianity as thus presented generally does not correspond with the Dayaks' concepts of what religion is expected to do for them, and consequently they frequently revert to old beliefs, or syncretize their old beliefs and practices with Christian beliefs and practices during times of crisis. If this is the case, then the KGBI needs to re-examine and develop further their understanding of conversion in this context. They need to take into account the differences in expectations of the role and function of religion and consider conversion from the aspect of changing or revising expectations that are essentially incompatible with Christianity. My goal is to facilitate and catalyze consideration of these issues among KGBI church workers and seminary teachers in West Kalimantan in the hope that they will begin to formulate an understanding of conversion that is biblical and appropriate to the Dayak context and worldview. My hope is that this will help them to refine and focus the KGBI's strategy and methodology of evangelism in West Kalimantan, Indonesia, and further that this will help the KGBI churches in West Kalimantan grow and mature.

There is always a danger, in any time or place, that theology and the practice of the Christian faith will be influenced by, or will adopt, elements of culture, worldview,

³ For example, in the late 1970s the Kerapatan Gereja *Protestant* Indonesia (Convention of Indonesian Protestant Churches) changed its name to the Kerapatan Gereja *Baptis* Indonesia (Convention of Indonesian Baptist Churches). One reason for making the name change was to enable the Southern Baptist mission board, which would not work in formal partnership with non-Baptist churches, to work cooperatively with the denomination, specifically by appointing missionaries to join the faculty of the KGBI seminary in Manado, North Sulawesi. Also, the KGBI discontinued the ordination of women partly because of pressure from another American-based mission agency with whom they were cooperating and which strongly opposes women in ordained ministry.

and previous religious beliefs, whether indigenous or introduced, that are incompatible with Christianity. The form this takes may turn out to be something that is not truly biblical Christianity. This is illustrated by the non-biblical elements the Western church picked up and integrated into its theology and practice as it expanded through Europe, influencing and being influenced by culture and religion. It is further illustrated by the constant struggle the church has, in our own age, to sort out faith and practice from culture, and to stay biblically based in changing times and situations.

Even though there is a danger of being paternalistic, missionaries to West Kalimantan, both Western and Indonesian, (including myself), feel some responsibility for the shape of theology and practice in the newly formed KGBI churches in West Kalimantan. If non-Dayaks do the theologizing and shape the practice of Christianity, there is the almost unavoidable danger of not being able to separate what is Western culture and what is biblical theology and practice. The same concern applies even to Indonesian missionaries from other sub-cultures in Indonesia. Sometimes it is even harder for them to differentiate between issues of faith and culture because they mistakenly think that they are working in their own culture, when actually they are not because of distinct regional differences within the country. When cross-cultural missionaries take full responsibility for doing theology and shaping the practice of Christian life they run a risk—proportional to the extent to which they are not aware of the connection between their own faith and culture—of imposing their cultural expectations and worldview into a situation that is very different from their own. Conversely, there is a danger that if the task is completely forfeited to the local people, they too will have trouble differentiating between their culture and biblical Christianity,

and will syncretize elements of their traditional religious beliefs with Christianity. All theology and practice is necessarily expressed culturally. The challenge is to keep it biblically based, and not to let it be essentially transformed through syncretism with non-Christian beliefs and practices.⁴

Even though it is difficult to separate theology and practice from culture, there is, however, a role—sometimes a key role—for the outsider. The role is not to do theology *on behalf of* others, but *with* others, to be a catalyst and facilitator, to work from the perspective of an outsider, to see things that an insider may overlook in his or her own culture. However, even just to be a facilitator, the outsider must have as full as possible an understanding of the culture and worldview under consideration. There are times, for instance, when a word may hold significantly different connotations depending on one's background. Expectations as to what Christianity is perceived to offer, what constitutes salvation, and the basis of morality may be significantly different depending on people's background and what they expected of their former religion.

The formulation of local theology and practice that are biblically based must take into consideration all the Dayak's real and perceived needs in the totality of their circumstances, such that they do not need to resort to those of their old beliefs and practices that are inimical to Christianity in order to meet these real and perceived needs. This thesis is directed at defining the issues, and providing guidelines as to how, and the extent to which, the theology and practice of the KGBI can be modified and developed to become a truly contextualized expression that is genuinely and thoroughly biblical and

⁴ Alan R. Tippett defines syncretism as "the union of two opposite forces, beliefs, systems, or tenets so that the united form is a new thing, neither one nor the other." ("Christopaganism or Indigenous Christianity?" in *William S. Carter Symposium on Church Growth, Milligan College, Tenn, 1974: Christopaganism or Indigenous Christianity?* Tetsunao Yamamori and Charles R. Taber, editors, South Pasadena: William Carey Library, 1975), 17.

which addresses every aspect and concern of the Dayak's life in West Kalimantan. I am motivated in part by a desire to keep the church (Indonesian, Canadian, and others involved) from being subjected to the same serious criticisms that have sometimes been directed at it in North American and other places around the world for its insensitivity to the cultures, concerns, and needs of indigenous peoples. The history of Christian missions is replete with instances of the church being used as the instrument of Western cultural and economic imperialism. The church, sometimes unwittingly, sometimes with full awareness of what was happening, has at times given legitimacy to governments and economic systems that exploited those unable to defend themselves from more technologically advanced cultures.⁵ Missionaries, sometimes deliberately, sometimes unconsciously, have been agents of cultural imperialism, believing that their culture as well as their religion was superior to the culture of those whom they converted. It seems to be a fact of human nature and culture that it is difficult for anyone, including missionaries, to realize the extent to which their worldview and theology are tied to and shaped by their culture.

There are many issues that should be considered in the formation of local theology and practice that are biblical, that address the perceived needs, and meet the real needs of the Dayaks of West Kalimantan. There are tremendous social and economic pressures bearing on the Dayak's culture, religion, and identity as a distinct people. My objective is to provide a foundation for refining and focusing the KGBI's strategy and methodology of evangelism in West Kalimantan, which ministry involves Canadian missionaries, Indonesian missionaries and church workers from Minahasa and other parts

⁵ I examined this issue in my M.Div. thesis, "Hunger in the Third World: An Ethical and Theological Analysis" (Acadia Divinity College, Wolfville, N.S., April 1980).

of Indonesia (each with a distinct cultural background), working alongside indigenous Dayak church workers who are working within their own essentially agrarian, animistic culture which is regulated by the norms, customs, and laws of the *adat* traditions.

Of particular concern are the instances where the church has given legitimacy to political or economic powers that are exploiting those who, for a variety of reasons, are not able to resist or defend themselves and their interests. Of even greater concern are the instances where the church has pacified those being exploited, or has diverted their attention from their critical political and economic situations by focusing them on purely spiritual matters. As will be seen below, Dayaks are in danger of losing their identity as a people with a distinct culture. They are being exploited and disenfranchised by tremendously powerful political powers and social pressures.⁶ The danger is that the church, in its concern for correct theology and an aversion to syncretism, is not taking these issues seriously and is not taking the part of those who are losing their land and cultural identity. A consequence is that those who are under such pressures look elsewhere than the church for assistance. They either reject Christianity, or compartmentalize their Christian faith and operate according to different belief systems in political, economic, and social matters.

I hope to establish that the traditional beliefs, religious practices, and social customs of the Dayaks are intimately connected with their subsistence, economy and ecology. The church in West Kalimantan has traditionally concerned itself primarily with doctrinal conflicts between Christianity and Dayak traditional beliefs and practices.

⁶ There are many similarities between the history of the First Nations people in North America and the current situation of the Dayaks: different concepts of land rights and ownership, the threat of cultural genocide, overwhelming social and economic forces that pay little concern to cultural issues, or to the economic and social concerns of the technologically inferior native people who are restricted by their traditional religious beliefs and practices in how they respond to external threats.

It has ignored issues of land rights, subsistence, and even cultural identity that are tightly tied to the traditional religion and practices that the church is trying so hard to change. In my role as a missionary I do not want to contribute unwittingly to the destruction of a culture. Rather I want to catalyze and facilitate the development of a theology and practice that will do full justice to the gospel of Jesus Christ as expressed among the Dayaks of West Kalimantan, Indonesia.

I am also responding to the growing number of voices in Asia calling for the freedom to engage in the formation of local expressions of theology and practice. These Asian theologians do not want to be constrained by theological expressions and practices that are as much an expression of a foreign Western culture as they are biblical.

I do not have the right perspective or answers to respond adequately to all of these issues because I am bound and limited by my own background, worldview, and socio-economic status. In this regard, I recognize how easy it is for a Westerner like me, working in an essentially aboriginal context, to appear somewhat patronizing. My role, through this thesis project, is to catalyze and facilitate discussion of these issues with people who may not yet be aware of the issues involved in the separation of faith and culture on the one hand, and the comprehensive nature of the gospel on the other hand that brings it to bear on social, economic, and cultural issues as well as purely spiritual matters. I hope that KGBI churches, and the Canadian churches that work in partnership with them, will not be subject to the criticism of having been insensitive to the culture, economy, and local conditions of the Dayaks.

These social, economic, and cultural issues need to be addressed as part of the overall goal of 'doing theology' in this local context in such a way that this theology

adequately expresses or speaks to all the real needs of these people. The primary goal of this thesis is to facilitate the formation of a theology and practice of Christianity that so thoroughly meet the real needs of these people that they will not need to resort to their old ways to fill in the functions that previously their traditional religion served. Such theology and practice should also so thoroughly meet their real needs that the church will be commended for standing with and building up a people who are socially and economically downtrodden in part because of the nature and restrictions of their traditional religion.

Rather ironically, direct involvement of an outsider, especially one having a position of power and influence, can backfire. There is a risk of misunderstanding motives. A missionary comes with relative wealth, power, and access to technology, and an apparent high degree of control over the events in his or her life. When such a missionary suggests that an economically underdeveloped, or socially marginalized people retain distinctive elements of their culture and work them into their theology, worship and everyday Christian life, they may mistake his or her motives. Such suggestions can backfire if the cultural features that the missionary suggests be retained are symbols of primitiveness to the local people. If I were to suggest that Dayak Christians should incorporate more of their distinctly Dayak cultural expressions into their forms of worship in Christian life, I, as a white Westerner, run the risk of being perceived as trying to thwart their efforts to catch up with the Western world, or even with other more economically advanced ethnic communities within Indonesia.⁷ They

⁷ Robert Schrieter's comments on the inculturation of forms of worship in Africa and Black American communities are applicable to Indonesia. "To be asked to rid African liturgy of its Western accoutrements, or to introduce gospel music into a middle-class, United States, black Episcopal or Roman Catholic church service has often met with resistance. The resistance often stemmed from a suspicion on

may associate some of the Western forms of worship or practices with ‘development’ or ‘modernization’ (such as white wedding gowns, pianos, and electronic organs) and associate indigenous expressions as being primitive. It is an issue to which one must be sensitive and which complicates the development of contextualized theology, worship, and practice of the Christian life.

The experience of the KGBI in West Kalimantan is that the Dayaks are highly receptive to the gospel. They far more readily become Christians than do their Muslim Malay neighbours, but just as easily as they become Christians they often return to their old beliefs in times of crises. The perpetual frustration of church leaders is that so many Christians either find it difficult to give up some of their animistic practices, or so easily revert back to them in times of crisis or stress after converting to Christianity. By examining certain aspects of Dayak *adat* and the underlying religious beliefs, I aim to demonstrate that Christianity, as presented and generally practiced in KGBI churches in West Kalimantan on the one hand, and traditional Dayak beliefs on the other hand, address different needs and questions. Christianity, presented in a Western, modernist model, addresses cosmic questions: origins, destiny, the meaning of life. It does not address the immediate issues of life (how to deal with problems encountered today, such as where to clear the forest for a swidden field, when to plant and harvest, how to deal

the part of the people that this was another trick of the powerful whites to take away their access to a better economic world by keeping them clearly black (i.e. inferior). Calling it contextualization or inculturation was perceived as simply a way of concealing the actual motives of the white leadership.” Robert J Shreiter, *Constructing Local Theologies*. (Maryknoll: Orbis Books, 1985), 27. My own personal experience was regarding neckties. During a coffee break in the West Kalimantan Area annual meetings, held under a tin roof within a few kilometers of the equator, I questioned why we had to wear Western neckties rather than Indonesian batik shirts or suits more appropriate to the climate. I was angrily accused of wanting to keep them dressed in primitive loincloths rather than permitting them to adopt what has come to symbolize progress and development to them.

with crop pests, how to be healed from sickness or injury, how to avoid accidents, when to get married.)⁸

The failure of Western theology to address satisfactorily the everyday issues of rural Dayaks results in widely accepted syncretism, or in reversion to the old ways in times of crisis. This tendency is exacerbated by missionaries who, like myself, find in Christianity the answer to the cosmic questions, but turn to science and technology for solutions to many daily problems, such as medicine for the healing of disease, and insecticides to eliminate the insects eating the crops. If Christianity is ever to find genuine expression in Dayak culture, it must recognize and provide means for dealing with the tangible, everyday felt needs of the people. If Christian faith and practice fail to address these perceived needs, then Dayak culture and worldview will remain fundamentally animistic.⁹

Some missiologists advocate that the way to bridge the gap between these two different sets of questions is for missionaries to think more like animists and less like post-Enlightenment Westerners. For instance, missiologist Paul Hiebert takes Western missionaries to task for what he terms “the flaw of the excluded middle.”¹⁰ He lays out a ‘secular-animist’ axis. At one pole is secularism: the belief that there are no spiritual

⁸ Van Rheezen, 58-62.

⁹ Tippett observes: “When a new religion neglects its therapeutic ministry in a communal community, that society will inevitably retain its shamanic configuration. Either religion and healing will become compartmentalized and religion will lose its function as integrator of society, or the configuration of animistic diagnosis and healing with its philosophical underpinnings will be incorporated into the new religion. This is another way in which Christianity has often become syncretistic- by failing to meet the basic felt needs of the society. These long-standing needs often arise from the environment or physical condition of the converts and continue after conversion, and Christianity is effective only as it meets the needs of its adherent. Neglect of these physical environmental and cultural needs forces the newly converted community to seek solutions elsewhere. When these solutions have pagan overtones, then Christianity becomes syncretistic.” Tippett *Christopaganism*, 25. (Note that the term ‘pagan’ is derived from *paganus* (Latin, ‘village’) and refers to religions of the Little Tradition.)

¹⁰ Paul G. Hiebert, “The Flaw of the Excluded Middle.” *Missiology: An International Review*, Vol. 10 No. 1 (January 1982): 35-47.

powers and life is controlled by natural laws. At the other pole is animism: the perception that all of life is controlled by spiritual powers, and human beings seek to manipulate these powers. In the middle is theism; the conception of God as sovereign over his world but allowing people the freedom to choose their allegiance in life, and for the most part not involved in the day-to-day issues of life. He and other missiologists¹¹ maintain that the only appropriate position, particularly for a missionary working in an animistic setting, is closer to the animist pole of the axis.

I am not comfortable with Hiebert's suggestion for two reasons. First, it ignores the discoveries of modern science. I realize that modern science has not provided us with all the answers and solutions to life's problems that Enlightenment thinkers anticipated, but I am reluctant to revert to interpreting unexplained events in terms of supernatural powers. I prefer to believe that natural, as yet undiscovered, causes lie behind most unexplainable events rather than quickly ascribing supernatural causes to events that are not yet otherwise explainable.

Second, I question the veracity of many reports that are recounted to illustrate the 'reality' of supernatural powers. All too often I have observed how credulous people are, particularly those with an animist background, willing to believe, indeed *wanting* to believe the most fantastic stories, such as the existence of a creature that is half human and half crocodile.¹² It has been my personal experience that it is far more likely that reports of supposed supernatural events are simply inaccurate or fabricated. After having lived and worked in a context where people relish reporting and listening to astounding tales of 'supernatural' events with little skepticism, I am reluctant to accept the

¹¹ for example, Gailyn Van Rheenen, Allan R. Tippett, and Donald R. Jacobs.

¹² Such credulity is not confined to animists, as the popularity of certain tabloids sold at Canadian supermarket checkouts testifies.

suggestion that it is the animists who have the more accurate perception of reality rather than Western (Modernist) Christians. A personal objective in undertaking the examination of this particular topic, and engaging in the theological reflection on it is to find a balance in my own theology and worldview between the credulous animistic and detached theist positions.

Methodology

To achieve these objectives I will use the following thesis structure. In Chapter Two I describe the geographic and historical setting of this ministry within the larger framework of the Republic of Indonesian. In Chapter Three I offer an examination of Dayak *adat* and its underlying animistic religious beliefs that provide the foundations for the Dayak worldview. Following a general description of the Dayak religion and worldview, in Chapter Four I examine some specific areas that are in conflict with Christianity. I analyze how Christian leaders, both Dayak and non-Dayak, respond to and deal with these areas of conflict as they work towards a biblically based Christian faith that is integrated with their culture. I close in Chapter Five by reflecting on the implications of the differences between traditional Dayak beliefs and Christianity. Further, I point out some areas of concern that should be emphasized in teaching and discipleship in Dayak congregations, and in the formation of Christian theology in the context of Dayak culture.

By way of method, I note here at the beginning that the general description of Dayak beliefs and practices, the discussion of the areas where they conflict with Christianity, and how the local church leaders have dealt with these issues, will be based on several different sources of information. First and foremost is personal observation. I

have served as a missionary with Canadian Baptist Ministries in Indonesia from 1986 to 1997.¹³ My ministry was in leadership training, discipleship, and church planting among the mainly Dayak KGBI churches of West Kalimantan. My assignment was to work with the pastors, lay leaders, new seminary graduates, and seminary students on field assignments. For several years I traveled extensively to villages, usually accompanied by an Indonesian missionary colleague or a local evangelist. Some of the villages were accessible only by boat, some by motorcycle, others only on foot. Because of the remoteness of the villages and the difficulties and dangers of travel, after I taught an extension course with lay-people and pastors, or conducted a Bible study or service in the church, I often spent the night in the village. These extended visits gave me plenty of opportunity to observe, ask questions, and learn. I recorded many of my experiences in journal form.

For several years my wife and I regularly hosted meetings with the area pastors and church leaders in our home in Tayan, 85 kilometers by air due east of Pontianak, or 285 kilometers by road. I always provided a forum at these meetings for the pastors and lay leaders to discuss the challenges they faced in their ministry. At these meetings the points of difference between Christianity and the traditional religion and customs of the Dayak people were always a topic of discussion. It was through these discussions that I first became aware of the conflict and tension between *adat* and Christian faith. The frequency and intensity of the discussions alerted me to the importance and urgency of the issues, and provided a base of experience and information.

Throughout my time in Indonesia I taught at the *Seminari Theologia Kalimantan* (STK), the KGBI seminary in Pontianak, the provincial capital of West Kalimantan.

¹³ During this time I had two periods of home assignment for a total of 21 months.

During the first years I was in West Kalimantan I lived six hours travel from the city and taught only part-time at the seminary. From 1994 to 1997 I lived in Pontianak and was involved full-time at the seminary. While I taught at the seminary I was involved on a daily basis with students, all of whom were actively involved in church-related ministry as part of their curriculum. Of the many subjects I was asked to teach during my time on staff at STK I particularly enjoyed teaching Worship and Liturgy, Christian Ethics, and Animism. These subjects relate directly to the focus of this thesis. I have interacted regularly with my Indonesian seminary colleagues, most of whom are from other parts of Indonesia and are working cross-culturally. All the seminary staff are actively involved in church ministries outside of the seminary and so continually face the issue of the tension between Christian faith and Dayak traditions and beliefs. They too constantly compare and contrast their culture and understanding of the gospel with the people of the churches in West Kalimantan, the majority of whom are Dayaks. The differences that they observed were frequent topics of discussion and have provided material for this examination.

I also draw on published anthropological studies of the Dayaks. Anthropologists and other researchers have largely overlooked the Dayaks of the small area of West Kalimantan where the KGBI works, perhaps because they look for more isolated and pristine cultures to study.¹⁴ There is, however, growing interest within Indonesia, primarily on the part of the Dayaks themselves, to study and record the Dayak sub-cultures that are in danger of extinction or at least radical change in the near future. The Institute of Dayakology Research and Development in Pontianak is facilitating and

¹⁴ Fridolin Ukur, "Kebudayaan Dayak" in *Kalimantan Review*, Tahun I Nomor 02 (Juli-Desember, 1992): 3.

promoting the study of Dayak cultures. The majority of the published Indonesian language sources that I used I obtained through this institute. I have also drawn on anthropological studies of Dayaks in other parts of Kalimantan with the recognition that there are differences in the details of the culture and beliefs, but enough essential similarities to warrant inclusion. The literary research for this thesis also draws on literature on neighbouring people, including the Iban Dayaks in the Malaysian states of Sarawak and Sabah, and the small nation of Brunei Darussalam on the same island. The Iban share a common culture and roots with the Indonesia Dayaks but are isolated by national boundaries imposed first by the colonial powers of England and Holland, and later consolidated by the post-colonial nations of Indonesia and Malaysia. There are more ethnographic works available on the Iban of Malaysia than on the Dayaks of Indonesia perhaps because such studies were better promoted and supported first by the British and then by the Malaysian government, which chose to remain a member of the British Commonwealth.

I have also considered literature and oral sources relating to the ethnic Chinese who make up a significant portion of the population of West Kalimantan. The outward expression of their sub-culture and beliefs are notably different from those of the Dayaks, but there is a significant amount of overlap and similarity in the animistic foundations of many of their beliefs. These sources made for interesting reference and comparison.

There is also some literature available on the Islamic Malay people of West Kalimantan, who are second in population to Dayaks. The Malay people in West Kalimantan are overtly Islamic in name and culture, but, having lived side-by-side with the Dayaks for many generations, share many features of the Dayak worldview. It is

interesting to note the extent of the similarities. If one looks beyond the overt performance of Islamic religious duties, the similarities with the non-Muslim Dayaks are striking. These similarities illustrate how deeply and fundamentally the worldview shared by these two cultures underlies and shapes their practice of Islam in the case of the Malay, and Christianity in the case of Dayaks who call themselves Christians.

I have focused particularly on the aspects of culture and religion that are points of conflict with Christianity as perceived and understood by Dayak church leaders (ministers, evangelists, lay-leaders, seminary students), and have gathered their specific concerns and questions through several means. As indicated above, I issued a written questionnaire among students, faculty, and pastors, in which I asked them to report on the areas in their ministries where they have encountered conflicts between Christianity and the traditional religion. I have incorporated the results of these questionnaires into the description of the Dayak worldview and the discussion of the areas of conflict with Christianity.¹⁵

Teaching a seminary course in Animism to Christian students who almost all have a background of animism was as much a learning experience for me as it was for the students. In this course I gave them the outlines and main concepts of animism and they filled in the details of the actual forms and practices in West Kalimantan and other regions of Indonesia represented in the student body. They provided me with a wealth of material based on their personal experiences and backgrounds and the oral traditions they already knew or could access through research. I designed the course assignments to make them aware of and able to identify the animistic elements of their background and

¹⁵ See Appendix A for a translation of the questionnaire.

thinking. I have used material from these assignments to fill in some of the details of the descriptions of the beliefs and practices of the animist Dayaks.

As well, I interviewed older church leaders who have had extensive experience dealing with the conflicts between the Christian faith and the culture and traditions of their fellow villagers, church members, friends, and families. In some cases I directed my questioning to cover issues that came up in the questionnaire responses. I used the interviews to clarify and explore some issues in more depth. In these unstructured interviews I did not ask for detailed descriptions of all aspects of the culture and religion, but rather asked them to describe specifically those traditional beliefs and practices that conflict with Christianity, and how they as church leaders have dealt with these conflicts.

Scope and Limitations

This study is limited primarily to KGBI churches and areas of ministry. Some questionnaire and interview data were gathered from outside the KGBI denomination, but from within the same geographical region. Because this study is limited primarily to KGBI churches it is confined to a small geographical region (See Appendix B for map), but encompasses at least five different Dayak language groups or sub-cultures.¹⁶ There are approximately 120 KGBI churches or places of ministry in West Kalimantan. They are mostly rural, and lie within a 100-kilometer radius inland from Pontianak.

Those who responded to the questionnaire, or were interviewed, were Christians, for the most part pastors, evangelists, or seminary students who have been actively engaged with the issues under discussion. Their responses and descriptions of the traditional beliefs and practices of the Dayaks are biased by their Christian faith and by

¹⁶ Kanayatn, Tebang, Aye-aye, Desa, and Ribun.

their experiences in dealing with the differences. Furthermore, some of them, particularly a few of those over fifty years old, were converted to Christianity and mentored by Western missionaries, and have worked closely with Indonesian missionaries from North Sulawesi for over twenty years. The literary sources are secular and provide a balance to the Christian bias in the reporting. It must be acknowledged and noted that the description of Dayak religious traditions and worldview in the following chapter is not neutral but is researched and reported from a Christian perspective. This is not meant to be, nor should it be treated as, an ostensibly neutral ethnographic report.

I need to say a word about some factors that qualify my role in this process. As I presume to offer direction to the Dayak church I am aware that I am a white, male, Western missionary who has at his disposal the wealth and strength of a Canadian mission board. I have access to technology, and an understanding of it, or at least ways and means of learning how to use it. I have ready access to medical care because I can pay for travel to the local mission hospital or even fly to Singapore or home to Canada if I need extensive care. I have certain political immunity. I am more likely to be deported to my own safe home in Canada rather than be thrown in prison with few rights if I speak out against the political, economic, or military powers. As a mortal human there are vast realms of life that are beyond my control, but I have relatively far more control over my life than do the Dayaks among whom I have lived and worked. These powers and protections that I have influence how I think theologically, and how I evaluate Dayak beliefs and practices.

Another important issue that must be faced before undertaking a study of this nature is that of who has the final word in the theology and practice of the church. Since

the 1970s, there has been a much greater awareness and willingness to acknowledge that Western theology is tightly bound to Western culture. With the rise of religious pluralism in the West is the collateral opinion that Western culture might not be superior to other cultures, an attitude that is sometimes called 'Orientalism'.¹⁷ There is less arrogance and more awareness of the failings of Western culture. There is growing dissatisfaction in the West with traditional Christian theology and increasing numbers of people are seeking different forms or expressions of spirituality. I endeavor in this study, I hope with some degree of success, to avoid being paternalistic and ethnocentric.

Paternalism and ethnocentricity pose significant obstacles to the process of the accommodation of the gospel to local cultures. Traditionally this has been done only under the watchful eye of the Western missionary. Often it was the Western missionary who provided the impetus for adaptation of Christian theology and practice to local culture or who benevolently supervised the process.¹⁸ Control of the process remained with the missionary. It has been the Western missionary, or those trained by the missionary, who have determined the limits or extent to which Christian theology and forms of worship and life reflect the culture and worldview of the local situation. I here am undertaking to examine the theology and practice of the church in West Kalimantan in the context of the animistic background of the majority of the church members. I can only do this in the light of my own theology, culture, and worldview. I realize that I am opening myself to charges of benevolent paternalism simply by undertaking this study. Nevertheless I carry on, because I believe that these matters are reasonably covered. I

¹⁷ Edward Said is best known for initially raising this strategic question in his celebrated text *Orientalism* (New York: Pantheon, 1978).

¹⁸ David J. Bosch *Transforming Mission: Paradigm Shifts in Theology of Mission*. (Maryknoll: Orbis Books, 1991), 453.

undertake and offer this study to the church in West Kalimantan in the same spirit that I have engaged in ministry. I went to Indonesia as a servant of the KGBI, at their invitation, to work in partnership with their leadership, to be assigned to ministries and tasks that they deemed to have priority, and for which I was equipped. In this study I do not presume to tell the church what its theology, strategies, or policies should be. I undertake this from the viewpoint of an outsider to the culture (which I will always be no matter how long I might have lived in Indonesia.) From this viewpoint I can bring things together for comparison and analysis that my Indonesian colleagues perhaps would not think to bring together from their vantage points within the culture.

Further, I do not presume to lay out a theology for the church that is emerging within the animistic culture of West Kalimantan. They must become the agents who establish biblically based theology, faith, and practice in West Kalimantan. I hope to contribute to the discussion through this study, and thus facilitate and catalyze a process that must be owned essentially by the Dayaks of West Kalimantan, and the Indonesian missionaries, pastors, and church workers who also make up the church. What I will attempt is to lay out some of the elements that, in my judgement, should be considered in working out a contextualized theology. From my perspective as an outsider I can suggest areas that need to be looked at, or worked on, that might not readily occur to those immersed in the culture. I would overstep my role and become paternalistic should I attempt to formulate a contextualized theology. This therefore limits my role to articulating elements that they themselves may or may not incorporate into their contextualized theology as they see fit.

In the same spirit, it would be helpful and revealing for Canadian churches to open themselves up to examination by a fellow worker from West Kalimantan. We could learn much together this way.

In gathering materials through surveys, interviews, and class assignments I have been made uncomfortably aware of how much I still do not understand, even after all this time living, working, and studying in Indonesia. Putting all of this down on paper exposes where I have misunderstood or have not dug deeply enough. I ask for a degree of tolerance and patient correction from my Indonesian colleagues who have already provided me with many rich experiences and learning opportunities, but to whom it will be apparent that I haven't fully comprehended everything they have tried to teach me.

I turn now to a brief description of some relevant historical and background materials that I trust will give the reader an idea of the Dayaks' place in the larger Indonesian and Asian society which help shape the Dayaks worldview, beliefs, and behaviors.

Chapter Two: Description of the Setting and the Ministry

Geographic Setting

Indonesia is located in Southeast Asia and constitutes most of the Malay Archipelago. It consists of over 13,600 islands with most of the population living on about 600 of these islands. It stretches 5,100 km from East to West, and straddles the equator. With a population of 201.5 million (1995) Indonesia is the fourth largest country in the world by population after China, India, and the United States. The islands of Java and Madura, where three-fifths of the population live, are among the most densely populated places in the world. Indonesia comprises the largest population of Moslems in the world, with 85-90% of the population professing allegiance to Islam.

There are over 200 active volcanoes on the chain of islands stretching from Sumatra in the west to Irian Jaya in the east, and north through Sulawesi (and on up through the Philippines). The soil of the volcanic islands is very fertile and is able to support intensive agriculture and a high population density. The island of Kalimantan, the world's third largest island after Greenland and New Guinea, is located in the center of the country.¹ The equator passes through the very center of the island. Kalimantan is at the center of the tectonic plate on which most of western Indonesia sits. Because it is far from the volcanic edges of the plate there are no active volcanoes on Kalimantan that replenish nutrients in the soil washed away by the heavy tropical rains. It is covered with dense tropical rain forest and appears lush and fertile, but the soil is actually very poor, usually highly acidic, and cannot support intensive agriculture. The population density

¹ In Malaysia, which shares some of the island with Indonesia, and in most of the English-speaking world, Kalimantan is known as Borneo.

on Kalimantan is very low compared to the other major islands of Indonesia because the infertile land cannot support a large population. These physical features of Kalimantan have partly shaped the worldview and religion of the Dayaks who for millennia have subsisted in harmony with nature. When we discuss the contextualization of the gospel among the Dayaks of Kalimantan we must start with the infertile soil and the climate and the way this has shaped their worldview, and their expectations as to what role religion has in their lives.

The island of Kalimantan is divided among the Malaysian states of Sarawak and Sabah and the small country of Brunei Darussalam in the north and the four Indonesian provinces of East, Central, South, and West Kalimantan to the south. Although the island is divided into separate political spheres there are fundamental similarities in culture that pre-date the political boundaries that were imposed by colonial powers.

The physical features of the region—the separation of the islands by the sea, the rugged mountainous terrain of most of the larger islands, and the dense tropical rain forest and jungles such as those found on Kalimantan—have contributed to the development of many language groups and distinct cultures. Estimates of the number of languages spoken in Indonesia range from 100 to 450, depending on the systems of classification and distinctions between languages and dialects.² The region is united under one government primarily because it was the region controlled at one time by Holland. It has been a challenge for Indonesia to forge a united state out of such a

² At a pastors fellowship meeting in my home in Tayan, with about 25 people present, which included several people from other parts of Indonesia, I conducted an informal survey of how many languages we could speak. Including the *Bahasa Indonesia* we were using, and the English my family spoke, we could speak 16 different languages.

diversity of language and culture.³ The island of Kalimantan is home to a vast diversity of languages and sub-cultures even among the people that have come to be known as Dayaks. *Bahasa Indonesia*, or Indonesian, is the national language and is most widely spoken, usually as a second language for most Indonesians. It is similar to Malay, which for centuries has been the lingua franca of the region. *Bahasa Indonesia* is the language used in the seminary at which I taught, and of the research for this project.

Pontianak, the provincial capital, is the largest city in West Kalimantan. It is located on the West coast of the island, directly on the equator. It is on the northernmost estuary of the Kapuas delta (The 'Little Kapuas') and accessible to ocean-going ships. Much of the lumber, rubber, and other produce of West Kalimantan passes through the Pontianak port. The population of Pontianak is about 500,000. The city is reported to have the highest proportion of ethnic Chinese in Indonesia. Dayaks constitute a small minority within the city; the majority of Dayaks dwell in rural villages. The very name of this city that was first settled in 1771 illustrates the depths of the animistic roots of the people of Kalimantan. "Ponti" is the name of an evil spirit. "Anak" means child. "Pontianak" is the name of a spirit, or a type of spirit, that was believed to have obstructed the passage of some men who were traveling up the river to find a place to settle.⁴

Historical Background

Indonesia has a long history and the tradition and religious beliefs that Christianity encounters have deep roots in the culture and worldview of the people. One

³ The Indonesian national motto is "*Bhineka Tunggal Ika*"- Unity in Diversity.

⁴ J. U. Lontaan, *Sejarah Hukum Adat dan Adat Istiadat Kalimantan Barat. (The History of Traditional Law and Customs of West Kalimantan.)* (Jakarta: Pemda Tingkat I KalBar, 1975), 230-235.

of the oldest human fossils, the Java Man (*Pithecanthropus erectus*), was found on the island of Java. Archeological sites in the Malaysian portion of the island of Kalimantan have yielded human remains and artifacts estimated to be 50,000 years old. The archipelago was populated by several waves of people who moved across from the Asian mainland, each time pushing the earlier inhabitants further to the east. Some wet rice cultivation (*sawah*) has been practiced for 2,000 years. Some regions, including most of Kalimantan, still practice slash-and-burn, or swidden (*ladang*) cultivation in much the same manner as their ancestors did before them for thousands of years, although now they use steel mattocks, machetes and chain saws.

An Indonesian proverb states that religion comes from the sea, tradition (*adat*) from the mountains. Trade with other parts of Asia dates back as far as the first and second centuries CE. There is evidence of trade with China in the third and fifth centuries. With the earliest trade from across the seas came religion, setting the pattern of interaction between religion and tradition for the centuries to follow. Notably, the earliest religious influences were from India: there is evidence in Java from rock inscriptions of the fifth or sixth century of the practice of Indian religious rites.

By the seventh century there were several maritime states in the region. The greatest of this period was the Sri Vijaya Empire of Sumatra, a Mahayana Buddhist kingdom. For about 500 years, beginning from the seventh century, this kingdom controlled trade with China. Through the centuries there have been several Hindu-Buddhist kingdoms centered in Java.⁵

⁵ For an account of Sri Vijaya and other ancient but formative pre-colonial Southeast Asian empires, see Nicholas Tarling, *The Cambridge History of Southeast Asia*, Vol. 1, Chap. 3-5 (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1992).

By the twelfth and thirteenth centuries Islamic traders passing through the Straits of Malacca, initially from south India, had introduced Islam to Indonesia. The conversion to Islam of rulers and major merchants catalyzed the conversion of the general populace in Sumatra, Java, and Sulawesi. Islamic kingdoms displaced the former Hindu-Buddhist powers. There were areas of Kalimantan, particularly the southern region close to Java and Madura, that eventually became strongly Muslim but the vast majority of the population of Kalimantan, the Dayaks, continued to follow their animist traditions and resisted conversion to Islam.

In 1511 the Portuguese captured Malacca. Their presence in the area changed the trade routes and alliances among the Islamic states in the region. Roman Catholic missionaries accompanied the Portuguese traders, and the forts became the centers of operation for the missionaries. Some lesser rulers who opposed the Islamic Sultan of Ternate, Halmahera, asked for help from the Portuguese, and in return for military assistance were baptized into the Roman Catholic Church. By 1522 the Portuguese had extended their influence as far as Maluku, Ternate, and Ambon. Roman Catholicism waxed and waned with Portuguese occupation and strength. Portugal maintained its control in Flores and Timor until Indonesia invaded and annexed East Timor in 1975. The majority of the population in these areas of Portuguese influence is Roman Catholic.

The Dutch East India Company (Vereenighde Oost-Indische Compagnie) was founded in 1602 and competed with the English and the Portuguese for trade in the area. The Dutch established their presence and influence by force and through alliances with various state powers. The VOC went into bankruptcy and was dissolved in 1799, at which time the Dutch government took over its possessions. The Dutch administration

introduced a so-called 'Culture System' in 1830, under which peasants were required to devote a designated percentage of their land to the cultivation of crops for export. This system was very profitable for the Dutch, but left many parts of the country in poverty and subject to several widespread famines. In the late nineteenth century exports to Europe of oil, tin, and rubber exceeded agricultural produce. The Dutch extended and consolidated their control over the areas that produced these raw materials. They tightly controlled the movement of missionaries, especially in regions where the missionaries spoke out against the exploitative policies of the administration. Peace and stability in a region made trade and commerce more profitable, so missionaries were restricted from some Islamic areas by the administration lest they destabilize the regions by provoking hostility from Moslems when any Moslems converted to Christianity. The result was that there were few pastors and little in-depth Christian teaching or discipleship. There was no training for national pastors. Pastors were said to be 'sacrament tradesmen' (*tukang sakramen*). Coming as it did on top of the Hindu-Buddhist, Islamic, and animist backgrounds of the people, such restrictions led to serious misunderstanding of the nature of Christianity in general and the nature of the sacraments in particular.⁶

During World War II Japan invaded and occupied Indonesia. The Japanese military commanders trained local militias to support them in their fight against the Allies. Within days of Japan's defeat Indonesia declared its independence on August 17, 1945. The Japanese-trained militias became the basis of the new republic's army that resisted Holland's attempts to regain control of the region. The first president, Sukarno, and his key supporters, although Muslim, established a secular, not an Islamic state.

⁶ T. Van Den End, *Harta dalam Bejana: Sejarah Gereja Ringkas. (Treasure in a Clay Vessel: A Concise History of the Church.)* (Jakarta: BPK Gunung Mulia, 1986), 215 ff.

The second president, Suharto (1996-1998), was also Muslim, but also resisted attempts by radical groups to establish an Islamic state. In 1998, President Suharto was forced by violent political protests and riots to relinquish the presidency to the vice-president, Yusuf Habibi. At the time of the protests and riots a prominent spokesman for the opposition was Amin Rais, leader of a powerful conservative Islamic party. The goal of this organization is to reestablish Indonesia as an Islamic state. Yusuf Habibi is also a Moslem, but desires to preserve the *Pancasila* principles. (See page 42 for an explanation of *Pancasila*.) With Amin Rais as one of only a very few alternatives for the presidency, most Christians supported Habibi who would at least in principle defend the rights of other religions. The pressure from the majority conservative Moslem population, and the Moslem extremists who desire an Islamic state is very much in the consciousness of pastors and evangelists working among the animistic Dayaks of Kalimantan.

The Dayaks

The origin of the Dayaks, who comprised 41% of the population of Kalimantan in 1985, is difficult to trace.⁷ The terrain and the tropical climate quickly obliterate any artifacts. Estimates of their first arrival in Kalimantan range from 4000 to 1,500 BCE during which time there appear to have been several waves of immigrations of “proto-Melayu” ancestors of Dayaks.⁸ There were two likely directions of migrations from the Asian mainland. One was through Indochina, through the Malaysian peninsula and then across to Kalimantan. Another direction of migration was through Taiwan and the

⁷ Stepanus Djuweng. *Manusia Dayak Orang Kecil yang Terperangkap Modernisasi*. (Pontianak: Institute of Dayakology Research and Development, 1996), 3.

⁸ Ukur *Kebudayaan*, 3-12.

Philippines to Kalimantan. There were times, likely during the ice ages, when there were land bridges between what are now the Malaysian peninsula and Kalimantan.

The term “Dayak”⁹ encompasses over 450 sub-cultures in Kalimantan.¹⁰ The term is not one that the people used themselves, but was introduced by outsiders, probably first by English merchants and colonialists. Before the advent of outside powers and their intrusion into Kalimantan, Dayaks identified themselves according to what are now referred to as sub-cultures. They still maintain their cultural differences and languages, but themselves recognize the larger category of “Dayak.”¹¹ Anthropologists disagree on the categories by which to classify Dayaks, or how to differentiate them precisely from other ethnic or culture groups.¹² Nevertheless, Dayaks now know who Dayaks are, and who are not Dayaks. These original inhabitants of Kalimantan were well settled centuries before foreign powers divided the island into different nations.¹³

In Malaysia and Brunei there have been more anthropological studies done on the people who have become known as the Iban. They have become somewhat differentiated

⁹ Alternative spellings include “Dyak,” “Daya,” and “Daya’.” “Dayak” is now the standard spelling.

¹⁰ The classification ‘Dayak’ corresponds to ‘Indian’ as applied to the aboriginal people of North America, who do not see themselves as one people. They considered themselves to be many people divided along lines that Europeans called tribal. Most classifications of Dayak sub-cultures have been done by Western anthropologists who do not agree on the basis of the distinctions or classification. (Djuweng, 4.)

¹¹ M.P. Lambut “Perlukah Mendayakkan Orang Dayak?” *Kalimantan Review*, (Institute of Dayakology Research and Development, Pontianak. Tahun I Nomor 02 Juli-Desember, 1992): 25.

¹² Paul Nyerom Kanoh, “Mencari Jejak Manusia Dayak” (In Search of Dayak Footprints). (Unpublished paper, 1991), 8.

¹³ In the past ten to fifteen years Dayaks have given attention to their cultural distinctives and are creating new categories or artificial ethnic groupings that reflect more their modern situation than historical roots. For instance, the name ‘Kendayan’ (or ‘Kanayatn’), which now is assumed by Dayaks in a large area north of Pontianak, and who are the focus of an increasing number of Dayak ethnographers, was originally only applied to a very small sub-culture. For some undetermined reason this sub-culture identity has been assumed by Dayaks living far beyond the original Kanayatn region. Furthermore they have adopted ‘traditional’ costumes that were unknown among Dayaks until the modern generation, and which resemble the dress of larger Indonesian sub-cultures.

from the Dayaks of Indonesia, but this is largely a consequence of the national boundaries having been drawn where they were by the colonial powers and those who consolidated the region into the nation states of Malaysia, Brunei, and Indonesia. The Malaysian Iban have a long history of British influence quite different from the influence the Dutch exerted on the Dayaks on their side of the border. The Iban are called 'Sea Dayaks' because they did not get pushed interior, as did other Dayaks, by the Malay people who migrated to Kalimantan long after the Dayaks first arrived.

Dayaks are distinguished from the *Melayu*, or Malay, who primarily reside in the coastal areas while the Dayaks live inland. The *Melayu* are differentiated from Dayaks primarily by their Islamic faith, which is a significant component of their ethnic identity. One account of *Melayu* origins suggests that they migrated to Kalimantan in the twelfth century BCE and were already converted to Islam before they migrated. Another account suggests that they have common roots in Kalimantan, but split into two societies as the result of a fight between two brothers, Sultans, one of whom had converted to Islam and whose subjects also converted in submission or obedience to him. Whatever the actual origins, Dayaks seldom convert to Islam because of the issue of cultural identity. Islam is considered to be the religion of the *Melayu*. Historically, when a Dayak becomes a Muslim he is referred to as a *Melayu*, speaks the Malay dialect¹⁴ and no longer refers to himself as a Dayak. The issue of cultural identity alone is a significant deterrent that keeps most Dayaks from converting to Islam.¹⁵

¹⁴ Ukur *Kebudayaan*, 4.

¹⁵ P.Yeremias. *Sebuah Permunungan Dan Refleksi Kerusuhan Etnis di Kab. Pontianak. (A Consideration and Reflection on the Ethnic Disturbances in the Pontianak Kabupaten.)* (Paroki Mempawah Hulu, Menjalin: BATAKKI, Special edition, Januari-Maret 1997), 15. Conversion to Islam also means having to give up eating pork and dog meat, both of which are significant features of Dayak culture.

Other migrants to Kalimantan make up a significant ethnic Chinese population. Over the centuries there has been a degree of intermarriage among these sub-cultures such that sometimes it is hard to differentiate on the basis of physical characteristics. Nevertheless there remain distinct differences in culture, traditions, and religious beliefs and practices among these communities.

Traditionally Dayak women have a role in religious functions and leadership. Women in the Christian ministry are generally well accepted and respected by their congregations in this culture. Marriages are usually monogamous. In the relatively rare cases of polygamy the first wife has priority. Genealogically Dayak society is parental, neither patrilineal nor matrilineal.¹⁶ Often Dayaks have only one name. In cases where they have more than one name there is not a family name, but all the names are names given at birth, or assumed after a significant life passage.

One characteristic of Dayak culture (but not unique) is the longhouse community in which any numbers of extended families build their own portions of the building. There are still longhouses that are inhabited and actively maintained but the number is decreasing. Most modern Dayaks prefer to construct either separate dwellings, or a modified version of the traditional longhouse using more modern construction materials such as cement and tin roofing. Since detailed descriptions of traditional longhouses are available elsewhere a description is not included here.¹⁷ It is important to note however that Dayak customs, religious beliefs, and laws evolved in the context of the communal

¹⁶ Ukur *Kebudayaan*, 9.

¹⁷ See Tom Harrisson, *World Within: A Borneo Story* (Singapore: Oxford University Press, 1959, 1986) for an excellent description of longhouse culture in a region and time before there was extensive contact with the outside world. A shorter account in *Bahasa Indonesia* can be found in "Rumah Panjang Sebagai Pusat Kebudayaan Dayak" in Paulus Florus, et. al. editors. *Kebudayaan Dayak: Aktualisasi dan Transformasi (Dayak Culture: Actualization and Transformation)* (Pontianak: Institute of Dayakology Research and Development & Jakarta: Gramedia Publishing, 1994). Also the No. 3 Tahun II (Januari-April, 1993) issue of *Kalimantan Review* is devoted to the significance of the Dayak longhouse.

life of the longhouse. Any examination of this culture must take this background into account, for the centuries of life in the communal longhouse comprise an important component of the Dayak worldview.

