

TUMA - THE TROBRIAND HEAVEN  
A STUDY TOWARDS THE VALUE  
OF TRADITIONAL TROBRIAND  
UNDERSTANDING OF TUMA AS  
HEAVEN

by

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DEDICATED TO THE MEMORY  
OF MY SISTER

LATE DORCAS MARIWENU KETOBWAU

## THESIS OUTLINE

### Problem of The Paper

There is no society, however primitive, without religion. Religion to most societies is the way of life. This way of life evolved around the spirit world. The life that is lived in the world of the living is just a little portion of the total life that extends even beyond death. Many, if not all Melanesian societies believe in the life after death where a person continues his life in the spiritual form for eternity. Nearly all Melanesian societies have a certain dwelling place where the immortal spirits live. This concept is similar to the Christian idea of Heaven.

Before Christianity brought the concept of Heaven, all Trobriand Islanders "bweiowa" - the native of the Trobriands, lived their lives that was very much influenced by the life lived in the spiritual world of Tuma. Tuma became the 'highest point of achievement where the spirit (baloma) of the person is free from toil and hardship of the "upper world" to live a happy life forever. Because the concept of life after death was already in the belief systems of the Trobrianders, the Christian Heaven was accepted without much questioning. The question now is, Is Tuma the same as Heaven?

The acceptance of Christianity today has drawn the Islanders' attention away from Tuma. After almost 100 years of Christian influence, Trobrianders have somewhat lost the value of Tuma in their discussions. However, when one dies or is about to die, he is dressed and prepared for Tuma. Christianity and its influence in some instances has infected and alienated Trobrianders from their original culture, but not necessarily from the basic set of cultural assumptions they are so familiar with.

### b. The Aim and Purpose

The aim of the thesis is not to dismiss or question the Christian concept of Heaven, but to rediscover the value of Tuma for the Trobrianders, and how Tuma can be seen as the highest achievement, a goal for harmonious living. I will also aim at indigenousising the concept of

a.

Heaven and identify Christ's place in the Trobriand society so that the Islanders will not confuse the two paradises, and view the Christian religion as foreign. The aim is to make Trobrianders wake up and recognise Christ in their culture so that they will believe in Him for salvation.

#### c. The scope of the Paper

In general, the scope of this thesis is not to argue that Tuma is the Heaven the Christians talk about. Rather, it is aimed at identifying the concept with the Trobriand belief of Tuma as the place of rest and happiness.

Heaven is an abstract concept that can be accepted by the mind that is speculative. The Trobriand mind, like all Melanesian minds tend to support and accept things that can be actualized. Tuma is not an abstract concept, but the physical form is seen. Therefore, the spiritual form in its depth can also be accepted easily. This paper will theologially explain the place of Tuma in the Christian life of Trobrianders. In addition, Christ's place in the Trobriand society will be identified so that Christianity is not seen as foreign but part and parcel of their total life.

#### d. Limitation of the Paper

Though the thesis may attempt to identify Heaven with Tuma, this identification may not be true for all societies which have their own heavens. Therefore, this paper will be confined to the people of the Trobriand Islands, known as the "Bweiowe people. Furthermore, it is evident that very little is written about Tuma in the theological perspective, although Anthropologists and Ethnologists have a great collection of materials about it. The idea of Christ been identified as a local has never been suggested before. Thus, my suggestions may be viewed negatively by the holders of the Traditional Christian view. In addition to this, the paper may be of value to theological students and scholars, but may be regarded as misleading by extreme Methodist Conservatives and fundamentalists, who find it hard to value culture in Christianity. It may also be appropriate for today but will not be the same in future.

#### e. Methodology

Each chapter of the thesis will begin with an Introduction. Brief mentioning of what is to be discussed in the text will also be stated in the introduction. At the end of every chapter, I will summarise the discussion. The reader will be led into the following chapter by a brief introduction of the next contents. There will be a Table of Content placed before the introduction to guide the reader and to relate to the points discussed. In the first three chapters, the descriptive view of the subject will be discussed. The final chapter will discuss and analyse the subject pursued.