The practice of slash-and-burn agriculture, which has shaped the nature of their connection to the land, is not unique to the Dayaks, but it has become for them an integral element of their ethnic identity. Their culture, religion, and laws have evolved to guide them through the agrarian cycles. As noted above, the soil of Kalimantan is generally infertile, and low in humus because the humus decomposes rapidly in the tropical heat and rain. For uncounted centuries the Dayaks have felled small areas of the rain forest, allowed it to dry, burned the trees, and then planted dry-field rice in among the remains of the burned logs. A clearing or *ladang* can be planted only two or three seasons before it has lost all its fertility to the rains and must be left to return to forest until, fifteen to twenty years later, it can again be cleared and planted for a few seasons. Dayak cultural identity, and religious beliefs and practices, are in large measure a result of their practice of swidden agriculture on infertile soil for the past several millennia. Perhaps more than any other factor this aspect of their culture has shaped their worldview, and their perception and response to Christianity that they have encountered only in this present century.

Closely related to and intertwined with life in the longhouse and the swidden *ladang* is the traditional practice of headhunting. Headhunting has not been openly practiced in recent times, but this too is a traditional part of the culture and makeup of the Dayak identity. It is the Dayaks who were the renowned and feared “wild men of Borneo.” The spiritual aspects of headhunting are preserved in modern times in other

forms and also constitute the background out of which the Dayaks perceive and respond to the gospel.¹⁸

While there are exceptions, for the most part the Dayaks tend to occupy the lowest socio-economic levels. The historic reasons for this are complex and beyond the scope of this consideration, but very likely have something to do with the nature of life in the rainforest. The Dayaks have developed a detailed system of dealing with the vagaries of an agrarian life in an environment that can be generous and abundant, but also harsh and deadly. Their culture enables them to survive in the rain forests, but it has not equipped them well for contact with more aggressive, more technologically advanced people of different cultures and worldviews. The Dayaks (again with some exceptions) tend to be very long-suffering and passive: characteristics that may have adapted them suitably to their *ladang* subsistence, but which make them vulnerable to those who are more aggressive and less patient. Further, their *ladang* agriculture on the nutrient-poor soil worked well with low population densities, but is not sustainable under higher population loads. These characteristics, combined with historical circumstances, have left the Dayaks at the bottom of the socio-economic ladder.

Some have moved to the larger towns and cities, but most Dayaks still reside in small inland rural villages. The mainstay of their subsistence is still dry-field rice cultivation in the *ladang* with some wet-field rice cultivation (*sawah*). Most village residents also keep vegetable gardens for their own use. Tapping latex sap from rubber trees is the most common source of cash income. (For the most part non-Dayaks control

¹⁸ During the ethnic disturbances of January and February 1997 in West Kalimantan in which the Dayaks attacked Madurese migrants, most of the Madurese who were killed were beheaded. There were many reports of cannibalism. That after about two generations since headhunting was officially stopped, it reappeared so dramatically and forcefully illustrates how deeply ingrained is the spiritual significance of the headhunting practice in the Dayak identity and worldview.

the buying, transporting, and selling of the rubber.) In some regions there is some small-scale lumbering. There is a small market for rattan and other forest products. There is a wide variety of fruit available, but because fresh produce is usually grown far from the city markets the produce does not have much cash value for the people of the villages.

Dayaks tend to have poorer educational opportunities than others in Kalimantan. Most villages are within walking distance of state elementary schools but junior and senior high schools are located only in the larger centers. Once a child has completed grade six, he or she either drops out of school, or often must leave home and find residence with a relative, or do housework for a family in exchange for room and board, to be able to continue schooling. The quality of education they receive in the village schools is generally very poor. School libraries are almost non-existent, and textbooks and teaching supplies are rare. Schoolteachers are poorly paid and must have other work to supplement their income, so they are often not in their classrooms. (Because teachers are often absent from the classroom students often pay for private tutoring from these same teachers.)

Dayak culture has been put under tremendous pressure during the past three or four decades. The pressure to change is so great that they are in danger of losing their cultural identity. Some of the most significant pressures are hitting them right at the essence of their cultural identity- *ladang* agriculture.

Population pressure is one of the most significant threats to the way of life and identity of the Dayaks. Besides the natural increase in population there is additional increase from migration, both incidental and through the government-sponsored transmigration programs. The transmigration programs are designed to deal with the

over-population of Java, Madura, and Bali by moving people to less densely populated regions of the country, such as Kalimantan, Sulawesi, and Irian Jaya. Transmigrants are given residential land and houses, land for farming, and tools, seed, and fertilizer to get them started in a new life. Often the land that is assigned to the transmigrants in Kalimantan is land that the Dayaks have used for generations in their cycles of slash-and-burn. The Dayak traditional concept of land ownership is different from that enshrined in the constitution and laws of the modern Indonesian state. Traditionally they have defined land rights and usage very clearly, but not in the same way that the state does. Because they do not hold registration certificates on the land the state feels free to appropriate it for the transmigration projects. This forcible appropriation of traditional lands in itself is a threat to Dayak identity and culture in that it does not acknowledge their system of land ownership and usage that is an integral part of their culture.¹⁹ Furthermore, it reduces the amount of land available to them for their shifting agriculture and threatens their subsistence. Land is cleared and re-used on shorter cycles and used before it has time to regenerate fully. Crop yields are reduced and the land is degraded more rapidly. Also, the land is not always well suited to the types of agriculture the transmigrants are instructed to practice and their land is quickly degraded also.

The majority of transmigrants who move to Kalimantan from more densely populated regions of Indonesia are Moslems. This government-sponsored influx of Moslems is changing the demographics to the point where Moslems are now in the majority in some regions and can influence government policies, grants, and subsidies in their favor to the disadvantage of the non-Moslem Dayaks.

¹⁹ Vincentius Julipin. "Tanah dari segi Adat, Religio Magis, dan Ekonomi di Kalimantan Barat," in *Manusia Dayak Orang Kecil yang terperangkap modernisasi*, Stepanus Djuweng, editor. (Pontianak: Institute of Dayakology Research and Development, 1996), 88-94

Many Dayak farmers have shifted from swidden subsistence agriculture to the cultivation of cash crops, such as rubber, and white pepper. But commodity prices are controlled by powerful monopolies, most of which are owned by members of former President Suharto's family or friends. The producers are at the mercy of these monopolies and must accept whatever price is offered.

At the same time, and with catastrophic results, vast amounts of land have been surrendered to logging companies and plantations (palm oil and fast-growing softwood trees for pulp and paper) on the same grounds that the Dayaks do not hold certificates for the land that they understood to be theirs. There is little they can do to protect their interests against the logging companies and plantations. The Indonesian army controls most of the logging concessions as a source of its funding, and former President Suharto's family or friends (or whoever controls the polity) own the palm oil plantations. Logging as practiced in Indonesia degrades the land brutally compared to the limited use from *ladang* agriculture. Logging roads bulldozed through the forest dam up streams and drown out areas of forest. Water running over the roads and worked areas muddies what were clear streams. Rainwater is no longer held back by the spongy humus of the rain forest floor in the logged areas and the plantations. Consequently floodwaters reach higher levels every year, and dry-season water levels drop to lower levels every year.

Most of the farming work is done by hand, without even the aid of oxen or other beasts of burden. Horses are unknown on Kalimantan. Some ethnic Chinese farmers use oxen or water buffalo to plow their *sawah* in the coastal lowlands, but Dayaks rarely use these.

Medical care in most of Indonesia is at best quite poor. It is even poorer in the rural areas where few doctors will voluntarily practice. Doctors who are sent to rural areas to do two years of mandatory rural service after graduation have little equipment, medicine, or access to medical laboratories. The general perception is that there is little point in going to a doctor except when all other measures have failed.

Although Dayaks comprise the majority of the population in West Kalimantan they are not correspondingly well represented in the higher levels of provincial government. To date only one governor of West Kalimantan has been a Dayak. Some have speculated that one factor that has contributed to the current situation of the Dayaks was the Japanese occupation during World War II. During the time the Japanese occupied West Kalimantan they systematically killed Dayak social leaders, twenty-one thousand of whom are buried in mass graves at Mandor, near Pontianak.

Dayaks are in the minority in the capital city of Pontianak, and generally live in humble housing developments and shantytowns. Like most other cities in Indonesia there is a striking contrast between the extravagant houses of the wealthy and the wooden squatter shacks of the poor. There are of course exceptions, but generally it is not Dayaks who own the nice houses and cars.

In sum, the general condition of the Dayaks is one of having little control over what happens in their lives. This has profound implications regarding what they expect their traditional belief system and recently introduced Christianity to do for them. From the time of the first Dayak swidden farmer to the present moment, Dayaks have been subject to the vagaries of nature. To deal with this they developed traditions and methods that adapted them well to life in the rain forest. In the past few decades, events have

conspired to deprive them of what little control they used to have over their lives. It is understandable that they would be seeking for some kind of control, and that they cling to their traditional religion that seems to offer the only control left to them. It is in this context that Dayaks are presented with the gospel. This context affects how they perceive and respond to the gospel. If or when the gospel is truly inculturated into the Dayak context, the shape the local theology and practice will take will be determined in part by this context. Traditionally Dayak culture and religion have been much concerned with control over events that are seemingly beyond human control. With the developments and the pressures of the past few decades it is even more important now to take into account their culture and religious background in the process of contextualizing Christianity in West Kalimantan Dayak churches.

Every ethnic community in Indonesia has a body of tradition comprising social norms, law, rituals and ceremonies, and religion, called *adat*. *Adat* is unique to each ethnic community and is an important component of group identity. Every Dayak sub-culture has its own *adat*, which often differs from village to village. As will be explained later in much greater detail, *adat* comprises norms, customs, and regulations regarding just about every aspect of life. Integral to the Dayak worldview, and practically seamlessly incorporated into *adat* is the conviction that there is more to reality than meets the eye. Traditionally the Dayaks have been, and the majority still are, animists, believing that most events are caused in one way or another by any of a myriad of spiritual forces. The *adat* held in common by the various sub-cultures that have come to be called Dayak, and interwoven through and through with animistic beliefs, is intrinsic to their cultural and ethnic identity. How the church responds to and deals with *adat* and

its animist underpinnings is a vital issue. Examining how the church responds, and how, if at all, it should respond differently than it has historically to the uniquely Dayak *adat* is essentially the question of how the gospel might be inculturated into the Dayak churches of West Kalimantan.

History of KGBI Cross-cultural Ministry to Dayaks in West Kalimantan

My focus is primarily on the KGBI churches in West Kalimantan. Many other mission agencies, individual missionaries, and national churches have worked in this province for many decades. No doubt there has been extensive interaction and influence among the different churches and traditions. While I must limit the scope of this examination to the KGBI churches, full acknowledgment must be given to the presence and significance of the other churches. To compare how other denominations have dealt with the issues I am examining here would in itself be an interesting study, but one that must be put aside for now.

In 1972 Canadian Baptist missionaries with the Canadian Baptist Overseas Mission Board²⁰ began working at the invitation of and in partnership with the *Kerapatan Gereja Protestan Indonesia*²¹ in the Minahasa region of North Sulawesi. The partnership was to work together on a ten-year task force to establish a seminary. The seminary was first established in Tondano and then moved to its present location in Manado. Several students who studied at the fledgling Minahasa seminary felt called to mission work within Indonesia. After the first of these seminary students went as missionaries from Minahasa to West Kalimantan, the KGBI entered into a second partnership agreement with Canadian Baptists. Canadian Baptist missionaries were teamed up with Indonesian

²⁰ Now called Canadian Baptist Ministries.

²¹ Now called *Kerapatan Gereja Baptis Indonesia*.

missionaries to work in church planting, discipleship, and leadership training in West Kalimantan. The churches they established were all rural with the exception of one congregation in the city of Pontianak and most were almost exclusively Dayak in membership.

In the early 1980's the KGBI established the *Seminari Theologia Kalimantan* in Pontianak in partnership with the Canadian Baptist Overseas Mission Board, and with Rev. Robert Williams, an independent American missionary who first went to Indonesia in 1938. (Up to the time of this writing he continues to visit West Kalimantan from his home in California at least twice a year.) In 1997 eight seminary staff were from Minahasa and one from West Timor. Seven were Dayaks. Several others were from West Kalimantan, but from other ethnic communities. The national language, *Bahasa Indonesia*, is the working language of the seminary. Everyone, staff and students, and of course, Canadian missionaries, speaks it as a second language.

Work for the missionaries was split between teaching at the seminary, preaching and teaching in villages, and working with lay leaders and graduates of the seminary who served as pastors of the rural churches. About two thirds of the seminary students are Dayaks. The remainder are from other ethnic communities in West Kalimantan (primarily Chinese), and from as many as ten of the twenty-six provinces of Indonesia. Many of the students who came from other provinces have settled in West Kalimantan after they graduated and now minister in Dayak churches. Thus it is not only the Canadian missionaries and the Minahasans that are ministering cross-culturally, but also some of the students. Together with the Dayak church leaders they play an important

role in establishing and teaching theology and working out forms of Christian life appropriate for this setting.

The National Ideology and its Effect on the Ministry

From the constitution down to the life in rural villages, Indonesian society is guided and shaped by five principles called the *Pancasila*, the first of which principles states that Indonesians believe in the one Almighty God. How God is understood differs widely according to different religions, but the Republic of Indonesia explicitly and officially acknowledges the spiritual realm of life within this broad spectrum of interpretation.

The Indonesian constitution guarantees religious freedom. The freedom is somewhat circumscribed in that it is not freedom to believe anything, nor is it freedom not to believe. It is freedom to adhere to one of five officially sanctioned religions: Islam, Buddhism, Hinduism, Catholic Christianity, and Protestant Christianity.²² According to the national constitution no one is to be coerced into converting from one religion to another. This is good for the Christians, who comprise about five percent of the country with the largest population of Moslems in the world, because they can appeal to the constitution for protection from coercion. On the other hand, coercion and proselytizing are defined quite rigidly; consequently Christians must be very careful about to whom, and under what circumstances, they share their faith. If a person inquires about the Christian faith, then Christians are free to share their faith with that person. They must be very careful though, if they initiate the contact. There are also differences in how different people can be treated. If a Javanese, Madurese, or *Melayu* Moslem

²² Mormonism, Jehovah's Witnesses, and various Eastern religions and sects are present in Indonesia but essentially exist underground.

converts to Christianity there are far more serious ramifications than if a Dayak animist converts to Christianity. In the last few years Moslems in Indonesia have become more self-aware and vocal, and are responding to what they perceive as a growing threat from the growth of the Christian church. Moslem extremists have organized anti-Christian riots: in 1996 Moslems in Indonesia burned over fifty churches. Anti-Christian violence continued through 1997 and into 1998, and erupted even more violently in 2000.

Many Dayaks are nominally Roman Catholic, but are essentially animistic in belief and practice. Protestants must exercise caution in evangelizing Catholics, although not to the same extent as with Moslems. Evangelization of nominally Catholic Dayaks is greatly facilitated if a person or whole village first declares an interest or intent to become Protestant. Protestant churches working in villages that are Catholic may not come to the attention of the higher government departments, but their activities can make a considerable stir at village and regional levels of government.

The policy of having all Indonesians subscribe to one of the five official religions was promoted by President Suharto, who led forces that put down an attempted communist coupe in 1965. In 1966 Suharto pressured then President Sukarno out of power. President Sukarno had Communist leanings that had allowed communists to gain enough strength to attempt a coupe. Suharto came to power with strong anticommunist policies. As part of his plan to keep Indonesia safe from communism, Suharto's government consistently pressured citizens to subscribe to one of the five officially sanctioned religions. They reasoned that since communists are atheists, then if there were no atheists in the country communism would not have a following. Every citizen of Indonesia is required to hold an identity card, on which is indicated the person's religion

that must be one of the five official religions. The government endorses the proselytizing of those who do not yet subscribe to one of these religions to ensure that there are no atheistic communists in the country. This means that the door is open for the Christians to work freely among the Dayaks to convert them from their animism, which the government does not recognize as a well enough defined belief system to be able to ward off communism. When Christians work in this way the government feels that they are working for the good of the country and actually encourages the expansion of the church into regions that are still overtly animist.

Motives of Dayaks to convert to Christianity are sometimes mixed, and may have little correlation with perceived spiritual need or even the proclamation of the gospel. This complicates or confuses evangelism because people will 'convert' even though the gospel might not be presented clearly. As well as promoting religion as a hedge against communism, the government also fosters the idea that adopting one of the official religions is a way of becoming more developed, and animism is seen as a 'primitive' religion. Many who live in rural villages seek the perceived benefits of economic development, and associate Christianity with development. Often Christian villages do advance economically because of the many changes that take place in Christians' lives, but what is more immediately obvious to villagers is that Christians often receive a lot of attention from the city and subsidization for church buildings and other programs. There have been 'communal conversions' that some missiologists who are concerned with Western individualism would applaud, but these so-called conversions are actually often motivated more by political or economic than spiritual concerns.

The Dayaks of West Kalimantan generally prefer to become Christians rather than Moslems because they consider the daily ritual demands of Islam onerous. They traditionally have eaten pork, and have raised dogs both for hunting and for eating, both of which they would need to give up if they became Moslems. Sometimes the church does not realize or fully acknowledge that sometimes motives have more to do with economics and politics, or preferences in diet, than with spiritual concerns and thus the church does not respond appropriately. Often when a Dayak indicates an interest in becoming a Christian the church mistakenly thinks that evangelization has already taken place. More realistically it means that the church has an opportunity to begin evangelism without fear of interference from the government. Pastors expect spiritual growth in their congregations and are frustrated when it doesn't happen. They welcome the new members to their congregations, or new churches to the denomination, but are puzzled and discouraged at the lack of spiritual growth in the 'converts'. The conversions might not have been motivated by spiritual concerns, so from a Christian perspective their lack of growth should not be puzzling; without a new beginning in Christ there is not yet a new life that can be expected to grow.

The government policy of religious freedom within the limits of the five officially recognized religions, in combination with the strict restrictions on proselytizing, has created an odd situation in which many evangelical churches do not have a clear understanding of conversion. For instance, all church leaders of the KGBI would state that there is no salvation outside of Jesus Christ. In actual practice, because of the strong influence of government propaganda, some of these same people consider certain groups and villages off-limits for evangelism because they are of a different ethnic group or

religion. Many church members would say that other faiths are different, but valid, paths to God. These are not so much theological convictions as consequences of the government propaganda that they have received throughout their schooling. It is as if Pancasila and the strong restrictions on proselytizing over-ride the universal claims of Christianity, at least at a folk-Christianity level.²³

Summary

Dayaks do not live in isolation. They are part of the multi-cultural Republic of Indonesia with its majority Moslem population. Though they are the largest ethnic group in Kalimantan they are not in the overall majority. Their culture and subsistence are under great pressure from outside political, economic, and social forces. They are struggling to define and maintain their cultural identity as their traditional swidden form of subsistence is becoming less viable. Their traditional solutions to the problems of life do not seem to be working as well as they seemed to in the past. In the midst of these struggles the Protestant churches, one of which is the KGBI, are diligently working to convert them to Protestant Christianity. This Christianity that is confronting them is in many respects fundamentally different, even antithetical, to their traditional beliefs and practices. The traditional beliefs and practices that most often come into conflict with Christianity are the subject of the next chapter.

²³ A young man from the Timor region of Indonesia took a discipleship course that I taught. When he arrived for the first lesson he met Ramlan, a Malay youth who had asked how to become a Christian and who was planning to attend the course as well. The Timorese man accused the Malay youth of being an imposter because as a Malay he was a Moslem and would have no reason to come to church. Ramlan did not attend the course and did not come to church services again for several months. When I talked to the Timorese man about this incident he had no idea that he had done anything wrong. As far as he was concerned Christianity was not applicable to Malay people.

Chapter Three: The Dayak Worldview

Animism and Adat

In this chapter I undertake to describe the Dayak worldview by examining religious beliefs and concrete expressions of these beliefs as expressed in the traditions and customs of *adat*. I describe the Dayak understanding of the source and purpose of life, and the manner in which it is to be lived, by examining the basic characteristics of *adat* and its role in the life of the individual and of Dayak society. This examination will explore their understanding of nature, what drives natural forces, and the characteristics of the interplay between humans and natural forces. I hope to demonstrate an insight that I have reached after many years of living and working in this culture: that the Dayak worldview consists in significant measure in the quest for control over nature and other persons. The main issues are personal survival in an unpredictable, mysterious, often hostile world in which they are subject to the vagaries of nature, without having recourse to modern technology, modern agricultural methods, tools, and chemical inputs, and with extremely limited access to effective health and medical care. In the following description it should begin to come clear that Christianity as presented and generally practiced in the KGBI churches in West Kalimantan, and traditional Dayak beliefs address significantly different sets of needs and questions. I believe that evangelism could be more effective and theology more authentic if the church fully realized and addressed this discrepancy.

Many Indonesian Christians are quick to point out that many aspects of *adat* are not religious in nature and are not essentially incompatible with Christian faith.¹ They will refer to what is called *hukum adat* (*adat law*), a body of oral traditions that comprises laws, regulations, and sanctions. (Only in recent years have efforts been made to preserve this oral tradition in writing, largely in an attempt to preserve cultures and traditions that are being threatened with extinction.)² *Adat* law governed Dayak society long before there was constitutional law in Indonesia. Non-Christians often angrily accuse Christians in their communities of discarding *adat* and thereby threatening the safety of the community as well as destroying Dayak cultural identity. Almost every time I have been engaged in discussion with Christians about *adat* it has been pointed out to me that Christians are not opposed to *adat* and do not want to discard it. They differentiate between *hukum adat* (traditional law) and *adat kepercayaan* (traditional beliefs and religious practices). They do admit that they want to discard or modify those aspects of the laws, traditions, ceremonies, rituals, and sanctions that conflict with

¹ For example, Hengky Tumundo, who came to West Kalimantan as a KGBI missionary in the early 1980s and has settled in Pontianak, in his S1 Thesis, "Penginjilan Terhadap Suku Dayak Kanayatn". ("Evangelization of the Kanayatn Dayaks"). (Unpublished S1 Thesis, Seminary Theologia Kalimantan, May, 1996.), 22. (An 'S1' degree is a first level of post-secondary academic degree, akin to a baccalaureate degree in North America.)

² Robert Redfield introduced to anthropology the concept of Great and Little traditions. He says, "In a civilization there is a great tradition of the reflective few and a little tradition of the unreflective many. The great tradition is cultivated in schools or temples; the little tradition works itself out and keeps itself going in the lives of the unlettered in their village communities. The tradition of the philosopher, theologian, and literary man is a tradition consciously cultivated and handed down; that of the little people is for the most part taken for granted and not submitted to much scrutiny or considered refinement and improvement." (*Peasant Society and Culture*, Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1956, 70.) Dayak *adat* would be classified in this schema as a Little Tradition. Until the introduction of Islam to Kalimantan in the twelfth century, and Christianity in just this past century, there have been no Great Traditions in Kalimantan. There is no comprehensive formulation of Dayak *adat*; it is unique to each sub-culture, and often differs among adjacent villages. It has been passed down orally and practiced by members of the society without much systematic reflection or refinement.

With the conversion of many Dayaks to Christianity a situation is developing where there are Great and Little Traditions, as Christianity as practiced by the common people is significantly modified or syncretized by animistic beliefs and practices. Redfield's model fits better with the situation of the Melayu society of Kalimantan, where Islam as practiced at the common level has been significantly shaped by the animistic worldview of the Malay people.

Christian faith, but emphasize that they respect, and want to preserve *adat* law that does not conflict with Christian faith and practice. My speculation is that actually it is not as easy as most Christians think it is to differentiate between *adat* law and traditional beliefs and practices, because *adat* law is fundamentally based on the animistic quest for harmony among humans and between humans and the supernatural realm. An examination of *adat* that simply describes the regulations and customs without taking into account the fundamental animistic assumption of the extent to which the spiritual realm is involved in the everyday affairs of mankind is inadequate. It is essential to have an understanding of the extent to which animistic thinking forms the foundation of the Dayak worldview and how it is seamlessly integrated into all aspects of law, customs, ceremonies, and rituals. Only then can we begin to look at how Christianity should best be presented, and what form Christian theology might take in this particular Southeast Asian setting.

In the first part of this chapter I describe how the Dayak worldview consists in an integration of what Westerners would refer to as the natural and the supernatural. I look at the characteristics of *adat* and describe how *adat* reflects this integration and how it relates to 'salvation' in this context. In the second part of this chapter I attempt to give a general description of the most commonly mentioned features of Dayak beliefs and customs. In the final portion I introduce some modern issues and current elements that are putting extreme pressure on Dayak society and forcing them to make fundamental changes in their traditional worldview. At this point a description of the Dayak worldview must include the elements of confusion and growing uncertainty about the reliability or accuracy of the way they see the world.

I have been using the term 'Dayak worldview' with some anxiety that I am generalizing too much. Before proceeding further I must address this concern. It is fairly safe to state that most Westerners who live in West Kalimantan and who have experienced anything more than superficial interaction with the Dayaks would report that the worldview of most Dayaks is significantly different from that of most Westerners. This is to say that they think about the world differently. They expect different things from it, and have different concepts as to its nature, and how and why things happen. Of course there are wide variations among both Dayak and Western individuals and sub-cultures. To speak of a "Dayak worldview" will necessarily involve considerable generalization that may not describe accurately the worldview of any one individual. The same would apply to an even greater extent when speaking about a "Western worldview" in the context of modern pluralism. However, I believe I see the world in fairly typical Western (i.e. post-Enlightenment, or Modern) categories, and my personal experience is that my own worldview consistently differs in significant ways from the worldview of the Indonesians -Dayaks and other ethnic groups- whom I have met during the time I lived and worked in Indonesia.

There are two main concerns that inspire an examination of the Dayak worldview. One concern is to be able to communicate effectively the essential elements of the Christian faith to the Dayaks. It is reasonable to assume that one's worldview will significantly affect how a person perceives and responds to the presentation of the Christian gospel. Christian missionaries and evangelists have not always recognized this, as the history of missions shows, but it is now well accepted by missiologists and others studying cross-cultural communication. To communicate effectively it is necessary to

have as comprehensive an understanding of the worldview of the Dayaks as is possible for an outsider to the culture. It is necessary to realize the extent to which the same words can be taken to mean very different things by the presenter and the hearer of the message. One objective in this chapter is to show how the background and worldview of the Dayaks regarding their expectations of religion are the key components of the filter through which the Dayaks hear the gospel. The gospel does not come into a vacuum: they already have preconceived ideas of 'God', 'personhood', 'spirit', 'soul', and 'salvation' or the benefits of belief, faith, and religion, and of the interaction or integrated nature of beliefs and affairs of day-to-day life.

A concern of this thesis is to articulate issues that are pertinent to the development of a truly biblically based expression of the Christian faith and practice in the context of the KGBI Dayak churches of West Kalimantan. If this expression of the Christian faith is to be more than adaptations or modifications of Western understandings of faith and practice, then it must be done with as full awareness as possible of the relevant aspects of this particular Asian culture and worldview. The Dayaks themselves must become self-aware of their cultural expectations of religion as well as those who come from outside the culture in order to formulate a theology that is appropriate to the culture and has biblical integrity.

An example of the differences in worldview, or at least in categories of thinking, occurred as I endeavored to categorize the data that follows. I started with a set of categories that reflected my own theological structures and soon realized that the data would not fit the framework. It was only after I reviewed some of the sources and looked

again at their categories that I was able to set out the data in a manner that – I hope – does not stretch it too much to fit the categories.

The descriptions that follow are examples taken from the different sub-cultures represented in this study. Dayak traditions, customs, and myths are not uniform. Each sub-culture's *adat* has unique features as well as many things in common. In some cases *adat* differs between adjacent villages within the same sub-culture. My assumption is that they are enough alike in intent that they can be treated together to represent the fundamental or underlying worldview, and that, for the purposes of the following chapters, can be treated in much the same way theologically.

Unity of the Natural and Supernatural

The Dayak worldview is one of almost seamless integration of the physical and spiritual or supernatural realms. It is integrated to the extent that it is actually inaccurate to speak of the 'supernatural' from within this worldview. What I see as a distinct dichotomy is a unity to the Dayak. What I see as two distinct realms — a physical and a supernatural — the Dayak sees as one reality — part of which is visible and part of which is invisible. Actually this is not exclusively a feature of Dayak thought. The Indonesian national language reflects the same perspective. An authoritative Indonesian-English dictionary gives the translation of the English 'supernatural' as '*hal-hal yang gaib*.' Working back from the other direction the same authors translate '*gaib*' as mysterious, invisible, hidden, inscrutable, belonging to the invisible (divine or supernatural) sphere.³ What is referred to by the English word 'supernatural' is not part of the natural order. It is beyond the natural order, hence the term 'super-'. The Indonesian terminology has a

³ John M. Echols & Hassan Shadily, *Kamus Indonesia-Inggris: An Indonesian-English Dictionary*. (Jakarta: PT Gramedia, 1990).

slightly different emphasis. That realm is not beyond the natural. It is as much a part of the natural order as the physical objects immediate to the senses.⁴ The difference is simply that it is not visible.⁵

Dayaks are characterized by their close relationship with their land, water, and the nature around them. This by no means makes them unique in the world or even within Indonesia, but nevertheless it is a characteristic that distinguishes them from many other peoples of the world and within Indonesia. The land is the source of their livelihood. Their relationship to the land is more than pragmatic; it has religious and 'magical' qualities to it. Creation stories convey the message that the Creator created the land as a place for humans to be born, with the right to use the land to live and upon which to die.⁶ In what has only within the last generation or two become a literate society, the connection to the land provided the continuity between the generations. Djuweng states,

The land unites the past generations with the present and future generations. The land for the Dayaks stores their unwritten history. It stores the bones of the ancestors, the holy places, and the altars of worship that are still used. On the land the rubber trees, durian, tengkawang, rotan, and *sampuan* (where the spiders spin their webs) grow and are cultured.⁷

Vincentius Julipin notes another dimension to the connection. It is through the land that the people also are connected to the invisible spirit realms. "They view the natural order as the place in which the people of *adat* live. It is also occupied by the spirits of the distant ancestors, parents, and friends who have died, also various other unidentified

⁴ Herculanus Bahari S. relates an origin myth of spirits. According to this myth the spirits used to be visible, but because they were continually being defeated or disadvantaged by humans they became invisible. ("Pantak Sebagai Alat Kesatuan Komunitas Radakng Dalam Binua Suku Dayak Kanayatn." *Kalimantan Review*, No 03 Tahun II Januari-April 1993: 3-11.)

⁵ There were at least five different Dayak languages (as well as several Chinese languages and Malay) spoken in the small area where I initially worked in West Kalimantan. I did not attempt to learn more than simple greetings in some of these languages. It would be interesting to compare the terminology in the Dayak languages. I would expect to find that the Dayak terminology would more closely match the usage in *Bahasa Indonesia* than English would.

⁶ Djuweng, 5.

⁷ Djuweng, 4. (My translation.)

spirits that appear from time to time and relate to the *adat* people who are still living.”⁸ Julipin considers the Dayak connection to the land to be so much a part of the Dayak’s identity that he speculates “It can be questioned whether a Dayak who does not farm is still a Dayak.”⁹

These observations lead to the point that the Dayak worldview fundamentally consists in making sense of events in a swidden agrarian society. From birth to death, traditionally most of the Dayak’s attention has been on dealing with the vagaries of nature. Although the tropical rainforest may look like an idyllic paradise with abundant food sources, in reality in this subsistence swidden culture there is a close line between hunger and plenty, life and death. Because the soil is generally very infertile, the climate is so hot and humid, and there are countless varieties of pests, it is difficult to build up and sustain food reserves. Consequently, there is not much buffer or tolerance when natural forces seem to conspire against human welfare. It is imperative that natural forces cooperate with humans. Beliefs and traditions have developed over the millennia to explain why things happen the way they do, and more importantly, to obtain benefits from nature for oneself, family, and community. Dayak beliefs and traditions are fundamentally intended to provide humans with some control over forces of nature that move and act in very physical ways with material results, yet have invisible motives and means. A key to understanding the Dayak worldview is to realize that they have made an association between the actions of humans and the directions and consequences of the natural forces. The Dayak lives by asking permission from these powers, and since one

⁸ Julipin, 92. (My translation.)

⁹ Julipin, 95. (My translation.)

can never be certain that permission has been granted, protecting himself from these same powers.

Natural forces, as understood by the animist Dayaks, are actually spiritual beings and spiritual forces, not the forces of Newtonian physics. Within such a framework it is logical to act and react to events in nature in much the same way as in personal relationships. In personal relationships it is important to sense how the other is feeling, how one's actions affected the feelings of the other, moods, desires, strengths, weaknesses, even position in the social hierarchy. In personal relationships we learn to adjust our behavior to the character and condition of others to keep the relationship in good working order. If one is looking out for one's own interests it is important to understand these things about others in order to be able to cooperate with them or to manipulate them to bring about the desired ends. The dynamics of personal relationships apply to the spiritual realm in the Dayak worldview. Hence there is an over-riding need to maintain harmony or good relationships in all facets of life, including with the invisible realms. "Laws, social customs, traditions that govern life on this earth are actually the incarnation of the laws of all nature."¹⁰ These relationships are not 'supernatural'; they are wholly natural.

For the Dayaks, as with most other Indonesians, *adat* is a way of maintaining this essential harmony through codified behavior. Just as there is seamless integration between the visible and the invisible, so there is a seamless integration of components of *adat* concerning inter-personal or societal relationships and relationships between people and the invisible realm. This is why it is hard to differentiate between components that

¹⁰ Roedy Hryo Widjono, "Simpukng Huan Dayak Benuaq Suatu Kearifan Tradisional Pengelolaan Sumber Daya Hutan" in *Manusia Dayak Orang Kecil yang Terperangkap Modernisasi*. Stepanus Djuweng, editor. (Pontianak: Institute of Dayakology Research and Development, 1996), 96.

Christians can endorse and components that Christians feel they should reject. Components that appear to concern only inter-personal relationships are actually related to the invisible realm as well. Because everything is inter-connected, a disruption in an inter-personal or community relationship also disrupts relationships between humans and the invisible realm.

There are four main aspects to *adat* that must be considered if we are to understand fully the challenge that Dayak Christians face in trying to work out an authentic expression of their faith in this context. The primary element of *adat* is its focus on harmony. Obey *adat* and there is harmony, prosperity, and peace; Transgress *adat* and harmony is lost and there is consequent trouble of some kind for humans. The harmony sought is more than harmony with individuals, community and spirits. There is also a concept of needing to keep harmony with the past. One must obey *adat* simply out of respect for the ancestors (who are still present with the living as ancestral spirits). Because the ancestors passed down the traditions that they themselves received from their ancestors, the living must follow the traditions out of respect for ancestors both recent and ancient. Because the ancestors themselves respected and observed what they received as traditions, and then laboured to pass them on to the succeeding generations, they will not be pleased if these traditions are rejected or forgotten. The danger for the present generation is that the ancestral spirits can use invisible means to express their displeasure.

The element of harmony involves not just the individual but also the entire community. The transgressions of one individual may result in undesirable consequences for a different individual or the entire community. Ukur Fridolin notes that “Violations

of *adat* law are always seen in a social context. *Adat* judgment is actually not only administered to the violator, but to the whole community as a restoration of the harmony of life in community.”¹¹ There is a strong tendency and tradition to look after needs in common. Social structures and activities are designed to look after the needs of the community as a whole and most events involve the whole community. All members are expected to bear responsibility regarding social order and *adat*.

Adat law does not make any differentiation between civil and criminal law. All violations are considered to be disturbances of the harmony. Lontaan observes that:

Adat law does not differentiate between violations of law that demand restitution before the law in the field of criminal law (in front of a criminal court) and violations of law that can be heard in a civil court. In relation to that in the system of *adat* law there is no difference in procedure in dealing with a civil case and a criminal case. Whenever there is a violation of the law the ‘judge’ (*Adat* head, village head) takes concrete action with the intent of restoring the broken relationship.¹²

The underlying purpose in dealing with violations of the law is not to punish or rehabilitate, but to restore the harmony on the earth and in the invisible realms that has been disrupted and which might cause misfortune for humans.

The second component of *adat* is manipulation: perform the correct ritual or ceremony, perform a particular behavior, and receive restored health, gain prosperity, ensure fertility and successful harvests, obtain personal occult power and confidence. There are several ways in which things can be manipulated in order to achieve the desired ends. In common with other animist belief systems, there is a belief that certain actions, if performed in the prescribed manner, are mirrored, or cause a parallel or similar action to take place in the spiritual realm. For instance, providing food to an idol in the visible realm causes food to be provided for the spirit associated with the idol in the invisible

¹¹ Ukur *Tantang-Djawab*, 14.

¹² Lontaan, 423.

realm. Placing tools and tobacco on a gravesite causes corresponding tools and tobacco to be provided to the spirit of the deceased in the invisible realm.¹³ Sometimes these objects are provided and other acts performed with the expectation that the spirits or forces that have benefited from them will be obligated to act on behalf of the one who made the offering or performed the act. In some cases there is a sense that the reciprocal act is contingent on the whim of the spirit or force thus addressed. In other cases there is a sense that the spirit is bound by the action if the action is performed properly.

Adat as manipulation raises some implications regarding the nature of morality. The rightness or wrongness of an action is determined by whether the action achieves the desired result. Proscribed actions are to be avoided because they might bring calamity or ill fortune to the individual or the community. A proscribed action might not be morally wrong if one is able to 'pay the *adat*' to smooth over the potential disruption in the overall harmony before the individual or community suffers the consequences from the angered ancestral or other spirits.

The third component of *adat* is the element of uncertainty and anxiety from never being able to know exactly what the spirits or gods want or demand and never being certain that their demands have been met or their desires satisfied. Great attention is given to the exact manner in which ceremonies and rituals are carried out, for it is only if everything is performed exactly as required that the spirits or forces are likely to be satisfied and cooperate with humans. It is this demand for precision in the performance of rites that has caused innumerable clashes with Christians who might not cooperate fully with the demands of *adat* on the community because they reject the animistic

¹³ Robert J. Barrett, "Performance, Effectiveness and the Iban *Manang*" in *The Seen and the Unseen: Shamanism, Mediumship and Possession in Borneo*. Robert L. Winzeler, editor. (Williamsburg, VA: The Borneo Research Council, Inc., 1993), 248.

foundations and aims of the rite. Through their non-cooperation the Christians are believed to compromise the efficacy of the ceremony or ritual, for which the community may have incurred considerable expense.

The fourth aspect of *adat* is its function in maintaining appropriate barriers between those of this world and the beings and forces of the unseen realms.

Men require personal intercourse with supernatural beings in order to maintain a sense of harmonious interaction with them, but at the same time they need protective distance from them. At times of malevolent interaction shamans intervene on behalf of men, first to connect the human and spirit domain, then to engage in transactions which restore a sense of reciprocity, and finally to create appropriate barriers between the two domains again.¹⁴

The invisible realm is very much a part of reality, but it is mysterious. Forces in the invisible realm are perceived as being whimsical or inconsistent. Forces that are usually benevolent can sometimes turn on humans in malevolent ways. Even with benevolent forces it is best to maintain a protective distance lest they turn on a person to his or her misfortune. These forces cannot be trusted, nor can one ever be certain that the proper rituals have been performed and that the spirits have what they want. Therefore it is best to maintain protective distances or barriers.

Indonesians generally identify three main categories or types of *adat*. The four main characteristics described above apply to all three categories. It is fairly easy to understand the distinctions in the types of *adat*, but it must not be forgotten that the purpose of all types and aspects of *adat* is to fulfill the objectives discussed above. It is important that these distinctions not be interpreted according to Western classifications because the underlying principle is the essential oneness of the visible and invisible realms.

¹⁴ Barrett 241.

Hukum adat or *adat* law is the body of traditions, regulations, and norms that roughly corresponds with jurisprudence. However no differentiation is made in *adat* law between civil and criminal law. Punishment, retribution, and rehabilitation are of less concern to *adat* law than the restoration of proper relationships with everyone and everything concerned: the individual, the community, and the invisible realm. *Adat* law preceded other forms of law, such as colonial or constitutional law, by many centuries. *Adat* law has traditionally provided strong sanctions against divorce, adultery, beating one's wife, theft, etc.¹⁵ In most regions of Indonesia, especially in rural areas, *adat* law takes precedence over constitutional national law. Many civil and criminal cases are settled by local authorities (the regional *adat* head, the local *adat* head, or the village head) and never make it to the national court system.¹⁶

Adat law is strongly reinforced by social sanction. Traditionally it would have been difficult to differentiate between the judgments or settlements of *adat* law and social sanctions. In recent decades *adat* law has lost some of the force of social sanction and is being reduced in essence to civil and criminal law (and settlements are reduced to monetary fines.) Increased migration within the country and social disruptions from economic and cultural forces are changing the cohesive nature of rural communities. As the communities lose their cohesiveness through the influx of individuals who do not consider themselves to be subject to the local *adat* the effect of social sanctions is greatly reduced and *adat* law must rely more on other means besides social sanctions, such as monetary fines, to achieve its ends.¹⁷

¹⁵ Tumundo, 21.

¹⁶ Lontaan, 280.

¹⁷ Djuweng, 67.

A second broad category is *adat kebiasaan*, or customs. Some *adat* customs concern the regulation of social relationships, for example how one greets and treats guests, how marriages are arranged and performed. Some customs are merely social norms; many have some relationship to or role in maintaining overall harmony. In order to understand the Dayak worldview it is essential to be aware that many actions that an outsider would consider to be simply social habits are actually connected with the spiritual realm in some way. Below (page 82) is a description of actions that are guided and regulated by *adat*, actions that a foreign Westerner would perhaps be surprised to see connected with the spirit realm, or which have consequences originating from the spiritual realm.

A third category is *adat kepercayaan*, religious beliefs, customs, rituals, and ceremonies. These aspects are designed to govern and regulate human life with regard to how human actions affect the forces in the mysterious invisible realm. Much of the *adat* in this category covers the seasonal cycles of the agrarian year, passages in the human life cycle, and crisis events. *Adat* of this category is most explicitly religious in nature. It involves direct acts of worship and the making of offerings and sacrifices. *Adat* in this category is the main source of conflict between Christians and those who want to preserve and follow *adat*, and is the focus of the following chapter. Note that while this category of *adat* is most explicitly religious, *adat* law and *adat* customs are also 'religious' in that they address human relationships with the invisible, spiritual realm.

Dayaks unfamiliar with Christianity or Islam would not likely think in terms of 'salvation', at least certainly not in the same terms as would Christians or Moslems (whose expectations of salvation are different from Christian expectations.) There is

little, if any, sense of judgment in the hereafter; in death the spirit simply passes on to the invisible realm. Of more concern are material well-being or survival, and safety and security in this world. Events and actions in everyday life are regulated by *adat* to ensure harmony with the invisible realm in order that this present life can be lived out without too much misfortune, inconvenience, or suffering. A Dayak unfamiliar with other religions would not think in eschatological terms. His focus is primarily on survival in this life as he deals with the vagaries of natural and invisible forces.

The life of a Kanayatn Dayak, which greatly depends on the natural environment and traditional methods of farming, is highly influenced by the friendliness, or harshness of nature. Whenever the climate is good and prosperous, it means that their life is agreed to (or blessed) by *Nek Patampa Asal Mula Jaji*. But whenever conditions are difficult, when disasters keep coming, then it means that sin has twisted around the people. The balance with nature must be restored to wholeness with the offering of sacrifices and the payment of *adat*. The life of man, the body and the *semangat* must be one with nature.¹⁸

The only eschatological sense would be in terms of seasons: anticipating the conditions for planting and harvesting, and wondering if there will be enough harvest for another year of subsistence while the next generation is nurtured to take the parents' place and preserve the *adat* traditions of the ancestors. In this respect the Dayaks are distinctly different from their Javanese neighbours who have messianic expectations of a *Ratu Adil* (Just King).¹⁹

To the Kanayatn Dayaks 'salvation' means a return to origins, that is, to the Creator (*Nek Patampa*). "The intention or goal of *adat* customs regarding death is to make straight the path of the deceased to 'heaven' and to preserve harmony in society."²⁰ The person is expected to respect *adat* to live a worthy life. All violations of *adat* must

¹⁸ Paul Nyerom Kanoh, "The Kanayatn Dayak View of Spirit and Salvation." (Unpublished paper, 1995), 7 (my translation).

¹⁹ Niels Mulder, *Mysticism and Everyday Life in Contemporary Java*. (Singapore: Singapore University Press, 1978), 14. Javanese 'messianic' expectations are not of a once for all messiah, but for a just king to arise at the end of a 'crazy period' to put an end to social injustice and restore cosmic harmony.

²⁰ Herkulanus Aten, "Hukum Adat dan Adat Istiadat Kematian Dayak Kanayatn," (Kalimantan Review, No 8 Tahun 3 Juli-September 1994): 9. (My translation.)

be paid according to provisions of *adat* to restore the balance of the natural order. Transgressions or breaches of *adat* that are not settled will cause suffering of mankind, calamity for communities, and curses in the form of disasters and destruction of the natural surroundings. The journey of the spirit of the deceased back to the creator will not be straight or unimpeded unless all his or her breaches of *adat* have been settled. In cases where the individual might be too poor to pay the *adat* fines he or she has incurred, the family can settle things after his or her death. This ensures that no one will be hindered from safe passage because of being too poor. Nyerom reports that provision can be made for the very cheap payment of *adat* fines with *darah ampa*, the red, blood-like spittle of a person who is eating betel nut.²¹ With others to look after one's journey in the hereafter, (motivated in part by not wanting the spirit of the deceased lingering around and causing trouble), the focus in this life is not much on worship, sacrifice, or moral living as preparation for the hereafter. Most of one's attention in life is focused on subsistence in a vagarious world.

The living take measures to ensure that *adat* is paid for the deceased not merely for the sake of the deceased getting along in the hereafter. Their primary concern is that harmony with the invisible realm be maintained for the sake of the living, and so that the deceased will move along on the journey of the dead back to *Jubata* and not disturb the living. This illustrates that the function of Dayak beliefs and traditions, or religion, is to enable individuals and communities to survive and, perhaps, prosper in this life. The primary focus is not on making preparations in this life for the hereafter, but survival in the present.

²¹ Kanoh *Kanayatn*, 5.

This examination of *adat* illustrates the unity of what others differentiate as the natural and the supernatural realms. The unity of the natural and supernatural in the Dayak worldview is further illustrated in their many and varied creation stories. Creation stories, besides teaching about the relationship between the visible and invisible realms, firmly tie Dayak being and identity to the land on which they live. Most of the creation stories emphasize that the Creator created the land as a place for humans to be born, with the right to use the land to live and upon which to die.²² The Dayak world, and life, begin with the land. Each sub-culture seems to have its own story or stories, which usually explain why a particular sub-culture has rights to a particular geographical region, and why their sub-culture is superior to others.²³

The land exists as one of three realms that make up the natural order, and different spiritual powers or types of beings are associated with each realm. There is the realm of 'Jubata' ('God' or gods) who is (are) usually believed to reside on the summit of a sacred mountain(s). The land (*Talino*) is the place where people dwell. The third realm is *Sabayatn*,²⁴ the dwelling place of the spirits (*roh-roh halus*) and the spirits of deceased humans. The three realms are joined together by ties of blood and by a promise to help one another. It should be noted that *sabayatn* is sometimes translated as 'heaven'. This use of a Christian concept and term in this context is somewhat misleading. *Sabayatn* is not described as a place of eternal bliss, merely the dwelling place of the spirits of the deceased. Sometimes it is described as being associated with *Jubata* and there is an

²² Djuweng, 5.

²³ The Ribun creation story, for instance, tells how the physical world was created when a prehistoric spirit person was cut to pieces. The various Dayak peoples were created out of pieces of his body. The Ribun were created out of the head. This explains why they can easily understand other's languages, but others have so much trouble learning theirs.

²⁴ A Kanayatn term that appears to have gained wider usage among Dayaks of other language groups.

expectation that the spirit of the deceased must journey back to *Jubata*. At the same time there is the notion that the spirit of the deceased lingers with the living, and the living want to encourage the deceased to move away back to *Jubata*, but that the living can also call upon the spirits of the ancestors in times of need.

Most accounts describe the Dayak concept of the universe as consisting of three tiers, with *Jubata* and other spirits of non-human origin above the earth, and the spirits of deceased humans in a realm below the earth. In the normal course of interaction with the invisible realm there appears to be little practical distinction between the god-type spirits, ancestral spirits, and the spirits that derived from deceased people but that have taken on special characteristics and seem to be in a different class, such as the *kuntianak*, (the malevolent spirit of a woman who died in childbirth – see page 68). In some situations it is not apparent which particular class of spirit is being discussed or given attention. For practical purposes the Dayak does not make a distinction between upper and lower when dealing with the entities and powers in the invisible realm. Functional distinctions are between the visible and the invisible, and benevolent and malevolent powers.

All the Dayak sub-cultures that are within the scope of this report are familiar with the term '*Jubata*' although some have their own version of the name. At first examination, actually for several years, I understood '*Jubata*' to mean 'God,' at least in the sense of Creator of the highest order. For some reason, probably because of some ambiguity about the term and usage, it took me several years to ferret out the belief that actually there is more than one *Jubata*, but that there is one *Jubata* that is higher than the others. The '*Jubata*' are good spirits and many in number. Any physically prominent or impressive place may have a *Jubata* that dwells there. Mountains, hills, particularly large

or unusual trees, dense forests and fields cleared in the forest, river banks, particularly bends in a river, caves, paths, forks in paths, entrances to villages, and the inside peak of a longhouse roof are some of the many places where a *Jubata* might dwell.²⁵ The *Jubata* can be any place because of their divine nature and power, but are not omnipresent. The particular places where *Jubata* are believed to reside are sacred. The most important *Jubata* dwells at the top of the Bawang (Kendayan- Bawakng) Mountain. This is the place to which the spirits of the dead are believed to journey. This *Jubata* is sometimes called ‘*Batara Guru*’ or ‘*Nek Panitah*’ the ‘god who speaks’. Others include ‘*Jubata Nek Pajaji*’ (‘god the creator’) and ‘*Jubata Nek Patampa,*’ (‘all-powerful god’). The impression I got from some informants is that these are different names for one god. Other informants indicate that these are different entities.

Some time after learning that there are many *Jubata*, with one higher than the others, I discovered that there is yet a higher power. “*Mamuraja,*” as referred to by one informant, is the head god above the *Jubata* and is the Creator. The Creator is so remote as to be inaccessible to humans. The *Jubata* are more accessible but are still considered too remote for intercourse with humans. It is the lesser spirits, below *Jubata*, that interact with humans.

Below *Jubata* are countless *dewa* (*dewi* if specifically female) — lesser gods or spirits.²⁶ It is these that have the most interaction with humans. The following description of some of these comes from informants and literature. It is not comprehensive but is representative enough to provide further insight into the worldview.

²⁵ In my travels I noted a house-sized rock that broke up the jungle along the banks of the Tayan river. It struck me as a good place for a picnic with my family. When we had our picnic on this striking location it came as no surprise to find the remnants of spirit offerings. What I considered an interesting site for a picnic others considered to be the residence of a spirit.

²⁶ The Indonesian terms ‘*Batara Guru*’ and ‘*dewa*’ are of Sanskrit origin.

A spirit that is of Dayak origin, or is unique to Dayaks, is the “*kamang*”.²⁷ The *kamang* wears a loincloth and a red and white head-wrap (*tangkulas*). This spirit can see, smell, and drink blood. The blood offerings at banquets are to this spirit. (The ubiquitous yellow turmeric-spiced rice at these banquets is for *Jubata*.) The most important *kamang* is *Kamang Tariu*. There are at least seven others that go by various names. *Kamang Tariu* has great power and is dangerous. No one will call the *Tariu* power into a house; it is always called from outside. The *Tariu* is called by shouting three times while cutting the head off a ‘red’ dog and a ‘red’ chicken. The *Tariu* likes to eat the brains and the blood, and bathes in the blood. The *Tariu* and other *kamang* give great strength, bravery, power to become invisible, power to take on the shape of a dog, and to withstand the sharp blades of machetes and even bullets. The *Kamang Tariu* and the other *kamang* dwell in the *Padagi* – a place in the forest where the idols (statues) are assembled together. A particular kind of war-whoop signifies that a warrior is one with *Kamang Tariu*. When a person is possessed by a *kamang*, the person’s *semangat* (one of a person’s several spirits – see page 72) leaves and must be called back after the conflict is over.²⁸

²⁷ Most of the following details are from P. Yermias’ analysis of the ethnic disturbances of January-February 1996 in West Kalimantan (“*A Consideration and Reflection on the Ethnic Disturbances in the Pontianak Kabupaten*” cited above). In a bloody conflict Dayaks strove to drive Madurese migrants out of the interior back to the coastal regions. The Dayak warriors wore red or red and white headbands as a sign of their possession by *kamang*.

²⁸ In an allusion to the ethnic disturbances of 1996 Hengky Tumundo reports, “The Dayaks very much believe in the spirits, and when these people are in danger and need help these spirits will come to help. This could be seen when Dayaks who lived in [monk-like] seclusion came down from the mountains [to fight] had great power. According to reports offered at the time of the ethnic violence one of these men was able to attack a thousand enemies, so great was the magic in him.” (Tumundo, 17.) It is relevant to the description of this worldview to note that Tumundo does not say “they believed . . .” but implicitly acknowledges it as a fact that they would possess this magical strength. I heard many times this type of report in which the informant accepts the accuracy of the story and accepts the reality of a person having such supernatural strength. Generally there was very little skepticism about such events. In this worldview it is possible, then, for one to be ‘possessed by a spirit’ and be given the strength ‘to fight off a thousand others’.

Yeremias describes three other spirits of non-human origins.²⁹ The *Pujut* (*Bahasa Indonesia*, strangulation) is a lower spirit who cannot be seen; its presence is detected from its smell. It is female, and dwells in fig trees. Fig trees choke out other trees and being choked or strangled can be a judgment for women. The *Tayam* also dwells in fig trees and can cause madness. The *Mawing* dwells in the forest, particularly in open places.

A *Kuntianak* or *Bintianak* is a malicious spirit that is the spirit of a woman who died in childbirth and that appears as a beautiful young woman with a hole in her back. This large opening is closed up with long hair. To prevent a woman who has died in childbirth from becoming a *Kuntianak*, the corpse is pierced with needles through the heart, feet, and hands so that her spirit can't walk or fly and become a *Kuntianak*.

The most common spirit is a *hantu*. *Hantu* generally are to be avoided or kept at a distance because their intentions are often disruptive, annoying, and sometimes malevolent. There are *hantu* that dwell in the sacred places; others roam about. They can destroy crops with disease and pests, wind and rain. The *hantu* can cause trees or branches to fall on people, and can cause illness. Usually they are believed to originate from people who have died, but the term is very general and it is not always clear if it is a human spirit or something else. The Indonesian word '*arwah*' refers specifically to the spirit of a deceased person. '*Hantu*' is a larger category that includes *arwah* as well as other spirits of unknown origin and nature. The significant aspect is that the *hantu* is the most commonly encountered spirit in day-to-day life.

²⁹ Some of the names Yeremias cites are of Javanese origin and have become *Bahasa Indonesia* vocabulary, indicating that there is overlap in the concepts of the inhabitants of the spirit world. The Dayak worldview is not mutually exclusive of others in Indonesia.

The spirits of the dead are believed to journey back to *Jubata*, that is, to ‘heaven’, yet are believed to remain present with the living as well. Elaborate measures are taken at funerals and in the following days to ensure that the spirit of the deceased actually does move on. There can be a lingering suspicion that the *arwah* has returned, or never really moved on. Uncertainty about such matters is an ever-present element in life and attention to the details of *adat* and relationships is necessary to ensure cooperation and/or distance from the ancestral spirits.

Two ideas about the relationship between humans and the spirits are present in a measure of tension. There is the idea that the different realms are bound together by promises to help one another, and humans can request and receive assistance from the spirit realm. A ritual prayer to *Jubata* is “We care for and help you, *Jubata*, just as you, *Jubata*, care for and help us.”³⁰ It is not just humans that need assistance from the spirits; the spirit beings, from *Jubata* down, need assistance from humans. Mutual assistance is based not on reciprocal love and devotion, but on need and self-interest. In tension with this concept of mutual help, and partly explained by the idea of mutual need and self-interest, is the concept that the realms are essentially in conflict, will not always cooperate, will even try to subvert the interests of the other realm, and will use deceit in order to achieve one’s own ends. This tension is apparent in an origin myth related by H. Bahari, according to which the spirits used to be visible, but because humans always defeated them whenever there was a conflict of interests they became invisible to gain an advantage over humans.³¹

³⁰ Bahari S. *Pantak Sebagai Alat*, 7.

³¹ Bahari S. *Pantak Dalam Hubungan*, 14.

There are other forces that the Dayak must contend with besides the various types of spirits that inhabit the natural order. For the Dayak, as with other animists, whatever helps him sustain his life has some kind of power. He believes that whatever makes an impression upon him, or is impressive, must have a 'soul.' It is the belief in power or forces at this level that orients the Dayak to a life of 'magic.' Life consists in asking permission from the powers, manipulating the powers, and protecting oneself from the powers. This power or force that permeates all things to greater or lesser degrees is 'semangat' or 'mana.'³² *Semangat* is not always clearly distinguished from more personal powers and spirits and is sometimes used interchangeably. It is a key component of a person's being.

The Dayak concept of personhood is different in many respects from most Western concepts that are highly influenced by the Hebrew and Greek concepts of personhood as found in the Bible and the early works of the church fathers. The Dayak concept of personhood reflects their animistic understanding of the unity of the visible and invisible realms that make up the natural order. There are many aspects or distinct entities to what would fall into a broad category of the "soul." It might be more accurate to speak of the soul in the plural rather than singular, or instead, speak of the various spirits within that give life and animate a person. The states of a person's mind and body are determined in large measure by invisible conditions and events of the soul or spirits within.³³

³² 'Mana' is a Polynesian term that is used in *Bahasa Indonesia* as well as English to describe similar concepts of animistic forces in other cultures.

³³ The framework for the following description of the concept of the soul is from Yereimias (12-14).

The first component or element of personhood is the *nyawa*, which is associated with life. Only humans and animals have a *nyawa*.³⁴ (In the *Bahasa Indonesia* translation of the Bible this term is usually used where the Bible refers to what in English is called the spirit of a person.) The *nyawa* leaves the body upon death.

A second component is the *pama*. The *pama* is a soul or spirit associated only with great people, particularly with successful headhunters, war heroes, and shamans of great power and *adat* heads of reputation. Those who possess *pama* have a special connection or relationship with *Jubata*. The *pama* can exist in objects. When a great person dies the *pama* can be preserved in an idol located in a sacred forest clearing (*padagi*). (The term *pama* derives from the Sanskrit *umpama*, meaning 'likeness.')

The idol is the likeness of the one who possessed the *pama*. Some who were believed to have *pama* are worshipped or praised in local village ceremonies in the expectation that the participating individuals or communities will themselves gain some of this power.

It is interesting to note the fluid nature of these beliefs. Without written records each community and generation can easily modify or elaborate the myths. This is apparent in an interesting sequence of overlapping reports. According to one account, the *pama* (or *semangat*) of the highest mythological ancestor, whose name is called upon in rituals in which mantras are used, is called *Dewa Sakti*. 'Dewa Sakti the highest' is a *Jubata* who resides on the Bawakng sacred mountain, and is also known as *Nek Panitah*, alias *Batara Guru*, 'the god who speaks'.³⁵

³⁴ The terms used in the following discussion are a combination of Indonesian and local Dayak words. The overlap in terminology indicates an overlap in worldview with the larger Indonesian population. The differences reflect the Dayak peculiarities on the subject that are mirrored in other Indonesia cultures that would have their own sets of concepts and terms about the human soul.

³⁵ Kanoh *Kanayatn*, 3.

The soul or spirit that receives the most attention, as which is perhaps the most important clue to understanding the Dayak worldview, is the *semangat*.³⁶ What is meant by *semangat* overlaps considerably with mana, but differs in that in many cases the concept coalesces from an impersonal life force into a more clearly defined spirit entity. In inanimate objects (farming tools such as machete, adz, pickax, and mattock) what is referred to as *semangat* would be a life force or power or mana. In significant plants (most significantly rice in all its stages and forms, and trees, especially if large or peculiar) it has a definite sense of spirit entity. In humans it is definitely a spirit entity that comprises an essential part of the total human being and identity.

There is a belief that the power, or *semangat* of someone, animal, or object, is transferable, or can be tapped into through possession of the object or association with it. This is the basis for the infamous Dayak practice of head hunting. (It is the Dayaks who in former generations were called the 'wild men of Borneo.')

The head particularly, beginning with the hair, contains much *semangat* force. Growing one's hair long is believed to be a means of acquiring magical strength, and having long hair is a sign of this strength. War machetes are decorated with the hair of someone who has been beheaded to give the weapon and the person wielding it added power. The power can be transferred to the one who obtains the head and to the community to which he belongs. Having many skulls translates into having much power (as well as popularity and prestige.) Formerly heads were sometimes obtained to accompany a great person after

³⁶ The *Bahasa Indonesia* spelling is *semangat*. Dayak variations on this encompass '*semangat*', '*sumangat*', and '*samangat*'. In common usage the *Bahasa Indonesia* word '*semangat*' is most accurately translated as 'enthusiasm.' It is interesting to compare the Dayak technical usage of the term '*semangat*' as describing an aspect of a person's spiritual makeup with the derivation of the English word from the Greek *enthous, entheos*, "to be possessed or inspired by a god."

death. Head hunting was a good way to start a marriage as well because the extra mana from the skull would bring prosperity to the family.

If a person is frightened by something he or she can receive additional *semangat* by biting on the sharp edge of a machete or sword. The person will gain strength and courage from the mana in this strong steel, sharp, dangerous object by associating with its characteristics in a ritual way. Amulets and fetishes that are infused with *semangat* bestow their power by association to the person possessing them.

People have *semangat* (in the sense of mana) everywhere within themselves. All parts of the body are indwelt by *semangat* from the top of their head to the tips of their feet. It is believed that for evil purposes or to injure someone, it is enough to take a single hair or fingernail clipping and act on the hair or clipping to harm the person. (Generally hair from haircuts is disposed of very carefully to thwart the possibility of it being used against someone for evil purposes.)

The *semangat* also takes the form of an actual spirit entity within the person and serves essentially as his or her life force and very being. The *semangat* can and does periodically leave the body without the person necessarily dying, but when it is absent the person is left without much 'enthusiasm' for life. That is, the person may become sick, weak, depressed, or confused. The *semangat* spirit can leave the body suddenly from fear or from some unnerving event. It does not necessarily flee far from the body, but it may take a few moments after the extreme fright before it returns to the body. Then the person is able to calm down and carry on with business. But the person will be in an abnormal state until such time as it returns. In extreme cases the *semangat* can become lost and not know its way back to the body. If this happens while the person is conscious

the person (or someone else, such as a parent on behalf of a child) can call back the *semangat* while making motions with his hands to catch it and put it back in through the person's ear. A body that has been deserted by the *semangat* for an extended time will become sick and may die. One tradition holds that it is important not to say the name of a sick person, because the person's wandering *semangat* will hear the name spoken, be confused, and not return to the person.³⁷ Rituals of healing often involve calling the *semangat* back to the body and persuading it to enter again, or calling to it to help it find its way after getting lost. It is usually not difficult to get the wandering *semangat* to return to the body. Usually simply calling it back, or making the proper motions will suffice. In more extreme cases a shaman must be employed to do the job.

There are about as many reasons for the *semangat* to leave the body as there are physical dangers to the body. These events often coincide. It can happen that the *semangat* of a small child can be washed away from it in the wash water. A woman's *semangat* sometimes leaves after she gives birth, and she needs to undergo a ritual after childbirth to call it back. A Westerner might diagnose that a problem or threat to one's health and well being has physical causes, and would look for physical means to remedy the situation. A Dayak would see the same physical phenomenon and might also diagnose ostensibly physical causes that need to be remedied, but would also perceive that the *semangat* has been disturbed or has fled, and would take measures to restore the *semangat* to the body as well. Some illnesses are recognized as being treatable by doctors but others are believed to be treatable only by dealing with the *semangat* or other spiritual aspects of a person.³⁸

³⁷ Yereimias, 5.

³⁸ Barrett, 240.

The *semangat* spirit leaving the body during sleep and having experiences is thought to cause dreams. Dreams involving other people indicate that their *semangats* met while they were both sleeping. There is a danger in too quickly waking someone who might be dreaming. The *semangat* that has left the body in the dream might not be able to find its way back, or might take some time to return, and the person will be disoriented until the *semangat* returns.

The *semangat* is thought not to die with the body. It is the *semangat* that goes to 'heaven' or back to *Jubata*. It often lingers after the death of the body and needs to be encouraged to move on to 'heaven' or *Jubata*, or just away.

There are several other spirits that are not commonly spoken about, and which may not exist in all Dayak belief systems. The Kanayatn believe that there is a spirit called the '*ayu*' whose place is in the rear of the body, to protect one from what comes from behind. It does not wander or cause dreams. It stays with the body even after death. The term '*sukat*' refers to part of the body from the back of the top of the head to the top of the spinal cord. This region is referred to as a spirit, or is the location of the spirit. Sickness can be caused by a lack of *sukat*. The '*bohol*' refers to the chest, particularly where the heart is beating. Loss of this spirit is often the cause of sickness in children. It is sometimes referred to as a spirit, sometimes as the foundation of life or an element of life. The '*Leo Bangkule*' can mean the heart, liver, lungs, and all the central internal organs. It is also used to mean the spirit of this part of the body. The '*nenet sanjadi*' is the windpipe that also has a spiritual element.³⁹

Descriptions of the soul or spirit components of a person differ in detail among different Dayak sub-cultures. Reports vary considerably, even from within the same sub-

³⁹ Yeremias, 14.

culture. The worldview and general concept of the person as consisting in a multiplicity of spiritual components remains the same across the sub-cultures. Also consistent is the notion that disturbances in the visible physical body usually have an invisible spiritual component that must be dealt with as well as the outward manifestations presented by the physical body if complete health and harmony are to be restored or maintained.

In this worldview the body is not the whole person but is just the visible component of the person. The organs within are related to the core of the person. The heart and liver are generally believed to be the seat of the emotions and intentionality, and the brain the locus of thought. The heart, liver, and brain possess a life force (*mana*) that can be acquired by others through cannibalism.⁴⁰ The skin is permeated by invisible openings in various parts of the body, such as the palms of the hand, soles of the feet, hair follicles, and the region of the anterior fontanel. These 'openings' allow the entry of unseen substances that cause illness. Rain or air may enter and turn into small stones inside the head. Spirits might leave invisible wounds and deposit small objects inside (that the shaman appears to remove during curing ceremonies). The *semangat* leaves through the anterior fontanel during dreams. The visible body consists of an invisible interior, contained by the skin, which allows for the movement of invisible substances into and out of the body.⁴¹

As mentioned above, dreams occur when the *semangat* leaves the body. In dreams the *semangat* can feel a range of emotions; is capable of seeing, hearing, and smelling, and engages in interaction with others. Some believe that the *semangat* in dreams can act with intentionality and can make moral choices. In some cases dream

⁴⁰ In the Dayak-Madurese ethnic conflict of January-February 1997 there were many reports of cannibalism by the Dayaks of these organs of the Madurese they killed by beheading.

⁴¹ Barrett, 242.

experiences are as legitimate as waking experiences.⁴² Dreams can therefore be another way of knowing things besides what is experienced during wakefulness.⁴³ Other non-human spirits are most often experienced by the *semangat* in dreams. These appearances can be deceiving though because the spirits can take on any forms.

The Dayak belief that there are other ways of knowing things besides what is experienced through the senses, as in dreams, for example, is an essential component of their worldview. It poses an interesting alternative to Western empirically based epistemologies. For example, a church member in the village of Bagan Asam was offering herbal remedies to people for a variety of ailments. He reported that the information as to what herbs and leaves to use, the measures of each substance, and the method of preparation would come to him in dreams. He considered this to be an equally reliable and valid source of information as experimentation or instruction. I learned about this after the church elders had first questioned me in depth about my understanding of obtaining knowledge through dreams without giving me any hint of the specific issue they were trying to come to terms with.

There is considerable communication and interaction between humans and the invisible realms. The gods and spirits communicate important information to humans. The methods are indirect, but it is believed to be real communication. Along with dreams, omens from birds are a very common way that humans receive messages from the invisible realm. There are various myths or legends that explain the origins of omens from birds as modes of communication. Dayaks are said to have one of the most developed traditions of receiving omens from birds. The meaning of the omen depends

⁴² Barrett, 241.

⁴³ Dreams feature frequently in Dayak testimonies of conversion to Christianity. Conversion is often reported to occur because of information, insights, or events experienced in dreams.

on the kind of bird, the duration of its call, the frequency of its call, and the direction of the call in relation to the person. For instance, if a person is walking down a trail and a particular bird calls from the right it is a sign of good luck; if it calls from the left it means bad luck and can be a reason to postpone or cancel a journey or activity. The direction a particular bird flies as one descends from the house has a meaning. Usually the omens are taken as warnings and incline the person to change his or her plans. Less frequently the omens are taken as confirmation of plans or actions.

The spirits communicate through other animals besides birds. For example, if a dog vomits at the door of a house while the guests are waiting for the bride or groom at a wedding, the wedding will be postponed (for more reason than just to clean up the dog vomit). Some would interpret this as a sign to call off the wedding entirely. If while a groom is walking to the bride's house a branch falls in front of him he will postpone the visit and 'do *adat*', that is make some kind of payment or sacrifice to restore whatever is out of harmony to *membuang sial* (cast away the bad luck). The spirits can also communicate through the entrails of sacrificial animals. This type of communication usually requires the expertise or special gifts of a shaman to divine the meaning and determine how those concerned should respond to the message.

A further word is in order regarding the Dayak animistic understanding of cause and effect and 'magic.' Causes and effects, particularly those spanning the division between the visible and invisible realms, are not related in this worldview in the same ways that causes and effects are related in Newtonian physics. They are related by a principle of correspondence. Actions or events that occur in one realm can be mirrored or paralleled in the other realm. The correspondence can work both directions, from the

visible to the invisible realms, and vice versa. Dayaks see what we categorize as 'magic' as a natural event that operates at a different level of cause and effect. Cause and effect at this level is not as immediately apparent and works by correspondence.

In the performance of animistic rituals and ceremonies it is sometimes apparent to observers (including members of the culture) that deception, or legerdemain is involved.⁴⁴ There are several ways that observers respond to the apparent incongruity of believing in invisible forces while observing that material objects purported to be related to the spiritual realm are actually being manipulated by sleight of hand. One response is to dismiss the whole belief structure as false, and to wonder how people can be so naïve as to let themselves be so easily deceived. Alternatively one can respond by recognizing that the practitioner (the shaman) and the participants are not necessarily deceived; they do recognize what is going on physically. What the Western observer usually overlooks is the belief, or expectation of the animist that events in the visible world will be mirrored, or will correspond to events in the invisible world.⁴⁵ Correspondence or parallel events are loosely analogous to how a magnet moving unseen under a paper can move a paper clip on top of the paper. The correspondence between events in the two realms is not the same causal relationship as the magnet and the paper clip, but when one happens, there is a corresponding mirror-event in the invisible realm. The difference in the worldviews can be further illustrated by looking again at the magnet and paper clip. Magnetic forces and gravitational attraction are still not completely understood, but

⁴⁴ Lee Siegel's *Net of Magic: Wonders and Deceptions in India* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1991) provides a fascinating treatment of the relationship between legerdemain and 'supernatural' powers in India. Although his research took place in India his observations are relevant far beyond that specific culture.

⁴⁵ Nevill Drury, *The Elements of Shamanism*. (Rockport, MA: Element Books Inc., 1989, 1991), 34.

Western empirical science assumes that there is a physical law that relates these causes and effects. In the animistic worldview there is no need to search for laws that govern the relationship, nor would one necessarily be able to find this sort of explanation should one seek it.

The late Djonli Kolopita, (a KGBI missionary from Minahasa and my former partner in ministry) related an example of this curious mixture of legerdemain and the connection to the invisible realm. He related how he called one evening on a friend whose father was a *dukun* (shaman). As he came up quietly from behind his friend's house he observed someone doing something suspicious outside the house. He approached unnoticed, and observed his friend's father picking grubs out of the wooden boards of the house siding. The *dukun* went back into the house without realizing Djonli had observed him. Djonli waited outside for a few moments and then entered the house where the *dukun* was treating a patient. In the course of the treatment he passed a drinking glass along the man's bare leg. As he moved the glass he deftly flicked the grubs one by one into the glass. He had hidden the grubs between his fingers and was able to make it appear that the grubs came from within the person. As he 'removed' the grubs he explained to the patient that he was removing the source of the affliction.

The question in a situation like this is whether the patient is aware that there is sleight of hand or really believes that the grubs 'caused' his ailment. There is also the question of whether the *dukun* actually believes that this provokes a mirrored event in the spirit world, and that he is actually extracting from the body the invisible elements that caused the ailment. Another possibility is that the *dukun* looks on this as a way to supplement his living by practicing 'magic', that is, not really believing that he is doing

anything other than convincing the patient that he is being cured, and making an income off of it. The safest conclusion is that it is not at all straightforward; there are many different things going on in this.

Putting aside this skepticism, the point here is that within the larger framework of this worldview, when the shaman removes a stone or other object from a person's body, he is believed to be somehow manipulating events in the invisible realm that will in turn have a more direct causal relationship with events in the visible realm. In the sleight of hand act of removing the grubs from the man's legs the shaman is believed to be effecting the removal of the invisible, immaterial elements in the invisible realm that are causing the man's ailments in the physical realm.

When tools are placed in or on graves, the deceased is thought to be equipped in a mirrored way with a corresponding spiritual equivalent in the invisible realm. The people do not believe that the deceased is using the actual physical objects, but that in a corresponding way provisions are being given to the deceased. Food offered before idols or on special platforms by the side of a trail is not expected to be physically eaten by the spirits. It corresponds to or mirrors food in the invisible realm that the spirits can eat. At banquets certain foods are prepared as offerings to the spirits who are ceremonially called to join the meal. The actual food prepared for the spirits may or may not be eaten by the human guests. While the human guests are feasting, their feast is mirrored in the spiritual realm and the spirits can eat to their satisfaction. The spirits, who rely to some extent on the living to supply them with food, are pleased with those who supplied the food at the banquet. They will then work for the good of that family and community, or at least not disturb them.

Another element in this complex relationship between the visible and the invisible realm is that the spirits, particularly those of the lower orders, are finite in power and perception and can therefore be deceived. It is believed that they can be tricked into thinking that they have been honored, granted gifts, or fed, by being offered less costly or more readily available imitations of the real things. There is a sense that just as the human eye can be deceived through sleight of hand, so too can the perceptions of the spirits. However, it is difficult to separate this notion from the principle of correspondence. It is also the case, in this belief system, that an imitation object can work the same effect in the invisible realm as a genuine article. A discarded cooking pot with a huge hole in it placed on a grave site might mirror a cooking pot in the invisible realm for the deceased as well as a new cooking pot placed on the grave would. Deception and imagination are woven together in this principle of correspondence and mirroring between the visible and invisible realms.

Ceremonies and Rituals- examples

To this point I have examined and described what I perceive to be fundamental components of the Dayak worldview. My contention is that these components are necessary elements in the process of formulating a Christian theology and approach to missions and evangelism that is not just an overlay of Western concepts. I have demonstrated that the Dayaks generally understand the natural order to be a unity, with part of it visible, and part of it invisible, and that there are principles of interaction between these two realms that together make up the natural order. I turn now to more detailed descriptions of the most commonly mentioned rituals and practices of these Dayaks in West Kalimantan with whom I have some experience. In the following section

I hope to demonstrate further the expectations the Dayaks have of their belief system, that is, what they expect of their interaction with divine, spiritual, or 'supernatural' forces. I do this by looking at a wide range of behaviors encompassed in their repertoire of activities in which they engage directly with the powers and beings in the invisible realm. I look at what they expect of these forces or powers and beings as they move through life passages, encounter special needs, and face personal and community crises.

Some of the following descriptions are more detailed than others, depending on the sources. I want to reiterate that this is not meant to be a comprehensive ethnography but a composite picture to describe the worldview of the Dayaks that make up the majority of the membership in the KGBI churches of a circumscribed area in West Kalimantan. To make this ethnography I would need to examine a ritual in detail among all the different sub-cultures for comparison, or make an exhaustive examination of all the rituals in one sub-culture. I have not attempted to do either of these for this is not my intent. The KGBI ministry encompasses many different Dayak sub-cultures and I am looking for an overall description that will serve as the basis for developing theology and practice that are the best fit with this culture. What follow are meant to be treated as examples illustrating the expectations the Dayaks have of their belief system. In each description that follows the reader should add "In some sub-cultures . . . " or "An example of . . ."

The Kendayan term for their beliefs and practices is '*nyangahatn*' or '*nyangahatn ke Jubata*.' In accounts written in *Bahasa Indonesia* the Kendayan word is usually used rather than *Bahasa Indonesia* terms that are translated into English as worship or prayer. This is to say that the Dayak authors of these articles are not completely satisfied that the

Indonesian terms adequately translate the Kendayan term. The *Bahasa Indonesia* words come from Arabic (through Islam). Indonesian Christians have adopted much Islamic vocabulary for religious ideas and activities. Sometimes the words have been given slightly different Christian meanings, but there is substantial overlap in the usage. But *nyangahatn* does not fit into the normal range of meanings of this vocabulary. At first glance it appears that 'worship' and 'prayer' are appropriate words to use, but on closer examination it appears that 'worship and prayer for the purpose of negotiation' might be closer to the meaning. This will, I trust, become apparent below.

Most of the rituals and ceremonies described below have a very important social dimension in addition to the obvious focus on spiritual elements. Most of the rituals and ceremonies involve the whole community, even though something may have happened that concerns only an individual, or family (such as childbirth.) The community functions with the hope, and assurance, that if they perform the rituals and celebrate the festivals properly they will be assured of prosperity, not just as individuals, but also as a community. For most events described below the whole community is expected to share the cost and take part in the preparations. All the mantras, songs, dances, and offerings are offered for the sake of or on behalf of each member of the community.⁴⁶ There is a democratic nature to the festivals and rituals; everyone works for the common good as they are able. Many of the rituals and ceremonies serve to mark the cycles and seasons. (This function has perhaps greater significance than in Canada, far from the equator, where snow clearly marks a change of seasons.) Furthermore, each time a ritual is

⁴⁶ Paulus Florus, "Pesta Rakyat: Kebudayaan Universal." ("Peoples' Festival: Universal Culture.") *Kalimantan Review*, No. 4 Tahun II (Mei – Agustus, 1993): 4.

performed it reinforces the relationship between humans and the invisible elements of the natural order.

Balalak- Closed village

The most frequently mentioned and most commonly encountered ritual is called variously the *balalak* or *balalang* (ward off, or prevent), *tutup kampung* (close the village), and *pantang kampung* (time of taboo in the village). The *balalak* encompasses many aspects of religious practice in West Kalimantan. An understanding of *balalak* helps one to understand the significance of other related behaviors. The *balalak* is a ritual usually performed yearly and additionally in crisis situations as needed, sometimes three or four times a year. It is performed to appeal to *Jubata* to protect the village from danger or a crisis the village is experiencing that has been diagnosed as being caused by some breach of *adat* in the community that has disturbed the harmony with the invisible realm. The threats might be floods, droughts, pests or other natural disturbances. If the harvest has been poor the ritual is performed to ensure that the harvest will be better next season. If there has been an obvious breach of *adat*, such as violence within the village, or with members from another village, or deaths from contagious diseases – anything that poses a threat to the community – the ritual is intended to settle the *adat* by making the appropriate sacrifices in the hope that peace, safety, and prosperity will be restored to the village.

The customs and requirements for a successful *balalak* are many and detailed, and differ even between neighbouring villages. What is consistent among all villages is that those who do not cooperate in the rituals and ceremonies are subject to heavy fines in the form of chickens, pigs, or large pottery jugs (*tempayan*). By not cooperating, even

inadvertently, an individual can jeopardize the effectiveness of the ritual and must compensate the community for the expenses of a failed ritual. The *balalak* ritual must be performed exactly according to custom to be effective. It is referred to as *tutup kampung* because during the performance of the ritual no one is permitted to enter or leave the village. Symbolic objects are placed at the entrances to the village to warn travelers that they must not enter the village. Generally no one is permitted to work for the day. Residents must stay at home, in their houses, while certain rituals are performed such as the slaughter of sacrificial chickens and pigs, and the reading of the mantras at the location where the spirit concerned is believed to reside. During a *balalak* there must be no loud noises or talking, or music. In some cases residents are not allowed to cook, eat red meat, and especially must not have big fires or lots of smoke. The village must remain quite and appear deserted. The restrictions apply in some cases up to three days.

Ritual offerings in almost all ceremonies, including the *balalak*, involve chickens. If the danger, crisis, or known violation of *adat* is great then pigs are sacrificed as well. The greater the crisis or the violation, the larger the offering required to put things right. Ritual offerings in this and other ceremonies also involve various food and produce offerings (for example, rice on the stalk, un-milled or milled, cooked plain or with spices, and eggs).

The main goal of the *balalak* is appeasement of spirit powers that are displeased with something in the village and that are causing something threatening to happen. Each *balalak* involves considerable expense. Even though the inhabitants share the cost it is still burdensome. Besides the cost of the sacrificial animals and foodstuffs, there is also the cost of a full day of idleness. The restrictions of other taboo days combined with

those of the *balalak* constitute a significant impediment to economic development in a village.

Farming

Because of the central place of swidden and wet-field rice cultivation in Dayak culture and subsistence there are many different rituals and ceremonies aimed at dealing with all the things that can go wrong, and for ensuring that when things have gone well that things will continue to go well.

The yearly agricultural cycle starts with ceremonies informing *Jubata* of their intentions and asking for permission to work the land, for help in their work, for protection from accidents and the dangers of nature. The ceremony requires considerable preparation. Every household in the community must contribute to the cost, the main cost being the purchase of the chickens and pigs for sacrifice. The number required depends on whether they have been through, or are experiencing, a difficult season, and the prosperity of the people at the time. Pigs for mountaintop sacrifices must be large because they are meant to feed or satisfy spirits from far and wide. The ceremony takes a full day to perform. There is usually a procession up to the summit of a mountain or high hill where *Jubata* resides. The animals are blessed by the 'priest', then sacrificed, cooked, and eaten in a banquet on the mountaintop.

At the end of the farming year there is a ceremony (*Nabo' Padagi*) that has elements of making atonement for the transgressions of the past year. This ceremony is addressed to the ancestral spirits as well as to *Jubata*.

Every year or two every swidden farmer must clear land that has gone back to forest cover to replenish the soil after previously being farmed. There is a ceremony to

guide making the decision as to what particular area to clear, and when it should be done. The decision is made on the basis of omens, particularly from birds. Before beginning to fell the trees and clear the land the farmer must inform the spirits on the land and make appeasement and compensation offerings. If the farmer does not make the appropriate offerings in the correct manner the spirits will not consent to the land being used and will disrupt the process. The farmer will be in physical danger from accidents from tools, or from falling trees or branches, or from snakes and other wild animals. The angered spirits could cause larger scale disasters, such as landslides, floods, and destructive storms, if the farmer fells the trees and works the land without requesting permission and making compensation offerings.⁴⁷

After permission has been sought and granted, and the omens indicate that the time and location are right, the tools used to clear the land and work the soil must be blessed. This blessing calls on the *semangat* or mana present in every significant object in the Dayak's world. It is a matter of making the best use of every source of power, because there are so many things that can disrupt or thwart one's efforts. Before the work actually starts another ceremony calls for blessings on the work, that one's labours will be blessed.

⁴⁷ This particular connection between having to request and receive the proper permission to work the land, and the natural disasters that might result, was illustrated to me dramatically after a particularly heavy deluge that soaked and flooded a large section of the Kapuas delta region. The heavy rains caused a large landslide on Belungai Mountain. The large scar halfway up the mountainside was clearly visible from my home in Tayan, about 25 kilometers away. I had been away in Pontianak during the storm, and had been delayed getting back home because of another landslide near Pontianak that had blocked the highway. My analysis was to attribute the landslide to the rainstorm. In the local coffee shop in Tayan I heard that the cause of the landslide was the commercial logging being done on the other side of Belungai Mountain. I found it hard to conceive that logging equipment would shake the ground enough to precipitate a landslide on the opposite side of the large mountain. But I was trying to make physical connections between the events. The person with whom I was talking was connecting the landslide disaster to the desecration of the forest with the logging that was being done without regard to the spirits in that region.

Every year at the time of planting there is a ceremony to bless the seeds, and a three-day period of *pantang ladang*- taboo to go the fields. Wet-cultivation rice is first planted very densely in special beds, and then each stalk is transplanted into the larger field by hand. This step in the cycle is particularly critical and usually involves the sacrifice of a chicken. At many stages in the cycle, particularly the transplanting stage, some will make vows that if they are granted good crops then they will offer some sacrifice to the spirits. These vows are a form of negotiating for favours with the spirits.

The land itself must be blessed in order for it to be fertile. Again there are ceremonies specifically for the blessing of the land to ensure fertility. In this ceremony a bamboo pole is split on one end and stretched open to hold a pottery jug (*tempayan*) or a plate on the top. Offerings, such as eggs and un-milled rice, or rice still on the stalk, are placed on or in the container. Prayers are said, and then the apparatus is stuck upright in the ground in the middle of the field. Prayers are offered again so that from this offering place *Jubata* will watch over the field and bring a good harvest.

When ceremonies are performed at the field the names of the crop pests are not mentioned. Should the names be pronounced it would serve to call those same pests. It is not the pests who would hear themselves being called, but the spirits or forces that animate the pests would hear and come. This ceremony at the field can be done by the farmer, or with the priest. The family eats a ritual meal in the *pondok* (simple hut constructed in the middle of the field for shelter from the mid-day sun). The meal includes specially prepared foods associated with most rituals.

Tropical forests are known for their diversity of plant and animal life. When one is trying to cultivate a crop in this climate there is an amazing diversity of plants, fungi,

diseases, birds, rodents, and wild animals that want their share of the crop. Even though modern chemical fertilizers, herbicides, fungicides, pesticides, and alternative farming techniques are not unheard of, for the most part the Dayaks cannot afford these inputs and the tools or training to apply them. Few are willing to take the risk of staking their subsistence on an unproven technique. But even if they could (and some do), there is still the feeling that the real problem lies deeper than the blight that is turning the rice plants yellow. There may well be a spirit of some kind that is responsible.

I witnessed a procedure designed to deal with crop blight. The residents of a village on the banks of the Kapuas assembled in one man's small wooden riverboat. They brought baskets of food and gongs and drums. They set off from the bank in a cacophony of drums, gongs, chanting, and shouting. They towed an old dugout canoe behind the riverboat. After they had traveled a distance down the river they placed their food baskets in the canoe and set it adrift. The noise from the drums, gongs, and chanting was meant to attract the attention of the spirit (or spirits) who apparently was (were) hungry and eating their rice crops. They enticed the spirit with the food offerings, and once it was lured far enough downstream from the village the dugout canoe was set adrift with the spirit still feasting on the offerings. By the time the spirit realized what was happening it would be too far away from the village to bother the crops any longer.

Before the harvest can begin the farmers must first ask permission of the spirits in the rice to harvest. The spirits are also informed before the first rice from the harvest is cooked, and the spirits are called to stay with the field to ensure the success of the next year's crop.

The Harvest Festival

When the harvest is complete and the rice is to be stored in the granaries the *semangat* of the rice must be properly honored and requested to stay with the rice. If the *semangat* of the rice leaves then the rice will be subject to spoilage and pests and will not be sufficient to last until the next harvest. The ceremony inviting the rice *semangat* to stay is called *naik dango*. The *naik dango* harvest festival is being developed in larger centers into a cultural festival and tourist attraction with government support and sponsorship. It is the occasion for official thanksgiving ceremonies and cultural displays and attractions. Dayak civil servants have Rupiah 5,000 per year taken off their wages as an obligatory offering to the Naik Dango festival fund.

The *dango* refers to a small temporary shelter in which to rest and get relief from the sun and rain out in a field. *Dango* also refers to a granary for storing harvested rice near one's residence. The granary is called a *dango padi*, a rice house, where the living spirits (*semangat*) of the rice live, just like humans have their houses. After the rice is stored in the granary it is taboo to enter or go up (*naik*) to the storehouse until after the *naik dango* ceremony. Whatever rice is needed between the harvest and the *naik dango* festival is stored in another location where it can be accessed.

In the *naik dango* festival and ceremony the whole farming society reflects on their activities of the past in relation to the greatness of *Jubata*. It is a covenant ceremony, in which whatever has been obtained through the goodness of *Jubata* is offered back to him to be stored and cared for. This is more than a thanksgiving ritual. Offerings given and worship performed with the expectations of receiving benefits. ("We help you, *Jubata*, so you will help us.") In effect it becomes *Jubata's* responsibility

to care for the stored rice. At the same time the people take on a corresponding responsibility to obey the traditional regulations of *adat*.⁴⁸

Preparations for the festival begin long beforehand. Immediately preceding the festival itself in which the community conveys its intentions to hold the festival to *Jubata* and the ancestral spirits and asks for their blessings on it. This ritual involves making offerings, among other things, of fried rice cakes and *ketan* rice (a type of sticky rice reserved for special occasions), and betel nut (with the accompanying chalk and several types of leaves required to make it ready for chewing). These are offered while informing *Jubata* of the family or community's intent to hold a *naik dango* ceremony. The intent also is to inform the ancestral spirits that are in the area and those that are still journeying back home from afar.

The essence of the *naik dango* ceremony consists in three main activities. It is held in the morning in the granary of the one hosting the ceremony. The *adat* priest (Kendayan: *panyangahatn*) reads the prayers (Kendayan: *nyangahatn*) in the manner of mantras. The initial component is the asking of forgiveness for transgressions of *adat* from *Jubata*, and discarding, or getting rid of the transgressions (*membuang dosa*).⁴⁹ The second component consists in calling the rice *semangat* that are still flying about or wandering about, to gather in the granary. (According to legend rice is mankind's younger sibling and needs to be loved and cared for as family.) The rice *semangat* must reside with the physical rice in the granary if it is to maintain its life, not spoil, and be

⁴⁸ Wolas Krenak and Vincentius Julipin, "Naik Dango: Upacara Syukuran Padi." ("Going up to the Granary: Rice Thanksgiving Ceremony." *Manusia Dayak: Orang Kecil Yang Terperangkap Modernisasi*. Edited by Stepanus Djuweng. (Pontianak: Institute of Dayakology Research and Development, 1996), 127.

⁴⁹ Transgressions constitute violations of *adat* and should not be equated with Christian concepts of sin. Similarly *membuang dosa* should not be equated with forgiveness of sins in a Christian sense.

sufficient until the next harvest. Alcoholic drinks and food offers are placed in the granary for the benefit of the rice *semangat*. The third component consists in prayers requesting peace and prosperity in the year to come, until the next harvest. Sacrificial offerings of chickens, food, and other objects 'used' by the spirits accompany each aspect of the ceremony. Special festival foods are served at the banquets.

The *naik dango* expresses a key element of Dayak culture and worldview. It is perhaps the fullest expression of the agrarian nature of the culture.

According to tradition, whenever one wishes for safety or security (*keselamatan*) then this ceremony must be held, whenever one earnestly desires that no disasters will happen during the calendar year. 'Disasters' means not obtaining what one needs for life, that the harvest obtained has not been blessed. Because of this the *Naik Dango* to the Kedayan Dayaks represents the visible expression of the moral responsibility of the family to *Jubata Nek Patampa*.⁵⁰

Note the use of *keselamatan* in this context. *Keselamatan* is the word Christians use for 'salvation'. In the context of the *naik dango* it means avoiding the harmful effects of forces of nature that will harm the crops. The meaning encompasses warding off malevolent forces. Note also the use of 'moral responsibility' in this context. Moral responsibility encompasses the individual, family, and community, and consists in keeping *adat*, that is, ensuring that all the proper taboos and rituals are observed through the year.

Passages

Adat traditions and regulations cover almost every aspect of a person's life from before birth to beyond the grave.

Birth. The pregnant mother, the father, and the midwife have their respective obligations, rituals, and taboos to observe to ensure the safety and health of the mother

⁵⁰ Krenak & Julipin *Naik Dango*, 129. (My translation.)

and the child. Pregnancy, labour, and delivery are among the most mysterious, awe-inspiring, and frightening things in the human life cycle. It is not surprising to find a multitude of rituals and ceremonies, customs, and taboos associated with it. During her pregnancy the expectant mother must observe many taboos and avoid doing certain things to keep the unborn child safe from harmful spirits and powers. The father also has a long list of taboos to keep during his wife's pregnancy and during her labour and delivery. The midwife protects the labouring mother from harmful spirits with her own rituals, such as throwing rice and salt at the evil spirits to keep them away from the mother. One informant reported that a midwife pulled out any nails that the mother had put in the walls of her house during her pregnancy to facilitate, by the principle of correspondence, that the baby will not get stuck and will come out easily. The same midwife ordered a father to remove the lumber piled up under the house in storage for a building project, with the explanation that it was somehow connected to the safety of the mother in labour. When there is a birth in the village it is taboo for anyone in the village to go out to the fields for one day. (The consequences of breaking this taboo are only personal bad luck: they would not affect the whole village as with other prohibitions or taboos do.)