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Kagutoki

(Thank you in Kiriwina)

Ignatius Towabu Ketolt...0 Rarongo

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## INTRODUCTION

No man has ever lived without some experience of religion, be it highly developed or primitive. Every living man has some acquaintance of religion in one way or another. Thus, the Trobriand people (Bweiwawa) have lived a religious life ever since they were born. Their total life revolved around the world of the spirits, who control their life's total activities. Their religious experiences were born with them from the very beginning. Their emergence from the ground was caused by the spiritual gods of their individual clans. Those gods gave them their culture and autonomy in terms of their relationship, and charged them with the responsibility of maintaining and promoting that spiritual and religious order. Departure from that given order meant certain death or other misfortunes. Therefore, immediate action had to be taken to restore the relationship whenever it was broken.

Trobrianders did not hold onto the secular belief that man existed of his own power for his own ends. They perceived man as been born either as man himself, or birds animals as strongly held in their myths of origin. Upon his birth or emergence he was endowed with a sense of purpose, a set of values and a vision of his cosmology, by which his life was to be guided. His cosmology had him as a physical being, controlled and guided by higher spiritual beings. His cosmology also included a place where his physical being could achieve a higher level of existence. This place was called Tuma, believed to be underground. The reason for it been underground was that Trobrianders emerged out of the womb of mother earth. Therefore, Tuma was believed to be the core of mother earth, the origin of the Islanders. Although, the physical form of Tuma was visible by the presence of an Island of the same name, it was not an abode of the gods and spirits, but an entrance, where Topileta lived.

Because Tuma was a place where a higher existence was to be lived, it was perfect in itself. It was not seen merely as a place of rest, for the spirit did not rest by becoming idle, but continued the pattern of his earthly life without the limitation as experienced by human beings. Tuma's existence was never questioned because people had gone there. Their stories of the happiness and of a struggleless life attracted

Trobrianders. Tuma, became the highest achievement for every Trobriander. While living in the land "above", every Trobriander looked forward to the day when he would return to Tuma. "Return" is the correct word to use here because the Trobriand life cycle originated from the ground. His desire to go to Tuma was like wishing to return home after been away for a long time.

When Christianity was introduced to the Islanders a new place called Heaven was taught as the real paradise to aim for and not Tuma. In addition to that, the Islanders had to live according to how the white missionaries wanted them to live in order to reach Heaven. They had to believe in a new God, whose name "Eaubada" did not have any significance in their life. A new thing called "Tapwaroro" was also something they had never experienced before.

Their idea of Tuma was now confused with Heaven. They began to raise questions such as, Is Tuma Heaven? Does the new Cod live in Tuma? This was because while they strived to end up in Heaven, Tuma was still within their lifestyle. They could not relinquish Tuma, so many carried over to Christianity their basic values and beliefs. Although they appreciated the God who became man through Jesus Christ, they could not comprehend how this foreign Jesus could understand them iv

totality. Nearly every Trobriand Christian had within him the struggle of harmoniously marrying the two belief systems.

Today, many educated Trobrianders have taken a negative stand against Christianity as a whole after realising what it did to their culture. The problem was not within Christianity, rather it was how Christ was presented. The European approach worked in the past when Trobrianders were not exposed to the whiteman's way of living. Now that they have been educated, they saw Christianity as nothing but Western imperialism. That, of course, is not correct. Christianity is the message of liberation and salvation for all humanity. However, how it was presented did not really show liberation but destruction.

In this paper, I will attempt to suggest ways of rediscovering the true message of liberation and salvation in Christianity. I aim to do this by identifying Christ as a Trobriander who can enable Trobrianders to experience a higher existence not in Heaven or Tuma only but here on earth first and finds its fulness with God where ever He is.

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In the first chapter, the paper will present the Socio-Anthropological and the Historical Background of the Trobriand society. It will identify the place, the type of people, the organization and structure of the society, the religious beliefs of the people and their total life systems.