When a child is born the whole community recognizes the event and also has ritual obligations. Paul Nyerom Kano vividly expresses the impact of a birth in a Dayak village:

From birth in the world a Dayak is greeted with magical pantheistic rituals. On the day of birth of a baby, the village is united, and the day is a holiday. All the residents of the village must not go to work. Their *gotong-royong* [shared labour workdays] must also be postponed. This means that a day of birth of a Dayak is a holy day. He is born bathed in blood with the suffering and pains of his mother that gives life to him. So the day must be accepted as sacred and glorified. The afterbirth must be buried below the steps of the house or at a fork in the road or path. This means that wherever he goes, whether to work or to travel about, at some time or other he will return to his parents' house. This is a sign and teaching so that children must attend to their parents and

their home village. Siblings are called with the term '*seet pusat*'. This term states that siblings are like coconuts on one stalk. They are attached to each other with the umbilical cord that is rooted in the mother's womb. So they may not despise their siblings and mother and father. Each person's *semangat* is tied to the *semangat* of the others. They can live because of the knife in the hand of the midwife that cuts their umbilical cord.⁵¹

Circumcision. When they approach adolescence, Dayak boys are circumcised, and traditionally Dayak girls must have their ears pierced. (Almost all girls now have their ears pierced as infants, but boys are circumcised at about the same age as a Muslim boy would be circumcised.) For Dayak boys, circumcision means getting rid of bad luck and also is a sign that he is approaching adulthood. It is performed in hope that the future will bring him good luck, that all his work will be profitable, and that his *semangat* will always travel a straight path.

Marriage. The *adat* for marriage ceremonies is complicated, and varies considerably from place to place. Most would follow the general outline of the following aspects. Each step in the process involves being sensitive to communication from the spirits through omens, making appropriate offerings and sacrifices, ensuring that the ancestral spirits, and the living immediate and extended family members are honored, and that the role of the community is acknowledged.

Once the couple have had an *adat* ceremony in which they exchange presents to formalize their intention to be married, there is a ceremonial meeting to determine the auspicious date for the wedding and who will be the *picara* (person versed in *adat* and entrusted with the role of ensuring that everything meets the requirements of *adat*), who will serve as witnesses, and who will perform the many other functions and duties in this event that often involves most of the village. In many of the decisions the family is guided by *adat*.

⁵¹ Kanoh *Kanayatn*, 5 (My translation)

The *picara* oversees the proceedings that entail several types of animal sacrifices and food offerings. The main sacrifice is of a pig, slaughtered with accompanying prayers and rituals. It is butchered into large portions and served on special plates for all the family members. Each family member, even distant relatives receive a portion. They are ritually given the plate, which might also have some chicken on it, and must eat a little of it as a sign of their blessing of the couple, and their respect for the greater family. This sacrificial ritual is very important in the wedding process. Without this ritual the wedding is not legal or complete according to *adat*. In another marriage ritual the couple are fanned with a chicken that is waved over them. The chicken is then slaughtered. Blood from the chicken is dabbed on their foreheads.

The couple and witnesses sit together and are given advice from the village head and the *adat* priest. Following the speeches of advice, the servers bring out the symbolic food that includes the types of food associated with most other *adat* events (*tumpi* and *poe*). A special serving tray on a small pedestal is loaded with a variety of foods and other objects. It will have various types of special rice cakes, and rice cooked in sections of bamboo, one or two chickens, some pork, and eggs, a wick lamp, certain types of leaves, and spices. The *adat* priest prays over these items that represent the things the young couple will face in their lives together. The *adat* priest prays for a blessing on the couple. The symbolic food is then distributed to the guests.

The *adat* priest offers prayers in every room of the house and outside the house, so that *Jubata* will help in each of these places and bless the couple. Some of the same foods described above are wrapped in leaves with blood and meat and offered to *Jubata*. After the *adat* priest is finished with the prayers he takes a glass of water and sprinkles

the house with a flower or basil leaf. It is particularly important to sprinkle the lintel of the door.

During the wedding banquet the couple sit on display to be witnessed. In some situations the guests do not eat together with the couple, but will be served outside the room or house, and will then take their plates into the room where the couple is sitting. The guests will eat there in front of the couple, and then offer greetings and gifts as they leave.

The wedding also includes the ritual payment of those who had a role in it. These payments consist of portions of the sacrificed animals, for example: the pig's feet for the one who led the ceremony, the jaw for the village head, and 'two fingers width' of pig skin for the family. If the family is not given this portion of pigs skin, or if they refuse to accept it, the family's relationship with the couple or with the in-laws, is considered broken.

The details of the wedding *adat* in any one village would constitute a small book. The point I want to illustrate here is that each step of the *adat* wedding acknowledges the involvement of *Jubata* and the ancestral spirits, the immediate and extended family, and the community. The wedding ceremony reinforces the participants' awareness and concept of how everything- visible and invisible- is tied together and must work in harmony if individuals, families, and communities are to prosper.

Death. Elaborate and detailed customs have developed around the death of an individual in the community. The rituals primarily focus on ensuring that the *semangat* of the deceased does not linger around and haunt the living. Closely related to ensuring that the deceased does not disturb the living are the *adat* rituals intended to ensure that

harmony in the community and with the invisible realm is maintained or restored, again for the sake of the living. The rituals also provide a framework for expressing grief at the loss of the family member, friend, or member of the community. In most cases, especially in the case of death from illness, the person dies in the presence of family and friends. At the moment the person breathes his or her last breath the measures begin and the body is buried within twenty-four hours. Immediately after the person has died the *adat* articles needed for the funeral are assembled.

The way a person dies influences the *semangat*'s journey to the realm of *Jubata*. The prescribed *adat* rituals, payments, and sacrifices reflect this belief and differ according to how a person dies: old age, illness (of which several categories are defined), childbirth, murder, hunting accident, or war (blood death). A 'blood death' results in a long journey to *Jubata*. Death from childbirth involves a pause along the journey. Each of these situations needs to be addressed in the *adat*. *Adat* differs if the deceased was a husband or a wife, if the death was in someone else's house or village, or if the death occurred in the forest on a trail. *Adat* is understandably different again if there was fault involved in the death. In each case most of the community members are involved besides the family. The *adat* settlements are different depending on the type of death and the identity or role of the person in the community, but the funerals are essentially the same for all types of death.⁵²

As with a community birth, it is taboo to work out in the fields on a day when someone in the village has died. If one works he is subject to an *adat* fine. Working is interpreted as a sign that the person who continued working caused the death. This is evident from his lack of grief shown by his continuing with his work.

⁵² Aten, 10.

Funerals. As soon as the person is dead, the deceased is given provisions of money, placed in the palm of his or her hand, and other things are assembled around the body. The *semangat* is given words of instructions as to how and where to travel, such as “Okay, now we are going to travel. Don’t turn to the left or to the right. Don’t disturb those who are still living.”⁵³ At the same moment the doors of the house must be opened, so that the *semangat* of the deceased can travel without obstacle. When the body is carried to the graveyard someone bearing burning coals and carrying a machete blade in his hand precedes it. The coffin is carried with the feet to the front to ensure that the deceased’s *semangat* can travel easily. Invisible obstacles that block the path of the *semangat* will be cleared and the evil spirits that intend harm will be kept at a distance by the fire and the machete.

There is customarily no singing at funerals. Singing is taken as a sign of happiness and implies that the singer is happy the person died and is not grieving.

During the committal of the body elderly community members are stationed about 500 metres from the graveside to call out to the *semangat* of those who go to the graveside. Every person must have someone calling to his *semangat*, to ensure that the mourner’s *semangat* does not follow the *semangat* of the deceased and thereby get lost. If this happens a person could fall sick or become lethargic and depressed.⁵⁴

When the pall bearers and graveside mourners return from the graveside they must pass through smoke from specific types of burning leaves before they can enter the house of the deceased for the funeral meal and other business. The smoke is to cleanse their bodies, and to discourage the *semangat* of the deceased from following them back

⁵³ Kanoh *Kanayatn*, 5 (My translation).

⁵⁴ Aten, 14.

into the house. The *adat* head discusses with the inheritors what *adat* remains to be fulfilled before everything can be declared finished. There is an extensive list of articles and foods that are necessary for this ritual discussion.

For at least three nights, for some seven, following the funeral the family takes further precautions to prevent the return of the spirit of the deceased. They place ashes on a leaf (like a plate) in front of the door to the house. In the morning they examine the ashes for footprints of the deceased. If the deceased spirit has tried to return to the house in the night it will step in the ashes and sting its foot, and return to the grave without encountering any of the living. If this happens it will leave its footprint in the ashes.

The spirit of the deceased is believed to be in or around the house for three, four, or seven days (depending on local beliefs). According to one informant, on the first day after death the spirit goes and reports to *Jubata*. On the third day it descends again. (In most Indonesia cultures the family expects to be visited by the deceased on the third night. This belief is not uniquely Dayak.) On the seventh day the spirit returns again to *Jubata* and the relationship with the family is terminated. On the seventh day there is another ceremony at the graveside that involves more food and some sacrificial offerings (often a chicken).

There is a wide variety of customs and beliefs about funerals. In some cases the steps up to the house are put upside down, so that if the spirit goes 'up' the steps it is actually going down and leaving the house. Some have an onion or garlic bulb wrapped in black cloth to keep the spirit out of the house. The corpse is sprinkled with ashes taken from the kitchen to symbolize that the deceased no longer eats rice but ashes. The ashes are sprinkled using the left (unclean) hand. A feather is broken to symbolize the broken

family ties. Gifts to the family of the deceased are given by placing them on the coffin. Guests sleep in the house during the mourning period and until the *adat* is finished, to give comfort, and to allay fears of the *semangat* of the deceased. A plot of land is set aside for the *semangat* of the deceased to farm (especially if he was a farmer). It is designated as such for three years. Some produce from this land is offered on the gravesite. After three years everything associated with burial procedures is finished.⁵⁵

As a collateral feature of the topics I have been discussing, it should also be noted that ritual or sacred objects play prominent roles in the customs and beliefs described. Some rituals are focused on carved wooden idols. There is also *adat* that guides the carving and dedication of the idols. Each step in making an idol is accompanied by sacrifices and special rituals. Before the carver chooses the wood he must inform *Jubata* of his intent, and get agreement and permission from *Jubata* to do the work. This ritual involves sacrificing a chicken. After beginning the carving it must be finished in three or four days only, at least in general outline. When it is finished there is a ceremony to call in the spirit that will inhabit the idol, or be identified with the idol. A *Jubata* is asked to inhabit the statue. It needs breath, words and power. In the ceremony the wind is commanded or decreed to become the breath, lightning is decreed to become the words, and water is decreed to become the power or strength. After the statue is ritually watched over for three nights there is a ceremony in which it is put in place. The *adat* priest (*panyangahatn*) performs this. The process is completed with a banquet.⁵⁶

There are three main types of idols related to the three types of traditional leaders or elders in the village communities who represent the three main areas of concern to the

⁵⁵ Aten 17.

⁵⁶ Bahari S. *Pantak Sebagai Alat*, 3-4

village: agriculture, war, and healing. There are also other types of idols for individual families and other uses. In sum, *adat* is a crucial feature of virtually every aspect of daily life among the Dayak, affecting as it does such diverse topics as agriculture and rites of passage. I turn now to yet other ways in which *adat* is exhibited in Dayak society and culture.

Crises

A sizable body of *adat* exists to guide during times of crises. The same principles apply as with the normal cycles of the agrarian year and passages through life: the re-establishment and maintenance of harmony in society and with the invisible realm.

War and violent conflict

In times of conflict or threat from outside the village, the members of the community unite themselves for the defense of their community or to seek vengeance or justice. They unite in taking up arms by passing the *mangkok merah* (the red bowl) – a ceremonial bowl of blood. The bowl is passed from village to village in the area of trouble. If a village refuses to accept the red bowl they become enemies of those who asked them to accept it. If they accept it they become allied in the conflict. The sacrificial blood makes ties with the spirits as well, not just with other villages. It is associated with magical qualities and the bestowal of supernatural strength from the spirits.

Adat customs cover the collection of obligatory offerings or levies for armed conflict. These monetary offerings are used for obtaining pigs and chickens to sacrifice to gain strength and power in the event of violent conflict. There are war ceremonies and

rituals, fetishes and amulets to grant bravery, and supposed invisibility. During periods of violent conflict or war a *kamang* spirit replaces the warriors' *semangat*. The person can live for a time with the *kamang* substituting for the *semangat*, but once the conflict is over there are rituals for exorcising the *kamang* and inviting the *semangat* to return to the body. These rituals serve as a visible sign of the end of conflict.

Spilling of blood, even if accidental and resolved without animosity, requires payment of *adat*. If it is not intentional the payments are not expensive – a chicken, plate, rice – and constitute a confession of fault.

The *tempayan* (a large pottery vessel) is considered a sign of peace for Dayaks. When violent conflict has been resolved and finished in a ceremony involving the sacrifice of chickens, a *tempayan* is put up on a tripod as a visible sign of peace. A *tempayan* on a tripod can also serve as a sign of one having paid off or settled the demands of *adat*, or as payment itself of the *adat*. A *tempayan* on a tripod in front of a house is a certain sign that it is the residence of a Dayak.

After there has been war or headhunting it is necessary to cleanse the land that has become 'hot' and stained by evil. In this condition it is easy for evil influences and powers to gain access. Successful headhunting brought additional life force to the community, but traditionally when the headhunting expedition was completed the community had to be officially restored to normal with post-headhunting ceremonies.

Yeremias relates that during the age of headhunting,

. . . after headhunting, they would place an idol on the peak of the roof, a figure of a deer, a monkey, (macaque), *amarakng* (a type of fish) and a hornbill. These symbolized the message to the spirits "Fast like a deer, high in the tree like a monkey, in the water like an *amarakng*, and fly far like a hornbill, run from this house, all evil spirits!"⁵⁷

⁵⁷ Yeremias, 8.

It is interesting to note that in this worldview headhunting itself is not immoral. It is dangerous to be possessed by a *kamang* and risk losing one's *semangat*, but obtaining a head is good, for this brings extra life force to the community. But there is recognition, however, that it is highly disruptive to the general harmony with nature and the integration of the community. The ceremonies were meant to calm the spirits and ward off the evil spirits that used the opportunity to invade the region. The customs do not, as far as I can determine, involve remorse for murder and death. Please note I use the present tense, for some of the features survive in the present Dayak sociological context.⁵⁸

Formerly skulls were part of the paraphernalia of some ceremonies and rituals. After the national government managed to put a stop (officially) to headhunting, they used old rather than new skulls in the ceremonies. In one region (Batang Tarang) the old skulls were ceremonially buried in 1991 to put an end to the practice of using these skulls. But even though the practice of headhunting was officially retired, it reappeared during the ethnic conflict of 1997. The rationale for the tradition is apparently still an integral component of the Dayak understanding of the natural order.

In former times a human head was sometimes buried under the corner post of a building. The mana from the head was to grant more life force to the building and those in it. Even though this tradition has long since ceased to be practiced the concept, and fear of losing one's own head is still present. For example in 1994 a bridge was constructed over the Tayan River, in the town of Tayan where I then lived. When the crews began driving the huge steel and concrete pilings into the riverbed, great fear swept

⁵⁸ The violent conflict between Dayaks and Madurese migrants in January and February 1997 saw a revival of headhunting, cannibalism, and these associated cleansing rituals.

through the district. Some people were scared to go out at night, fearful that headhunters would be out seeking a human head to put under one of the pilings to grant life force to the bridge.

Sickness

As explained earlier, most sickness is believed to result from disturbances in the invisible realm. If a person's *semangat* leaves the body for an extended period the person loses life force and becomes ill. Illness is also believed to be caused by direct attacks from malevolent spirits, or by spirits that have been angered by violations of *adat* or taboos. It may have been the sick person, or someone else in the family or community that performed the offensive act. There are many ways in which the spirits can be offended, such as defecating or urinating in a spot where a spirit dwells.

Most treatments by local practitioners involve dealing with the spirit realm. The Dayaks do not have a legacy of treating illnesses with herbal medicine. (This stands in stark contrast to the traditions of the ethnic Chinese who rely on a vast array of herbal medicines readily available in medicine stores, which, in the cities, are often adjacent to Western-style pharmacies.) Most commonly the shaman, who deals exclusively with spiritual matters rather than medicinal treatments, treats illness. The shaman is most often called a *dukun* (*Bahasa Indonesia*). The *dukun* is generally active rather than passive in his or her approach to dealing with the invisible realms. Generally there is little practice of mediumship, in which the practitioner is more passive in the contact with the spirit world. The term *dukun* is sometimes used to apply to persons or activities that are beyond what is normally meant by the term shaman in anthropological literature.⁵⁹

⁵⁹ Nevil Drury, *The Elements of Shamanism*, (Rockport, MA: Element Books Inc., 1991), 11.

A midwife is often called a 'baby-*dukun*'. The midwife *dukun* physically assists the mother in labour and delivery, but relies heavily on her discernment of spiritual forces to perform her duties.

The role of *dukun* is different from that of *adat* priest who knows or reads the mantras for various *adat* ceremonies. A common term is '*tukang mantera*' (mantra tradesman) for someone who knows the prayers or mantras but does not practice diagnosis of illnesses and other problems that might be related to the spirit powers.

The first role of the *dukun* is to diagnose the cause of the particular problem, be it illness, misfortune, or calamity of personal or community-wide scope. There are numerous rituals for making diagnoses. One such involves passing a special stone over the body of an ill person. The *dukun* diagnoses who is encompassed by the particular problem; sometimes only the individual is involved, other times the whole family, sometimes the village. Most frequently the *dukun* prescribes the sacrifice of chickens and pigs, sometimes of a dog, as appeasement offerings to restore order. The sacrificed animal and other food offerings might be offered at the place where a particular spirit was made angry. Prescriptions from the *dukun* also encompass various types of amulets and talismans. In the case of a village wide problem the *dukun* prescribes a *balalak* or village cleansing ceremony. (See "*Balalak*" page 85.) Sometimes the prescription calls for exorcising the spirit in a person or a place, such as road, riverbank, or house.

One informant related that, in his village, sacrificial items are gathered outside the house of one who is ill. These articles would include pigs, chickens, alcohol, *pulut* rice, chicken eggs, and other foodstuffs. When it has been assembled it is taken off to a hill, cave, or large tree where they believe the spirit to reside that needs to be appeased, and

where an idol may already have been erected. There they conduct a healing ceremony. The family struck by the illness makes their offerings before the idol in which they leave the sickness as well as the food offerings. The food offerings are eaten there on the spot. No food is to be brought back home otherwise the sickness will come back with them.

One remedy for chronic illness or bad luck in a child involves deceiving or confusing the malevolent spirits that are causing the trouble. Parents of the chronically ill or unfortunate child will go to a more prosperous family, one whose 'luck' is better, and ask that they '*mengaku*' ('confess' or 'admit') that the child belongs to their family in a special *adat* ritual. The child remains with his or her original parents, but because he or she 'belongs' to another family the child does not 'exist' in that household; the spirits are confused because they cannot find him or her and are thus unable to work their mischief on the child.

The *dukun* is consulted for other problems besides physical illness. The *dukun*'s role is to deal with any disturbance in the physical realm that might be related to an invisible realm source. For instance, the *dukun* is called when one suspects that spirits of the dead have returned or move closer and are interfering with the living. Evidence of their return might be disturbing dreams, the mysterious disappearance of rice, or unexplainable noises and movements in the night. The *dukun*'s role is to re-establish the protective distance between the living and the dead and other spirits. The *dukun* is also called upon to deal with bad omens (to help cast off bad luck), and to neutralize a breach of *adat* or taboo (whether or not this has resulted in illness.)

Generally the *dukun* functions without going into a trance. Trances are reserved for serious illnesses or crises. As with any profession there are different degrees of

expertise. Some dabble in the practice and offer assistance in small matters. Others are experts who are called upon in serious cases. Usually each village has its own *dukun* but for serious situations an expert is called in from outside. When a trance is called for as in the case of a serious problem, the ceremonies involve consumption of alcohol, and the use of gongs, drums, and wooden percussion instruments. (The only indigenous musical or percussion instruments appear to be used primarily in these contexts.)

Prophylactic safety precautions

Before undertaking activities of any significance it is common to make arrangements with *Jubata* and the spirits, to let them know what is happening and to ensure that they have their share of involvement in order that the event will not be disrupted by untoward happenings such as injury or death of the participants. For instance, before a *gawai*, a regional festival hosted by a local community and usually held after the main annual harvest, offerings of chickens or pigs are made beforehand, so that *Jubata* or some evil spirit does not demand a life from one of the participants.

One informant related that after a new village soccer field was cleared and leveled a ritual was performed in which a chicken was sacrificed first, and then a dog. The dog's head was cut off and its blood was sprinkled over the field. The head was buried under a goal post. Tradition claims that the dog's spirit guards the field to prevent anything dangerous from happening when people play (such as injuries) and to prevent fights on the field. The expectation is that the god or spirit of that land is then satisfied by the offering and will not harm those who use it.

Dogs are sometimes associated with bad luck, and so can be used in sacrifices to get rid of bad luck. Sacrifices are made in cases where an individual is experiencing a

streak of bad luck, or if a plot of land is thought to be bad luck. Land on which someone has been murdered must be cleansed through *adat* with the blood of a dog, pig, and/or chicken. If it is not so cleansed something worse could happen on that land, perhaps an even more tragic death. Sacrifices of various sorts are made to ward off bad luck from other animals or omen birds that bring or foretell bad luck. Some believe that dogs and cats are more useful alive than as sacrifices because the spirits are afraid of their barking and meowing.

If someone wants to proceed with a plan even in the face of a bad omen, the *dukun* might prescribe a sacrifice or offering to set the balance right, thereby allowing the plan to go ahead. In cases where *adat* rules are 'stretched' such as in the marriage of a couple who are related back to the same grandparents, paying the *adat* first will provide them with a dispensation. (In such cases the *adat* offering might consist of a pure white pigeon or dove, which is considered a holy bird. It is cooked with its feathers and eaten by a village elder.) The *adat* offering in such a case is meant to pay the debt owed to *Jubata*, their parents, and to the community that they will incur by marrying too close a relation.

There is a sense that a person will increase the chances of having an accident or encountering some danger if one fails to complete an intended or expected action. When a person does not complete the intended or expected action the person has been negligent, at least in the perception of the spirits, and has somehow 'transgressed.' This is called '*kampunan*'. In a subsequent journey he or she might be struck by a tree, be attacked by an animal, or crash on a motorcycle or vehicle. What makes this belief or feeling hard to

ignore is that the disaster might not strike the one who has transgressed, but may strike someone else.⁶⁰

A commonly encountered example of *kampunan* occurs at the meal table. When anyone is about to eat or is eating it is customary to invite any others present to eat before one begins or continues eating.⁶¹ The person who is invited to eat usually is not expected to eat, but must acknowledge the invitation by eating a few grains of rice, or alternatively, touching his or her fingers to the side of the rice bowl as symbolic gesture of eating. Failure to do this may result in bad luck.

Most amulets and talismans serve as prophylactics, warding off bad luck and the presence of harmful spirits. Many households have small bundles of grass and leaves over their door and hanging from the rafters to ward off spirits. Charms are made from stones, seeds, and other objects that have been 'blessed' and worn on the body or stored in the house. Young children often have a black string bracelet. Ostensibly it is to measure the growth of the child, but it also has been prayed over with a mantra to ward off bad luck and danger to the child. It is black because apparently the spirits that would harm the child don't like the colour black. They therefore consider the child ugly and stay away.

Most people have small lights, usually wick lamps, which burn through the night. The light serves the practical purpose of providing illumination without one having to search for matches or a flashlight in the dark of a night without electric lights. More

⁶⁰ Jay Bernstein, "The Shaman's Destiny: Symptoms, Affliction, and the Re-interpretation of Illness among the Taman," in *The Seen and the Unseen: Shamanism, Mediumship and Possession in Borneo*, Robert L. Winzeler, editor. (Williamsburg, VA: The Borneo Research Council, Inc., 1993), 189.

⁶¹ Until I learned about this belief I was puzzled by the behavior of fellow guests at a meal table inviting others, who came by while we were eating, to come and eat.

significantly, the small lamp also serves as a guard against the spirits that move about freely in the darkness.

The *tempayan* mentioned above as a sign of peace, can also be used to guard the house against invisible elements. A small *tempayan* is placed either on a tripod, or half buried in the earth in front of the house with an appropriate ritual and accompanying sacrifices. The *tempayan*, amulets, and talismans represent the Dayak's concern to maintain a safe distance from the invisible forces that, although they sometimes work for good, are generally not to be trusted and are dangerous.

Taboos

Taboos are a normal feature or occurrence in the everyday life of most Dayaks. Taboos are prescribed for many reasons. Some are long-standing, routine components of *adat* that involve the whole community. A taboo could be short-term, as a solution to a specific need or crisis at an individual or community level. Taboos also feature in the search for personal occult-type power as prescribed by a *guru ilmu* (occult teacher). Taboos are based on the belief that there are connections between certain behaviors or objects and the invisible realm. The connection might be by correspondence, or in parallel. It could also be through the whim or nature of the spirit power that is believed to be involved. The taboos are seldom rational or empirically based.

Normally taboos are ways of dealing with the connections or correspondences between the physical and invisible realms. Often this type of thinking is applied to make cause and effect connections between things in the physical realm. It is common to hear of food taboos for health reasons (such as food allergies). This type of diagnosis is readily made and often involves little or no empirical evidence. There are multitudes of

taboos for pregnant and newly-delivered women, many of which run contrary to modern medical science and nutrition (such as discarding the colostrum, avoiding eggs).

The supposed consequences of breaking a taboo can be serious. For example, when a woman died in labour it was diagnosed that the husband broke a taboo while she was pregnant. The husband was levied a huge *adat* fine. There are many examples of taboos connected with pregnancy: throwing out hot water, killing a chicken, sleeping stretched out on one's back, swimming in the river, eating blood, cutting hair (but it can be burnt), fighting, cutting bamboo, and eating banana flowers.

Other examples include not taking a small infant outside in the evening without a knife hung on its body or it will be attacked by *hantu*. Whistling at night or while walking past a graveyard is taboo, for the sound will attract the spirits. In one village the water used to cook vegetables must not be spilled, fish must not be cooked in certain ways, some types of wood must not be burned, and some fruits must not be carried home but may be eaten only under the tree. Continual rain that lasts for weeks or months without letup might possibly be caused by an unmarried woman being pregnant.

The list of examples could go indefinitely. The important point is that in this worldview, the person who breaks the taboo or violates the *adat* is not necessarily the one who suffers the consequences of the transgression. It may be another individual, a family member or neighbour, or the whole community that suffers.

Personal power, occult, manipulation

There are beliefs and practices that lie outside the scope of *adat* and the taboos discussed above, but that are also connected with the same personal and impersonal invisible powers. As with many described above, these are not unique to Dayaks, but

nevertheless constitute part of their worldview. These beliefs and practices are means of obtaining personal powers that are beyond normal human ability, that is, occult powers. Powers that are believed to be available and commonly sought are invincibility or invulnerability to weapons, such as machetes and bullets, and physical attack (fists), invisibility, and the ability to transform oneself into an animal shape such as a pig or dog.

Power is acquired by studying with a teacher of this 'science'. Often people who seek this go to many teachers and their power is said to be rated by how many teachers they have studied under. This kind of power is generally perceived as dangerous and is primarily sought by rougher, rebellious young people. It is obtained through various personal disciplines, taboos, amulets, and talismans. Stories of people swallowing charmed stones for strength and invulnerability are common.

Amulets and talismans are attributed to have inherent power that prevents them from being destroyed. It is considered dangerous to tamper with them, or having once acquired them, to dispose of them.

The point here is not whether such powers actually exist, but that stories of occult powers are common, are usually third-hand, and are told and listened to with fascination. The reports are told and received in an atmosphere that implies awareness that the stories are 'incredible' but there is a hope that they are true. It is as if they *want* to believe the stories are true, and that should they have need of such power it would be available to them.

The above descriptions of interaction between humans and the forces that constitute the invisible aspects of the natural order demonstrate that many, if not most, aspects of traditional Dayak life are regulated and guided by an elaborate belief system.

Many of the regulations and guidelines are encoded in *adat*; others are less formal customs and traditions. All are connected to the invisible realm. Social disturbances have consequences beyond inter-personal or social relations. Because social events are tied to the invisible realm they might cause bad luck. The consequences of transgressions do not necessary fall to the one who transgresses. Anyone in the community might suffer the effects, so there are strong social sanctions that ensure conformity and cooperation.

Some beliefs and practices relate to the quest for personal power and control, but these are not the main features of this worldview. The main concentration is on the power and control over mysterious events of nature for the sake of subsistence of the individual, family, and village.

Modern Issues: Pressure on the Worldview

A description of the Dayak worldview that failed to consider the modern issues that are putting extreme pressure on Dayak culture would be inadequate. It remains to be seen how long these people can preserve their culture and identity when so many things around them are changing and which are far beyond their control to stop or manage. Traditional *adat* law, customs, and the religious beliefs that undergird *adat* evolved over generations to deal with subsistence in the tropical rainforest on infertile soil. *Adat* laws and customs are not able to deal with modern challenges that have never before been encountered in uncounted previous generations. These modern challenges produce instability and insecurity. There are those who would cope with the stress on the system by devotedly preserving the traditions. Most have no idea what to do. When the church strives to formulate expressions of Christian faith and practice in West Kalimantan it must take into account the increasing sense of instability, insecurity, and frustration the

people are feeling. These feelings influence the way the people perceive, interpret, and respond to the Christian faith. My assumption or premise is that the worldview will affect what people expect of a belief system. At present the belief system of the Dayaks is still deep-rooted, but it is under tension. This tension may well be another factor affecting how the Dayaks perceive the Christian faith presented to them.

Land ownership and land usage rights most overtly threaten Dayak identity and belief systems. The Dayak identity is tied to the land, forest, and farming. They have long-standing traditions regarding ownership and usage, traditions that have been worked out over uncounted generations, and that have made for long-term sustainable subsistence. The 1960 constitution of the Republic of Indonesia subverted the Dayak system. Because they did not have their land registered, this not having been how their system worked, their land was designated as state-owned.⁶²

Since most of the land was designated as state-owned it was very easy to for the government to expropriate land and resources for economic exploitation: logging, lumber mills, and palm oil plantations and processing plants. The immediate effect of expropriation is that the Dayaks are deprived of their ancestral lands and are left with little choice but to work for the companies at very low wages. Land that is left to them is not unaffected. Roads that are pushed through the forest dam up streams, flooding on one side of the road and drying up the streams on the other side. Streams that were clear are muddied and fish stocks dwindle. Streams and rivers are polluted with mercury from gold-panning operations. Logging is poorly regulated and trash left on the cuts easily ignites into huge fires that damage far more forest than was logged. Mud from the dirt roads built through the rice paddies washes into the remaining fields and degrades what

⁶² Djuweng, ix.

land remains. The roads facilitate movement, but it is mostly movement of resources out of the area with little being returned.

There have been many instances of plantation or logging companies negotiating with the *adat* head on land concessions or sales. The *adat* head traditionally does not have the authority to do this, but because the companies personally compensate him he makes a deal. When there is any need for their land from outside concerns the Dayaks usually come out poorly. For instance when a palm oil plantation (near Ngabang) expropriated land on average they took about 7.5 hectares per person. The company then arranged to sell back to the people who traditionally owned the land private sections of 2.5 hectares of palm oil trees, a .25 hectare plot for a house, and .25 hectare vegetable garden for US\$4,900 with the payments amortized over 20 years.⁶³

The swidden agriculture of the Dayaks is often blamed for the degradation of the forest and land. Djuweng and others argue that the Dayaks actually improve the land by planting fruit trees, rattan, and hardwoods when they are finished using the cleared forestland for their crops (after two or three seasons of planting.) Their subsistence depends on the sustainability of their methods. Their land use is usually measured in hectares per farmer. In contrast, plantations clear thousands of hectares at a time, which is far more destructive. Fires set by plantations to clear forest are far more extensive and destructive than the fires set by Dayak farmers. Dayaks have strong *adat* sanctions and penalties if their fires destroy other property. The logging and plantation companies face

⁶³ Wolas Krenak, "Transformasi Budaya Dan Hak Atas Sumber Daya Alam" in *Manusia Dayak Orang Kecil yang Terperangkap Modernisasi*. Edited by Stepanus Djuweng. (Pontianak: Institute of Dayakology Research and Development, 1996), 86.

no such sanctions. The company owners are wealthy and powerful and there is little motivation or means for the police or civil servants to control them.⁶⁴

The Dayak worldview is subject to tension from the introduction of modern technology and information. The state-controlled television stations broadcast many American productions (with Indonesian subtitles) that portray a very different way of life from the Dayak subsistence farmer.⁶⁵

Secularizing influences come from unexpected sources. One such secularizing force is the bulldozer, used to push logging roads through the rainforest. That the bulldozer operator can fell trees and clear land without first doing *adat*, not getting *Jubata's* permission to clear the land, and not observing any omens, is a challenge to the traditional Dayak belief system.

Many years ago the contingencies of World War II similarly affected the perceptions of the Dayaks (in the northeast and central regions of Kalimantan). Tom Harrisson was very sensitive to the impact his British forces were having on traditional Dayak life as they allied with the Dayaks to fight the Japanese occupation. Describing the impact of the war he writes:

It was one of the inevitable and in some ways saddest repercussions of our sudden appearance that, almost over-night, these traditions had to be reconsidered and reevaluated as so often in so-called total war — especially where total war has not been before. I suppose I was one of the last people in the western world who wished to upset and alter other people's beliefs as such. But it would have been impossible to have conducted any operation had we followed local observances and determined the movements of our runners — or our aeroplanes — by the position of the first

⁶⁴ During the El Niño drought of 1997-98 much of the smoke that closed airports in Singapore and Malaysia as well as in Indonesia, and which caused considerable hardship across South East Asia, was from plantations and logging fires. Some fires were caused by lightning, and some by swidden farmers who got more than their share of the blame for the smoke.

⁶⁵ It is interesting to observe that among the more popular American shows broadcast on the national network were "Friday the 13th" and "Xena". Also very popular are Asian productions featuring martial arts fighting enhanced with supernatural occult powers. These shows were shown nationally, but were very popular among Dayak audiences.

barking deer to sound off on the track in the morning, or the direction in which an eagle was last seen to be soaring over the mountains at sunset.⁶⁶

The laws, customs, and beliefs that express the Dayak worldview evolved to maintain balance in their agrarian life in the rainforest. It is not well equipped for encounters with other worldviews.

Further pressure comes from normal population growth, which in itself could be sustained for some years at current rates, but is accelerated by immigration from other islands. There is population increase from individuals and families migrating to Kalimantan from the densely populated regions of the country. The government-sponsored transmigration projects have the highest impact. In these projects large groups are moved from over-populated regions and settled in Kalimantan (and other islands of low-density population). The transmigrants are given title to traditional Dayak land. The transmigrants actually have more legal rights to their land than do the Dayaks from whom it was taken, because they are given certificates of ownership. Vincentius Julipin points out "The transmigrants have good prospects for the future, with land, houses, and equipment supplied to them. The Dayaks, from whom the land was taken because of the different understandings about land ownership and usage, become the labourers in the plantations and fields of the transmigrants."⁶⁷

The vast majority of the transmigrants originate from the over-populated regions such as Java and Madura, where the vast majority of the population are Muslims. The transmigrants bring their own culture and their own *adat* that is heavily influenced by Islam (which in Indonesia has been uniquely influenced by *adat* and culture.) The injection of permanent settlements right in among Dayak villages is changing the

⁶⁶ Harrison, 236.

⁶⁷ Julipin, 94.

religious landscape of Kalimantan. The creation of each transmigration settlement between Dayak villages means more fragmentation of the Dayak worldview.

As well as the influx of migrants who have come to settle permanently there are many young men who come to Kalimantan seeking jobs in the plantations and logging. These young workers are separated from their communities and families, and from the social sanctions these provided. Alcohol abuse is a growing problem among such workers. The migrants and job seekers do not consider themselves subject to Dayak *adat*. Consequently *adat* law is losing its power of social sanction. *Adat* sanctions are reduced to monetary fines and are not connected with the same social stigma or economic weight as they traditionally have in Dayak culture. *Adat* law and customs regulated Dayak society for generations, but Kalimantan is rapidly changing around them.

Over millennia the Dayaks have worked out a system wherein they felt they had some limited control over the mysterious factors in their environment that so greatly affected their lives. The system has not always seemed to give them as much control as they would like, but in most cases the system can at least provide some explanation as to why things have happened, and offers ways of responding and shaping events to be more favorable. They believed they had ways of controlling or manipulating the forces of nature. The factors that are changing the natural, social, and cultural environments serve to throw this system of control and explanation off balance. As the situation continues to change it becomes increasingly apparent to the Dayaks how little control they actually have over their lives. If the Dayak worldview is not in disarray it is at least under extreme pressure. Their concepts of harmony with nature, their explanations of mysterious events, and their manipulation of the invisible forces do not fit in a world with bulldozers

and logging trucks, vast plantations, polluted rivers, and approaching the critical minimum amount of land necessary for traditional swidden agriculture.

For the time being their worldview is essentially still holding, even in this era of extreme pressure on the culture. Krenak states his vision to preserve the Dayak culture and worldview:

Dayak society, in contrast to common perceptions of them that colour outsiders' opinions of them, has traditions inherited from the ancestors that demand that they stand their ground in changing times. As has been expressed by a number of *adat* heads of the Kendayan Dayaks, the ancestral values given expression and manifested in the practical lives of the Dayaks originate from the Creator (*Nek Jubata*) and are translated into human language through myths, legends, tales, or other oral traditions. These oral traditions, loaded with meaning, become a kind of manual for human life. They regulate mankind's relationship with the creator, with fellow humans, and with the individual's relationship to society.⁶⁸

Even if they stand their ground in changing times out of respect for their traditions that the ancestors themselves respected, preserved, and passed down, it is not clear that they will be able to keep the ground if the traditions cease to work for them.

The worldview described in this chapter has deep roots. It is under pressure, and in some cases is changing, but it still shapes the way most Dayaks view life. This is the worldview of the people among whom the KGBI is working and establishing churches. The questions before us are how Christianity should be presented in this context, and what form it should be given. What is the best way to present Christianity so as to preserve Dayak cultural identity while avoiding syncretism? How can the church best seek economic, social, and political justice and equality in this situation? What is the fullest, most complete, or truest expression of the gospel in this context?

Having described the Dayak worldview I will turn in the next section to a description of how many of the beliefs and practices that derive from this worldview conflict with Christian faith and practice. I will focus on issues of control, and how

⁶⁸ Krenak, 82.

Christianity responds in such situations. The Dayak worldview is one of seeking control over the forces that act on human life and existence. Should Christianity be presented as a better, more effective way of gaining this control, or is to do so to subvert or critically modify the essence of the Christian faith and practice?

Chapter Four: Areas of Conflict

In the previous chapter I examined some prominent aspects of Dayak *adat* and how Dayak life is generally shaped by and around it. My objective was to understand and describe the Dayak worldview in the hope of having a better understanding of their general expectations of what might be referred to as a belief system. I trust that it has become apparent that the foundation for their daily life, rituals, ceremonies, taboos and superstitions is their belief in the essential unity of the visible and invisible realms. I reiterate that my rationale for undertaking this examination is that their worldview significantly influences how they interpret Christianity when it is presented to them, and consequently also influences what that expect of Christianity. This in turn will influence the theology they work out in this context.

Christian Dayaks share essentially the same worldview as non-Christians. The extent to which Christian teaching has changed their understanding of the nature of things varies considerably. The extent to which it has changed varies with the nature of understanding of those who have been the principle teachers and the length of time a person has been a Christian, among many other factors. My experience has been that, for the most part, Dayak Christians continue to view the natural order as consisting of the same visible and invisible realms. They continue to view things in terms of spirits in conflict with mankind. They associate all spirits apart from God with evil, as Satan (*Setan*), the Devil (*Iblis*), or evil spirits as agents of the Evil One. Christians generally continue to believe that at the time of death and the funeral spirits are near and eager to disturb the living. Generally Christians no longer believe that it is the spirit of the deceased that is present, but that what they encounter are evil spirits disguising

themselves as the spirit of the deceased, from which they must protect themselves, and which must be pushed back to a safe distance. The difference is that Christians look to the power of God to maintain this protective distance, not to *adat* beliefs and rituals. This is to say that the elements of the worldview are essentially the same, but are interpreted differently. An example is found in an expression that is very common in the opening prayers of a public worship services, in which the worship leader asks God to “*mengusir setan-setan yang dapat mengganggu*,” that is, to expel or chase away all the evil spirits or satans that might disrupt the worship service or distract the worshipers from their worship.

Christian Dayaks share the worldview with non-Christian Dayaks, but in some cases radically differ in how they interpret events and how they respond. For example, Evangelist Ipen was a seminary graduate assigned to evangelize in an area known for its strong commitment to *adat* in all its aspects. He lived with a family in a large house in the village of Nek Rungkap. He returned one evening after dark and found the family eating a sacrificial meal that was part of an animistic ritual prescribed by the *dukun*. He did not want to risk being invited to partake of the meal (which he would find awkward to decline), so rather than going up into the house and joining the family, or even going on to his room, he walked several kilometers further to the next village where he spent the night in the home of a Christian school teacher. His commitment to avoiding even the appearance of condoning this animistic ritual was so great that he made the journey in the total darkness of a moonless rainy night without a flashlight or lantern. He stumbled and fell many times as he blindly walked off the trail. Sometimes he crawled along the

trail to find his way.¹ Ipen's story illustrates the intensity of the encounter between Christianity and traditional animistic Dayak beliefs and practices.

In this chapter I describe and discuss some of the issues where Christian faith and practice comes in conflict with the traditional belief system of the Dayaks that I have encountered in the course of my ministry in West Kalimantan. The following material has been the frequent topic of discussion at pastors meetings and was reported in the questionnaires and interviews, and seminary class assignments. I present these issues in essentially the same order as in the previous chapter. With each issue I relate why Christians perceive it to be a conflict, and how pastors and evangelists have reacted or dealt with it. I turn first to the issue of the name of God.

The Name of God

Many missionaries, in their desire to present the gospel in the most readily understood forms, have sought an indigenous word for God. When they discovered the native term '*Jubata*', they suggested (as I once did) using this term where in English we use the word 'God.' The reasoning was that this term seemed to convey the sense of the one, all-powerful, omniscient creator. Some thought that it could at least be used to translate the English 'Lord' (Indonesian, '*Tuhan*').

In my role as missionary I have tried to facilitate indigenous expressions of Christian theology, that is to say, contextualized theology. It seemed that the logical place to begin would be to use an indigenous name for God. At pastors meetings we frequently discussed whether or not to use '*Jubata*' for 'God' or 'Lord'. There was always some hesitation on the part of the pastors to adopt this term. I understood this

¹ After he related this story to me I bought him a flashlight!

term to refer to the one, all-powerful creator, and attributed their hesitation to reasons other than the actual meaning of the word. For instance, I had observed a general reluctance in seminary students and pastors to use their native languages in worship services even when they were working within their own native language group. I often wondered why, when the entire congregation and the pastor spoke the same language, they insisted on using *Bahasa Indonesia*, the official national language, in the service. At the most they would use a few local words when their Indonesia vocabulary was insufficient. Seminary students or graduates were particularly reluctant to pray, even in private prayer, in anything but *Bahasa Indonesia*. There was a sense that *Bahasa Indonesia* was the proper Christian language. Sometimes I picked up a feeling that using a local language gave the appearance of still being primitive.

This was illustrated when I led a team of seminary students to a village that was of the same language group as one of the students on the team. I encouraged her to give her testimony in the local language. This she did, but only reluctantly. She and the residents of the village were accustomed to speaking about Christianity in the national language of *Bahasa Indonesia*, not their local language. Her audience appeared to be distracted, not just by her slightly different accent, but also by the incongruity of using the local language in Christian worship. On succeeding occasions she stuck to speaking the national language on such occasions. When this occurred I attributed the reluctance to use an indigenous word for 'God' to factors of familiarity or primitiveness.

After more digging I realized that the reluctance to use this name for God was not a matter of shame or embarrassment at using their local language and the feeling that they were still primitive if they didn't use *Bahasa Indonesia*. The problem rather is that the

term is not used to refer to the one Almighty Creator, but to many separate entities that are located in various places and things. To confuse the matter, '*Jubata*' is also the term given to the composite of all the different gods. The term "*Jubata Nek Patampa Nek Pajaji*" means 'Highest Being', or sometimes Higher than *Jubata*, or Above All *Jubata*. But "*Jubata Nek Patampa Nek Pajaji*" also exists in various places. It can be in various things and places because of great power, not because of omnipresence. There is a concept of a higher creator, omnipresent divine power called *Mamuraja*, but I am not certain as to how widespread this is among Dayaks, nor if it refers to the highest *Jubata*.

In 1981 the KGBI missionaries from Minahasa and local church leaders agreed that *Jubata* could be used to refer to 'God' or 'Lord'. At that time the term was commonly used in Dayak Roman Catholic churches. However they continued to have a general discomfort about the term, and it did not become widely used in KGBI churches. At the 1994 West Kalimantan Area meetings of the KGBI the assembly decided that they would not use this term. *Jubata* is not God.²

Balalak

The most frequently encountered and most contentious conflict between Christianity and traditional Dayak beliefs and practices is the *Balalak* or Closed Village. Much is at stake in this conflict. The practices of *balalak* along with the *naik dango* harvest festival are important components of Dayak cultural identity. Christians who do not cooperate in the *balalak* ritual are interpreted as undermining Dayak cultural identity. More seriously they are seen as subverting the efficacy of the whole process. Emotions

² It seems a little incongruous that the discussion about the use of the indigenous term '*Jubata*' was conducted in Bahasa Indonesia using the Islamic 'Allah' for God. Indonesian Muslims pronounce the word with an Arabic tone whereas Christians have Indonesianized the pronunciation.

run high because the negative consequences of violating this *adat* do not necessarily fall on those who transgressed. When one person violates the *adat* requirements anyone in the community or even the entire community could suffer. By not cooperating Christians are believed to endanger the whole community through their intransigence about worshipping only God as revealed through Jesus Christ.

When the *dukun* diagnoses a problem that requires a *balalak* to put things right, the date for the closed village ritual is set by reading omens. When the omens indicate that a Sunday is the day, the conflict with Christians intensifies, because consistently *adat* regarding the *balalak* states that there must not be large gatherings, and certainly no noise or singing. In some instances it is taboo to descend from one's house at certain times. So if a person goes to a worship service in the church building he or she violates several times: by descending from the house, by leaving or entering a village if the church is outside the village, by gathering, and by singing and making noise.

In one instance Ateng Thio, an ethnic Chinese seminary student, was doing his six-month practical field assignment in the village of Mangkup. A *balalak* there fell on a Sunday. Ateng went to the house where the church services were normally held. As was his custom he began playing his guitar and singing as a sign for people to gather. (In a village setting, with the light construction of the houses and the open doors and windows, the sound of the singing would be heard through most of the community.) When no one dared break the taboo of leaving one's house during the time the *balalak* rituals were being performed Ateng sang more loudly, partly as a stronger call to the Christians, and partly out of defiance of the *adat*. Later some Christians reported that they had been prepared to come to the worship service when he began singing, but their neighbours

were ready to pelt them with stones should they make the attempt. Ateng was later tried according to *adat* and levied a fine.

In another incident, in the village of Kersik, Dayak seminary student Iyon was conducting a Sunday School class in the church building on a *balalak* day. The session was disrupted by some nominally Roman Catholic youths that physically beat up Iyon and smashed his guitar. One child, while fleeing the scene through a window of the church building, fell and broke his arm. In this instance the police and national judicial system got involved because of the extent of the physical violence. The youths that attacked the church were jailed for a short time and had to pay damages. A *balalak* is now no longer permitted to fall on a Sunday in that village by government decree. Iyon continued to minister there until he graduated from seminary.

When a *balalak* (or any other *adat* ritual or ceremony) is planned, the village residents are required to contribute to the costs. The dilemma for a Christian is that if he or she pays the requested funds it indicates that he or she agrees with or supports the animistic beliefs. But if the Christian doesn't contribute it puts extra burden on the others to come up with sufficient funds. In some cases those who do not pay are subjected to *adat* fines and end up paying anyway.

There is a widespread and growing sense that the ceremonies such as the *balalak*, requesting blessing of the land, abundance of crops, etc. are no longer as effective as they once were because people are no longer of one mind on observing *adat* and participating in the rituals and ceremonies. Outsiders look to physical causes, such as population growth, proliferation of plantations, extensive forestry and transmigration housing developments as putting too much pressure on the relatively infertile land that no longer

is allowed to recover its fertility between cycles. Deforestation changes the flood level and low water level patterns. The majority of Dayaks, who still hold to their traditional beliefs, believe there are factors involving the invisible realm that also contribute to them having to work harder to subsist.

Christians have reacted in different ways to the conflict over the several types of *balalak* ceremonies. One informant explained that by not taking part in the *balalak* the Christians are perceived as showing a lack of respect for the village head, and they must be sensitive to this. They are also perceived as lacking respect for their ancestors who preserved and passed down the traditions. They do however have the backing of the national constitution, which guarantees religious rights. Christians have an advantage of sorts in conflicts such as with *balalak* because animism is not recognized as an official religion under the constitution. Churches have an official registration number and can thereby appeal to government authorities when their official rights are being violated. Animists do not have such recourse.

The same informant, an elderly Dayak evangelist, has tried to explain to the village head that Christians are trying to help people in the villages. He explains that Christianity is not a Western religion but belongs to the Dayaks as well. He points out that Christians bring education and the chance for the villagers to develop socially and economically. In contrast animists have not developed their own system of education other than the age-old oral communication of traditions. He points out that areas that are strongly animistic are slow to develop socially and economically. Treating sickness or other problems with *balalak* involves a high cost in animals sacrificed, payments to the *dukun* and time lost working while observing *balalak* and other taboos. The evangelist's

approach to the conflict is to demonstrate that Christians are not abandoning Dayak identity and culture. Rather, Christians are striving for a better way with a religion that impacts the whole lifestyle of a person, and which he believes provides better solutions to the problems of subsistence.

Some pastors and evangelists look on the *balalak* and other community-wide *adat* events as opportunity for Christian evangelism, teaching, and growth, because preaching and teaching can be presented during times of crisis and perhaps intense interest. Most teach their congregations to keep the rules of entry and exit and other taboos out of respect for the others in the community. Rather than advocating participation in the rituals however, they encourage the Christians to spend the time in prayer and fasting. I have the impression that few congregations actually do this, but this is the goal many pastors are aiming at. They suggest praying for the specific problem that is the object or focus of the *balalak*. That is, if the *balalak* is conducted because of crop failure, sickness, flood, or drought, the Christians should be in intense prayer for this same issue at the same time that the non-Christians are observing the *adat* ritual. One pastor I interviewed expressed the hope that the practice of community prayer for such concerns and in times of crisis would be preserved even in a totally Christian village, not just in reaction to a *balalak*. This pastor believes that Christianity should be presented as a better way of dealing with the problems of traditional Dayak subsistence. He felt that Christianity would be more relevant to the people of his village if more effort was put into substituting Christian rituals in the place of the *adat* or *kepercayaan lama* rituals.

To be able to show respect for the *balalak* traditions without undue conflict with the church it is necessary that the *balalak* not be conducted on a Sunday. Most of the

pastors interviewed stressed the importance of maintaining good relationships with the village and *adat* heads, so that they understand that Christians are working for the common good. The auspicious time for conducting a *balalak* is determined by omens, but the omens apparently are enough subject to interpretation that Sundays could be avoided if non-Christians in turn are willing to compromise with Christians.

Christians who do try to show respect for the taboos and restrictions, however, can inadvertently run into trouble. Minahasa missionaries Tumundo and Languyu once entered a village where a *balalak* was being conducted. They did not see or recognize the symbols on the trail warning travelers not to enter the village. Dozens of people thronged to the house they had entered and demanded payment of the cost of the *balalak* that these two missionaries had ruined. Hengky Tumundo was concerned that if they paid outright it would look as if they agreed with the animistic beliefs and their ministry would be compromised. They worked it out with the village head, who was sympathetic to them, so that the village head would make the payment and they would secretly repay him. Apparently this was effectively kept secret. The village head defended the missionaries on the grounds that they were working for the good of the village and that the *adat* fine conflicted with their beliefs. (He also understood the workings of the *adat* and was able to negotiate a much lower fine and so reduced the burden on the missionaries.)

The primary concern of Christians concerning *balalak* is that they might appear to condone the worship of other gods if they restrict their actions in accordance with the *adat* regulations of *balalak*. They perceive Christianity as a better way of dealing with the multiplicity of problems they encounter in the course of their life in this tropical setting.

Farming

As we saw in the previous chapter, a large portion of *adat* laws, traditions, and beliefs in this agrarian society are concerned with the cycles of the farming year. Conflicts between Christianity and traditional beliefs in this area are not as intense or confrontational as with the *balalak*, but nevertheless are a significant concern for Christians. These issues are not as confrontational because, unlike *balalak* it is not as essential that everyone in the community participate, so it is easier for Christians to opt out of practices that conflict with their beliefs. Christians realize that it is not longer appropriate to worship any other than God. Traditional beliefs and practices are specifically focused on producing crops most effectively and safely in the midst of the plethora of dangers and pitfalls of clearing, planting, harvesting, and storing produce in the humid tropical rainforest. The conflicts in this area are felt more by the Christians than the non-Christians, because by adhering to Christianity the Christians are opting out of a belief system that has seemed to ensure their subsistence for millennia. Christian faith and practice, while forbidding the worship of any other than God as known through Jesus Christ, does not always seem to provide the solutions the farmers seek for dealing with their immediate agrarian concerns. The challenge to the church in this area is to present Christianity in such a way that it provides viable alternatives to traditional beliefs and practices.

Conflicts for the Christians begin with the opening of the farming cycle that traditionally is marked by a one to three day festival and ceremony in which they inform *Jubata* of their intentions to start the cycle and ask permission to work the land, for help in their work and protection from accidents in their work and from the dangers of nature.

These are real concerns. Many things can cause the crops to fail. Many accidents occur, particularly while felling trees to clear the land. Storms damage crops and injure people, and myriad biting insects, venomous snakes, and larger animals are a constant threat. Christian farmers of course face the same dangers as their non-Christian neighbours. Christians however believe that the others are worshiping false gods or demonic powers and so may no longer make appeals to them. Their deepest concern is that the Christian God will provide the same blessings and protection as the traditional beliefs and practices. The result is that for Christians, especially new converts, there is an internal conflict between the two belief systems. The Christians need assurance that theirs is a viable alternative, for there is much at stake if things don't work out.

There is conflict also because no one likes to be told that his or her belief system is wrong. Even harder to take is being told that one's beliefs and practices are demonic or morally wrong. Even if the Christians show sufficient respect for the ceremonies, and do nothing to disturb them, just by opting out they implicitly condemn the traditions and create tension.

Furthermore, by opting out they put additional financial burdens for the materials required in the rituals and ceremonies on those who continue with the traditional practices. In some cases those who refuse to contribute to the cost of the sacrificial animals and other provisions are subject to an *adat* fine. The mountaintop ritual is a community affair for the benefit of the community and region and is regulated by *adat*. Because it is of regional concern everyone should contribute, but the Christians opt out.

There is still a lot of pressure on the Christians to participate in all the rituals marking the farming cycles. While it is not as critical as in *balalak* that everyone

participates there is still the sense that non-participation undermines the effectiveness of the rites. There are a number of practical, natural reasons why everyone must act in coordination. For instance, it is important to fell the trees and burn at the same time, and to cooperate in the water flow across the wet-cultivation rice fields. In many villages the pigs and cattle roam about while the fields are fallow. Everyone must cooperate by penning their livestock when the crops are put in and this only seems to happen when they plant at the same time. Also, if one plants early the pests congregate on the prominent display of easy food. If they plant together then the pests spread themselves around equally and no one farmer suffers unduly. It is also important to pool wisdom and experience to determine the right time to plant so as not to get flooded out or miss the rains.

The timing of the mountaintop ceremony to mark the beginning of the season is set by reading omens. Similarly the ceremonies determining the locations of the fields and the actual times to start planting rely heavily on omens from birds. Certain sounds from certain birds are taken to be signs from *Jubata* that the crop will or will not prosper on a given tract of land. Since the omens are always subject to interpretation there is plenty of room for the interpreters to rely intrinsically on their practical experience of seasons and conditions. The Christian farmers need to make the same kinds of decisions about where and when to plant, but can no longer rely on the omen birds. When they no longer rely on omens to make these decisions they look for something to fill the void. Christianity does not provide answers for them in this area, so they are tempted to revert to traditional, animistic methods to deal with these issues.

The pastors I interviewed are united in teaching their people not to participate in the mountaintop rituals marking the beginning of the farming cycle, on the grounds that participation in any way would give the appearance of agreeing with the worship of the false gods and idols. Beyond this agreement the pastors suggested two different courses of action. One was not to have any organized Christian activity because it would appear to be a competition and that they were deliberately disturbing the peace. They would be suspected of sabotaging the ceremony on the mountaintop. They advise their people to stay at home, pray, and read the Bible privately. When the *adat* ceremonies are finished then the Christians gather for a service of their own. One pastor would like to see his congregation fasting at the same time, but he has not been able to get this to happen yet.

The other response is to have an alternative Christian service while their neighbours are up on the mountaintop. This gives the Christians an alternative that is more appealing than sitting at home while their friends are up on the mountaintop having a party.³ Christians can gather for celebration and fellowship as well. It must be remembered that there are many things going on in any activity, and social interaction, fellowship and fun are significant aspects of these events. It is hard to exclude oneself voluntarily from a good time without an attractive alternative. Some Christians, afraid of being ostracized or simply being left out of the fun, go along to the mountaintop, even though they no longer believe in what is taking place. Having a Christian service at the same time gives them a more attractive option than simply opting out.

³ Krenak notes "The process of selecting a field location, clearing the land and burning the land, planting, cultivating, and harvesting, besides its primary economic importance also is an expression of the culture and social identity of the Dayaks. These activities cannot be evaluated according to their economic value alone. They are expressions of social relationships as well: togetherness, communication, a form of self-expression and actualization, important for relationships between individuals as well as group identity and communal relationships." (83.)

Although there is the danger of being seen as being in competition by having alternative services, these offer the advantage of demonstrating that Christians have not rejected the traditions of marking the beginning of the season, selecting the land, and requesting blessings on the land and its produce. They acknowledge the need and the traditions, but Christianize them. They are not then subject in the same way to the accusation of rejecting the traditions of the ancestors so they are able to live in harmony with others in the village who still practice the animistic forms.

Before the actual fieldwork begins there is an *adat* ceremony performed at the field where the forest is to be cleared or, if it is already cleared, that is going to be cultivated. There is unanimous agreement among Christian leaders that a Christian substitute is necessary, that is, there must be equivalent prayers for Christians because the needs are the same. Some pastors are quite willing to go to the fields with the farmers and lead them in a Christian ceremony on the site. Some, although they will not refuse to go to the field if the family insists, would prefer to lead the prayers in the church building. They feel that going to the field is appropriate only for new Christians and should be done for them until they grow past the need for this physical connection with the land, that is, having the prayers offered right at the location. Some pastors interviewed do not want to eliminate the practice of praying at the field because they consider it to be an excellent teaching opportunity to teach people how to pray properly, that is, to God instead of *Jubata*. Their worldview, or expectations of their belief system, and the content of their prayers are essentially the same. The difference between Christians and non-Christians is essentially to whom one goes to see that these needs are met.

Hengky Tomundo related that he would only go once to the field with the family. After that he insists that they hold their service in the church. He instructs other pastors not to permit the animistic paraphernalia (fetishes, and animals to be sacrificed) to be taken to the field. They should, though, bring other festive foods (particularly *tumpi* and *poe*, uniquely Dayak festive foods). Tomundo puts the food in the *pondok*, and then goes to the edge of the field. There he explains that God created everything. He picks up some earth as he talks about everything being from God. He is careful not to use any tools or objects that might be considered sacred or having mana. He also explains that it is possible for everyone to pray directly to the Lord themselves and that they do not need to rely on a pastor. There they hold hands and he prays that God will help them, and give them strength and health so they can work with profit in their fields.

He also explains that he is not a priest and that he will only pray once at the field. After that the prayers take place in the church building, from where people “call out to the Lord.” He tries to convey the idea that praying in the field and in the church is effectively the same, that one can pray anywhere. But the church is the place for the congregation to gather. They could pray at home, but he encourages them to gather in the church because this is where they find fellowship and mutual support.

In the church, Hengky invites the farmers to come to the front, asks them if they are convinced that God will help them, and tells them that they have to work too. God owns the land and causes it to produce. He draws the lines between praying to *Jubata* or to God who created the earth, water, and rice, and causes it to grow. He encourages them to pray to God, and to offer their work to God *so that God will help them*. Note that there

is a similar note to the prayers to *Jubata* in which the priest declares to *Jubata* that the people offer service, or help, *Jubata* in the expectation that *Jubata* will help humans.

Kasidi, originally from Java, is a well-respected pastor serving a Dayak village church. He also teaches that there is no need to pray in a particular place, such as at the field that is being planted, because God is all knowing. He stress that what is in the heart is what is important. He suggests that people bring their seed and seedlings to the church where he will pray over them. He acknowledges that this is slightly inconsistent with his teaching, but feels that having the seeds and seedlings visibly present is psychologically important. After the people bring their seeds and seedlings to the church to be prayed over they no longer feel the need to do anything further. That is, they do not feel the need to resort to further animistic rituals to ensure that they will prosper. He sees this as just a stage in their development; it is not the final goal. The final goal would be to do without even bringing the seeds or any other objects to church to be blessed.

Dayaks traditionally harvest the rice one stalk at a time with a small blade held in the palm of the hand. They believe that if the rice is harvested any other way then the *semangat* of the rice will flee and possibly become lost with dire implications for succeeding plantings. This method is extremely labour intensive and tedious. With a scythe or sickle the work could be accomplished in a fraction of the time. Sickles are used for gathering grass and hay, but to my knowledge scythes are unknown in the area where I have worked. Even the Christians continue to use the small palm-held harvest knife.

When the rice is ready for harvest the people in one village assemble at the field where they sacrifice a chicken to the spirit, or lord, of the land that is represented by a

carved figure. It is a festive occasion, and as with events described above, there is strong pressure on the Christians to participate for the social as well as the adat aspects. Again at this time the church members must decide whether to hold their own service and ceremony. One pastor reported an amiable solution worked out in his community. While the animists go to the field the Christians have a service in the church building. The two groups then unite for a festive meal. This solution permits the Christians to express the same thanks, and to pray for future prosperity without compromising their commitment to worship only God. Not many villages have been able to cooperate in this manner, possibly because the necessary levels of trust and tolerance have not yet been achieved.

Naik Dango

The *naik dango* harvest ceremony is a key component of Dayak cultural identity. The government is promoting a stylized generic version of the *naik dango* as a cultural festival and tourist attraction, held in Pontianak and other large centers in West Kalimantan. This presents a dilemma for the Christian. By not taking part in the *naik dango* a Dayak denies part of his or her cultural identity but in taking part he or she compromises his or her beliefs and convictions in a ceremony that syncretizes Christian with animistic beliefs and expectations. In the government-sponsored events, for example, the *adat* priest performs the *nyangahatn* and then the Catholic priest or a Protestant pastor offers Christian prayers. Christian participation in local ceremonies would require the same or greater degrees of compromise and syncretism. The issue of

the *naik dango* is an intense struggle for Christians because of all the cultural associations, and the festivities associated with it.⁴

In villages many congregations hold church services concurrent with the *naik dango* ceremonies that usually occur within a day or two of Easter. There is a general reluctance on the part of most pastors to have ceremonies or services at the granary, where the *naik dango* is normally held. Their goal is to move everything to the church building. Those Christians who do have ceremonies at the granary are either Roman Catholics, who, consistent with Catholic practice in other parts of the world, are not as concerned about syncretism as are Protestants. Some also are relatively new Christians who have not yet matured in their faith. One pastor reported that in his home village the Protestants used to go and pray at the granary but the need to do this has passed. Now they have a worship service in the church only.

Gawai

It is customary for most centres of any size to host festivals or fairs, either in conjunction with the completion of the harvest or around the national Declaration of Independence Day holiday (August 17). Entrepreneurs set up booths to sell food and alcoholic beverages and where patrons can gamble. Western-style rock bands are brought in for dancing and entertainment. People walk great distances from neighbouring villages to attend these events that might last several days. Sometimes *gawai* are focused around soccer or volleyball competitions. The tremendous popularity of these events is not surprising, considering how little variety and how few choices there are for entertainment in most villages and towns.

⁴ As far as I understand there is little official participation in the *Naik Dango* by the Muslim *ulama* or *imam*; Dayak ethnic identity is partly defined as being non-Muslim.

Apart from the propitiatory, prophylactic sacrifices offered to the spirits to ensure the safety of participants, the challenge to the church from *gawai* is not specifically because of animist/Christian differences. The challenge is because the events are very popular and draw most of the church youth and many adults who are tempted to take part in activities inappropriate for Christians, such as heavy drinking, gambling, and extra-marital sex. The church seldom, if ever, offers any activities that are as much 'fun' as *gawai*. The KGBI has customarily restricted its activities to holding worship services. Even youth events are basically worship-service centered. I do not find it at all surprising that youth will walk great distances, or travel on over-crowded trucks and 'buses' to attend a *gawai*, but will not bother to attend a church-related event that is much closer to home. This is not an issue of animist over against Christian beliefs, but should nevertheless be considered in the same framework as such issues because it relates to the question of the expectations the Dayak Christians have of their belief system. They expect Christianity to provide better solutions to the same problems of health and subsistence that their traditional beliefs and practices were designed to deal with. KGBI leaders somehow have acquired the idea that the church is not a forum for fun social activities. My conviction is that the church should be involved at this level of life as well. It should be proactive in providing appealing alternatives to activities that are less than wholesome, such as the heavy drinking and gambling at a *gawai*.⁵

⁵ In a seminary chapel service an American guest related, through an Indonesian translator, the story of his conversion to Christianity. The translator made a mistake that was revealing. The guest told how he had been attracted to Christianity at a church youth meeting where the youth were "playing games and doing all sorts of crazy things." His point was that, contrary to his conceptions, Christian youth could enjoy life and have fun. The translator translated this statement into Indonesian with the meaning that the youth were doing all manner of things that were not pleasing, that is, not appropriate at a church youth meeting. The translation of the slang usage of 'crazy' was coloured by the translator's conception that youth meetings should be conducted as worship services, not parties.

Passages

Just as I reviewed the various rites of passage from a traditional perspective in the last chapter, now I aim to show how they pose an additional set of challenges for Christians. Many of these events involve a degree of dependency on others in the community who may still hold to the traditional beliefs and practices. When there is no choice but to rely on, or interact with those who insist on performing the animistic rituals and ceremonies, the Christian must compromise to some degree, or convince him or herself that it is of no consequence, or cut him or herself off completely from interaction and dependency in these areas. In some cases the only choice for Christians, as they move through their own life passages, is to submit to the non-Christians and let them perform their animistic rites.

For example, when a woman is in labour and attended by an animist midwife, the mother has little choice but to ignore what is happening because of her great dependency at the time. (The conflict is not just one way; when an animist midwife attends a Christian mother she has her own *adat* to perform in order to make certain that overall harmony is maintained even though she is attending a Christian mother. Similarly a *dukun* reportedly requested that a picture of Jesus be removed before he would proceed with his rituals.) The newly-delivered mother is faced with the choice of how to dispose properly of the afterbirth if she does not want it superstitiously buried at a crossroads or under the steps of her house to create an invisible tie between the newborn child and the village.

The practice of circumcision is a multi-dimensional issue for Christians. Most Dayaks practice circumcision and the practice is tied to traditional beliefs and practices.

Generally they believe that a male who is not circumcised will be unlucky and become an object of ridicule in society. Christian families continue to have their boys circumcised. Sometimes they will do it in conjunction with a circumcision in a non-Christian family to cut down on the costs of the social events associated with the practice. The general trend is to have a health worker or doctor do the circumcision rather than the *dukun*, and then hold a circumcision ceremony or celebration. Some Christians are taking this route—either having the circumcision performed by a doctor, and then not having any celebration, or sometimes substituting the traditional celebration with a Christian thanksgiving service or celebration. It comes as no surprise that Christians feel a strong social pressure to conform to general practice in this matter. Social conventions and habits, religious convictions, and superstition regarding circumcision have almost a global range. This matter is not at all unique to Dayaks but nevertheless is a challenge they face in the context living as Christians in a majority animist community.

Marriage

Traditional *adat* marriage practices conflict with Christian faith and practice in several areas. These conflicts are especially difficult to deal with because marriages necessarily involve and affect so many family members on both sides, plus substantial portions of the entire village community. The conflicts are particularly acute because all three aspects of *adat* — laws, customs, and beliefs — are involved. The challenge for Christians is to incorporate or adapt enough traditional elements to make the marriage legal with respect to *adat*, valid in the eyes of the community, and to feel right and proper to the couple, families, and guests, and yet not to incorporate animistic practices that compromise Christian beliefs and practices.

Pastors encounter problems before they get to the wedding ceremonies, when the couple and families believe they must settle the *adat* before the marriage can take place. In cases where the couple have slept together before marriage, or even been alone together, or if they marry too close a relative, or are in some other violation of *adat* norms (and there are many norms that are easily violated during a courtship), they need to 'pay *adat*' to put things right before they can proceed.⁶ Otherwise their marriage will not be blessed and they will be stigmatized in the community, and individuals or the community as a whole may suffer misfortune caused by the angered ancestral spirits. On the evening of their wedding day the couple may go through an *adat* ceremony in which they are required to make *adat* payments to put things right. The objects used in these payments are the objects used in traditional rituals and ceremonies: chickens, pigs, rice, cakes, ceramic jugs.

Christians need to deal with the same issues, such as the couple having slept together or the marriage to a relative. Simply to ignore such would hurt the reputation of Christians generally and the families particularly. Ignoring violations of *adat* norms would give force to the accusation that Christians discard *adat*. But dealing with these issues through animistic *adat* compromises Christian belief and practice and exposes the Christian to the risk of having his or her faith undermined and weakened through further association with the animistic practices.

Another challenge is that a family may arrange for a church wedding that meets the standards and expectations of the pastor and congregation, but also hold a traditional

⁶ 'Paying *adat*' consists of fulfilling all the sanctions imposed by *adat*. Often this involves payment of a fine assessed as chickens, pigs, or other animals that must be sacrificed, the observance of temporary taboos, or the payment of a monetary fine, which sometimes is assessed in terms of an archaic currency now used only in connection with *adat*.

ceremony afterwards. Again, they would do this because they do not want to be accused of destroying or rejecting *adat* and the traditions handed down by their ancestors. They may also have a residual belief that things can go wrong for the couple, family, and community if *adat* is not fulfilled. Depending on how strong or weak the Christian community is in the village, the families may also be subject to *adat* fines if they do not have an *adat* marriage ceremony.

A Christian ceremony, it should be noted, is called the “blessing of the marriage.” Usually the legal aspects of the marriage are not included in the ceremony. The legal aspects are handled separately, either at the site if the pastor or a layperson is licensed to formalize marriages, or at a civic office sometime previous or subsequent to the church marriage ceremony. In situations where the village is isolated or remote, the civic formalization of the marriage may be done weeks or months later (if it is done at all). Sometimes when a couple have converted to Christianity after they are married by *adat* they request a church ceremony to Christianize, or ‘bless’ their marriage.

After the marriage is blessed in the church service the reception and banquet pose further challenges to Christians. The conflicts and challenges seem to be more acute for the pastors and evangelists than for the families and guests. Not surprisingly the tension is felt most acutely by the couple who are Christian or from Christian families, who are being married in the context of expectations as to how a marriage should be properly performed according to *adat* to safeguard the prosperity of the couple and the safety of the extended families and the entire community. A complicating element is that an *adat* marriage is normally performed in the home of the bride or groom’s family. The traditional ceremony precedes, leads up to and includes the marriage banquet. This is to

say that the banquet is seamlessly integrated into the whole procedure. It is hard for the Christians to have a banquet that does not include many of these traditional elements because the banquet itself is part of the traditional *adat* ceremony. Certain foods and customs must be present in order for it to feel like a valid marriage banquet, but many of these foods and customs have animistic meanings inimical to Christianity. For instance, most of the special foods traditionally served at a wedding are first offered to the spirits or *Jubata*. In the Kendayan *pirikng* (food plate) ritual performed during the wedding banquet, each family member, even distance relatives, is give a plate with pork or chicken. Each person must eat a small portion of this as their blessing on the couple and as a sign of respect for the greater family. Without this ritual the marriage ceremony is not considered valid or legally binding. If this ritual offering of food is not accepted and eaten it is as if the extended family does not agree to or bless the union. The problem for Christians is that the animals were first sacrificed, thereby involving the spirits in the event. Further, symbolic payments (such as the pigs feet for the *picara*, the jaw to the village head, and two-fingers width of pigskin for the family members) are meted out to family and important community officials. These traditionally consist of portions of pork or chicken that have been offered to the spirits.

The objects used in these ceremonies, particularly the pedestal tray on which the sacrificial foods are served, have symbolic value beyond the ceremonies in which they are used. Pastors, and some families, are loath to use them because of the connotations. One pastor reported that he recommends keeping the trays as valuable antiques, but that Christians not use them to serve food on any occasion because it powerfully reminds them of their old beliefs and might draw them back from their Christian faith.

Throughout the traditional marriage ceremony the couple (and sometimes the parents or their representatives) are seated or 'enthroned' where they can be seen and witnessed by all the guests. This display for witness, without which the marriage is not considered valid or legally binding, traditionally involves further animistic rituals. The challenge for Christians is to incorporate enough of these elements to maintain their Dayak culture and to satisfy the expectations of the couple, family, and community, without compromising Christian faith and practice by permitting practices that involve the worship of any other than God.

How the pastor or evangelist deals with the situation depends in part on the extent to which he has been involved in the planning of the marriage. Increasingly pastors are attempting pre-marital counseling, but this practice is in its infancy. Pastors who require the couple to have counseling use the time to instruct the couple and family about the differences between Christian and *adat* marriage ceremonies. (I suspect that what they reported to me in the interviews were more ideals than actual practice.) What frequently happens is that the pastor is involved only at the final stages, after the traditional elements have already been prepared. One way the pastors deal with this is by using most of the traditional items and unique festival foods, but insisting that they not be offered to the idols or prayed over by the *adat* priest first. One pastor related that it is particularly important not to use the traditional pedestal tray for serving these symbolic food items, because the tray itself is so firmly associated with animistic practices. He also does not have the food items and other symbolic articles present while he is praying lest he be perceived as praying over them in the manner of the *adat* priest. He prays that the couple will grow in their Christian journey, for the families of the bride and groom, and for the

banquet. Several pastors reported that when they attend or are asked to take part in weddings where everything is already prepared and laid out in front of the couple, they take time to reinterpret the meaning of the objects and foods. They give each object a symbolic meaning that is compatible with Christian faith and practice.

In essence, what these pastors are doing, or attempting to do, is mold traditions that preserve Dayak identity and culture yet remain compatible with Christianity. This approach is fraught with dangers of syncretism on the one hand, and radically altering or destroying indigenous culture on the other hand. Often the traditional meanings are far more persistent than the pastor imagines and the pastor's message far less informative or influential than he believes or hopes it to be.

Another pastor reported that when he is given opportunity to speak to the couple and the guests while they are being 'witnessed', he uses the occasion for evangelism. This approach is potentially offensive to the guests who may resent the intrusion of non-traditional elements into the proceedings.

Christian marriage ceremonies are often incorporated into regular Sunday morning worship services. When a marriage ceremony is performed other than on a Sunday morning the service has much the same content and flow as a regular Sunday morning worship service. The bride and groom sit through the service on specially prepared seats in front of the first row of pews or benches until such time as the focus is turned to them. Doing the service this way leaves no doubt as to the Christian context and character of the ceremony.

White wedding dresses are popular among Christians even in remote villages. Somehow white wedding dresses, and suits and white gloves for the men, have become

symbols of a Christian wedding, even though the white wedding dress is not part of the culture and is not specifically Christian even in Western culture. It seems somewhat incongruous to see a bride in her white dress with a long train making her way down a muddy pathway to the church building for the wedding ceremony, or walking a narrow plank as she boards a riverboat to get to the church. In village weddings in which I was involved I suggested that the bride and groom wear their traditional formal attire rather than a white wedding dress and suit. The suggestion was never well received. One couple insisted on the white dress and suit coat for the church service, but then changed into more traditional attire for the reception. The *Seminari Theologia Kalimantan* owns a wedding dress that it rents out to students and church members. The rental income from the dress is put aside to purchase a replacement when it wears out.

As I tried to persuade couples to wear their own formal dress rather than a Western-style white wedding gown, eventually I realized that the white dress serves as a distinct, visible symbol of the couple's break with animistic traditions. Furthermore it is associated with progress and modernization. Traditional attire symbolizes backwardness. (The white dress is not just an association with Western culture. The ethnic Chinese in the larger centers, who are generally far wealthier than most Dayaks, have extremely elaborate white wedding gowns and huge wedding cakes.)

Death and Funerals

Death and funerals are times of intense conflict between Christian and animistic beliefs. The conflicts are intense because of the great fear associated with the presence of spirits at the time of someone's death. Funerals and the following week of mourning are the most critical times for reestablishing and maintaining the protective distance between

the visible and invisible realms. Death, when a person's spirit passes from the visible to the invisible realm, is a time when the two realms most obviously and acutely converge. The intensity of the conflict is heightened because often a death is unanticipated and the family is not prepared to deal with the differences in beliefs as to how the funeral and mourning should be carried out. Unlike a marriage there is no time of planning and preparation as in premarital counseling. Unlike farming rituals that follow the seasons, there is little time to prepare. Furthermore the deceased is normally buried within twenty-four hours of death.

An elderly evangelist related that when his one-year-old son died and was buried he did not prepare the special leaves to burn for the smoke to walk through after returning from the graveside. Only he, his wife, and two other family members went to the graveside. Others stayed away because of their deep fear of the consequences of not being able to walk through the smoke to disassociate themselves from the spirits that would accompany them back from the graveyard. It was only after people saw that he and his wife lived on and remained in good health that Christians in his village became willing to go to the graveside without the protection of the special smoke on their return.

A minor difference that is fairly easy to deal with is the custom of not singing at a funeral lest it be interpreted as a sign of joy that the person died. Christians deal with this either by limiting their singing, or educating others as to the intent of their songs. It is customary to give gifts of comfort and assistance to the bereaved by placing them on the coffin. Christians also give gifts of food and money to the bereaved, but not on the coffin.

It is not uncommon for the bereaved to move to abandon their house and either move to a new house, or tear down the old house and move it to a new location in order to reestablish and maintain a protective distance from the spirit of the deceased.

It is commonly believed that the spirit of the deceased reports to *Jubata* immediately after death, and then returns to visit the family on the third or fourth night. After the seventh night, if all goes well with the spirit and the family performs the proper *adat*, the spirit finally departs from the house. The challenge for the church and specifically for pastoral care is what to do during this period. Christians generally reject the idea that the spirit of the deceased will return. Instead they believe that what the family experiences is an evil spirit or demon that uses the opportunity to deceive the family and friends by appearing in the form of the deceased. With that theoretical 'difference' in belief, Christians still share the Dayak worldview of the reality of the two realms. Christians are just as sensitive as non-Christians to spiritual beings making their presence felt in the visible realm. Christians frequently relate stories of seeing visions, ghosts, hearing strange noises or sounds of a person walking, doors opening, the floor creaking, someone getting into bed, etc. without any physical presence of a person to make the noises. Christians do not feel a need to distance themselves from the spirit of the deceased; their perceived need is to maintain a protective distance from the evil spirits that try to deceive and disturb them.

Pastors commonly conduct Christian worship services in the home of the deceased as often and for as long as the family feels it is necessary. In addition to the funeral service some have services on the third, fourth or seventh nights. Others will hold services every night until the family feels comforted and safe. The pastors generally

demonstrate a willingness to do this to give comfort to the family by having people present, and to help the bereaved through this vulnerable, fearful time. Lending comfort is a genuine motive. Further motive is that everyone concerned, the bereaved as well as the church members and the pastor, fear the spirit of the dead, or the demons that use the opportunity to visit and deceive the family and they find safety in numbers.

It is also customary for family and friends to sleep in the home of the bereaved. Each family involved has at least one representative that sleeps at the house before the night of the funeral. Their presence is ostensibly to guard against the suicide of the bereaved. (It is commonly reported later by the bereaved that they contemplated suicide but the presence of the people there prevented them from doing it. I believe that such suicides are actually quite rare.)

Most pastors consider the funeral and mourning period as an excellent opportunity for evangelism and teaching. Many non-Christian family members are present and are a captive audience. Furthermore it is a sensitive, vulnerable time, when people face the reality of their own mortality. Funerals are a time when Christians can be bold rather than fearful. For the most part it is their own welfare they are believed to be risking by not taking the traditional *adat* precautions. Non-Christians are freer to observe the results of these violations of traditions without themselves being put at too much risk. Christians are freer than in some other situations to adopt new practices, and the results are readily visible to non-Christians.

Crises

War and Violent Conflict

War and violent conflict are times of critical decision for Christians. When the 'red bowl' is sent around the village, and from village to village, Christian faith often disappears. During times of intense emotions and physical violence many do not want to be obviously Christians. When Christians do not cooperate in a *balalak* they anger their neighbours, but usually the situation is resolved without violence through *adat* or the national justice system. But during a violent crisis there is an all too real danger of being killed for not cooperating. To refuse the red bowl means to side with enemy, so when the enemies are being attacked and killed one must be very determined to refuse the bowl.

During the Dayak/Madurese ethnic conflict of 1997, as each village joined the fight they sacrificed chickens and pigs to equip themselves with strength and power. Refusal to contribute to the cost of the sacrifices could easily brand one as a supporter of the enemy. Many Christians contributed to the sacrifices under threat of death. One pastor who was located in the center of the conflict advocated that Christians respond by gathering for special services to pray for peace instead of contributing to the sacrifices.

Many Christians took part in the fighting in the Dayak/Madurese conflict. An even greater number of Christians turned to *kekuatan gaib* (supernatural powers) to protect themselves. When the crisis had passed and the road to Pontianak was open and relatively safe again, the KGBI pastors gathered for a special meeting on the seminary campus to discuss the crisis, what their congregations had experienced, and how they had coped with the situation. Many pastors expressed deep disappointment at how many of their people had reverted to magical powers for protection. The pastors related that many

people sought protection in fetishes, amulets and mantra formulae for protection even though they were aware that as Christians they should not do so. They sought magical or supernatural protection to get them through the crisis, intending to return to the Christian faith when it was over. One man was reported as saying "I received Jesus too soon. I gave up all my fetishes, now there is a war. What will I do? I returned to them. After the trouble is past, I'll come back to Jesus." The man felt it necessary to return to his fetishes, etc. in order to find physical protection during the time of danger. He realized that Christianity did not offer this kind of protection. He also realized that the two belief systems were incompatible and that he was violating the principles of Christianity by taking up his fetishes again, yet he felt he had no alternative but to do so to preserve his life.

One issue that all the churches in West Kalimantan had to deal with after the conflict ended was what to do with members who had sought animistic or supernatural powers during the conflict and then wanted to return to the church when the danger was passed. In 1997 they had to deal with a dilemma as old as the Christian faith itself: what to do with returned apostates. For the most part the KGBI and other churches in West Kalimantan did not struggle with this issue, but actively sought out those who had returned to their old beliefs, encouraged them to return to the Christian faith, and resumed the task of teaching and discipleship. Although the pastors were disappointed with the number that failed the test, there was a general sympathy towards those who returned to their animistic beliefs during the crisis. Most of the pastors understood that sticking with Christianity during such times required a great deal of faith and willingness to die,

because Christianity does not promise the same kind of immediate physical protection as is ostensibly afforded by amulets and fetishes.

Many reports of unusual or supernatural strength, invulnerability to wounds, or 'miraculous' healings from wounds reached Pontianak during the fighting. The reactions and attitudes of many church leaders, pastors, and seminary students to these reports were noteworthy. There was a general fascination with these reports. Those who heard and retold the stories apparently believed them as factual. If they didn't actually believe them as factual there was certainly a sense of intrigue and longing on their part for this kind of power. One report was of Dayak warriors (possessed by *kamang* spirits) who when wounded would wipe their hand over the wound and the wound would disappear. Reports abounded about how Dayak warriors could identify Madurese from others by sniffing or smelling them.

Some of the church leaders who related these stories had themselves sought out teachers of this 'science,' had owned fetishes, swallowed magical stones, etc. to obtain strength and invulnerability in their youth and before conversion to Christianity. I have heard numerous testimonies to the effect that what prompted conversion to Christianity was the failure of these fetishes to protect them in street fights. As far as I know none of the church leaders, pastors, or seminary students resorted to supernatural means to protect themselves, and if they didn't actually fully believe the reports they heard, and retold, there was at least a sense that they wanted them to be true. They knew that as Christians this was off-limits for them and that ultimately it does not lead to Heaven, but there was a subtle sense of regret that such powers are not part of Christianity.⁷

⁷ TV shows in which the characters supplement their martial art fighting with supernatural strength are very popular among seminary students and staff.

Sickness

One of the most frequent complaints from village pastors is that families they assumed had converted to Christianity often resort to the *dukun* for medical treatments in cases of severe illness. It is discouraging for the pastors, but upon closer examination of the situation they should not be as perplexed or disappointed as they become. First, there are practical and social factors that put the sick person, or the caregivers under extreme pressure to resort to the old methods. Sometimes there is pressure from non-Christian family members to seek traditional treatments from the *dukun*. Westerners, raised in a society that values individualism and independence, may not appreciate the intensity of the pressure the highly integrated extended family can bring to bear on the patient or care givers. The pressure intensifies when the Christian prayers do not ‘work’ and the person does not recover. Those involved begin to question the validity and effectiveness of Christian prayers for such situations. Furthermore, modern medical care is often not available or is very difficult to reach.⁸ The available medical care is often of poor quality. (Doctors and clinics seldom have access to medical laboratories for testing and diagnosis.) Hospital and clinic buildings are usually dilapidated, and medicines and other supplies are simply not available. In some cases the illness is incurable even with available treatments, or known treatments are impossibly expensive. For example, just getting to a government hospital in the city of Pontianak or the rural mission hospital is

⁸ For example, when I heard that one of our pastors was seriously ill I took my boat upriver as far as it would go, then hiked across a dried up lakebed before getting to the trail that led to the village. I assessed the situation and returned home that same day. The next day we decided that we should bring him out, so I made the trip again, spent that night in the village, and then made arrangements to carry him out. We tied him to the driver of a motorcycle who drove to the shore of the lakebed. From there we carried him by stretcher to my boat, and from there to our own house where we provided treatment ourselves for what turned out to be typhoid fever. It was relatively easy to get him out with my motorboat, we had a radio to consult with an American doctor, my wife is a nurse -but it was still a big job. Very few Dayaks have such resources.

expensive even before paying for the simple treatments. Only the very wealthy can afford to fly to Singapore or drive to Kuching, Malaysia for medical care (which rivals treatment in Canada).

Second, there is the deep and controversial issue of the role of physical healing in the Christian faith. This relates to the question of what one can expect of Christianity, and the degree to which the Christian faith legitimately and validly deals with the micro questions of everyday life as well as the cosmic questions of meaning and eternal destiny. I will put aside for the moment whether physical healing is actually available to every believer as some popular North American evangelists and faith healers claim it is. The reality is that frequently Christians who pray for healing either of themselves or another are not healed as they requested. So for a variety of reasons Dayak Christians often resort to the *dukun* for medical treatments.

It has been my experience on many occasions to be called upon to pray for a seriously ill person (in the role of a priest or holy man with special status whose prayers might be more effective than the local pastor's). I frequently noted evidence of the *dukun* having previously offered treatment, for instance small woven platforms hanging from the ceiling or rafters on which there are offerings to the spirits. I transported a seminary student back to her village who had been called back from school because her younger sister was near death. The ill sister was a Christian, but had been painted and anointed by the *dukun* and was laid out in the middle of the large room with fetishes around her. Family and friends sat in a wide circle around her keeping vigil. I was asked to pray as one more approach to find healing for the girl. My main concern was to transport her in my boat to a clinic in a larger community up river. Her 'Christian' father would not

permit me to take her. I learned later that to have moved her would have violated a taboo imposed by the *dukun* after he had done his 'treatment'.

As with other cases of apostasy, pastors face the question of how to deal with people who, having sought treatment from the *dukun* later return to the church. Most of them treat it as the normal course of development in a person's Christian walk and growth. The person is readily accepted, but encouraged not to engage in such practices in the future.

Some pastors approach the problem from a practical angle. They point out to their people how expensive the *dukun* treatment is compared to modern medical care. The *dukun* requires payment in the form of cash, or sugar, rice, coffee, etc. There is also the sometimes high cost of sacrificial chickens, pigs, and sometimes dogs that the *dukun* prescribes. The pastors advocate modern medical care as more effective, and cheaper, than *dukun* treatment. The most serious drawback to this is the difficulty of getting adequate medical attention. It also conveys the message that Christianity is not concerned with the micro issues of sickness and health because one must go outside of the church to find healing. This in a way can reinforce the tendency to return to the *dukun* for medical care, because providing such care is specifically one of the functions of the *dukun*. Suggesting the patient be taken to a medical doctor outside the church gives the message that Christian faith does not cover these problems. Indeed such concerns are specifically addressed at length and elaborate detail in the animistic traditions and belief system.

Pastors advocate that Christians not contribute to the community collections to purchase sacrificial animals and to pay the *dukun*. Some churches take up special

offerings in church to give to families who need assistance for medical treatment and are willing to seek modern medical care (such as it is).

There is as well the custom of having another more prosperous family 'confess' a child as their own to confuse the spirits and remove the child from the influence of the spirits. This custom has interesting implications for the practice of 'child dedications' (as practiced in non-paedobaptist churches.) It is not inconceivable that the parents of the child believe or hope that by dedicating the child to God they are removing him or her from the influence of malevolent spirits, either by placing the child under the stronger power of Jesus, or by the church taking the place of the more prosperous family that would be asked to 'confess' the child according to the traditional practices.

Ritual Prophylactic safety precautions

Kampunan

Several seminary students related that they had refused to eat some grains of rice or touch the bowl after being invited to eat in a non-Christian's home. The host was very upset with them, and afraid because they had refused *kampunan*. As they departed he threw some rice after them, making sure that some of the rice touched them. This man's fear of the consequences for his guests and for his own household was evidently great.

Most Christians are aware that the *kampunan* practice of eating a grain or two of rice, or at least reverently touching the side of the rice bowl, is no longer necessary or appropriate. One evangelist related that he has had a host take his hand and physically force him to touch the rice. The host was afraid that the evangelist would encounter some disaster on the road when he left, or that bad luck would come to the host's house because of this violation of *kampunan*. This evangelist does not willingly touch the rice

or plate. He now responds to this conflict of beliefs by taking the time to pray then and there for the family. He prays that the family will not encounter misfortune and this helps to alleviate their fears. He tells the family that he assumes responsibility for any misfortune they may experience, but that he is confident in the Lord he serves. When he returns at a later date safely and still in good health he is well received as a minister, or someone who has a source of power. Furthermore he is given greater respect when he comes. It is as if, he says, they believe that the Lord God has entered the house with him. After he has proven to the family that the *kampunan* custom has no meaning he explains to them that they must pray to God who created all things, even rice, and leave their old, false beliefs. He explains that he no longer experiences fear that binds him. He prays that they will be able to give up their old beliefs and turn to the Lord. After he has demonstrated that he can be safe and healthy even though he has refused *kampunan*, he finds that people are receptive to his message.

Fetishes

Some non-Christians install a clay or ceramic jug (*tempayan*) half buried in front of their house, or hang small sheaves of grass and leaves over the lintel, as defenses against malevolent or mischievous spirits. Christians have been taught, with varying degrees of success, that it is no longer appropriate for them to rely on these traditional fetishes. But the custom and beliefs are hard to give up or change. What sometimes happens is that the Christians substitute the traditional objects and methods with Christian artifacts. Crosses, crucifixes, candles, Bibles, and Bible story pictures become the focus of animistic worship centres in the house. A crucifix is believed to guard against thieves and fire. A common practice among Roman Catholics is to take palm fronds to church

on Palm Sunday. The priest blesses the fronds that are then used for fertility. When something is planted the palm frond is stuck in beside it, not for shelter from the sun (which the seedling also needs), but for good luck and to keep the pests away. A KGBI pastor has noted that some of his congregation have taken the communion wine (actually juice or tea) home to be used for medicinal purposes. It is rubbed on arthritic joints, on the stomach for stomach ailments, and on the forehead and chest to take away fear.⁹ Pictures of Jesus have been put on the chest of a deceased person in the coffin along with his or her baptismal certificate; the deceased is equipped for the hereafter with Christian objects rather than with traditional animist provisions and tools.

In such cases the fundamental mindset or worldview of the Christian has not changed with conversion to Christianity. All that is different is that they rely on a different spiritual power, God, to protect them, and they channel or appropriate this God's power with Christian fetishes. This behavior demonstrates that much more attention needs to be given to the nature of conversion in light of their expectations of a religious belief system. Many Dayak Christians essentially expect Christianity to do for them what they expected their animistic traditions and practices to do for them, but they have been convinced in a variety of ways that Christianity is a better way to meet these expectations and ends. Their fundamental expectations have not been converted.

Pastors and evangelists are concerned about such practices and try to teach their people that these things are no longer appropriate or even necessary for Christians. What I personally have observed is that the pastors are sympathetic and understanding about

⁹ The most common term for the Lord's Supper, or Communion, is *Perjamuan Suci*. One meaning of the root word, 'jamu' is 'meal, or banquet.' A second meaning is 'a tonic made of medicinal herbs, or traditional medicine.' The way informal Indonesian is commonly spoken 'Perjamuan Suci' (Holy banquet or meal) is easily shortened to 'jamu suci' (Holy traditional medicine).

such actions. They do not agree with the actions, but they understand why the people do these things, perhaps because the pastors themselves share the same worldview and understanding of how 'spiritual forces' work, and so for the most part they are patient with their members who still do such things.