Chapter Two will discuss myths of death and of the recurrent cycle of life, the causes and rituals of death, the journey of the spirit to Tuma, communion between the spirit and the living, the return of the spirit during Milamala, and the belief in reincarnation.

Chapter Three will highlight the effects of changes brought into the Trobriand society by internal and external influences. The chapter will also discuss the Christian concept of Heaven as a great influence in the belief systems of the Islanders.

Chapter Four will concentrate on the question of whether or not Tuma is same as the Christian Heaven. This chapter will also analyse the current trend of Christianity experienced by the Islanders, their attitude towards Christianity and need for a new Christianity that is appropriate and ! • .ijul to the Islanders.

The thesis will conclude with more analysis of the need for a new Trobriand Christianity. Recommendations and suggestions will also be offered for consideration and discussion by the Trobriand Christians, in particular.

May this thesis be a vehicle by which you may enter into the inner being of the Trobriand society, and may Cod's Spirit enable you to understand the cries of Trobriand Christians who desire to identify Christ as someone of their own flesh and blood so that He may be the means of their salvation.

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## CHAPTER ONE

### A SOCIO - ANTHROPOLOGICAL AND HISTORICAL

## BACKGROUND OF THE TROBRIAND SOCIETY

### 1. THE LOCATION OF THE AREA

#### THE PEOPLE

- a. The Origin
- b. The People's Social Life-style
- c. The Language of the People

### 3. ORGANIZATION AND STRUCTURE. OF THE SOCIETY

- a. The Institution of Mother-right
- b. The Chief System
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- a. Belief in Spirits
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#### SUMMARY

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#### CHAPTER ONE

### A SOCIO - ANTHROPOLOGICAL AND HISTORICAL BACKGROUND OF THE TROBRIAND SOCIETY

This is a presentation of the Trobriand Society. The historical setting of the people, their cultural, religious, traditional values and heritages will be discussed in this chapter to open up understanding of heritages will be discussed in this chapter to open up understanding of the people of my study. The values that are strongly held determine the day-to-day life of the Trobriand Islanders from birth to death. The organization and the structure of the society will also be discussed. The chapter concludes with a summary and a brief introduction of the new chapter.

#### 1. THE LOCATION OF THE AREA

The Trobriand Islands were discovered in 1793 by Bruni D' Entrecasteaux, navigating the French ship L'Esperance. The Islands were named after Denis de Trobriand, the First Lieutenant of the vessel.

Trobriand Islands are made up of a small group in the South Western Pacific. The islands are

part of Papua New Guinea and are about 241 km Northeast of the main island of New Guinea. The Islands cover an area of 544 square km. Unlike most of the surrounding islands, the Trobriands are low-lying flat coral atolls (figure 1). Kiriwina is politically the central island, with Kitava to the East, Kaileuna to the West, and Vakuta to the South, separated by a small strip of water. There are also other smaller islands mostly uninhabited (figure 2). Losuia is the District Headquarters for the Trobriands with a population of over four hundred indigenous people living in permanent government-style housing. The urban Kiriwina scene is marked by trade stores, a small hospital, schools and mission stations.

## 2. THE PEOPLE

### a. The Origin

The indigenous people of the Trobriand Islands were mixed Melanesian and Polynesian stock (figure 3). There was a great variety in their physical appearance. The great Anthropologist, Dr. Bronislaw Malinowski, in his book, *ARGONAUTS OF THE WESTERN PACIFIC*, described the people as;

There are men and women of tall stature, fine bearing, and delicate features, with clear—cut aquiline profile and high foreheads, well formed nose and chin, and an open, intelligent expression. And besides these, there are others with prognatic, negroid faces, broad, thicklipped mouths, narrow foreheads, and a coarse expression. The better featured have also a markedly lighter skin. Even their hair differs, varying from quite straight locks to the frizzy mop of the typical Melanesian. (Malinowski 1922: 51-52)