There is a growing body of Christian folklore about encounters between Christians and fetishes. Typical is a story in which a man demonstrated the power of his fetishes by putting them in a tree and challenging others to shoot them. No one could hit them with the rifle except the Christian, who shot and destroyed them. The people involved were convinced that Christian power is greater than the animistic power of the fetishes. Typical too are stories of converts destroying their fetishes by burning them, only to find that certain fetishes aren't easily destroyed because they will not burn. Such stories are told to credulous audiences and seldom related as first-hand eyewitness accounts. They do serve as yet another illustration that Dayak Christians function with the same worldview, with the difference that they believe that their power is stronger than that which their non-Christian friends and neighbours still rely upon.¹⁰

Customs and Culture

Music

Only once while I lived and worked in West Kalimantan did I encounter any sort of indigenous Dayak musical instrument. The guitar, store-bought or home made, is the exclusive instrument found in the rural KGBI churches. Dayak Christians in KGBI

¹⁰ It should be noted that many Western missionaries, both in Kalimantan and elsewhere, believe that there is some intrinsic spiritual power in fetishes. Some missionaries will not collect fetishes as artifacts because they believe that having the object in their home would invite a demonic presence. This indicates that many features of the worldview I have been describing as the Dayak worldview are not unique to Dayaks or even aboriginal peoples almost everywhere. Many Westerners share aspects of this worldview as well.

churches have totally spurned their traditional instruments for use in church. The instruments, which are mostly percussion, such as gongs and drums, have too many animistic connotations. Besides the connotations and symbolism of the instruments themselves, certain rhythms signify different animistic rituals. These instruments are also used in martial arts training, another association that many believe is incompatible with Christian faith and practice.

One pastor in my survey totally rejects the use of the native instruments in church because it reminds the people of their animistic past, but he advocates that Christians use them for other entertainment. If Christians use the instruments outside of church it demonstrates to Christians and non-Christians alike that there really are not any spirits affiliated with the instruments; they are simply physical objects. People can see that they can use these instruments casually without getting sick or dying. It demonstrates that the Lord is stronger. This pastor believes that there is nothing intrinsically wrong or evil about the instruments, only that they are such powerful symbols and reminders of his people's animistic beliefs that are still all too present and tempting.¹¹

Dancing

KGBI pastors feel the same way about dancing as they do about the use of indigenous instruments in the church. The patterns, movements, and rhythms of traditional dances all have religious meanings that could be considered as incompatible with certain interpretations of traditional Christian faith and practice. The movements in

¹¹ In all the visits I made to villages I only once found an instrument, a three-note rhythm instrument made from a section of a bamboo stalk, that I would classify as indigenous. The guitar is overwhelmingly the instrument of choice for entertainment generally and for Christian worship in both Roman Catholic and Protestant churches. I have heard locally made drums and antique gongs used in animistic rituals, but have never seen them used for either casual entertainment or Christian worship.

all dances, such as the *Tarian Tontong* for the healing of the sick, or the *Tarian Cunggang* for rice harvest, are generally the same, and all relate to the spirits in the invisible realm, not to God.

Arts and Crafts

The patterns and motifs of Dayak art and crafts also have religious meanings. Indonesian sub-cultures are represented and identified by the style of their traditional costumes and the motifs on the cloth. Most Christians would like to preserve the traditional costumes that identify Dayak sub-cultures over against other Indonesian sub-cultures, but the motifs and patterns in the cloth have animistic religious meanings, and so are inappropriate for Christians to use. Those who are sensitive to such matters try to find traditional costumes that follow the general style but are not designed around the animistic motifs. Shields, machetes, and other paraphernalia also identify Dayak culture, but are inappropriate for decorations or any other role in a church setting because of the animistic — in this case headhunting — connotations.

The strong association between the traditional musical instruments and art motifs leaves Dayak Christians searching for symbols that will identify their sub-culture but not re-associate them with animism. They uniformly use Western guitars for church music. The preacher is expected to wear a white shirt — preferably long-sleeved — and a necktie. Churches are virtually devoid of decoration and artwork.

Betel Nut

The betel nut has a prominent place in traditional Dayak culture. It is becoming less popular in modern times because frequent use of the nut leaves the user's mouth and

teeth stained dark red or black. It is said that this helps preserve the teeth and at one time was considered attractive, but the look is now considered to be a sign of backwardness. Common use is mostly limited to elders. The younger generations have turned away from the stimulation in the betel nut to the caffeine in coffee and the nicotine in tobacco. Although consumption of betel nut is not as common now in everyday usage it retains its symbolic value and role in *adat* rituals. Traditionally a guest would be offered betel nut. Refusal signified a lack of respect for the host; refusal of the betel nut signifies a rejection of the host's *adat* that the nut represents. Betel nut is used in *balalak* rituals. In some traditions when the village is closed off for the *balalak* rituals a person could still enter the village by being ritually sprinkled with water, and given betel nut to eat. Before he would enter a house it too was sprinkled with water. A Western missionary advocated accepting the betel nut in such cases to be permitted to enter the village and meet with his congregation. A Minahasan missionary reported that when he met with a "Tribal Head" he was offered betel nut served on the end of a machete blade. As a sign of respect for the host, the village, and the culture, he accepted the betel nut.

Coffee and tobacco are replacing betel nut in common usage. The issue for Christians with the betel nut is primarily the symbolic value attached to it. As it fades from usage it becomes less an issue for the Christian.¹²

Goods considered common property

There is one further cultural item that is not as overtly tied to the Dayak animistic worldview and belief system as the other issues I have discussed so far, but is nonetheless collateral. This is the issue of communal property: land, houses, and tools. The land has

¹² I was once served betel nut and cigarettes on a pedestal tray on which there was also an old Dutch era coin that I was told serves as a fetish to that family. I declined both, I hope graciously.

been passed on by the ancestors, whose spirits linger on it. An individual may own the land but because the common ancestors planted the fruit trees all the descendents believe they have a right to the fruit. Even though land might be willed to specific family members it is still viewed in many respects as common property. It is difficult in Asian culture generally for someone to deny things to others, especially family members. It is even more difficult when the people believe that the involvement of the spirits of the ancestors provides further justification for holding goods and produce in common.

A house might be willed to a specific family member, but other family members can come and visit indefinitely, or even move in permanently on the basis that it is theirs too because they are relatives, or it was owned by a common parent.

Personal items are commonly borrowed by others and not returned, or passed down a whole series of borrowers until no one remembers to whom it properly belongs. This practice undermines individual incentive to improve one's material quality of life. Anything that one has can be borrowed and it must be loaned out whenever someone requests it unless the owner has a very good reason for not loaning it out (such as plans to use it immediately). Since the borrower also cannot easily refuse to loan it out, it quickly becomes worn out or damaged, and of course no one wants to assume responsibility. There is little point in working hard to acquire goods to improve the material quality of life of the whole community (except for the status that comes from being able to loan things out).

Some non-Dayak Indonesian missionaries and church workers have tried to address this issue, which they see as a problem hampering development of village life. They try to teach that a Christian should show respect for the owner of the land, house, or

tool. They should at least ask before picking the fruit, not assume that they can move into the family house, and make sure they return a borrowed item to the original owner and not loan it out any further, at least not without permission from the original owner. The basis for this approach is that Christians are commanded to love their neighbours, which implies respecting them and their possessions as well. Loaning out borrowed items can lead to interpersonal problems with the owner of the item, and Christians must strive to be on good terms as much as it is in their power to do so.

Prayer

In the *adat* rituals the *dukun* or *tukang mantera* (the mantra expert) functions as a celebrant who does the actual communicating with the spirits and invisible powers while the people watch. This celebrant functions quite apart from actual participation of those present who can carry on with their conversations. It is quite different from the Christian congregation at prayer in which all are either engaged in prayer themselves (often quite vocally, offering strong competition with the leader), or are listening to and silently following a leader. In *adat* rites, however, there is a definite sense that the celebrant is performing the rites on behalf of others. The *dukun* or *tukang mantera* is the only one who has the special abilities or senses and who knows the formulae for contacting and communicating with the spirits. Many Dayak animists are also nominal members of the Roman Catholic Church, in which the division between laity and priesthood is well established. Protestant Christians from this background also often associate the minister's role as intermediary with God, to appeal to God for the day-to-day and particularly special needs. They also tend to look upon the minister as a priest or shaman who has a spiritual gift that enables the minister to offer prayers and conduct rituals with

more effectiveness than a layperson. Thus where the animist calls upon the *dukun* or *adat* priest to perform the ritual necessary for achieving the desired ends, so the Protestant calls upon the minister as one whose role is to do the same thing in a Christian context.

Animistic prayers, or communications with the invisible realm, are usually offered in conjunction with sacred objects such as fetishes or sacrificial offerings. The prayers are not offered spontaneously, but rather as part of a ritual. Some prayers and rituals are conducted only at certain places, such as on the mountaintop, under a large or unusual tree, by a prominent rock, a bend in the river, the entrance to the village, or special places where idols have been erected. The idea that places are sacred or more effective points of communication with the spirits persists in the church. I have heard pastors say, "Animists go to the mountain top or field to pray. Christians go to the church to pray." These same pastors will teach that Christians can pray anywhere, but the over-riding message the Christian hears is that the church building is the focus of attention and activity. Therefore it becomes very important to erect a church building as a sacred spot for efficacious prayers. There are of course many other factors that influence a new congregation's decision to erect a special building, but I would suggest that this particular influence from their background is significant.

Resolving Conflicts

Adat law requires that there be restitution for any blood injury, whether intentional or accidental. A young Christian woman slipped as she was getting out of a boat and accidentally cut her friend, also a Christian, with her machete. The injury was not serious, and the women remained on good terms. However, the non-Christian parents

of the injured woman demanded that her friend pay *adat*. In this case they were not seeking personal gain, but were concerned that overall harmony with the invisible realm be maintained even though there was nothing further that needed to be resolved between the two women. The Christian woman responsible for the accident did not want to pay the *adat*, nor did her friend want her to have to pay, because both believed it would endorse their parents' belief in the power the spirit world held over their lives. Pastors whom I consulted about this incident recommended paying the fine, but not participating in any of the rituals involved in settling the *adat*.

There is further conflict between the church and *adat* when the church moves to defend those whom it perceives are being treated unjustly by standing up to the injustice meted out in the name of *adat*. Like any other human system, *adat* can be used by individuals (particularly by those who administer the *adat*) for personal profit or as an instrument of one's personal prejudices against another individual.

In one instance some boys were fighting and one of them was hurt. The parents of the injured child requested that the other child's parents pay the medical expenses, which they did. After the parents had already paid the expenses the *adat* head got involved. He stated that the case needed to be judged according to *adat* and an *adat* fine levied. The local pastor got involved on behalf of the parents. He noted that the parents had already paid retribution in that they had covered the medical costs, and asked why they needed to pay more. The pastor's analysis was that since *adat* law is an oral, not a written code the *adat* head could make it up as he goes according to the situation and according to the possibility of him personally making some profit through it.

In another instance a young man and woman rode together on a motorcycle. They were accused by the *adat* head of inappropriate behavior (that is, being un-chaperoned) that violated *adat* norms for young people of different sexes. He stated that they needed to pay a fine and then get married. The fine was a relatively large amount (over a month's income for a labourer). The fine would be divided up among those involved in the proceedings, with the largest portion going to the *adat* head himself. Before the *adat* case was heard the pastor had the couple married in civic ceremony (without being blessed in the church – that would take place later after more preparation). He defended the couple from having to pay the *adat* fine by arguing that the civil marriage was valid nationally whereas an *adat* marriage was only valid locally. Since they were already legally married they should not be subject to an *adat* fine and *adat* marriage. In this case the pastor believed that the *adat* head was seeking personal profit and had taken a dislike to the young people involved. He was able to defend them from what he perceived to be an unjust situation. He stated that he and his church respected and wanted to preserve *adat*, but not when it is unjust. In this instance the conflict was not essentially between Christianity and *adat*, but a case of speaking out against an injustice that was disguised as *adat*.

Summary

From this examination of how pastors, evangelists, and lay people deal with the areas of conflict between Christianity and their traditional beliefs and practices it can be seen that there are at least four aspects of concern.

First, the most visible conflicts between Christianity and traditional beliefs and practices as encoded in *adat* result from Christians not wanting to endorse, or not wanting

to be perceived as endorsing, the animistic beliefs and practices from which they have been converted. They want to make it clear that they believe that the spirits, however they are identified or conceptualized, do not have power over them. There is a struggle within the church when members do not fully subscribe to this belief, and still concern themselves with maintaining good relationships with the invisible spirit realm.

For the most part Dayak Christians in the KGBI churches essentially still believe in the existence or reality of the spirits that were their primary concern before their conversion to Christianity. The spiritual powers are transformed in their understanding to fit Christian categories, such as Satan, demons or evil spirits. These spirits are just as much a part of their worldview as before their conversion to Christianity. They are less fearful of these spiritual forces because they believe in the superior power of God and of Jesus Christ. Even though Christ's power is acknowledged as superior, the Dayak Christian remains vigilant against the spiritual forces and views life very much in terms that have become popularized in North America in recent decades as 'spiritual warfare'.

Second, at a folk level there is a prevalent perception that Christianity does not really address the issues of life, health, and subsistence in quite the same detail or effectiveness as their traditional beliefs. There can therefore be confusion on this matter. In general terms, it is fair to claim that Christianity cannot coexist with animistic practices. Yet Christianity as it is presented to Dayak villagers does not always appear to provide ready answers and solutions to the challenges of health and subsistence. Hence Dayak Christians will not infrequently return to their old ways for specific needs, even though these practices are at odds with Christianity.

Thus a third challenge for Christianity among Dayaks of West Kalimantan is the inextricability of some aspects of Dayak culture and animistic beliefs from the normative world-view and traditional social settings. Certain rituals and artifacts are considered necessary to validate an event, such as marriage or the opening of the planting season. These rituals and artifacts are laden with animistic symbolism. The challenge for the church is how to preserve Dayak culture and ethnic identity without compromising Christian faith and practice.

As seen from the point of view of non-Christians, there is a fourth area of concern, that is, the objections from them that their rites and ceremonies are becoming less effective because Christians in village communities do not cooperate – and thus anger the spirits. Christians are sometimes confronted with fines, physical force and violence and, in extreme cases, even death, for their lack of cooperation.

I have been especially interested in why some Dayak Christian converts drift back to traditional beliefs in times of crisis. In the fifth and concluding chapter, I show what Christian ministry in this context can do about coming to grips with this and other collateral challenges. In this way, my thesis has a practical objective, aiming as it does to help the indigenous pastorate work out strategies for a stronger future church in this culturally intriguing part of the Lord's vineyard.

Chapter Five: Conclusion

Up to this point, I have analyzed certain crucial aspects of the cultural background and worldview of the Dayak members of the KGBI churches in West Kalimantan as expressed in *adat* laws, social norms, and customs. I have provided illustrations of how the Dayak traditional belief system conflicts with Christian beliefs and practices in many ways. I have indicated that church leaders have tried to work through these issues to achieve a biblically based Christian faith that they can integrate with their culture. In this fifth and final chapter I draw out some implications of the differences between these two belief systems, and the worldviews they represent, for the way the Gospel should initially be presented to the Dayak people. Further, I point out some areas of concern that should be emphasized in teaching and discipleship in Dayak congregations, and in the formation of Christian theology that has biblical integrity and makes sense in this particular cultural context.

As I stated in Chapter One, the KGBI churches of West Kalimantan must constantly deal with the challenge of conflicts between Christianity and the animistic traditional belief system of the Dayaks. Particularly at issue are the difficulties pastors experience urging members of their congregations to discard their animistic belief system. Pastors frequently find that members of their congregations revert to traditional practices and rites in times of crises or significant life passages. It is often considered to be a serious issue when a church member engages in traditional practices and rites, because such actions are not consistent with Christian teachings.

Through examining the traditional beliefs and practices, and by looking at why they are considered to be in conflict with Christian beliefs and practices, I have reached

the conclusion that the fundamental cause of the frequent reversions to traditional practices lies with the way conversion to Christianity is presented. When Christianity is presented it is received and interpreted by the hearers in a way that makes it fit with the traditional Dayak worldview and the traditional expectations regarding the role of a belief system in the lives of individuals and communities. I propose that the subject of conversion needs to be given much more consideration and needs to touch on more areas than it does in a standard or commonplace presentation of the gospel. Those who are presenting the Gospel need to have a much more clearly defined notion of what they are asking people to do when they convert to Christianity.

First, it could be argued that pastors and mission workers need to emphasize the gravity of what conversion to Christianity entails. They need to be much clearer regarding from *what* they ask people to convert, and to be equally clear as *to what* they are asking people to convert.

In this regard, having listened many times while my colleagues or students have preached or delivered the gospel, I have noted that usually people are challenged to 'become Christians', to 'enter the Christian religion', to 'change religions' or to 'join the KGBI'. Just what this might involve is generally left somewhat ambiguous. On those occasions where the pastor or evangelist is more specific, the gospel is too often is presented in a simplistic and dated manner (for example, by first describing – in exquisite detail – the 'eternal punishment' that lies in store for non-Christians, and then presenting faith in Jesus Christ as the means of avoiding this eternal suffering, and entering 'Heaven' instead). What is notably absent from this type of presentation is any consideration of the expectations regarding the role of a belief system in a person's life.

Second, as I have argued above, Dayaks generally have a defined sense of what to expect from their traditional belief system. They expect their belief system to provide well-defined guidance and assistance regarding issues of subsistence and material prosperity and physical health and safety. They rely on their traditional belief system to provide integration and meaning to life's events, to validate and make sense of their experiences. The belief system embodied in *adat* provides significant validation of the life passages, from conception and birth, through coming of age, marriage, accident and illness, and death. In the presentation of the gospel, and in subsequent teaching and discipleship, typically these issues are not addressed. Furthermore, for some the traditional beliefs are an avenue to acquiring power over forces of nature and other people for personal benefit.

Third, despite these not inconsiderable drawbacks, the KGBI has had notable success in establishing churches in rural Dayak villages in West Kalimantan. The reasons for this apparent success are varied, and, I suspect, are importantly different from the reasons that might be reported by the church workers who initially established many of these churches. By this I suggest that often the actual *motives* for becoming Christian are not what the evangelist would ascribe to the new converts. For instance, Christianity is promoted by the Indonesian national government as an official religion, suitable for a people who are 'developed'. In contrast, traditional animistic beliefs are stigmatized as belonging to 'primitive' people. The KGBI has been invited to establish churches in some villages because the village leaders want to promote 'development' in their communities. There have also been cases where a village leader has invited the KGBI to establish a church in the village after seeing the attention and monetary subsidies

neighbouring villages have received from church organizations. Thus it can be argued that it is not the norm for conversion to Christianity to be based on a deep-seated conversion of the heart.

Fourthly, whatever the actual motives for switching to Christianity might be, the Dayaks' worldview and expectations of the role of a belief system significantly affect the shape of Christian beliefs, worship, and practice in village churches. This is of utmost importance to contemporary pastors. It is a delicate matter that needs gentle and open discussion. Often it may not be a theologically black and white situation or issue. I strongly suspect that in many cases Christianity is perceived to be, and is accepted as, a better, more powerful way of fulfilling the traditional expectations of the role of a belief system. When it is preached that God is the omniscient and omnipotent creator of the universe, that God is in some way made accessible to humans through Jesus Christ, and that Christ has ultimate power over all spiritual forces, this message is well received because it appears to be a better alternative way of meeting subsistence, health, and safety concerns, and of dealing with the vicissitudes of life.

Of course, simple everyday life experience shows that Christian faith is not a guaranteed method of ensuring well-being and freedom from painfulness. Obviously, Christian prayers and worship rites are not supposed to be ways of controlling weather, crop pests and blights, disease, or accidents. It is apparent that rain falls on the just and the unjust, the Christian and the non-Christian. Pests damage the crops and harvests of Christians as well as those of non-Christians. Christians are not in any way immune from illness, accidents, or misfortune. Sometimes converts to Christianity are confused and disappointed when they experience crises, expecting divine intervention in their hour of

peril. Christianity actually forbids many of the roles played by Dayak traditional religion, that is, the means by which private and community life were previously regulated and nature coerced into cooperation, and by which crisis events were explained and integrated into the fabric of life. The salient point is that while Christianity excludes these traditional means it does not provide viable substitutes or alternatives because it addresses different issues. Thus, key means of ensuring subsistence, health, safety, and for explaining mysterious events, are no longer available. Dayak subsistence farmers are able to cope with the new system, that is Christianity, to a degree, but when crises occur they are drawn back to traditional beliefs and practices to regain some means of control over their very survival. It is because of these features that I propose that in the development of a contextualized form of faith and practice of Christianity among the Dayaks of West Kalimantan, more attention must be paid to the issue of conversion. More specifically, there needs to be some type of conversion or revision of expectations regarding the role of religion in the life of individuals and communities. As long as Dayak converts to Christianity expect Christianity to perform all the functions of their traditional belief system, church leaders will continue to find their people reverting to old ways in times of crisis.

At this point, and before venturing further with my conclusion, to be consistent with my missiology, I propose only to state the issues in the hope of catalyzing discussion of the issues among my Indonesian colleagues. As soon as I try to answer the questions of what should be left behind, and what should be adopted in conversion, I am confronted with the contrasts between my own worldview and the Dayak worldview, and between

what I admit is my culturally-bound interpretation of Christianity and the still-developing interpretation of Christianity in the Dayak context.

The question that confronts us as Christian pastors and mission workers is whether to leave the animistic worldview and expectations of an aboriginal belief system intact, or to propose that conversion to Christianity requires a completely different belief system that cannot sustain too much absorption of culturally localized spiritual traditions. One approach, essentially what is currently being practiced by default, is to make no effort actually to change the Dayak worldview, and to leave essentially intact their expectations of the *role of a belief system* within the context of their animistic worldview. This is to substitute Christian faith for traditional beliefs. Christianity is presented as a stronger, more valid power over the forces that control life. The problem is, as I have already pointed out, that according to Christian understanding, God cannot be manipulated or bargained with in the same way that Dayaks believe they can bargain with and manipulate *Jubata* and other invisible beings and powers. When their traditional worldview is left intact, Dayak Christians continue to pay significant attention to the role of spirits or demons. They continue to perceive spiritual powers impinging upon their lives. The form and nature of the spiritual powers according to Christian concepts may be different from the *hantu* of the traditional beliefs. Nevertheless, Christians have the same concern to maintain protective distance from spiritual powers as they did before their conversion to Christianity. This is illustrated in the ubiquitous opening prayer in a KGBI worship service in which the leader exorcises from the assembly any demonic powers that might disrupt the proceedings.

There are Christians in all parts of the world, including North America, who adhere to a worldview in which spiritual entities are believed to actively influence the affairs of humans. This conceptualization is, of course, nothing new and may be found in the Bible itself.¹ But in recent decades this worldview has undergone resurgence in popularity in quite a literal format. The popular term for this framework of interaction between God, the devil, angels, demons, and humans is 'spiritual warfare'.²

According to this understanding of the nature of things people must strive to maintain protective distance from malevolent beings, and power to ward off these beings is granted to Christians by virtue of their calling upon the name of Jesus Christ in their encounters with demonic entities.

There are several issues arising from the 'spiritual warfare' conception that might be considered in the process of working out a contextualized theology West Kalimantan Dayak theology. In the context of West Kalimantan, it is most likely that such a schema would comprise a veneer of Christianity overlaying a deep-rooted and essentially unchanged animistic view of the world. A potential and crucial drawback to this conceptualization is that, if the animistic worldview is left essentially unchanged, then concomitant expectations regarding the role of religion would also remain unchanged. This is to say that the likelihood is high that adherents of this viewpoint would still think in terms of personal welfare and safety, manipulation and control.

¹ "Yet the idea of sinister world powers and their subjugation by Christ is built into the very fabric of Paul's thought, and some mention of them is found in every epistle except Philemon." George Caird, *Principalities and Powers: A Study in Pauline Theology*. (London: Oxford University Press, 1956, vii).

² Frank E. Peretti imaginatively describes this worldview in his popular novel *This Present Darkness*. (Westchester, Ill.: Crossway Books, 1986). Even though it is explicitly a novel, many Christians who think in terms of spiritual warfare accept his descriptions of the interplay between the 'powers of darkness', 'powers of light' and people as accurate depictions of reality.

Furthermore, even if one allows for the possibility that this worldview accurately reflects reality, it has been my experience that adherents of the 'spiritual warfare' schema – in North America as well as in West Kalimantan – are not without some anxiety and fear of demonic powers, even as they express faith and trust in the power of Jesus Christ. In this model, a person only feels safe from the demonic powers that inhabit the unseen realm as long as one remains in the protective custody of Jesus. To the extent that a person is uncertain that he or she may have sinned and thereby moved outside the protective custody afforded by Jesus, this person fears becoming vulnerable to the malevolent acts of ever-present demonic powers. It may be only a small minority of those who adhere to this worldview that experience such fear and anxiety, but I am of the opinion that the negative implications for this minority are significant. I want to suggest, in the process of working out a contextualized theology in West Kalimantan, that serious research be focused on this issue to confirm or disprove my suspicions on these matters.

What I have described above is essentially the KGBI's present approach to evangelism in West Kalimantan. Again, the central focus of my thesis is to propose an alternative, which is to pursue conversion as also encompassing a change in expectations regarding the role of the belief system. This is to suggest that, in addition to the basic gospel message of salvation as made available through Jesus Christ, attention also be given to what the Christian gospel does *not* offer. In this approach, those who present the gospel, and those who teach and disciple, should make it clear that the primary function of Christianity is *not* control and manipulation of forces that affect subsistence, but something much more spiritual and lasting.

There is general agreement among Christians of all persuasions that Christian faith is meant to bring a peace and joy not contingent upon the physical circumstances of adherents. There are Christians who believe that Christianity is solely concerned with 'spiritual' matters, such as forgiveness of sin and eternal life. However, many Christians in our time may well agree that Christian faith and spiritual practice also involve matters of social and economic justice, and physical and mental health. Although the gospel is interpreted in different ways, there is general agreement that the essence of its message is that we who once estranged from God, and subject to the consequences of this estrangement (however this is expressed), are reconciled to God through Jesus Christ, and can appropriate the benefits of this reconciliation (however this is expressed). Those who claim that Christianity is primarily a means of controlling natural forces and ensuring physical subsistence, health and safety, are surely now no longer in the majority.

Because Christian faith precludes intercourse with spiritual entities other than God, it has profound ramifications for Dayaks. Since Dayak traditional beliefs and practices focus on interaction with animistic entities for the purpose of ensuring subsistence, etc., the proclamation of the gospel should be accompanied by an appeal to give up both the desire and the need for spiritual or supernatural means of manipulation of forces that affect the lives and welfare of humans. But what is to replace reliance on traditional animistic rites, ceremonies, and taboos aimed at worldly matters? How this question is answered has profound implications for the growth and strength of the church in West Kalimantan, and for the nature and long-term viability of the theological framework to be worked out in this context.

In suggesting that the presentation of the gospel to Dayaks should be accompanied by an appeal to give up the perceived need to manipulate spiritual forces to ensure one's well being, I believe that I have reached a point beyond which I can proceed only with extreme caution and humility. I am fully aware that my perceptions and analyses are rooted in my own Western background with its own world-view constantly being altered by technology, globalization and scientific discovery. At issue here is what I think Christianity, as an alternative belief system, can offer those whose culture is fixed in very different Dayak setting in life. According to my own missiological perspective, my role is to catalyze the process, not to determine the outcome.

First, let me claim that it is in fact not always obvious in the Christian framework what is to replace reliance on traditional animistic rites, ceremonies, and taboos to ensure one's subsistence, health and safety. Typically, when a Dayak subsistence farmer is told to give up his traditional cooperation with spiritual forces, his first response is to substitute with Christian ceremonies and rites, and to attribute to the minister powers of intervention and negotiation similar to those the *dukun* was believed to possess. In my earlier description of conflicts between Christianity and traditional beliefs I noted that ministers generally are not comfortable in this role and try to discourage their people from following this route. Pastors and church members continue to offer prayers of supplication, but with the understanding that they cannot manipulate or negotiate. If or when converts conclude that Christianity is not essentially a means of controlling events in the physical realm, they are faced with the option of returning to the traditional ways, or turning instead to modern scientific agricultural tools, inputs, and methods. However, due to the socio-economic status of Dayaks I have described earlier, modern tools and

inputs (such as fertilizer, herbicides, insecticides, etc.) are not generally available to village farmers. Furthermore, few Dayak farmers would have sufficient education or funds to attend an agricultural college to study modern methods – even if a suitable college existed in their area.

Similarly, when Dayak Christians are forbidden from seeking treatment from the *dukun* they face a deep quandary. In the absence of efficacious medical facilities and care, sometimes they must rely almost entirely upon prayer for healing. In the event that the patient does not begin to recover from the illness or injury, they are not permitted to resort to the *dukun* for healing. With that avenue closed to them, the only other option is to take extraordinary efforts to travel, often at significant expense, to distant hospitals or clinics. That they must exert such extraordinary effort to seek medical treatment in cases where prayer has not effected healing, and that farmers must resort to modern technology, leads to an incipient form of secularization; Christian faith appears to be applicable to matters of eternal welfare (which, as I have pointed out earlier, appears not to have been a traditional concern), but modern scientific methods must be sought for matters of subsistence, health, and safety. That the best hospital in West Kalimantan was founded and is run by an American mission agency contributes to this secularizing tendency in a subtle way. On the one hand, Christians believe that spiritual concerns are better met through Christianity than through the traditional beliefs. On the other hand, Christians resort to science, technology, and modern medicine to deal with physical concerns. In contrast, traditional beliefs, ineffectual or erratic as they are in controlling nature, tightly integrate the physical with the invisible realms in a manner consistent with the traditional worldview.

Second, my note of caution expressed above concerning my role stems from my awareness that Western Modernism, with its empirically based epistemology and quest for natural laws, has fostered a possible diminishment of Christianity's traditional cosmology and worldview. The growth of science and the development of natural laws have eroded the range of applicability of Christianity. Many previously mysterious events that were ascribed to miraculous divine intervention are now understood to be natural consequences of natural events. Yet in the present age in North America, which is referred to with increasing frequency as 'post-modern', there is growing dissatisfaction with an epistemology that is exclusively based on empirical evidence. There is a widespread movement back to spiritual awareness, and seeking of spiritual causes behind natural events. There is an increasingly common desire to seek and find spiritual components in the workings of the universe. In light of these trends I am aware that my own worldview, and Modern Western thought generally, is culturally and historically conditioned, and is not the final word on the nature of things.

My intent is, therefore, to engage in further and continuing dialogue with my Indonesian colleagues to catalyze the development of forms of theology, worship, and practice of Christianity that are sensitive to Dayak needs, culture, worldview, and which are biblically based. To this end I have composed a study paper to be circulated among seminary instructors and pastors. The English language version of this paper is found in Appendix C. I designed the paper to be used as a study series with congregations, or men's, women's or youth groups. In this paper I make short statements about the same issues I have developed herein, and present questions for discussion. I have tried to make the level of the statements and questions appropriate for the educational level of the

majority of the leaders and participants. My hope is that the theology that eventually emerges will understand Christianity to be applicable to all aspects of Dayak life, and will at the same time enable them to deal successfully with other cultures and worldviews that are impinging upon them.

In this study guide, I ask participants to identify the goals of the traditional belief system and to compare these goals with what they understand to be the goals of Christianity. I have included sections that consider these comparisons in the context of farming, the regulation of community life, social life, passages, healing from disease and injury, and the quest for personal power and invincibility. I aim to catalyze thought about from what and to what a person should be challenged to convert.

Beyond the scope of the study guide, which must be somewhat circumscribed because of where it is intended to be used, I have some recommendations for the KGBI and related churches. First, I recommend the appointment of a body or bodies, of lay people, pastors, and denominational leaders to focus on how Christian rites of passage might better and more acceptably take the place of *adat* rites based on traditional beliefs. Second, I would encourage this body to seek appropriate symbols that will not be misconstrued or confused with traditional beliefs, and to elaborate meanings for these symbols. The intent would be to provide enough symbols, having deep enough meaning, to give sufficient validation to rites of passage. Each *adat*-regulated rite of passage needs to be examined. If it is determined that it is important to mark the same event in a Christian fashion, then a biblical rationale for the rite should be sought. Where a rite is not described in the Bible (such as marriage), consideration should be given to the development of a rite or ceremony that integrates the Christian faith with Dayak culture

and ethnic identity in a way that is clearly Christian, but does not simply mimic imported Western customs.

Third, the role of *adat* and traditional beliefs in subsistence farming should be examined much more deeply, since this issue seems to be so integral to Dayak subsistence and cultural identity. When the church takes away the traditional means, more attention should be given to eliminating the perceived need for all that the traditional beliefs offered, or to providing a viable substitute that can be integrated with Christian faith and practice.

I recommend that the same type of attention be paid to analyzing further the roles of *adat kebiasaan* and *adat hukum* in the regulation and maintenance of order in village community life, and then considering the extent to which church members can, or should, regulate their social interactions in a fashion parallel to *adat kebiasaan* and *adat hukum*.

There are several other themes of a more abstract nature that have surfaced from this research that I believe deserve further development, perhaps through a seminary course, or a series of seminars offered at regional pastors meetings. Pastors could benefit in their ministry, and evangelists could better bridge the differences between traditional beliefs and Christianity, by considering these themes, which I will mention briefly. According to *adat*, the rightness or wrongness of an action is evaluated almost entirely as to the degree to which it maintains or disturbs the harmony between the visible and invisible realms. If an act can be justified according to this scheme, even if it involves taking a human life (traditionally as in headhunting), it is not considered wrong or immoral. By contrast, Christianity presents a radically different basis for morality, based on love of God and neighbour and inseparable from grace and forgiveness. The

elaboration of the differences between these two systems of morality would facilitate a clearer explanation of what a person is convert from and to in the move from traditional beliefs to Christianity.

Another theme that could play an important part in defining the differences between Christianity and traditional beliefs, both at the level of theological speculation and practical preaching and ministry in villages, is that of manipulation of forces and of other people to further one's own ends in contrast to 'suffering servant-hood' that Christianity advocates. By elaborating on the theme that the Christian expects to share in the resurrection victory of Christ through the imitation of Christ in his loving self-sacrifice, the goals and expectations of the Christian faith may come into clearer focus in this particular culture. Similarly, in Dayak tradition, the taking of vows as a way of negotiating either with the inhabitants of the invisible realm, or with God, is a popular pursuit. Making vows to the spirits is a common, well-understood traditional practice. Considering the subject of vows in lessons and sermons would lend itself to explaining the differences in expectations between Christianity and the traditional beliefs.

Through the years that I have studied Dayak culture (and indeed been immersed in it on a daily basis), I have been struck by the incongruity of the uncertainty, or unpredictability, of responses believed to have come from the invisible realm to humans. For all that they are trusted and relied upon for healing, for instance, the record of the *dukuns* is not impressive. Not unsurprisingly, negative results are usually explained away in terms of the rites not having been performed properly. Even with repeated disappointing results, there remains the expectation that the invisible forces can be

controlled.³ This phenomenon can be contrasted with the belief in the steadfast love of God, and the Christian conviction that God will bring good out of pain and death.

I pointed out earlier that one function of traditional rites is to maintain a protective distance from the variety of beings and forces that inhabit the invisible realm. This function of such rites has long been apparent to me, but I wonder to what extent Dayak culture agrees that this is something it seeks. Contrasted to this is the Christian belief in the proximity of God through the incarnation in Jesus Christ, and God's steadfast love, graciousness, and offer of forgiveness.

Let me finish with this observation. Early in my ministry in West Kalimantan, I noted the persistent conflicts between Christianity and the various aspects of *adat*, and the perennial problem of Dayak converts to Christianity reverting to their traditional rites during times of crisis or extreme need. Upon examining *adat* and traditional Dayak beliefs in considerable depth, it seemed to me that the typical presentation of Christianity to Dayaks in KGBI churches does not address the issue of the Dayaks' fundamental understanding of what to expect from a belief system or religion. Research revealed that Dayaks expect their belief system to aid them in subsistence, ensure their health and safety, and on occasion, give them enhanced physical powers and even invulnerability to weapons used against them.

My understanding of Christianity is that it is not a means of ensuring these things that the Dayaks expect from a belief system. If this is the case, then Christianity is not going to meet their perceived needs in their subsistence-level agrarian community life. It

³ The frequent need to explain failures is one factor contributing to the differences in beliefs and practices between regions and villages. The *dukun* can invent new *adat* taboos and regulations as ways of explaining away failures.

is not surprising, therefore, that in times of crisis they resort to what, for them, are often the only viable or trusted means of meeting their immediate subsistence needs.

Christian theologizing done in this context, by Dayaks themselves, along with those from other Indonesian ethnic communities and from outside the country, must give much more consideration to the issue of what Dayaks are being asked to give up when they become Christians, and what in turn they can expect from the Christian faith.

The whole question of the effect of the Dayak worldview and *adat* on the interpretation of the gospel in Kalimantan has been a fascinating topic for me to research and reflect on. I have gained a renewed appreciation for many of the subtle complexities involved in keeping alive the gracious and archaic Dayak culture in a Christian setting. The Christian faith rightly deserves, and must have, viable and meaningful association with indigenous cultures, including that of the Dayak. The imposition of a completely Westernized theology and attendant worldview on the Dayak converts is neither desirable nor efficacious for the gospel. The church in West Kalimantan must continue to search for and refine ways of bringing native tradition and doctrinal theology together so that the faith has a secure and welcome prospect for Dayaks in West Kalimantan's multi-religious environment. As I have indicated elsewhere, so important do I believe this issue to be that I have composed a study guide (Appendix D) in *Bahasa Indonesia* for use among instructors, students, pastors and other church leaders that aims to bring some of these topics into focus.⁴ Some of the items in my study guide are the product of research done for this thesis. I have designed questions that I hope will catalyze thought about the differences between Christian and traditional Dayak beliefs regarding the role of religion.

⁴ The English language version of this study guide is found in Appendix C.

I unavoidably expressed my own opinions in this document, but I trust that the questions are open-ended enough to stimulate the development of truly indigenous biblical solutions for these issues. I am confident that, if given encouragement and confidence, the Dayak Christians of West Kalimantan will develop a form and practice of Christianity that is biblically based, honours their cultural identity, and truly speaks to all needs, physical and spiritual.

Appendix A: Questionnaire

Translation of Questionnaire
Original in *Bahasa Indonesia*

Name:

Place of Ministry:

From: Rev. Larry Thomson

Servants of the Lord who are serving in West Kalimantan often see that there are conflicts between Christian teaching and the old beliefs. In my thesis I want to examine the conflicts between aspects of *adat* that are related to beliefs, and Christian beliefs. I need to collect examples of the old beliefs that are in conflict with Christian faith that have at one time or other been challenges to you, servants of the Lord, in West Kalimantan.

In the writing of this Doctor of Ministry thesis I need your assistance as ministers of the church. Please give explanations as completely as possible. If I quote your answers in the thesis I will give credit to you as the source of my information. If your answers won't fit on the space provided, I request that you add another sheet so that your answers will be complete.

- 1) Tell of your experience regarding a conflict between the old beliefs and customs and Christian faith. In relating this experience, explain why this belief or custom is in conflict with Christian beliefs.
- 2) Explain why this old belief is a problem in your ministry.
- 3) Relate how you, or others, have faced and handled this problem of the conflict in your ministry.
- 4) It has been suggested that the old beliefs and customs not be discarded, but rather Christianized. Explain what would happen if the old belief you have described above were not rejected but Christianized. What would the results be, good or bad, for the health of the church? Why?

Original Questionnaire in Bahasa Indonesia

Nama: _____

Tempat Pelayanan: _____

Dari: Pdt. Larry Thomson

Hamba-hamba Tuhan yang melayani di Kalimantan Barat sering melihat ada pertentangan antara ajaran Kristen dan kepercayaan lama. Dalam skripsi saya mau menyelidiki pertentangan antara bagian-bagian adat yang berhubungan dengan kepercayaan, dan kepercayaan Kristen. Saya perlu mengumpulkan contoh-contoh kepercayaan lama yang bertentangan dengan kepercayaan Kristen, yang pernah menjadi tantangan dalam pelayanan hamba-hamba Tuhan di Kalimantan Barat.

Dalam rangka penulisan skripsi *Doctor of Ministry*, saya mohon bantuan dari saudara/i sebagai pelayan gereja. Tolong berikan penjelasan dengan selengkap-lengkapnyanya. Jika saya mengutip jawaban saudara/i dalam skripsi, saya akan mencantumkan nama saudara dalam catatan kaki sebagai sumber informasi. Seandainya informasi tidak muat di lembar ini boleh tambah lembar sebagai lampiran.

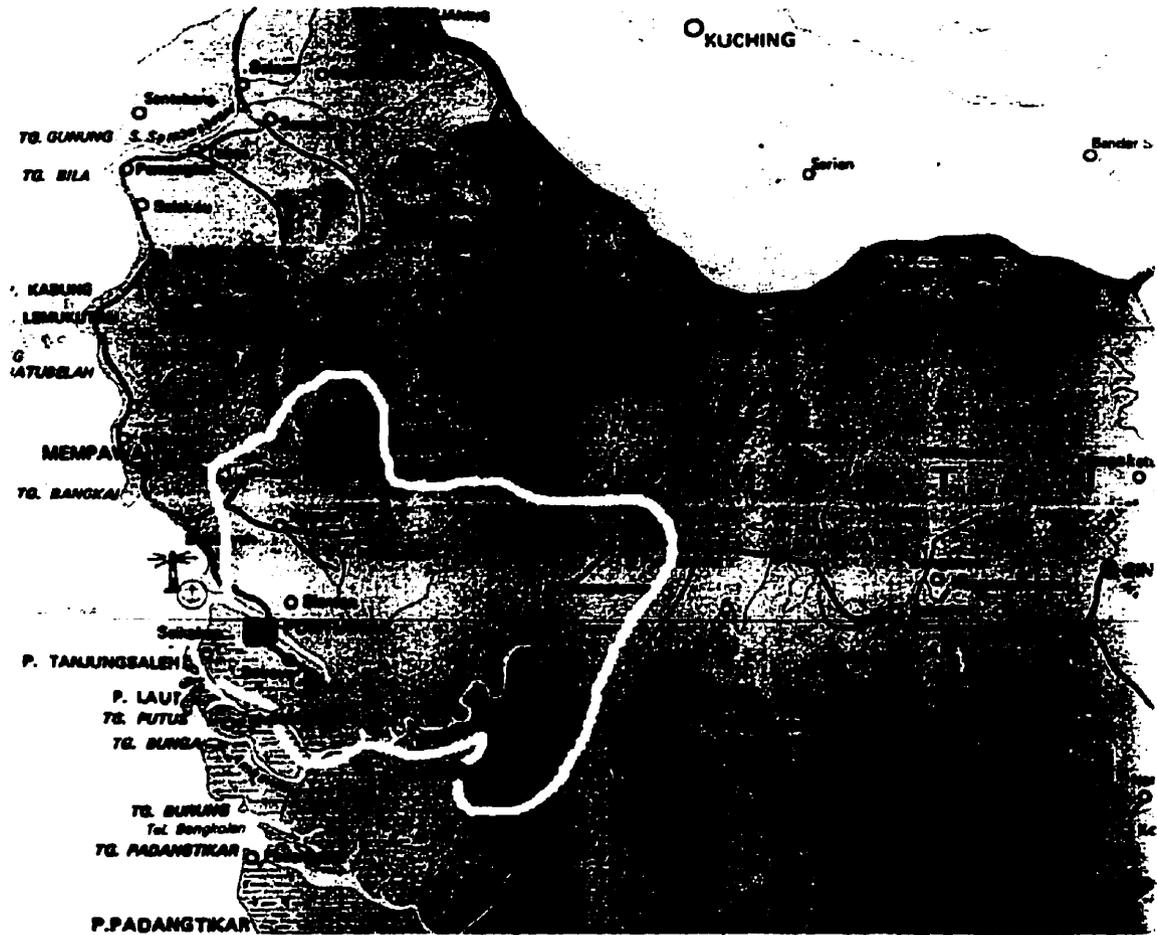
- 1) Ceritakan pengalaman saudara mengenai suatu pertentangan antara kepercayaan dan kebiasaan lama dan kepercayaan Kristen. Dalam berceritakan ini, jelaskan mengenai kepercayaan atau kebiasaan lama itu.
- 2) Ceritakan mengapa kepercayaan lama tersebut merupakan masalah dalam pelayanan.
- 3) Ceritakan bagaimana saudara, atau orang lain, menghadapi dan mengatasi masalah pertentangan tersebut dalam pelayanan.
- 4) Pernah ada orang yang mengusulkan agar kepercayaan dan kebiasaan lama jangan dibuang, tetapi diKristenkan saja. Jelaskan apa kira-kira yang terjadi jikalau kebiasaan lama tersebut di atas tidak dibuang tetapi diKristenkan. Apa akibatnya, baik atau tidak baik bagi kesehatan gereja? Mengapa?

Terima kasih atas bantuannya.

Appendix B: Map of KGBI Ministry Area

West Kalimantan

Outlined portion indicates area of KGBI ministry in West Kalimantan.



Appendix C: *Adat-istiadat* and Christianity (English)

To: Pastors, Evangelists, Seminary Professors and Church Workers
Kerapatan Gereja Baptis Indonesia
Kalimantan Barat

July 2000

Dear Friends,

Greetings in the name of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ.

We pray that the Lord will continue to bless the ministry of the church in West Kalimantan. It is with heavy hearts that we listen to the saddening news about the challenges and difficulties you are facing. We trust that God will bring good out of these events for those who love Him.

As you know, it has been three years now since I left Indonesia with my family to return to Canada. I have not written as often as I had promised myself that I would, but let me assure you that during the past three years not a single day has passed that I have not thought about my friends and the work in Indonesia.

Since returning to Canada I have continued working on my Doctor of Ministry program and am nearing completion on my thesis. Part of my thesis is a description of what I have learned about *adat-istiadat* and traditional beliefs. Many of you were good enough to respond to a questionnaire I circulated three years ago concerning the conflict between the old beliefs and customs and those of the Christian faith. I have appreciated your frank and honest answers, and I have used your commentaries in my thesis text. As I have written out what I learned in the time I lived with you, and from library research that I have done, I have thought about several theological topics, which I would like to share with you now. I would like to know if my thoughts are valid and relevant, or if I have a confused understanding of the differences between Christian faith and traditional beliefs. I request your responses to some questions that I have for you. I want to keep in touch with you about this matter, so that I can gain a more complete understanding of the situation.

My thesis is about the differences between Christianity and traditional beliefs among the Dayak people of the area in which the KGBI has ministry, and how these differences affect the way we do evangelism and church planting in West Kalimantan. The first part of my thesis is a description of *adat* in general and *adat kepercayaan*, to the extent that I have learned about it. In the second part I look at the ways the Christian faith and practice conflicts with traditional beliefs. My goal in writing this thesis is to facilitate the ministry of the church in West Kalimantan. I hope very much that this document will be a useful instrument for you as you come to grips with the issues it reflects on.

As I have tried to describe *adat* and traditional beliefs I have become aware of how much I still do not understand, even after all the time I lived, worked, and studied in Indonesia. I ask for tolerance and patient correction from you who have already provided

me with many rich experiences and learning opportunities, but to whom it will be apparent that I haven't fully comprehended everything you have tried to teach me.

Attached to this letter is a paper in which I discuss some of the questions that have come up as I have studied and written about the traditional beliefs and *adat* of the Dayak people in the area in which the KGBI has ministry. I ask you to read and together discuss the following paper, and, if you would like, to respond in writing to the questions that follow each section. I am interested in anything at all you want to say to me. May I also suggest that as you reflect on these questions, you use this attached document as a study guide with your people?

The Issue: Conversions to Christianity that do not endure crises, and the persistence of traditional beliefs along with Christianity

During the time I lived in West Kalimantan I heard a common complaint from the pastors and church leaders whom I visited. Every pastor and church leader that I visited, or who attended the fellowship meetings we had in our home, related that his members found it hard to give up all of their old beliefs. Frequently I heard reports of members returning to traditional beliefs during times of stress or crisis. (Christians who did give up their old beliefs and practices were perceived by non-Christians as threats to the safety and well being of their communities.)

Why do so many Dayaks readily convert to Christianity, but just as readily revert to their traditional beliefs in times of crisis? Perhaps because of their background of traditional beliefs, Dayak people expect the religion they follow to do some specific things for them. For instance, they expect that their belief system will ensure that the fields will be fertile and the crops sufficient for their needs, that they will be protected from accidents as they work and travel, and that they will not suffer disease, or will be readily cured from disease when it strikes them, etc. When Dayaks become Christians they often become Christians with the expectation that the Christian faith will do a better job of providing them with the things they expect from a religion, that is, protection from accidents, fertile fields, sufficient crops, physical health, etc.

After they become Christians and begin to learn about how they are expected to live according to the Christian faith, they find that they are not allowed to turn to the beliefs and practices of traditional beliefs any longer. They learn that traditional beliefs are considered incorrect, even evil, because they involve worship of gods or powers other than God as known through Jesus Christ. For example, they learn that they are no longer permitted to call upon the spirits of the rice to ensure that they will have a good crop, or to offer animal sacrifices in order to be healthy and safe.

Christianity as proclaimed emphasizes eternal salvation, that is, whether a person will go to heaven or hell after death. Actions also are emphasized, that is, what behavior is permitted and what is forbidden. Pastors and evangelists teach their church members to pray for the fertility of their crops, for safety as they travel and work, and for health and healing from sickness and injury. But there are no guarantees that prayers will be answered as expected. In situations where the Christian faith is applied to those issues where they expect religion to make a difference, they find that Christianity often does little if any better than the traditional beliefs. Crops are still attacked by pests after being prayed over by the Christian pastor. Christians suffer accidents and illness, and not all Christians who are prayed over for healing are restored to health.

In the rural villages of West Kalimantan, Dayak people do not have access to adequate medical care, or appropriate modern technology for the fields. All they have to help them with the mysterious obstacles to survival such as pests in the fields, or accidents, or sickness, is religion. When Christianity does not meet their expectations, that is, when it does not fulfill the functions that they expect a religion to do for them, it should not be surprising when they return to traditional beliefs, which seems to have met their needs for uncounted generations.

As I have studied and examined *adat* and traditional beliefs, I have the impression that the main purpose of traditional beliefs is to provide Dayak people with a way of

dealing with natural events that are basically beyond their control: fertility of crops, personal safety from accidents (especially while farming) protection from diseases, and protection from harmful spiritual powers. There is also an element of traditional beliefs that seeks control over other people for one's own personal benefit. People observe the rules, regulations, and taboos of traditional beliefs in order to have control over things that essentially are beyond their control. In other words, traditional beliefs are a way of understanding natural events and having some kind of control over natural events that are beyond the control of humans. On the other hand the Christian faith does not offer control over natural events. It does not promise fertile fields, personal safety, protection from disease, or power over other people, even though these matters are often invoked in prayer. It is, rather, a way of being in a right relationship with God the creator as revealed through Jesus Christ. Being a Christian means changing one's attitude or expectations from looking after oneself at the expense of others (sin) to becoming a loving servant who is willing to suffer inconvenience, pain and even death, for the sake of others whom he loves in the same way that Christ loved us and gave himself for us. After examining *adat* and traditional beliefs in detail, I have concluded that we need to look more closely at the meaning of conversion in the context of evangelism and church planting among the Dayaks of West Kalimantan.

In the following section I explain in more detail what I have observed about the goals of traditional beliefs as compared to the goals of Christianity. Please consider my thoughts and then respond by answering the questions related to each section. If you find that my observations are incomplete or inaccurate, I invite you to express your thoughts and observations to me in the hope that by sharing our thoughts on these matters, together we can find the best way of building the church in West Kalimantan to the glory of Jesus Christ.

Goal of traditional beliefs

Swidden agriculture (*pertanian ladang*) is an important component of Dayak ethnic identity. Dayak traditional beliefs (encompassing *adat kepercayaan*, *adat kebiasaan*, and *adat hukum*) has grown and developed through the experiences of uncounted generations of *ladang* farmers in the tropical rain forests of Kalimantan. Of course, in this modern era many Dayaks are not farmers. However, for most who are not farming today, the move away from farming to the city or to other occupations has been fairly recent, usually within their own generation. The background of many hundreds of years of farming in the tropical rain forests of Kalimantan has shaped how Dayaks understand the world. This concept of the world and nature is thoroughly imbedded in Dayak culture. It will probably persist for many generations—even in this modern age when there are many outside influences.

As is to be expected, traditional beliefs developed over the centuries as Dayak farmers tried to make sense of, and live successfully in, a mysterious world. There are many things that happen that are hard to explain, even in the modern scientific age, such as why a tree fell at a particular time and struck a person, why the rains arrive early or late, why the pests destroy one crop but not another, why a person falls sick, why one person dies and another lives. Traditional beliefs evolved as ways of explaining such

mysteries. They encompass ways of determining what land to clear, when to clear it, when to plant, when to harvest. Dayak people have come to believe that traditional beliefs is a way of protecting the crops from pests, keeping away the forces that cause sickness and accidents, and bringing healing to the sick and injured.

What becomes a problem for the church is that the traditions and social norms of Dayak communities are tied to traditional beliefs. Rules and traditions that enable the community members to get along, to build a strong community, and to survive as a community, are reinforced by their ties to spiritual forces. The interaction of people within a community is believed to affect how the unseen spiritual forces respond and act towards that community. Disruption of human relationships results in a corresponding disruption of the relationship of the spiritual powers with the community, to the misfortune of the community. This belief applies at several levels. There is the level of social customs and traditions, that is, what to expect from other people as 'normal' behavior. There is also the level of civil law, that is, behavior that is not permitted because it would endanger or weaken the community. The challenge for Christians, who are accused of discarding *adat*, is that all aspects of traditional beliefs are inter-related. Christians attempt to distinguish between *adat* kepercayaan, *adat* hukum, and *adat* kebiasaan, but this distinction is hard to make at the foundations of *adat*. This is because all aspects of *adat* are tied together and given sanction through their connection with spiritual forces.

'Right' and 'wrong' as determined by traditional beliefs are inseparable from actions. 'Right' is adherence to *adat*, that is, the proper observance of taboos and required rituals. 'Wrong' is the failure to observe taboos, to perform rituals, or to make provision beforehand if a taboo or regulation is going to be broken intentionally (such as in the case of marrying a relative who is too closely related under the conditions defined by the village *adat*.) Because taboos and rituals differ from region to region, what is 'right' and 'wrong' differ as well.

It appears that the fate of a person after death is not the primary concern or focus of traditional beliefs. Traditional beliefs are more concerned with the circumstances of the living: ensuring that the crops are good and supply enough food for the year, that people will enjoy good health, recovery from disease and injury, avoid accidents, and have a measure of protection from persons who would physically harm them, and enjoy general material prosperity. Traditional beliefs are not overly concerned with one's fate after death, but the concern that is expressed is primarily to ensure that the spirits of the deceased will not linger on, or return, to disturb the living. *The focus is primarily on the material conditions of the living.*

The answer to the questions of how to live successfully in this visible realm lies in the proper observance of the regulations and taboos as codified in *adat* kepercayaan, *adat* hukum, and *adat* kebiasaan. Correct observance of the regulations and taboos and proper execution of the prescribed rituals enable people to manipulate the unseen forces. In this belief system, if the rituals are performed correctly, then the spiritual forces are persuaded, or compelled, to act in human's favour. Taboos and regulations are observed, and rituals performed, to keep the spiritual forces at a distance, or under control, or at least inclined to act in favour of human welfare.

Fundamental to traditional beliefs is the theme of reciprocity. This is illustrated in the *nyangahatn* prayers to Jubata: "We do this for you, Jubata, now you do things for us."

Worship of Jubata and all the other spiritual forces involves making sacrificial offerings. The sacrifices are offered as favours for the spirits who are expected (or sometimes 'compelled') to reciprocate with favours towards those making the offerings.

These elements constitute the expectations that Dayaks have of religion. That is to say, Dayaks expect religion to fulfill these functions for them. My observation, or concern, is that many Dayaks convert to Christianity with the expectation that Christianity will do a better job of fulfilling these functions. In some cases, Dayaks convert to Christianity because somehow they have become convinced that Christianity will do a better job of meeting this list of expectations. They continue to have the same expectations of religion that they had of traditional beliefs. 'Conversion' means employing the means offered by a different religion (Christianity) in the hope that it will more effectively fulfill the expectations they have of a religious system. The expectations persist; the means are different. When Christianity does not directly address all the every-day needs of the Dayaks, *at least not in the way they expect a religious system to address their needs*, the result is confusion, conflict, and tension, and abandonment of Christianity. When converts realize that Christianity primarily addresses a different set of human concerns, they find themselves in a bind. Christianity precludes continuing with the old ways of ensuring fertile fields, avoidance of and recovery from disease and injury, etc., because traditional beliefs involve the worship of spiritual powers other than God. But Christianity does not consist of a set of formulae or rituals for ensuring the fertility of the fields, protection from dangers and disease, or for gaining personal prosperity and wealth in the same way that traditional beliefs is expected to.

This point is illustrated by a story that came out of the 1997 conflict between the Dayaks and Madurese. A new Christian convert expressed deep anxiety that he had converted to Christianity "too soon". In that time of extreme physical threat he felt a strong need for a powerful fetish that would give him physical protection from bullets and machetes. Christianity offered him assurance of Heaven if he died in the conflict, but he understood that Christianity did not offer means of insuring physical safety from machetes and bullets. He considered returning to traditional beliefs for the duration of the ethnic conflict and then returning to Christianity when it passed.

Christianity addresses a different set of needs and concerns than does traditional beliefs. I turn now to a look at how this is different.

Goal of Christianity

Christianity, as presented by evangelists and pastors of KGBI and other evangelical churches in West Kalimantan, is primarily a way of dealing with eternal issues, that is, with what happens to a person's soul after death. A presentation of Christianity to a non-Christian usually begins with a description of the human condition. This involves speaking about human sin, and how this sin has separated or alienated mankind from God. The consequence of human sin is eternal separation from God, or eternal punishment. The remedy for this desperate human condition is provided by Jesus Christ, and is appropriated by a person accepting Jesus Christ as savior. Christianity is presented as the only means of salvation from this danger of eternal punishment. Faith in Christ results in eternal reward in Heaven.

Of course most Christians in West Kalimantan understand that there is a present, this-worldly, element to Christianity. This is to say that they understand that Christian faith deals with issues of living in this present world, not just with eternal consequences. Christians learn that following Jesus Christ brings a new quality of life. They experience joy and peace in this world. The joy and peace that Christians experience in this present life are not dependent upon outward circumstances. A Christian's quality of life is no longer dependent upon physical circumstances, not because God now takes care of all of the Christian's daily needs miraculously, but because one's physical circumstances are of much less importance when ultimate, eternal concerns are taken care of. Christian experience and faith is that God answers prayers of supplication and takes care of day-to-day needs on a personal basis. However, my point is that the Christian—believing that eternal matters are successfully taken care of—can be more relaxed and less anxious about this life. This enables the Christian to experience a quality of life that is described as 'abundant', characterized by peace and joy.

Although Christians might experience a higher degree of peace and joy because they have been restored to a right relationship with God through Jesus Christ, the reality is that Christians are not necessarily guaranteed any better crops, or less illness, or fewer injuries than non-Christians. Christians pray for, and hope for, miraculous interventions, and believe that sometimes these requests are granted. But there are no guarantees that what they request will be done for them. The New Testament writers instruct Christians to pray about every aspect of life. The caveat is that God is not obliged or bound to grant requests, even requests that are properly framed. It is clear that there is no way to manipulate God for our own needs. This is graphically illustrated in that the apostle Paul was not healed of whatever the affliction was from which he suffered and which he called the "thorn in his flesh". Following Jesus does not guarantee that life will be without its difficulties.

With all of this in mind, consider the following questions:

- 1) In your experience, what is the main objective that people hope to achieve by adhering to traditional beliefs?**
- 2) In your understanding, what is the goal or the promise of Christianity?**
- 3) In your experience, why do Dayak people adopt Christianity? What do Dayak people hope to gain by converting to Christianity?**
- 4) Do you agree or disagree with my observation that the goals of traditional beliefs are different from the goals of Christianity? Why or why not?**

In light of the fundamental differences in the goals and expectations of traditional beliefs and Christianity, I turn now to an examination of what these differences mean in relation to some specific aspects of Dayak life.

Farming

Many aspects of traditional beliefs are related to farming. The Dayak people have lived for uncounted generations with very simple technology in the tropical rainforests of Kalimantan. Traditional beliefs developed over the centuries as the Dayak people faced mysterious and unpredictable natural phenomena. Their beliefs and practices developed as a way of explaining these mysterious events, and, more importantly, as their primary means of 'controlling' events that, for the most part, are far beyond mankind's ability to control (such as the seasons, crop pests, disease).

Traditionally, decisions about when and where to clear a ladang, when to plant, when to harvest, etc., have been determined according to the rituals of traditional beliefs. It is important to make these decisions together, because what one person does affects, and is affected by, the actions of others. For instance, one person cannot plant earlier than others because all the pests will migrate to his crop, or others might still have their pigs running loose. Traditional beliefs specified methods of dealing with pests, floods, droughts, and crop diseases. It provided ways of ensuring safety while traveling back and forth to fields, and while working in the fields. Whether or not these means actually worked is somewhat irrelevant to this discussion. What is at issue is that these traditional means of dealing with these essential concerns are no longer permitted for Christians. But Christians must still coordinate their farming practices with others in their communities. They still face the same threats to their subsistence such as droughts, floods, pests, etc. The Christian faith does not offer rituals and formulae for determining the most auspicious times to do field work, nor for dealing with weather or threats to the crops. Furthermore, the Christian faith forbids recourse to the rituals and formulae of traditional beliefs because traditional beliefs involve worship of other than God. Christians believe that they can pray to God for help, but experience shows that Christians' crops are as equally subject to threat and failure as non-Christians' crops. This dilemma raises the following questions.

- 5) How can the church support farmers (especially new converts) so that they do not feel a need to return to traditional beliefs when making decisions about when to clear land, plant, harvest, etc, and when dealing with pests and crop diseases, floods, droughts, etc.?
- 6) What would you say to a Christian farmer whose crop is failing who has praying for a good crop, and thinks he should perform a ritual according to traditional beliefs?

Regulation of Community life

Adat kebiasaan and *adat hukum* regulate social life in rural Dayak communities. What people are expected, permitted, and forbidden to do is codified in *adat*. *Adat* is given sanction by traditional beliefs. That is, breaches of *adat* are believed to involve the unseen spiritual realm. Traditional beliefs is founded on the assumption that when the *adat* that regulates human interaction is breached spiritual powers get involved and express their displeasure towards not just the individuals involved but the larger

community as well. When Dayaks convert to Christianity and no longer adhere to some aspects of *adat*, they are perceived as a threat to their community for at least three reasons. First, they are perceived as a threat to the community; the spiritual powers might express their displeasure by visiting misfortune on 'innocent' community members because the Christians have not kept the *adat*. Second, they are perceived as a threat because their beliefs undermine the foundations of *adat*. Non-Christians fear that their communities will disintegrate into chaos if they are no longer regulated by *adat*. Third, *adat* is a very important component of ethnic and community identity. When community members reject even some aspects of their *adat*, the *adat* loses its power to provide them with a distinct identity.

In light of these comments, consider the following challenges.

- 7) *Adat* and traditional beliefs are important components of Dayak ethnic identity. Are there ways that Christians can preserve Dayak ethnic identity and remain true to Christian beliefs in one God?
- 8) Do you think it is important to preserve Dayak culture that is represented in *adat* and traditional beliefs, or should it be allowed to disappear as Dayaks become Christians?
- 9) *Adat* consists of many detailed regulations and specifies penalties to be imposed when the regulations are broken. Given the difficulty of enforcing Christian behavior even on church members, can Christian beliefs, instead of *adat*, ever successfully regulate community life?

Social Life

Harvest festivals are big attractions in rural areas where there is normally not much action or excitement. People young and old will walk for hours and travel great distances to *keramaian gawai*. However, most church leaders are concerned because many of the activities at such *gawai* are not suitable for Christians. Besides the gambling, drunkenness, and unsupervised pairing off of young couples, there is the more fundamental concern that these festivals are based on traditional beliefs. Many *gawai* are directly associated with *adat*, such as *naik dango*, in which the official reason for holding the event is to perform rituals to maintain harmony with the spirits so that the fields will produce in the next season, and the harvested rice will last until the next harvest. Furthermore, before a *gawai* officially begins, the organizers of the event make sacrifices to the spirits to ensure the safety of the participants.

It has been observed that people will expend considerable effort to travel to a *gawai*, but won't walk a fraction of the distance to attend church events. Church events do not have the same appeal, even for Christians, as do the *keramaian gawai*. In comparison to the *gawai*, church events are not as appealing or as exciting. Most Dayak Christians attend church because they believe it is something they ought to do, not because it is something they look forward to doing. The relative popularity of church events and *keramaian gawai* suggests that the church events are not meeting the social needs of the people. This is to say that people have a need for social interaction

(fellowship), entertainment, and having fun. For the most part Christians must look outside of their church circle to meet these needs. But popular activities that meet these needs involve both animistic (traditional beliefs) practices and behavior that is generally deemed unsuitable for Christians. This raises at least two fundamental questions.

10) It would be good if the church held exciting, fun social activities apart from worship services or Bible Studies, events like *gawai* festivals, but with activities appropriate for Christians. Do you agree or disagree with this statement? Why?

11) What types of alternative social events could or does your church sponsor or promote as alternatives to activities based on traditional beliefs?

Passages

Important events that mark significant moments or transitions (passages) in the life of individuals and communities are defined according to *adat* kebiasaan and *adat* kepercayaan. I refer to events that mark the life cycle, such as birth, first haircuts, entering school, circumcision, graduating from school, reaching adulthood, marriage, death, etc. In a traditional marriage ceremony, for instance, many symbolic objects are used. These objects represent, and emphasize family and community relationships. A traditional marriage ceremony is based on the assumption that spiritual powers are involved in all the relationships. A marriage ceremony is not just about the bride and groom. It emphasizes existing relationships with the families of the bride and the groom, and the relationship of these families with their respective communities. The marriage ceremony highlights the creation of new family relationships. All this is done with the understanding or belief that spiritual forces have an interest in how these relationships are formed and maintained.

I am impressed by the number of symbolic objects used, and symbolic acts that are performed, in a traditional marriage ceremony. Many of these symbolic objects and rituals are not used in Christian marriage ceremonies. But when I look at how important it is to Dayak people to have symbolic objects and rituals, I wonder if Christian marriages could be made more meaningful, and better represent and preserve Dayak culture, if more (Christian) symbolic objects were used. But in light of the importance of symbolism and symbolic objects in traditional beliefs, and the tendency of people to look on and use such objects as fetishes, I wonder in particular whether church should promote or reject the use of symbolic objects.

Modern Dayak Christian marriage ceremonies reflect less Dayak culture than do traditional ceremonies. (Church marriage ceremonies are based on Western models and do not incorporate symbols and rituals that characterize Dayak culture.) There are three relevant topics for discussion.

12) Traditional wedding ceremonies involve many symbolic objects and actions that must be included to make the ceremony authentic and valid. Many of these symbolic objects and actions are related to traditional beliefs, so are not included in Christian

wedding ceremonies. Do Christian wedding ceremonies have enough symbolism (of a Christian nature) to make the ceremony authentic and valid in the eyes of the guests and larger community?

- 13) Traditional Dayak marriage ceremonies acknowledge the intricate web of family relationships that already exist and that are being newly created in the joining of two families in the marriage of the bride and groom. Are these relationships emphasized enough in Christian marriage ceremonies, so that the families are satisfied that proper attention has been given to these relationships, and so do not feel a need to perform traditional beliefs rituals?
- 14) Should the church be developing ceremonies and traditions that reflect and preserve Dayak culture and ethnic identity? Can the church Christianize Dayak rituals and symbolic objects, or will Dayak Christians be confused and think that the church is approving of traditional beliefs and the worship of spiritual powers other than God?

Healing from disease or injury

According to traditional beliefs, illness and injury are understood to be caused by spiritual forces that are out of harmony with the human members of a community. An important traditional role of the dukun is to protect the community members from disease and injury. He does this by ensuring that the needs of the unseen spiritual beings in and around the community are heeded and met, and that the human members of the community do not act in ways that disturb the spiritual powers.

Traditionally Dayak people have relied upon the dukun to keep the community safe from accidents and illness, and to restore the ill to health, and help the injured to recover. Treatments from the dukun are unreliable and expensive. Modern medicine, when available and properly administered is often more effective than treatments from the dukun. But modern medicine is not always effective. There are still many diseases that are not understood and for which there is not adequate medicine or prevention. Furthermore, medical care in rural communities is non-existent or very poor, and often medicine and adequate care for diseases that are treatable are not available in villages. In such situations, the dukun's treatments are the only help available.

Christians pray for healing and use medicine when it is available. But illnesses are not always healed and even Christians suffer and die from illness and injuries just as do non-Christians. It is perhaps understandable that people who are desperate for help would return to the dukun for assistance when it seems that their prayers to God for healing are not being answered.

- 15) One function of traditional beliefs is to ward off disease and injury. Does the Christian faith provide any better protection from disease and injury than traditional beliefs?

- 16) Another function of traditional beliefs is to bring healing from disease or injury. Are Christian prayers more effective at restoring the ill to health than are the workings of a dukun?
- 17) What do you say to Christian parents whose child has died of disease after they remained faithful to their Christian beliefs and refused to go to the dukun?

Personal Power and Invincibility

It is fairly common for people to desire protection from physical attack from their human enemies. Some people are aggressive and often involved in fights that they have themselves provoked. Many others do not provoke fights, but fear being attacked and beaten. Other people seek *ilmu hitam* ('black science or knowledge', 'black magic') to give them extraordinary powers and invulnerability. Christians are aware that this kind of power is wrong because it involves the worship of other than God. Nevertheless, many Christians are intrigued by these powers. I have experienced many conversations in which Christians related stories of extraordinary powers that give invulnerability to physical attack.

Such stories are received with great interest and with little skepticism, that is, the stories are readily believed. The interest displayed in the telling and hearing of such stories suggests to me that there is some regret that this source of power is forbidden to Christians. The desire for such power remains, even though a person has converted to Christianity. This situation suggests that such a person has not repented of the desire to give priority to one's own desires. There are several issues related to this that need to be considered.

- 18) Do you know of Christians who are still fascinated by such stories, or in your experience, do such stories have no interest to Christians?
- 19) There are many accounts of people being invulnerable to injury from physical attacks with machetes or bullets. Do you think that such accounts are essentially true, exaggerated, or pure fiction?
- 20) Some Christians continue to be intrigued by occult powers (such as invulnerability to attack) although they understand that it is wrong for them to seek such powers. Some Christians regret having to give up this kind of protection during times of physical danger. What advice or teaching would you give to such a person?

Inviting people to become Christians

- 21) When the gospel is preached and people are invited to become Christians, what should the evangelist say that they should leave, or from what they should convert? Why is it necessary for them to be asked to leave this in order to become Christians?

- 22) What should they be told about why it would be good to become Christians? What is the benefit for someone to become a Christian who has been following the traditional religion?**
- 23) When people are considering becoming Christians, what should they be warned that they might be disappointed about? That is, what benefits might they think they will be receiving which are in fact not benefits of becoming Christians?**
- 24) When the gospel is preached, what should the people who are invited to become Christians be asked to accept?**

Appendix D: Adat-istiadat and Christianity (Indonesian)

Dari: Pdt. Larry Thomson

Kepada Yang Terhormat:

Para Pendeta, Para Gembala Sidang, Para Penginjil, Para Pelayan Gereja, dan Para Dosen, Kerapatan Gereja Baptist Indonesia di Kalimantan Barat

Juli 2000

Salam dalam nama Tuhan kita, Yesus Kristus.

Kami terus mendoakan agar Tuhan tetap memberkati setiap hamba Tuhan di Kalimantan Barat. Dengan berat hati kami mendengar berita yang menyedihkan mengenai tantangan dan kesusahan yang kalian alami di masa kini. Kami sangat berharap Allah dapat bekerja dalam segala sesuatu untuk mendatangkan kebaikan bagi mereka yang mengasihi Dia.

Sudah genap tiga tahun sejak kami meninggalkan Indonesia dan pulang ke Canada. Saya malu karena tidak menyurati saudara sesuai dengan tekad saya waktu berangkat. Tetapi ketahuilah, tidak pernah ada satu hari pun selama tiga tahun ini di mana saya tidak berpikir mengenai Kalimantan Barat, teman-teman, dan pelayanan yang kami tinggalkan.

Semenjak kami pulang ke Canada saya melanjutkan program studi "Doctor of Ministry" dan itu hampir selesai. Tinggal penyelesaian tesis bagian akhir. Tesis saya menjelaskan hubungan antara adat dan kepercayaan lama Dayak. Sebagian besar dari tesis tersusun dari apa yang saya pelajari selama saya berada di Kalimantan, juga dari penyelidikan pustaka. Waktu kami masih berada di Kalimantan, saya mengedarkan daftar pertanyaan berhubungan dengan perbedaan diantara kepercayaan lama dan kebiasaan, dan kepercayaan Kristen. Saya sungguh berterima kasih atas jawaban-jawaban yang begitu terus-terang. Jawaban-jawaban terhadap daftar pertanyaan sudah saya gunakan dalam tesis. Sebagai akhir dari diskusi-diskusi dan penyusunan tesis, timbullah beberapa pertanyaan. Lalu, saya mau tahu pikiran saudara-saudara mengenai beberapa hal-hal yang bersangkutan dengan kepercayaan lama dan kepercayaan Kristen. Saya mau tahu apakah hasil penyelidikan saya benar atau salah, apakah kesimpulan yang saya tarik dari penyelidikan benar atau tidak. Juga, saya mau tahu jikalau saya keliru mengenai perbedaan diantara kepercayaan lama dan kepercayaan Kristen. Itulah sebabnya saya telah menyusun sebuah naskah, dilampirkan dengan surat ini, yang dapat dipakai oleh saudara sebagai bahan pelajaran. Kalau saudara menggunakan bahan ini, saya minta agar saudara menyampaikan uraian-uraian saudara. Khususnya, kalau saya keliru atau salah, tolong diberitahukan kepada saya, supaya saya dapat lebih memahami hal-hal tersebut.

Dalam tesis saya membahas perbedaan antara agama Kristen dan kepercayaan lama Dayak di daerah pelayanan KGBI. Khususnya, pengaruh perbedaan-perbedaan itu pada hasil penginjilan dan penanaman gereja di Kalimantan Barat. Bagian pertama tesis merupakan penjelasan mengenai adat dan kepercayaan lama. Bagian kedua terdiri dari penjelasan mengenai pertentangan-pertentangan diantara kepercayaan lama dan kepercayaan Kristen. Tujuan saya menyusun tesis macam ini untuk menolong pelayanan KGBI di Kalimantan Barat. Mudah-mudahan bahan pelajaran ini dapat berguna bagi

saudara dalam pelayanan waktu saudara menghadapi hal-hal yang sudah dibahas di dalam naskah ini.

Waktu saya coba menjelaskan mengenai adat dan kepercayaan lama saya merasa kurang enak, karena saya sadar bahwa masih banyak hal yang belum saya mengerti, walaupun sudah lama berdomisili, melayani, dan belajar di Indonesia. Dengan menjelaskan hal-hal tersebut secara tertulis, silahkan kemukakan hal-hal dimana saya keliru. Saya mohon agar saudara-saudara, yang sudah menolong dan mengajar saya, juga memperbaiki kekeliruan saya dengan sabar. Karena masih banyak hal yang belum saya tahu atau mengerti.

Sekarang saya minta tolong. Saya sudah menyusun sebuah naskah dimana saya membahas beberapa hal yang dikemukakan dalam studi dan penulisan tesis tentang adat dan kepercayaan lama orang Dayak di daerah pelayanan KGBI di Kalimantan Barat. Saya mohon agar saudara memeriksa naskah yang terlampir, lalu menjawab pertanyaan-pertanyaan yang ada pada akhir setiap bagian. Saya mau tahu apakah saudara setuju atau tidak setuju dengan pikiran saya. Kalau ada hal penting yang seharusnya dimasukkan dalam naskah ini, tolong beritahukan. Saya mau tahu usul atau perbaikan apa saja. Terutama, tolong beritahukan apakah penyelidikan dan kesimpulan mengenai perbedaan-perbedaan diantara kepercayaan lama dan kepercayaan Kristen benar atau salah, atau kurang lengkap.

Kiranya Tuhan melimpahkan berkatnya di gereja-gereja-Nya di Kalimantan Barat.

Dengan segala hormat,

Pdt. Larry Thomson

Adat-istiadat dan Kepercayaan Kristen

Perihal: Orang yang masuk kepercayaan Kristen tidak dapat bertahan pada masa gawat, tetapi tetap berpegang pada kepercayaan lama bersama kepercayaan Kristen.

Selama saya tinggal di Kalimantan Barat seringkali ada hal yang dikemukakan oleh para Gembala Sidang yang saya kunjungi di desa-desa. Hal itu dibahas, tanpa terkecuali, pada setiap persekutuan Gembala Sidang yang diadakan di rumah kami di Tayan. Yaitu, anggota-anggota gereja di desa-desa tidak mau meninggalkan kepercayaan lama. Seringkali ada laporan dari Gembala Sidang bahwa anggotanya ikut lagi kepercayaan lama pada masa sulit, misalnya, kalau ada anggota keluarga yang sakit parah. Selain itu, orang animisme menganggap orang Kristen yang berani meninggalkan kepercayaan lama merupakan pengacau yang membahayakan kampungnya.

Mengapa begitu banyak orang Dayak masuk agama Kristen dengan mudah, tetapi dengan begitu mudah kembali kepada kepercayaan lama pada masa sulit? Mungkin karena pikiran tradisional mengenai apa yang diharapkan dari kepercayaan. Yaitu, sejak dahulu, orang animisme berpikir bahwa kepercayaan akan menghasilkan hal-hal tertentu. Misalnya, diharapkan bahwa dengan menganut kepercayaan lama, ladang-ladangnya subur dan menghasilkan panen yang mencukupi. Diharapkan juga agar tidak kena celaka atau penyakit. Kalau jatuh sakit, agar cepat sembuh. Sejak tibanya orang Dayak di Kalimantan, dipercayai bahwa cara agar hidupnya aman, sehat, dan makmur ialah memenuhi segala syarat kepercayaan lama. Sejak dahulu dipikirkan bahwa alasannya mengikut segala syarat kepercayaan lama, yang menjelma dalam syarat-syarat adat-istiadat, ialah agar menghasilkan keamanan, kesehatan, dan kemakmuran. Waktu seorang Dayak masuk agama Kristen, dia masuk dengan harapan bahwa kepercayaan Kristen akan memenuhi harapannya mengenai tujuan agama, yaitu keamanan, kesehatan, kekuatan, dsb. Merupakan cara yang lebih baik dibanding dengan kepercayaan lama.

Sesudah mejadi orang Kristen, penganut agama Kristen itu belajar menurut kepercayaan Kristen, dimana dia tidak boleh menganut kepercayaan lama lagi. Dilarang kembali kepada kepercayaan lama. Juga, dia belajar bahwa kepercayaan lama dianggap salah, malahan jahat, karena termasuk menyembah kepada ilah-ilah lain dan bukan kepada Allah yang Maha Esa, yang dinyatakan kepada manusia oleh Yesus Kristus. Misalnya, diketahui bahwa tidak boleh lagi menyembah kepada roh-roh di ladang agar ladangnya berhasil. Diketahui bahwa tidak boleh lagi memotong binatang sebagai korban kepada roh-roh agar tetap aman atau sehat. Cara pengaturan hidup, yang dianut nenek moyangnya sekarang dilarang. Diganti dengan kepercayaan Kristen.

Agama Kristen, sebagaimana diberitakan, mengutamakan keselamatan kekal, yaitu, apakah orang berada di surga atau neraka sesudah meninggal dunia. Perbuatan-perbuatan yang ditekankan adalah apa yang boleh dibuat dan apa yang tidak boleh dibuat orang. Anggota jemaat diajar untuk berdoa agar ladangnya subur, mohon keamanan, dan kesehatan. Tetapi tidak ada jaminan bahwa doa-doa akan dikabulkan sesuai dengan permohonan. Ladang-ladang orang Kristen juga dapat diganggu oleh hama, walaupun telah didoakan oleh Gembala Sidang. Orang Kristen juga bisa kena celaka, dan jatuh sakit. Tidak semua orang Kristen yang telah didoakan dapat menjadi sembuh.

Di pedalaman Kalimantan Barat, pada umumnya tidak ada fasilitas kedokteran yang memadai. Juga, pada umumnya tidak ada teknologi pertanian moderen. Untuk

menghadapi dan mengatasi masalah-masalah alam, seperti hama di ladang, kecelakaan, sakit-penyakit, hanya ada kepercayaan tradisi. Yaitu, orang yang mengikuti kepercayaan lama coba memenuhi segala peraturan adat-istiadat dengan harapan agar tidak terkena celaka, sakit, atau musibah. Letak masalahnya yaitu orang Kristen juga kena celaka, sakit, dan musibah. Tidak ada jaminan bahwa orang Kristen terlindung dari segala macam masalah. Lalu, tidak mengherankan bahwa orang menjadi kecewa dengan kepercayaan Kristen dan kembali mengikuti kepercayaan lama, karena masih mengalami masalah hidup. Dalam pikiran mereka kalau agama Kristen tidak memenuhi keperluan hidup sehari-hari, lebih baik mereka kembali kepada kepercayaan lama yang diturunkan dari nenek moyang.

Setelah menyelidiki adat-istiadat dan kepercayaan lama, terkesan bahwa tujuan utama dari kepercayaan lama ialah mengatur atau mengendalikan kuasa alam yang sebenarnya sulit diatur atau dikendalikan. Dengan kata lain sulit mengatur atau menjamin hasil panen dan keamanan (khususnya ketika bertani). Selain itu, sulit juga menjauhkan diri dari bahaya sakit. Juga sulit dalam membela diri dari kuasa-kuasa roh yang mau mengacaukan kehidupan orang. Lebih lagi, dalam kepercayaan lama ada unsur keinginan orang untuk mengontrol orang lain demi keuntungan diri sendiri. Jadi pada dasarnya, ada orang yang mengikuti peraturan adat dan kepercayaan lama supaya dapat mengontrol kuasa-kuasa, atau peristiwa-peristiwa yang sebenarnya tidak dapat atau tidak bisa diatur oleh manusia. Dalam kata lain, kepercayaan lama merupakan cara untuk mengerti peristiwa alam dan mengontrol peristiwa-peristiwa yang tidak dapat dimengerti atau dikontrol tanpa ada kerja sama dengan kuasa-kuasa roh. Sedangkan tujuan agama Kristen bukan untuk mengontrol kuasa-kuasa alam. Agama Kristen tidak menjamin ladang berhasil, aman di hutan, atau tetap sehat, walaupun sebenarnya hal ini sering dimohon dalam doa. Tujuan agama Kristen bukan untuk memberi kuasa ajaib agar tidak kena luka parang. Bukan untuk mengontrol orang lain. Maksud agama Kristen adalah supaya orang dapat berhubungan baik dengan Allah, pencipta segala sesuatu, yang dikenal oleh manusia dalam Yesus Kristus. Menjadi orang Kristen berarti merubah sifat dan keinginan. Menjadi orang Kristen berarti tidak mementingkan diri sendiri melainkan mengutamakan kepentingan orang lain. Juga untuk menjadi hamba yang mengasihi, yang siap diganggu, siap menderita, siap mati atas keperluan sesama manusia yang dikasihinya. Berarti mengasihi sama seperti Yesus Kristus mengasihi kita, dan mengorbankan dirinya sendiri untuk kita. Dengan menyelidiki adat-istiadat orang Dayak, saya berpendapat bahwa kita harus menyelidiki lebih dalam lagi artinya "pertobatan" atau "pindah agama" dari segi penginjilan dan penanaman gereja di Kalimantan Barat.

Pada bagian berikut ini, saya ingin menjelaskan dengan lebih teliti lagi tentang apa yang saya telah selidiki mengenai tujuan-tujuan kepercayaan lama dibandingkan dengan tujuan-tujuan kepercayaan Kristen. Saya mohon agar saudara-saudara memeriksa pikiran-pikiran saya ini, lalu membahas pertanyaan-pertanyaan yang ada pada akhir setiap bagian. Kalau saudara berpikir bahwa kesimpulan-kesimpulan saya keliru, saya minta agar disampaikan kesimpulan saudara tersebut kepada saya. Dengan tukar-menukar pikiran, mudah-mudahan kita dapat menerapkan metode yang menghasilkan jemaat-jemaat yang kuat dan mantap di Kalimantan Barat, demi kemuliaan Yesus Kristus.

Tujuan-tujuan Kepercayaan Lama

Pertanian ladang termasuk bagian yang sangat penting dari identitas suku Dayak. Kepercayaan lama Dayak (termasuk adat kepercayaan, adat kebiasaan, dan adat hukum) berkembang dari nenek moyang yang berladang di hutan di Kalimantan. Pada zaman moderen ini, memang banyak orang Dayak yang sudah tinggal di kota dan tidak berladang lagi. Walaupun demikian, belum lama sejak orang pindah ke kota dan tidak berladang. Biasanya satu, paling dua, keturunan saja sejak tidak berladang. Selama berabad-abad tidak terhitung orang Dayak berladang di hutan di Kalimantan. Latar-belakang itu menentukan pengertian orang Dayak mengenai alam semesta. Pengertian mengenai alam semesta itu merupakan bagian inti kebudayaan Dayak. Pengertian itu akan bertahan lama, bahkan pada zaman moderen ini penuh dengan pengaruh-pengaruh budaya dari luar daerah Kalimantan.

Berabad-abad kepercayaan lama berkembang, selama petani-petani di Kalimantan coba hidup di hutan yang bersifat misteri dan gaib. Seringkali ada sesuatu terjadi yang sulit dimengerti atau dijelaskan, bahkan pada zaman moderen ini. Misalnya, mengapa pohon jatuh persis pada saat itu dan menimpa orang itu? Mengapa orang itu jatuh sakit, yang lain tidak? Mengapa musim hujan tiba awal atau terlambat? Mengapa hama merusak ladang itu, tetapi tidak mengganggu yang lain? Mengapa seseorang mati, yang lain masih hidup? Kepercayaan lama termasuk caranya mengerti hal-hal yang misterius dan gaib. Kepercayaan lama berkembang sebagai hasil dari orang yang mencoba menentukan di mana membuka ladang, kapan membuka ladang, kapan menanam, kapan menuai, dsb. Kepercayaan lama dianggap sebagai cara untuk menangkis hama dari ladang, kuasa-kuasa yang menyebabkan penyakit dan celaka, dan caranya menyembukan yang sakit atau terluka.

Yang menjadi soal bagi gereja ialah kebiasaan-kebiasaan suku Dayak berhubungan erat dengan kepercayaan lama. Peraturan adat disokong oleh kepercayaan kepada roh-roh. Dipercayai bahwa hubungan antara orang-orang desa mempengaruhi sikap kuasa-kuasa roh terhadap penghuni desa itu. Dipercayai bahwa gangguan rukun di antara manusia menyebabkan gangguan rukun di antara kuasa-kuasa roh dengan manusia. Dan jika hubungan di antara manusia dengan kuasa-kuasa roh terganggu, sial bagi manusia. Bukan adat kepercayaan saja yang berhubungan dengan kuasa-kuasa roh. Soalnya bagi gereja, adat kebiasaan juga dianggap berhubungan dengan kuasa-kuasa roh. Dari setiap segi, baik adat kepercayaan maupun adat kebiasaan, berhubungan dengan kuasa-kuasa. Orang Kristen berusaha untuk membedakan di antara adat kepercayaan, adat hukum, dan adat kebiasaan. Tetapi sulit dipisahkan karena pada pokoknya, segala adat, termasuk adat kebiasaan dan adat hukum, berdasarkan kepercayaan lama.

Apa yang dianggap 'benar' dan apa yang dianggap 'salah' ditentukan dari segi perbuatan. 'Benar' berarti menerapkan peraturan adat sedangkan 'Salah' berarti melanggar peraturan adat dengan tidak memperhatikan pantang, tidak melaksanakan upacara adat, tidak membayar adat. Sesuatu yang dianggap salah atau dilarang (misalnya, menikah dengan saudara sepupu) bisa menjadi benar kalau adat dibayar sebelumnya. Karena adat di salah satu daerah berbeda daripada adat di daerah lain, apa yang dianggap 'benar' dan 'salah' berbeda juga.

Nasib jiwa orang mati bukan soal utama bagi kepercayaan lama. Yang ditekankan ialah hidup di dunia ini: agar hasil panen memadai, agar tetap sehat, agar sembuh dari sakit atau luka, agar tidak kena celaka, agar tidak diganggu oleh kuasa roh

yang disuruh oleh musuh orang, agar hidup makmur. Lagi yang ditekankan ialah agar supaya hantu orang mati menjauhkan diri dari orang hidup dan tidak mengganggu orang hidup. *Yaitu, yang diutamakan ialah keadaan materi orang hidup.*

Menurut kepercayaan lama, supaya seseorang dapat hidup makmur di dunia yang kelihatan ini, wajib memenuhi segala peraturan sebagaimana ditentukan dalam adat-istiadat. Dengan menuruti dan mentaati segala peraturan adat, manusia dapat mengendalikan kuasa-kuasa gaib, yang tidak terlihat. Menurut kepercayaan ini, jikalau upacara-upacara dilaksanakan dengan sempurna, maka kuasa-kuasa roh dapat dibujuk, atau didesak, untuk berbuat baik terhadap orang atau kelompok yang melaksanakan upacara itu. Juga agar kuasa-kuasa lain menjauhkan diri dari manusia yang hidup, dan tidak mengganggu manusia.

Kepercayaan lama berdasarkan 'saling menolong' di antara manusia dan kuasa-kuasa roh. Dasar itu ternyata dalam doa-doa *nyangahatn* kepada Jubata, seperti "kami berbuat ini untukmu, Jubata. Sekarang Jubata melakukan hal-hal bagi kami." Sembayang kepada Jubata dan roh-roh lain termasuk membawa korban. Korban diberi kepada kuasa-kuasa roh dengan harapan bahwa kuasa-kuasa itu akan bersikap murah hati kepada mereka yang melakukan korban.

Hal-hal tersebut merupakan pengertian suku Dayak mengenai tujuan dari kepercayaan. *Yaitu, orang Dayak berpikir bahwa tujuan dari kepercayaan atau agama apapun ialah agar manusia bersama kuasa-kuasa gaib saling menolong.* Tujuan kepercayaan ini untuk dapat hidup makmur, aman, sehat, dsb. Jika demikian, ada kemungkinan banyak orang Dayak akan pindah agama, dan masuk agama Kristen, karena mereka berpikir bahwa kepercayaan Kristen lebih berhasil dalam memenuhi semua yang diharapkan dari segi kepercayaan itu sendiri. Dengan pemikiran bahwa lebih baik sembayang kepada Allah, karena Allah lebih kuat, lebih mampu, dan lebih rela menolong manusia yang sembayang kepada-Nya dan menuruti segala perintahNya. Pada dasarnya, pikiran mengenai tujuan kepercayaan tidak dirubah. Pengharapan terhadap kepercayaan Kristen tetap sama dengan pengharapan terhadap kepercayaan lama.

Dapat dikatakan bahwa tujuan dari agama Kristen lain daripada tujuan kepercayaan lama. Tujuan utama agama Kristen bukan supaya orang hidup dengan aman, sehat, dan makmur, melainkan supaya dosa dapat diampuni, dan supaya manusia dapat hidup dengan hubungan yang baik dengan Allah, sampai selama-lamanya. Soalnya, jika kepercayaan Kristen tidak memenuhi segala pengharapan, sesuai dengan pengertian mengenai tujuan dan maksud agama, akibatnya, orang menjadi kecewa dan membuang kepercayaan Kristen yang mengecewakan itu. Waktu orang baru masuk agama Kristen, dia belajar bahwa tujuan dan maksud agama Kristen berbeda dengan tujuan dan maksud kepercayaan lama. Dia ada masalah, atau dilema. Soalnya, caranya menentukan kapan dan di mana membuka ladang, cara manangkis hama dari ladang, buang sial dari hidupnya, mencari kesehatan, kesembuhan, dsb., bertentangan dengan agama Kristen. Karena kepercayaan lama termasuk penyembahan kepada roh-roh lain daripada Allah. Tetapi agama Kristen tidak ada cara lain untuk mendapatkan hal-hal tersebut. Jika demikian, bagaimana caranya agar memenuhi segala kebutuhan kalau cara lama tidak diperbolehkan lagi, tetapi penggantinya tidak disediakan oleh agama Kristen?