It was certain from the above description that the Trobriands did not originate from one particular place. None of my informants could satisfactorily trace back the origin of the islanders. Most of them held strongly onto the myths of origin which told stories of how the Trobrianders emerged from the ground. Each Island, village and clan has different versions of how their ancestors emerged from the ground. However, the strongest and most accepted version was the emergence from a special hole called 'Obukula'<sup>1</sup>, near the small village of Labai (figure 4). Contrary to the course of one original hole, one lineage, from "Obukula" there emerged representatives of the four main clans one after the other. This version is as strong today as it was first written by Malinowski in his book, *MAGIC, SCIENCE AND RELIGION*, which read;

Their arrival, moreover, was followed by an apparently trivial but, in mythical reality, a most important event. First there came the Kaylavasi (Iguana), the animal of the Lukulabuta clan, which scratched its way through the earth as iguanas do, then climbed a tree, and remained there as a mere onlooker, following subsequent events. Soon there came out the Dog, totem of the Lukuba clan, who originally had the highest rank. As a third came the Pig, representative of the Malasi clan, which now holds the highest rank. Last came the Lukwasisiga totem, represented in some version by the Crocodile, in others by

the Snake, in others by the Opossum, and sometimes completely ignored. The Dog and Pig ran round, and the Dog, seeing the fruit of the noku plant, nosed it, then ate it. Said the Pig: "Thou eatest noku, thou eatest dirt: thou art a low-bred, a commoner; the Chief, the guya'u, shall be I." And ever since, the highest subclan of the Malasi clan, the Tabalu, have been the real chiefs. (Malinowski 1948: 112)

Not all clans in the Trobriands emerged from "Obukula". Many came from the sea, called 'Ugwawaga<sup>2</sup>. One such group was the Kabata subclan of the Lukulahuta clan who emerged from a hole near Mount Kabata in Woodlark. They travelled on seven big canoes to the Trobriands via Gawa (figure 5). Different subclass from other islands also had their own myths of origin. This may explain the reason for a mixed stock of people in the Trobriand Islands.

#### b. The Peoples Social Lifestyle

The lifestyle of the people was built around the principle of "kuba- gula bukukwamu", which literally meant, "you work to eat". This guiding principle directed the attention of the people towards the importance of having a yam garden every year. Everyday starting from the month of "Iyalaki" (September) to "Milamala" (August) every able-bodied man and woman went out very early into the garden and came home shortly before dark. The gardens were owned by men only. Every married man and adolescent had at least one garden. The mother and girls worked in the father's gardens and the brother's garden.

During 'kayasa<sup>3</sup> when gardening became very competitive, communal work was encouraged. This communal work instigated the concept of interdependency upon each other. From time to time when a garden owner required work to be done faster in a short period of time, he would organise a 'kabutu<sup>4</sup>, where members of his clan, village or other villages came together to carry out the task. He would pay them with cooked food at the end of the days' work.

From clearing of bush for a new garden to harvesting, Trobrianders toiled not in vain, but with a strong hope of a good harvest. When there was a good harvest and all hard work was done, they rejoiced during the was a good harvest and all hard work was done, they rejoiced during the month of Milamala with singing, dancing and marrying. But first, they had to work hard every day of the months "Iyalaki" (September), "Iyako-Iwo" (October), "Iyakosi" (November), Turiyavata" (December), "Yavatamwa"

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(January), "Gelivilai" (February), "Bulumaduku" (March), "Kuluwotu" (April), "Utokakana" (May), "Ilebisila" (June) and "Kaluwalasi" (July). "Milamala" (August) was the time for feasting and dancing to celebrate the good harvest and the end of the gardening year.