Contohnya sewaktu kerusuhan antara suku Dayak dengan suku Madura pada tahun 1997 di Kalimantan Barat. Seseorang yang belum lama menjadi orang Kristen merasa cemas dan sangat terganggu karena, katanya, dia terlalu cepat masuk agama

Kristen. Pada waktu kerusuhan itu, dia merasa lebih baik kalau ada jimat yang dapat memberi kekuatan gaib kepadanya, untuk menangkis peluru dan parang musuh. Dia yakin bahwa, kalau dibunuh, dia akan ke sorga. Karena dia tahu bahwa kepercayaan Kristen tidak menjamin bahwa dia dibela dari serangan parang atau peluru. Dia pikir adalah bijaksana kalau kembali kepada kepercayaan lama sementara ada kerusuhan. Lalu kemudian, sesudah keadaan menjadi damai, dia kembali lagi kepada agama Kristen. Nampak dari contoh ini bahwa tujuan agama Kristen lain daripada tujuan kepercayaan lama. Kalau seseorang masih mau berharap pada kepercayaan lama, dia harus murtad dari agama Kristen, karena agama Kristen melarang cara-cara yang demikian.

Tujuan Agama Kristen

Dikatakan bahwa agama Kristen dapat menyelesaikan masalah-masalah hidup. Tetapi masalah-masalah yang diselesaikan melalui agama Kristen lain daripada yang diselesaikan oleh kepercayaan lama. Perbedaannya dibahas lebih lanjut lagi dibawah ini.

Agama Kristen, sebagaimana dijelaskan oleh para penginjil dan Gembala Sidang gereja-gereja injili, adalah cara menyelesaikan masalah-masalah kekal yaitu, apa yang terjadi kepada jiwa orang sesudah meninggal dunia. Biasanya, penjelasan mengenai agama Kristen dimulai dengan menggambarkan keadaan manusia, yaitu mengenai dosa manusia, dan akibat dari dosa itu. Dijelaskan bahwa dosa memisahkan manusia dari Allah, akibatnya, manusia yang berdosa dihukum secara kekal. Cara memperbaiki keadaan buruk itu, yaitu keselamatan, disediakan oleh Yesus Kristus, dan diperoleh dengan menerima Yesus Kristus sebagai Juruselamat. Agama Kristen diberitakan sebagai cara satu-satunya menyelamatkan manusia. Percaya kepada Kristus menghasilkan keselamatan kekal di sorga.

Jelas bahwa orang Kristen di Kalimantan Barat mengerti bahwa agama Kristen berlaku di dunia yang fana, bukan hanya mengenai hal-hal kekal. Yaitu, orang Kristen mengerti bahwa kepercayaan Kristen berhubungan dengan hal-hal kehidupan sehari-hari, lebih daripada hal-hal kekal saja. Orang Kristen tahu bahwa mengikut Yesus Kristus menghasilkan mutu tinggi dalam hidup ini. Mereka mengalami damai dan sukacita. Damai dan sukacita yang dialami oleh orang Kristen tidak tergantung pada keadaan-keadaan hidup. Bukan karena Allah, dengan mujizat-mujizat memenuhi segala keperluan, melainkan oleh karena keadaan-keadaan jasmani yang dianggap tidak begitu penting dibandingkan dengan keperluan-keperluan kekal. Memang pengalaman orang Kristen ialah Allah mengabulkan doa-doa permohonan. Maksudnya, orang Kristen, karena percaya bahwa hal-hal kekal sudah diatur dengan baik, tidak lagi cemas mengenai hal-hal jasmani. Orang Kristen dapat mengalami hidup 'berkelimpahan', penuh damai dan sukacita.

Walaupun orang Kristen mengalami damai dan sukacita karena berhubungan baik dengan Allah dalam Yesus Kristus, kenyataannya, tidak terjamin bahwa orang Kristen mendapat hasil panen lebih dari orang yang bukan Kristen, atau dia lebih sehat, atau lebih aman. Orang Kristen berdoa mohon mujizat dan perlindungan Allah, dan percaya bahwa doa-doa dapat dikabulkan. Tetapi tidak ada jaminan bahwa apa yang dimohon akan dikabulkan sesuai dengan permohonan. Para penulis Perjanjian Baru mengajak agar senantiasa mendoakan setiap segi kehidupan. Tetapi dimengerti juga bahwa Allah tidak terikat atau berkewajiban untuk mengabulkan doa orang, walaupun doa itu disembahkan

secara tepat. Jelas sekali bahwa manusia tidak dapat memainkan atau memaksa Allah. Dinyatakan dalam pengalaman Rasul Paulus, yang menderita dengan apa yang dikatakannya “duri dalam daging”. Walaupun dia berkali-kali mohan agar dilepaskan atau disembuhkan dari “duri” itu, tapi tidak dapat. Orang Kristen diberitahu oleh para penulis Perjanjian Baru bahwa mereka akan dianiaya, disiksa, berkesusahan, bahkan mungkin mati syahid. Mengikuti Yesus tidak berarti bahwa hidup akan berjalan tanpa kesusahan lagi.

Dengan memikirkan hal-hal itu, rundingkanlah soal-soal berikut ini.

- 1) Menurut pengertian saudara, apakah yang merupakan tujuan utama daripada kepercayaan lama? Dalam kata lain, hal-hal apakah yang diharapkan oleh orang yang mengikuti kepercayaan lama?
- 2) Menurut pengertian saudara, apakah yang dapat dikatakan tujuan utama daripada kepercayaan Kristen? Hal apakah yang diharapkan oleh orang yang mengikuti kepercayaan Kristen?
- 3) Menurut pengalaman saudara, mengapa orang Dayak mau mengikuti agama Kristen? Apa guna menjadi orang Kristen?
- 4) Dikatakan di atas bahwa tujuan kepercayaan lama lain daripada kepercayaan Kristen. Apakah saudara setuju atau tidak dengan perkataan itu? Jelaskan.

Berhubungan dengan perbedaan-perbedaan pokok di antara tujuan-tujuan dan pengharapan-pengharapan kepercayaan lama dan agama Kristen, mari kita merundingkan dan membahas akibatnya bagi beberapa segi kehidupan orang Dayak.

Pertanian

Kepercayaan lama berhubungan dengan hal pertanian dari beberapa segi. Selama berabad-abad orang Dayak tinggal di hutan di Kalimantan dengan menggunakan teknologi sederhana. Abad demi abad, kepercayaan lama berkembang ketika orang Dayak menghadapi hal-hal alami yang tidak dapat diramalkan. Kepercayaannya berkembang sebagai cara untuk mengerti kejadian-kejadian alami. Juga sebagai cara mengendalikan kejadian-kejadian alami, yang pada umumnya, di luar kuasa atau kemampuan manusia (seperti tibanya musim hujan, hama-hama, sakit-penyakit dsb.)

Menurut kebiasaan lama, keputusan-keputusan mengenai di mana, dan kapan mau buka ladang, kapan menanam, kapan menuai, dsb, ditentukan menurut upacara adat. Penting juga mengambil keputusan-keputusan pertanian secara berkelompok, karena apa yang dilakukan oleh salah satu orang mempengaruhi, dan dipengaruhi, oleh apa yang dilakukan oleh orang-orang lain. Misalnya, seseorang tidak dapat menanam sebelum yang lain menanam karena banyak hama akan pindah ke ladangnya. Atau orang lain mungkin belum mengandangi babi-babinya. Kepercayaan lama menentukan caranya mengatasi hama, banjir, kekeringan dsb. Kepercayaan lama menentukan bagaimana caranya agar orang dapat berjalan dan bekerja di ladang dengan aman. Bagi orang Kristen, tidak tentu apakah cara-cara yang ditentukan itu sungguh-sungguh bermanfaat.

Jadi orang yang ikut kepercayaan lama merasa bahwa cara-cara itu bermanfaat. Yang dikemukakan disini ialah, metode-metode lama itu tidak diperbolehkan lagi bagi orang Kristen. Walaupun metode-metode dan upacara-upacara dilarang bagi orang Kristen, orang Kristen masih bertani bersama-sama dengan orang bukan Kristen. Orang Kristen masih menghadapi tantangan-tantangan yang sama, seperti banjir, kekeringan, hama, penyakit, celaka, dsb. Soalnya, kepercayaan Kristen tidak ada upacara untuk menentukan waktu baik untuk membuka ladang, menanam, dsb, atau mengatasi bencana alam. Apa lagi, kepercayaan Kristen melarang orang kembali kepada cara-cara yang digunakan oleh kepercayaan lama, karena kepercayaan lama termasuk penyembahan kepada ilah-ilah lain. Orang Kristen berdoa kepada Allah, tetapi menurut pengalamannya, ladang orang Kristen kena bencana sama seperti ladang orang bukan Kristen. Ada pertanyaan-pertanyaan yang timbul karena masalah ini:

- 5) Bagaimana gereja dapat mendukung petani-petani (khususnya yang baru menjadi orang Kristen) agar mereka tidak kembali kepada kepercayaan lama untuk menentukan hal-hal seperti membuka ladang, menanam, menuai, dsb. Bagaimana gereja dapat mendukung petani-petani yang menghadapi tantangan hawa, banjir, kemarau, dsb.?
- 6) Apa yang dapat dikatakan kepada seorang petani Kristen waktu ladangnya kurang berhasil dan dia memutuskan untuk berdukun menurut kepercayaan lama untuk menjadikan ladangnya subur kembali?

Pengaturan Kerukunan Desa

Adat kebiasaan bersama adat hukum mengatur hidup masyarakat di desa. Ditentukan oleh adat perbuatan yang diperbolehkan, yang dilarang, dan yang dianggap kebiasaan. Peraturan adat berdasarkan kepercayaan lama. Ada anggapan bahwa pelanggaran adat oleh manusia melibatkan kuasa roh-roh yang tidak dilihat. Menurut kepercayaan lama, ketika seseorang melanggar adat, roh-roh menyatakan perasaan kurang senang kepada seluruh penghuni desa. Tidak terbatas dengan orang yang melanggar saja. Ketika orang Dayak menjadi orang Kristen, dan tidak lagi menuruti segala peraturan adat lagi, mereka dianggap sebagai pengacau yang membahayakan desanya. Ada tiga sebab. Pertama, dianggap bahwa mereka membahayakan desanya karena ada kemungkinan bahwa roh-roh mencelakakan orang lain yang masih memenuhi segala adat. Kedua, mereka dianggap pengacau karena kepercayaan Kristen meruntuhkan adat. Orang bukan Kristen cemas karena berpikir bahwa kehidupan sekampung akan terpecah-belah kalau tidak diatur lagi oleh adat. Ketiga, adat merupakan bagian penting daripada identitas suku dan desa. Ketika orang menyangkal sebagian saja adatnya, adat itu tidak berlaku seperti dulu sebagai tanda kesukuan.

Lalu, berdasarkan keterangan ini, rundingkanlah soal-soal berikut ini.

- 7) Adat bersama kepercayaan lama merupakan bagian penting dari identitas suku bangsa Dayak. Adakah caranya agar orang Kristen dapat melestarikan identitas kesukuan Dayaknya sambil menyembah kepada Allah saja dan tidak lagi berurusan dengan kuasa-kuasa lain?

- 8) Apakah saudara menganggap bahwa melestarikan kebudayaan Dayak yang bersifat adat dan kepercayaan lama merupakan hal penting? Atau boleh dihilangkan saja pada waktu orang Dayak masuk agama Kristen?
- 9) Adat terdiri dari banyak peraturan, dan menentukan hukum yang dikenakan jika peraturan-peraturan dilanggar. Dengan mengingat akan kesulitan mengatur kelakuan Kristen pada anggota gereja, apakah peraturan agama Kristen dapat mengganti adat hukum untuk mengatur kehidupan masyarakat?

Ramah-tamah

Gawai-gawai sangat menarik perhatian masyarakat di pedalaman, di mana pada umumnya tidak ada banyak hiburan. Pemuda dan orang tua dengan rela berjalan kaki dari jarak jauh untuk mengikut keramaian gawai. Ketua-ketua gereja merasa berat hati karena kegiatan gawai tidak cocok dengan iman Kristen. Selain main judi, mabuk-mabukkan dan pergaulan antara laki-laki dan gadis-gadis. Keberatan yang lebih mendasar lagi yaitu, keramaian gawai didasarkan pada kepercayaan lama. Ada gawai yang berhubungan langsung dengan adat seperti Naik Dango, di mana alasan diadakan gawai itu untuk upacara adat atau kepercayaan lama. Ada upacara yang bertujuan mengatur hubungan dengan roh-roh, agar ladang dan sawah berhasil, dan agar hasil panen bertahan sampai tahun depan. Terlebih lagi, pada pembukaan gawai, ada korban sembelihan kepada roh-roh agar pengikut-pengikut keramaian itu tidak ditimpa kemalangan di jalan.

Terbukti bahwa orang siap berjalan jauh supaya dapat menghadiri atau mengikut gawai. Kenyataan yang lain walaupun gereja dekat, mereka malas mengikut kegiatan-kegiatan di gereja. Penyebabnya adalah kegiatan gereja tidaklah menarik dibanding dengan keramaian gawai. Ada orang Kristen yang hadir waktu jam sembayang di gereja hanya karena mereka menganggapnya sebagai suatu kewajiban, bukan karena kebaktian yang menarik atau menyenangkan. Dengan membandingkan kedua kegiatan ini, rupanya gereja tidak begitu memenuhi keperluan orang dalam hal ramah-tamah. Semua orang perlu bergaul, bersekutu, dan mengikut hiburan untuk maksud senang-senang. Pada umumnya, keperluan-keperluan ini dapat dipenuhi di luar gereja. Tetapi kegiatan-kegiatan ini justru merupakan ramah-tamah yang memadai dan pada umumnya termasuk kepercayaan lama dan perbuatan yang dianggap kurang cocok bagi orang Kristen. Dua pertanyaan dikemukakan menyangkut soal-soal ini:

- 10) "Lebih baik kalau gereja mengadakan kegiatan ramah-tamah yang menggairakan atau menggembarakan lain daripada kebaktian atau Pelajaran Alkitab, seperti keramaian gawai tetapi dengan kegiatan cocok buat orang Kristen." Apakah saudara setuju atau tidak setuju dengan perkataan itu? Apa sebabnya ya atau tidak?
- 11) Kegiatan macam apa yang cocok buat orang Kristen, yang dapat diselenggarakan oleh gereja sebagai pengganti kegiatan di keramaian-keramaian umum?

Peralihan Hidup

Ada kejadian-kejadian yang menandai saat penting di hidup, atau peralihan dari satu tingkat hidup kepada yang berikut, seperti kelahiran, gunting rambut pertama kali, sunatan, pernikahan, kematian, dsb. Peralihan-peralihan itu diatur menurut adat kebiasaan dan adat kepercayaan. Upacara pernikahan merupakan upacara adat yang banyak sekali menggunakan alat dan lambang kepercayaan. Misalnya, ada yang menggambarkan atau melambangkan hubungan-hubungan keluarga dan hubungan-hubungan masyarakat. Upacara pernikahan menurut kepercayaan lama berdasarkan praanggapan bahwa kuasa-kuasa roh terlibat juga dalam segala hubungan antar-manusia. Upacara pernikahan adat melibatkan lebih daripada calon isteri dan calon suami. Upacara pernikahan adat menekankan pada hubungan-hubungan baru antara keluarga calon suami dengan keluarga calon isteri, lagi hubungan keluarga-keluarga itu dengan masyarakatnya. Semuanya itu diadakan dengan pengertian dan kepercayaan bahwa kuasa-kuasa roh tertarik kepada hubungan-hubungan itu dan memperhatikan keadaan hubungan-hubungan itu dari awal dan seterusnya.

Saya terkesan dengan banyaknya alat dan tata cara sebagai lambang yang digunakan pada upacara pernikahan adat. Sebagian besar alat dan tata cara tersebut tidak digunakan lagi pada pernikahan Kristen. Semuanya itu mempunyai peran penting dalam upacara-upacara adat dan segala macam. Saya mau tahu apakah kalau upacara Kristen, misalnya dalam pernikahan, lebih berarti bagi calon bersama peserta jika alat-alat atau lambang-lambang Kristen digunakan. Sebab rupanya banyak sekali lambang yang tidak digunakan atau dibuang oleh orang Kristen. Tetapi, justru karena alat-alat begitu penting dalam upacara-upacara adat, kalau alat-alat lain digunakan oleh orang Kristen, mungkin orang Kristen menggunakan alat-alat itu sebagai semacam jimat Kristen. Lalu, bagaimana? Saya mau tahu, apakah sebaiknya gereja menggunakan alat-alat yang ada arti lambang lebih daripada sekarang atau tidak?

Rupanya upacara pernikahan Kristen tidak bersifat ciri khas Dayak seperti upacara adat. Misalnya, pernikahann Kristen lebih bersifat “kebarat-baratan” daripada Dayak. Ada tiga hal yang bersangkutan dengan hal tersebut untuk dirundingkan:

- 12) Upacara pernikahan adat menggunakan alat-alat berlambang yang menandai bahwa upacara tersebut betul-betul berlaku. Alat-alat itu mengandung arti kepercayaan lama. Itulah sebabnya tidak digunakan pada pernikahan Kristen. Apakah ada alat-alat dan upacara berlambang yang secukupnya, sehingga upacara pernikahan Kristen dirasa cukup dan berlaku di mata para tamu dan masyarakat umum?
- 13) Pernikahan adat mengaku jaringan hubungan-hubungan keluarga yang sudah ada, dan yang baru jadi pada saat pernikahan itu. Apakah jaringan hubungan itu diakui / diperhatikan dalam upacara pernikahan Kristen secara memuaskan dibandingkan dengan upacara adat? Atau, habis upacara gereja, adakah keluarga yang masih mau mengadakan adat?
- 14) Apakah sebaiknya gereja mengembangkan upacara dan kebiasaan yang mencerminkan dan melestarikan kebudayaan Dayak bersama identitas kesukuan Dayak? Atau apakah orang Kristen Dayak merasa bingung dan berpikir bahwa gereja menyetujui kepercayaan lama dan perhatian kepada kuasa-kuasa roh lain daripada Allah?

Penyembuhan

Menurut kepercayaan lama, orang kena sakit atau luka oleh kuasa-kuasa roh yang kurang rukun dengan anggota suatu masyarakat. Peranan penting daripada si dukun ialah membela anggota masyarakatnya dari penyakit dan kecelakaan. Menurut kepercayaannya, dia memenuhi keperluan kuasa-kuasa roh di tempat. Dia juga berjaga agar anggota masyarakat tidak bertindak untuk mengganggu kuasa-kuasa itu.

Menurut kebiasaan, orang Dayak bergantung kepada si dukun agar mereka tetap sehat dan aman, dan kalau kena sakit atau luka, agar disembuhkan. Perobatan dukun tidak selalu dapat dipercayai, lagi mahal. Perobatan dokter, kalau ada, dan kalau digunakan secara betul, biasanya lebih berhasil. Tetapi perobatan dokter tidak selalu manjur juga. Masih banyak sekali macam penyakit yang tidak dipecahkan oleh ilmu kedokteran. Belum ada obat atau cara menangkis bermacam-macam penyakit. Lebih daripada itu, di pedalaman, fasilitas rumah sakit atau balai perobatan yang memadai belum ada. Kalau begitu, rupanya pilihan satu-satunya ialah berdukun saja.

Orang Kristen berdoa, memohon agar disembuhkan, dan menggunakan perobatan dokter kalau ada di tempat. Tetapi, walaupun berdoa kepada Allah, ada juga penderita yang tidak disembuhkan, sama seperti orang bukan Kristen. Tidak sulit mengerti mengapa seseorang atau keluarga kembali berdukun, karena rupanya doa kepada Allah tidak dikabulkan.

- 15) Salah satu tujuan atau fungsi kepercayaan lama ialah menangkis kemalangan seperti penyakit dan kecelakaan. Menurut pengalaman saudara, apakah kepercayaan Kristen lebih berhasil dari segi menangkis kemalangan seperti sakit dan celaka dibandingkan dengan kepercayaan lama, atau sama, atau kurang baik?
- 16) Tujuan atau fungsi lain kepercayaan lama ialah agar menyembuhkan yang sakit atau terluka. Apakah doa Kristen lebih berhasil menyembuhkan orang?
- 17) Bagaimana kalau ada, misalnya, orang tua tetap setia kepada Yesus Kristus dan tidak membawa anaknya berdukun, lalu anak itu meninggal dunia? Jelaskan apa yang dapat dikatakan kepada orang tua itu yang, walaupun setia kepada Yesus, kehilangan anak.

Kekuatan Gaib

Mencari perlindungan, atau kuasa membela diri dari musuh-musuh, merupakan kemauan biasa. Ada orang yang bersifat menyerang dan suka menghasut orang lain agar berkelahi. Ada juga macam orang yang tidak menghasut yang lain, tetapi takut akan perkelahian. Ada yang mencari ilmu sebagai sumber kekuatan gaib untuk membela diri. Orang Kristen tahu tidak boleh mencari kuasa macam itu lagi, karena termasuk menyembah kepada ilah-ilah lain. Walaupun orang Kristen tahu bahwa kekuatan itu tidak pantas bagi orang Kristen, mereka masih tertarik. Seringkali ada percakapan di mana orang Kristen menceritakan mengenai orang yang, katanya, ada kekuatan gaib. Misalnya, mengenai orang yang tidak mempan dengan parang atau peluru.

Cerita macam itu dianggap menarik sekali. Rupanya cerita-cerita itu dianggap benar dan dapat dipercayai. Sepertinya juga bahwa orang Kristen yang menceritakan dan

mendengarkan hal-hal macam itu menyesal telah melarang mereka mencari dan menggunakan kuasa gaib semacam itu. Keinginan akan kuasa macam itu masih ada, walaupun mereka sudah menjadi orang Kristen. Keadaan itu memberi kesan bahwa orang macam itu belum bertobat dari keinginan mengutamakan diri. Ada beberapa hal yang perlu dipikirkan:

- 18) Apakah saudara kenal dengan orang Kristen yang masih terkesan dengan cerita-cerita mengenai kekuatan gaib? Atau mungkin cerita-cerita macam itu tidak menarik lagi bagi orang Kristen?
- 19) Ada banyak cerita mengenai orang yang tidak kena luka dari parang atau peluru, bertahan pukulan, dsb. Apakah cerita-cerita itu benar, atau diceritakan secara berlebihan atau khayalan saja?
- 20) Ada orang Kristen yang menyesal bahwa dia tidak boleh lagi mencari kekuatan gaib. Dia menyesal karena menghadapi ancaman berat, di mana musuhnya mau membunuh dia. Nasihat apakah yang saudara katakan kepada orang yang menghadapi bahaya gawat?

Menjadi Orang Kristen

- 21) Ketika Injil diberitakan dan orang diundang menjadi orang Kristen, apakah yang seharusnya dikatakan oleh si penginjil mengenai apa yang harus mereka tinggalkan. Yaitu, dari apakah mereka harus bertobat? Kalau mau menjadi orang Kristen, apakah penting untuk meninggalkan itu? Mengapa?
- 22) Ketika Injil diberitakan, hal apa yang penting untuk disampaikan mengenai keuntungan menjadi orang Kristen? Apakah yang dibawa oleh agama Kristen merupakan sesuatu yang dicari oleh orang yang sudah lama ikut kepercayaan lama?
- 23) Kalau orang merundingkan apakah dia mau masuk agama Kristen, adakah sesuatu yang mungkin mengecewakan dia? Yaitu, mungkin dia mengharapkan sesuatu hal yang sebenarnya tidak merupakan keuntungan menjadi orang Kristen. Apakah ada orang yang kecewa sesudah menjadi orang Kristen karena apa yang dia harapkan tidak terwujud?
- 24) Juga, ketika Injil diberitakan, apakah yang harus diterima oleh orang yang mau menjadi orang Kristen?

Glossary

(Underlined indicates a Dayak language or dialect, *italic* indicates Indonesian language)

<i>adat</i>	a custom or tradition that may be a social norm, civic law, religious belief or religious practice
<i>adat hukum</i>	customary or traditional law
<i>adat-istiadat</i>	plural of <i>adat</i>
<i>adat kebiasaan</i>	cultural norms and behaviors
<i>adat kepercayaan</i>	traditional animistic religious beliefs
<i>arwah</i>	spirit or ghost of a deceased person
Dayak	indigenous people of the island of Kalimantan, or Borneo
<i>dosa</i>	sin, transgression
<i>dukun</i>	shaman or witch doctor
<i>gawai</i>	festival
<i>hantu</i>	an invisible spirit being of either human or non-human origin
<i>hukum</i>	1) law 2) judgement
Iban Dayak	Dayak people residing in the Northern regions of Kalimantan, also referred to as Sea Dayaks because unlike others they did not move inland upon the arrival of other ethnic groups
<i>imam</i>	priest
<u>Jubata</u>	name of most powerful spiritual being. Sometimes refers to one being, sometimes to a collective of the highest spiritual beings
<u>kamang</u>	a particular type of spirit that can be called to possess a person and give superhuman strength and courage for battle
<i>kepercayaan</i>	beliefs
<i>kepercayaan lama</i>	old beliefs- the animistic beliefs encoded in <i>adat</i>
KGBI	<i>Kerapatan Gereja Baptis Indonesia</i> The Convention of Indonesian Baptist Churches
<i>ladang</i>	swidden, or slash-and-burn field
<u>Kanayatn</u>	Kendayan Dayak's term for 'Kendayan'
<i>Kendayan</i>	a Dayak sub-culture
Madura	island off the North-East coast of Java. Highly over-populated. Madurese people are almost exclusively Moslem
<i>Malayu</i>	Malay, the second largest ethnic group in Kalimantan. Mostly Moslem
<u>Mamuraja</u>	name of a spiritual power, higher, more remote than <i>Jubata</i>
mana	life-force, animating force
mantra	ritual or magical formula chanted or intoned as an incantation or prayer
Minahasa	region of the northern-most end of Sulawesi
<i>naik dango</i>	"Go up to the granary"- festival marking the storage of the rice harvest
<u>Nek Patampa</u>	Creator
<u>nyangahatn</u>	animistic 'prayer' particularly during <i>naik dango</i> ceremony

<i>padi</i>	rice growing in the field
<i>Pancasila</i>	five statements articulating the national ideology of Indonesia
<i>pantang</i>	taboo
<u>penyangahatn</u>	one who performs the <i>nyangahatn</i>
<u>picara</u>	“Master of Ceremonies” of a marriage, oversees the planning and implementation of the ceremony
<i>sawah</i>	irrigated rice field
<i>semangat</i>	name of one kind of spirit that comprises a human being
shaman	an animistic priest or medicine man
STK	Kalimantan Theological Seminary
<u>subayatn</u>	heaven (Kendayan)
<u>talino</u>	1) the visible order 2) humans
<i>tempayan</i>	large pottery jug, sometimes used for storage of water, rice, or other foods. Large old decorative <i>tempayan</i> serve as an <i>adat</i> currency
transmigration	government program in which people are moved from over-populated regions and settled in new communities in less densely populated areas.
<i>tukang</i>	tradesman, for example, a <i>tukang kayu</i> (wood) is a wood tradesman, i.e. a carpenter

Bibliography

- Adams, Kathleen M. "The Discourse of Souls in Tana Toraja (Indonesia): Indigenous Notions and Christian Conceptions." *Ethnology*, Vol. 32 (1993): 55-68.
- Ali, H. Mukati. "Religion and Development in Indonesia." *International Review of Mission*, Vol. 63 No. 251 (1974): 400-416.
- Anderson, Gerald H. & Thomas F. Stransky, C.S.P. *Christ's Lordship and Religious Pluralism*. Maryknoll: Orbis Books, 1981.
- _____. eds, *Mission Trends No. 5: Faith Meets Faith*. New York: Paulist Press and Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1981.
- Aten, Herculanus. "Hukum Adat dan Adat Istiadat Kematian Dayak Kanayatn," ("Adat Law and Adat Death Customs of the Kanayatn Dayaks.") *Kalimantan Review*, No. 8 Tahun 3 (Juli-September 1994).
- Aulén, Gustaf. *The Faith of the Christian Church*. Translated from the 5th Swedish edition by Eric H. Wahlstrom. Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1960.
- Bahari S., Herculanus. et. al. *Pantak Dalam Hubungannya Dengan Kepercayaan dan Kehidupan Masyarakat Dayak (Idols in the relationship between Dayak Religious Beliefs and Life)*. Pontianak: Institute of Dayakology Research and Development, 1992.
- _____. "Pantak Sebagai Alat Kesatuan Komunitas Radakng Dalam Binua Suku Dayak Kanayatn." *Kalimantan Review*, No 03 Tahun II (Januari-April 1993): 3-11.
- Baker, Ken. "Power Encounter and Church Planting." *Evangelical Missions Quarterly*, (July 1990): 306-312.
- Barrett, Robert J. "Performance, Effectiveness and the Iban *Manang*" in *The Seen and the Unseen: Shamanism, Mediumship and Possession in Borneo*. Edited by Robert L. Winzeler, 235-280. Williamsburg, VA: The Borneo Research Council, Inc., 1993.
- Benson, Steven R. "By One Man's Obedience Many Will Be Made Righteous: Christian Understanding of the atonement in the Context of Asian Religious Pluralism." *Asia Journal of Theology*, Vol 9 No. 1 (1995): 101-121.

- Beyerhaus, Peter. *Shaken Foundations: Theological Foundations for Mission*. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1972.
- Boff, Leonardo. *New Evangelization: Good News to the Poor*. Trans. Robert R. Barr, Maryknoll: Orbis Books, 1991.
- Bosch, David J. *Transforming Mission: Paradigm Shifts in Theology of Mission*. Maryknoll: Orbis Books, 1991.
- Brock, Charles. *The Principles and Practices of Indigenous Church Planting*. Nashville: Broadman Press, 1981.
- Burridge, Kenelm. "Missionaries and the perception of evil." *Missionaries, Anthropologists, and Cultural Change, (Studies in Third World Societies, #25)*. Edited by Vinson H. Sutlive et. al. Williamsburg, Virginia: College of William and Mary, Department of Anthropology, September 1983.
- Caird, George. *Principalities and Powers: A Study in Pauline Theology*. London: Oxford University Press, 1956.
- Chiu, Andrew. "Spirit and Spirits in Classical Asian Religions and Traditions." *East Asia Journal of Theology*, Vol 4 No. 2 (1986): 104-120.
- Choan-Seng Song. "Christian Education in a World of Religious Pluralism." *Theological Approaches to Christian Education*. Edited by Jack L. Seymour and Donald E. Miller. Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1990.
- Clark, Blair. "The Spirit-Filled Night: An Introduction to Animism." *The Enterprise* Summer, 1989, 19-21.
- Cox, Harvey. *Many Mansions: A Christian Encounters Other Faiths*. Boston: Beacon Press, 1998, 1992.
- Crockett, William V. & James G. Sigountos, eds. *Through No Fault of Their Own: The Fate of Those Who Have Never Heard*. Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1991.
- D'Costa, Gavin, ed. *Christian Uniqueness Reconsidered*. Maryknoll: Orbis Books, 1990 1987.
- Djuweng, Stepanus, ed. *Manusia Dayak: Orang Kecil yang terperangkap modernisasi. (Dayaks: A Small People Trapped by Modernization.)* Pontianak: Institute of Dayakology Research and Development, 1996.
- Drury, Nevill. *The Elements of Shamanism*. Rockport, MA: Element Books Inc., 1989, 1991.

- Dye, T. Wayne. "Toward a Cross-Cultural Definition of Sin." *Missiology: An International Review*, Vol 4 (January 1976): 27-41.
- Echols, John M., & Hassan Shadily, *Kamus Indonesia-Inggris: An Indonesian-English Dictionary*. Jakarta: PT Gramedia, 1990.
- _____. *Kamus Inggris-Indonesia: An English-Indonesian Dictionary*. Jakarta: PT Gramedia and Cornell University Press, 1975.
- Esau, Frieda. "No Longer Believes in the Birds." *Mennonite Brethren Herald*, Oct 21, 1983, 26-28
- Fernando, Ajith. *The Christian's Attitude Toward World Religions*. Wheaton: Tyndale, 1987.
- Florus, Paulus, et.al. editors. *Kebudayaan Dayak: Aktualisasi dan Transformasi (Dayak Culture: Actualization and Transformation)*. Jakarta: Institute of Dayakology Research and Development, Pontianak & Gramedia Publishing, 1994.
- _____. "Pesta Rakyat: Kebudayaan Universal" ("Peoples' Festivals: Universal Cultural"). *Kalimantan Review* No. 4 Tahun II (Mei - Agustus 1993): 3-6.
- _____. "Transformasi Budaya Dayak." ("Transformation of Dayak Culture.") *Kalimantan Review*, No. 2 Tahun I (Juli-Desember 1992): 13-17.
- Fortosis, Steve. "A model for understanding cross-cultural morality." *Missiology: An International Review*, Vol. 17 (April 1990): 163-176.
- Ginoh, Redan. "Are there really spirits inside the sacred tamboks?" *Sarawak Tribune*, May 6, 1997, 4.
- Glasser, Arthur F, & Donald A. McGavran. *Contemporary Theologies of Mission*. Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1983.
- Gnanakan, Ken R. "The Training of Missiologists for Asian Contexts." *Missiological Education for the 21st Century*. Edited by J. Dudley Woodberr, Charles Van Engen, & Edgar J. Elliston, 112-119. Maryknoll: Orbis Books, 1996.
- Hamm, Carolyn. "Kipa of Kalimantan: A Teacher of the New Way." *Mennonite Brethren Herald*, Oct 21, 1983, 27.

- Haire, James. "Stories in Animism and Christian Pneumatology." *Asia Journal of Theology*, Vol 5 No. 2 (1991): 397-409.
- Harrison, Tom. *World Within: A Borneo Story*. Singapore: Oxford University Press, 1959, 1986.
- Hesselgrave, David, and Edward Rommen. *Contextualization: Meanings, Methods, and Models*. Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1989.
- Hick, John, ed. *Truth and Dialogue: The Relationship between World Religions*. London: Sheldon Press, 1974.
- _____. *God has Many Names*. Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1980, 1982.
- _____. *Problems of Religious Pluralism*. New York: St. Martin's Press, 1985.
- Hick, John, & Brian Bebblethwaite, eds. *Christianity and Other Religions*. Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1981.
- Hick, John, & Hasan Askari, eds. *The Experience of Religious Diversity*. Aldershot: Gower Publishing, 1985.
- Hick, John, & Paul F. Knitter, eds. *The Myth of Christian Uniqueness: Towards a Pluralistic Theology of Religions*. Maryknoll: Orbis Books, 1987.
- Hiebert, Paul G. "The Flaw of the Excluded Middle." *Missiology: An International Review*, Vol. 10 No. 1 (January 1982): 35-47.
- Hoekema, Alle G. "Recent Church Growth in Indonesia." *Exploring Church Growth*. Edited by Wilbert R. Shenk. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1983.
- Hughes, Dennis E. "Shamanism and Christian Faith." *Religious Education*, Vol. 71 No. 4 (July August, 1976): 393-404.
- Hughes, Dewi. "An Evangelical Theology of Pluralism", *Evangelical Review of Theology*, Vol 1 No. 4 (January 1990).
- Jacobs, Donald R. "Conversion and Culture - An Anthropological Perspective with Reference to East Africa." in *Down to Earth: Studies in Christianity and Culture*. Edited by John R.W. Stott & Robert Coote. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1980.
- Joedhiswara, Mikha. "Hendrik Kraemer and Inter-religious Relations in Indonesia." *Asia Journal of Theology*, Vol. 9 No. 1 (1975): 86-100.

- Julipin, Vincentius. "Tanah dari segi Adat, Religio Magis, dan Ekonomi di Kalimantan Barat." in *Manusia Dayak Orang Kecil yang terperangkap modernisasi*. Edited by Stepanus Djuweng, 88-94. Pontianak: Institute of Dayakology Research and Development, 1996.
- Kamarudin, Alex. et. al. "Rumusan Adat-Istiadat/Hukum Adat Suku Dayak Kendayan Kecamatan Mempawah Hulu" ("Formulas for Adat Ceremonies and Traditional Laws of the Kendayan Dayaks of the Mempawah Hulu County"). Unpublished manual. no date.
- Kanoh, Paul Nyerom. "Manusia Dayak: Gaung Pergelutan Umat Manusia" ("Dayaks: Reverberations of the Wrestling Match with Mankind"). Unpublished paper, 1991.
- _____. "Mencari Jejak Manusia Dayak" ("In Search of Dayak Footprints"). Unpublished paper, 1991.
- _____. "Pandangan Tentang Roh Dan Keselamatan Dalam Kepercayaan Masyarakat Dayak Kanayatn" ("Views of Spirit and Salvation in the Religious Beliefs of the Kanayatn Dayaks"). Unpublished paper, 1995.
- _____. "Siapakah Suku Dayak Kanayatn?" (Who are the Kanayatn Dayaks?). Unpublished paper, 1991.
- Katoppo, Marianne. "Conversion: An Asian Woman's Experience." *International Review of Missions*, Vol. 68 (1979): 156-160.
- Keck, Leander. *The Church Confident*. Nashville: Abingdon, 1993
- Krenak, Wolas, & Vincentius Julipin. "Naik Dango: Upacara Syukuran Padi." (Going up to the Granary: Rice Thanksgiving Ceremony." in *Manusia Dayak: Orang Kecil Yang Terperangkap Modernisasi*. Edited by Stepanus Djuweng. 127. Pontianak: Institute of Dayakology Research and Development, 1996.
- Knitter, Paul F. *No Other Name? A Critical Survey of Christian Attitudes Toward the World Religions*. Maryknoll: Orbis Books, 1985.
- Koentjaraningrat. *Manusia dan Kebudayaan di Indonesia. (People and Culture in Indonesia.)* Jakarta: Penerbit Djambatan, 1971, 1993.
- Lamb, Christopher. "An Evangelical Theology of Pluralism: A Personal View", *Evangelical Review of Theology*, Vol 1 No. 4 (January 1990).

- Loewen, Jacob A. "The Gospel: Its Content and Communication - An Anthropological Perspective." *Down to Earth: Studies in Christianity and Culture*. Edited by John R.W. Stott & Robert Coote. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1980.
- Lontaan, J. U. *Sejarah Hukum Adat dan Adat Istiadat Kalimantan Barat. (The History of Traditional Law and Customs of West Kalimantan.)* Jakarta: Pemda Tingkat I KalBar, 1975.
- Lowie, Robert A. *Primitive Religion*. New York: Liveright, 1924, 1952.
- Malinowski, Bronislaw. *Magic, Science and Religion and Other Essays*. Garden City: Anchor Books, 1948, 1954.
- Mastra, I. Wayan. "Contextualization of the Church in Bali- A Case Study from Indonesia." *Down to Earth: Studies in Christianity and Culture*. Edited by John R.W. Stott & Robert Coote. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1980.
- McCown, Joe. "Shamanism: The Art of Ecstasy." *Encounter*, Vol. 39 (1978): 435-446.
- McEwen, Richard C. & Herschel E. Aseltine. "Prayer in Primitive Religion." *Religious Studies*, Vol. 2 No. 2 (1967).
- Mulder, Niels. *Mysticism and Everyday Life in Contemporary Java*. Singapore: Singapore University Press, 1978.
- Netland, Harold A. *Dissonant Voices: Religious Pluralism and the Question of Truth*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1991.
- Newbigin, Lesslie. *Foolishness to the Greeks: The Gospel and Western Culture*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1986.
- _____. *The Open Secret*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1978.
- _____. *The Gospel in a Pluralistic Society*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1989.
- Niebuhr, H. Richard. *Christ and Culture*. New York: Harper & Row, 1951.
- Peacock, James L. "The Creativity of Tradition in Indonesian Religion." *History of Religions*, Vol. 25 No. 4 (1986): 341-351.
- Pinnock, Clark H. *A Wideness in God's Mercy: The Finality of Jesus Christ in a World of Religions*. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1992.

- Peretti, Frank E. *This Present Darkness*. Westchester, Ill.: Crossway Books, 1986.
- Porterfield, Amanda. "Shamanism: a Psychosocial Definition." *Journal of the American Academy of Religion*, Vol. 50 No. 4 (1987): 721-739.
- Rawlyk, George A. *Is Jesus Your Personal Saviour? In Search of Canadian Evangelicalism in the 1990's*. Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1996.
- _____. *The Canada Fire: Radical Evangelicalism in British North America, 1775-1812*. Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1994.
- Redfield, Robert. *Peasant Society and Culture: An Anthropological Approach to Civilization*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1956.
- Richardson, Don. *Peace Child*. Glendale, Calif.: G/L Regal Books, 1974.
- Rufinus, Albert, et. al. *Tradisi Lisan Suku Dayak Kanayatn Banua Talaga Sangah Tumila' Kabupaten Pontianak. (Oral Traditions of the Kanayatn Dayaks of Banua Talaga Sangah Tumila, Pontianak County)*. Pontianak: Institute of Dayakology Research and Development, 1994.
- Runia, Klaas. "The Gospel and Religious Pluralism", *Evangelical Review of Theology*, Vol 14 No. 4 (October 1990).
- Said, Edward. *Orientalism*. New York: Pantheon, 1978.
- Salmeno, Yongki. "The Making of Kerei, Mentawai Shaman." *Voice of Nature* Vol. 84 (August 1990). Jakarta: PT Suara Alam.
- Samartha, Stanley, J. "The Lordship of Jesus Christ and Religious Pluralism," *Christ's Lordship & Religious Pluralism*. Edited by Gerald H. Anderson & Thomas F. Stransky, C.S.P. Maryknoll: Orbis Books, 1981.
- Sanders, John. *No Other Name: An Investigation into the Destiny of the Unevangelized*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1992.
- Sastrowardoyo, Pandil, et.al. *Upacara Tradisional yang Berkaitan Dengan Peristiwa Alam dan Kepercayaan Daerah Kalimantan Barat. (Traditional Ceremonies in Relation to Natural Events and Local Beliefs in West Kalimantan.)* Pontianak: Proyek Inventarisasi dan Dokumentasi Kebudayaan Daerah Direktorat Sejarah dan Nilai Tradisional Departemen Pendidikan dan Kebudayaan, 1983/1984.

- Schreiter, Robert J. CPPS. *Constructing Local Theologies*. Maryknoll: Orbis Books, 1985.
- Senior, Donald C.P. & Carroll Stuhmueller, C.P. *The Biblical Foundations for Mission*. Maryknoll: Orbis Books, 1983.
- Shanklin, Eugenia. "Missionaries and Witchcraft Beliefs in Kom, Cameroon." in *The Message in the Missionary: Local Interpretations of Religious Ideology and Missionary Personality. (Studies in Third World Societies, #50)*. Edited by Vinson H. Sutlive et. al. Williamsburg, Virginia: College of William and Mary, Department of Anthropology, September 1983.
- Shaw, R. Daniel. "Every Person a Shaman: The Use of Supernatural Power Among the Samo of Papua New Guinea." *Missiology*, Vol. 9 No. 3 (1981): 359-365.
- Sider, Ronald J. *Rich Christians in an Age of Hunger: A Biblical Study*. Downers Grove: Inter-Varsity Christian Press, 1977.
- Siegel, Lee. *Net of Magic: Wonders and Deceptions in India*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1991.
- Singih, E. G. "Let Me Not be Put to Shame: Towards an Indonesian Hermeneutics." *Asia Journal of Theology*, Vol. 9 No. 1 (1975): 71-75.
- Sitompul, A. A. "Nature and the Natural in Asian Thinking- Asian Animism and Primal Religion." *East Asia Journal of Theology*, Vol. 1 No. 1 (1983): 15-30.
- Stange, Paul D. "Configurations of Javanese Possession Experience." *Religious Traditions*, Vol. 2 No. 2 (1979): 39-53.
- Strom, Donna. "Cultural Practices- Barriers or Bridges." *Evangelical Missions Quarterly*. Vol. 23 No. 3 (July 1987): 248-256.
- Tarling, Nicholas. *The Cambridge History of Southeast Asia Vol 1*. New York: Cambridge University Press, 1992.
- Tilak, S. John. "Nature and the Natural in Asian Thinking- Asian Animism and Primal Religion. The Response and the Reaction to the Paper Read by Dr. A. A. Sitompul." *East Asia Journal of Theology*, Vol. 1 No. 1 (1983): 31-33.

- Tippett, Alan R. "Christopaganism or Indigenous Christianity?" in *William S. Carter Symposium on Church Growth, Milligan College, Tenn, 1974: Christopaganism or Indigenous Christianity*. Edited by Tetsunao Yamamori & Charles R. Taber. South Pasadena: William Carey Library, 1975.
- _____. "The Evangelization of Animists." in *Perspectives on the World Christian Movement: A Reader*. Edited by Ralph D. Winter & Steven C. Hawthorne. Pasadena: Institute of International Studies, William Carey Library, 1981.
- Tumundo, Hengky. *Penginjilan Terhadap Suku Dayak Kanayatn. (Evangelization of the Kanayatn Dayaks.)* Unpublished S1 Thesis, Seminary Theologia Kalimantan, May 1996.
- Ugang, Hermongenes. *Belanga-Belanga Keramat: Sebuah Penilaian Anthropologis-Theologis tentang Pandangan Orang Dayak Kalimantan Tengah mengenai Harta Kekayaan Material. (Sacred Earthen Cooking Pots: An Anthropological – Theological Examination of the views of Dayaks of Central Kalimantan regarding Material Wealth.)* Published dissertation for D.Th., South East Asia Graduate School of Theology, no date.
- Ukur, Fridolin. "Kebudayaan Dayak." ("Dayak Culture.") *Kalimantan Review*, Tahun I Nomor 02 (Juli-Desember, 1992): 3-20.
- _____. *Tantang-Djawab Suku Dajak: Suatu penjelidikan tentang unsur-unsur yang menjekitari penolakan dan penerimaan Indjil dikalangan suku-Dajak dalam rangka Sedjarah Geredja di Kalimantan 1835-1945 (An examination of the elements in the refusal and acceptance of the Gospel among the Dayaks with regard to Church History in Kalimantan, 1835-1945).* Jakarta: BPK Gunung Mulia, 1971.
- Van Den End, T. *Harta dalam Bejana: Sejarah Gereja Ringkas. (Treasure in a Clay Vessel: A Condensed History of the Church.)* Jakarta: BPK Gunung Mulia, 1986.
- Van Rheenen, Gailyn. *Communicating Christ in Animistic Contexts*. Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1991.
- Wakefield, William R. *The Principles and Practices of Indigenous Church Planting*. Nashville: Broadman Press, 1981.
- Wang, George T. & J. Andrew Fowler. "Accommodation in an Iban Church Today." *Practical Anthropology*, Vol. 17 No. 5 (1970): 220-234.

Winzeler, Robert L., editor. *The Seen and the Unseen: Shamanism, Mediumship and Possession in Borneo*. Williamsburg, VA: The Borneo Research Council, Inc., 1993.

Wolfe, David L. *Epistemology: The Justification of Belief*. Downers Grove: Intervarsity Press, 1982

Yeremias, P. *Sebuah Permunungan Dan Refleksi Kerusuhan Etnis di Kab. Pontianak. (A Consideration and Reflection on the Ethnic Disturbances in the Pontianak Kabupaten.)*. Paroki Mempawah Hulu, Menjalin: BATAKKI (Berita Antar Kampung Kita), Special edition, January-Maret 1997.