Apart from hard work, the Trobrianders were lovers of their own bodies. To stay young and beautiful. was a fundamental concern for the islanders (figure 6). This concern originated from myths

that the islanders in the past never grew old and ugly, rather, once the body's beauty had faded, the old skin with its afflictions was peeled off and the body rejuvenated. Beautiful body and face was 'migimwamwasila'<sup>5</sup>, which was attractive not only to the opposite sex, but also for attracting attention for a hearing. A happy face glowed like a radiant ray that attracted a lot of attention. The attractiveness of the body was enhanced by the wearing of body decorations of 'kuwa'<sup>6</sup>, 'paya',<sup>7</sup>, 'kalomwa'<sup>8</sup>, 'kwasi'<sup>9</sup> and 'vana'<sup>10</sup>. The task of beautifying the body started at childhood. Earlobes were pierced, noses and chins shaped by pressing them into place, and bodies were constantly smoothed with coconut oil. Beautiful bodies did not have anything to be ashamed of during social gatherings. Thus, all Trobrianders, in thinking that they were beautiful, went out into their social aspects of life free of bothering thoughts of ugliness.

All the work of beauty was accompanied with the love magic which came in many different forms. Most of these love magic formulas were for attracting the opposite sex. However, there were certain formulas for 'kemwasila'<sup>11</sup> which caused others to have a liking of the holder of this magical formula, and to be in agreement with whatever the producer of "kemwasila" did. These types of magic were at their peak during the adolescence age, where young boys and girls met their sexual partners for the very first time. This meeting would then lead to marriage, in most cases at a very early age. The average ages of marriage for boys was 16, while girls could marry at the ages of 15.

The social life of the Trobrianders has changed very little during the last ten decades. This is because of the fact that the islanders hold strongly onto the guiding principles of their lifestyles.

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### c. The Language of the People

The language of the people in the past was known as "Bweyowa", the indigenous name for the islanders. It was later known as "Kiriwina" when missionaries started to write catechism, translated hymns and parts of the Bible into the local language. Different Islands and parts of the main Kiriwina Island had their own dialects, which were seen as separate languages by the people. The "Kegi Kilivila" was spoken by the people in the Northern part of Kiriwina island. "Kegi Vakuta" was spoken by people in the South. "Kegi Kitava" was spoken by the Kitava islanders while "Kegi Keleuna" by the Keleuna islanders. A small group of people spoke the "Kegi Kavataria", which was adopted by the early Methodist missionaries in 1894 as the 'Missionary language'<sup>12</sup>.

Today the classical Bweyowa is understood by very few older people. The language had taken "on board" other languages of the nearby islands and English into its vocabulary. Even the different dialects are not in their purest forms. However, all Trobrianders understand each other, even if they speak their own respective dialects.

## 3. ORGANIZATION AND THE SOCIAL STRUCTURE OF THE SOCIETY

### a. The Institution of Mother-Right

The Trobriands is a matrilineal society, one of the very few in the world where descent, kinship, and every social relationship are legally reckoned through the mother. From the very beginning the mother had a considerable share in tribal life which included taking a leading role in economic, ceremonial and magical activities. As a rule, the mother (or any woman for that matter) was not allowed to join the councils of men, however, in many matters she had her own way, and controlled several aspects of social life. This mother-right deeply influenced the customs and structure of the society. Malinowski described this system in *THE SEXUAL LIFE OF SAVAGES IN NORTH-WESTERN MELANESIA* in the following words;

These natives have a well-established institution of marriage,  
and yet are quite ignorant of the man's share in the  
begetting

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of children. At the same time, the term "father" has, for  
the Trobriander, a clear, though exclusively social  
definition:

it signifies the man married to the mother, who lives in the  
same house with her, and forms part of the household. The  
father, in all discussions about relationship, was pointedly  
described to me as tomakava, a "stranger", or even more  
correctly an "outsider". This expression would also  
frequent-

ly be used by natives in conversation, when they were  
arguing some point of inheritance or trying to justify some  
line of behaviour, or again when the position of the father  
was to be belittled in some quarrel. (Malinowski 1929: 4)

This description by Malinowski was primarily based on the belief that a Trobriand woman conceived when a 'waiwaia'<sup>13</sup> was brought by her ancestral spirit from 'Tuma'<sup>14</sup> into her womb. The father was not thought to play any part in the conception of that particular child. Therefore, the mother was the sole owner of the child, for the child was of the same substance as that of the mother. It is important to understand this view before attempting to understand the social structure of the Trobriands.

Today Trobrianders find it difficult to reaffirm the kinds of statement made to Malinowski. Many of my informants said that the older generations believed that women could conceive without men. This belief is not strong today because Trobrianders know the biological facts as taught by Europeans. However, this fact alone cannot change the social structure of the Trobriand society.

Status and position was based on 'dala'<sup>15</sup>, the original genealogy. From the very beginning until today this has not changed, and will never change as long as people hold onto the "Mother Right" principle.

Although Trobrianders know the biological factors of conception, and the child may resemble the father in feature and ways, he can never be the father's (figure 7). He will forever belong to the mother. Thus, as the boy grows up he will learn to accept the fact that his father is from a different "dala". For example, if a boy's father is a "Tabalu"<sup>16</sup>, from the highest rank of the Trobrianders, he will never become a "Tabalu". He is allowed to enjoy the benefits of the social rank by wearing the same ceremonial decorations of his father's clan, and the respect attributed to the position. However, he will eventually go back to his mother's "dala", which is his real "dala". On the other hand, if the boy's father is not a "Tabalu", but his mother is, he is a "Tabalu" who will one day hold the highest position in the village and the society as a whole.

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## b. The Chief System

The Trobriand society is unique in that the system of chiefs is a hereditary one. In describing the uniqueness of the Chief system, Annette Weiner, in her book, *WOMEN OF VALUE, MEN OF RENOWN* writes;

The system of Chiefs is not to be found in any other Massim island. The style of being a Trobriand chief, however, retains much of Melanesian big-man dynamics. The fundamental difference is that, whereas other Melanesian big-men must individually establish their position of authority without the advantage of hereditary claims, only Trobrianders who have a hereditary claim to the position may become chiefs. Therefore, the dogma of hereditary right gives only a few Trobriand men potential access to more resources than anyone else. Through these beliefs, Trobrianders grant chiefs this privileged position. Therefore, Trobriand "Chiefs" must be clearly distinguished both from big-men and from chiefs elsewhere. (Weiner 1977: 46)

The current Paramount Chief, Pulayasi succeeded Webadi and Vanoi, the former chiefs who held the highest rank in the Trobriand society. Pulayasi is of the "Tabalu" clan in Omarakana though his father was not a "Tabalu". His mother's "dala" enabled him to inherit this high office from his maternal uncles. In addition to the Paramount chief, there are other chiefs of the "Tabalu" clan who are known as 'Guyolavalu'<sup>17</sup>, in charge of other Trobriand villages. They are seen as smaller chiefs in rank. Other clans like that of 'Toliwaga'<sup>18</sup> are also given the title of "Guyolavalu". Such chiefs have similar influence and authority, though in some degree less than the "Tabalu".

The validity of the chief's claim to legitimacy is based more on traditional rather than rational or charismatic grounds. In Rational grounds obedience to the legal authority is owed to the legally established impersonal order. It is the office the leader holds which gives him authority. In Charismatic authority, it is the charisma of the leader that attracts obedience by virtue of personal trust in him, his heroism or his qualities which are fit to be imitated. M. Weber describes legitimate

authority on Traditional grounds in the following words;

In the case of Traditional authority, obedience is owed to the person of the chief who occupies the traditional sanctioned position of authority and who is (within its sphere) bound by tradition. But here the obligation of obedience is not based

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on the impersonal order, but is a matter of personal loyalty within the area of accustomed obligation. (Weber 1971: 15)

Originally the chief was seen as the spiritual leader representing the deity. He was also the law-giver, peacemaker, judge and leader in all aspects of life. He influenced and determined the life of the village. When a chief was a 'giyobwela'<sup>19</sup> he used his position for the betterment of his people and community. If He was a 'giyogaga'<sup>20</sup> he used his position to manipulate his people to his advantage and benefit. Common people and ordinary villagers submitted to the chief is obedience as a matter of personal loyalty within the area of accustomed obligation. This obligation was somewhat mutual in nature. The people were loyal to the chief as long as the chief was loyal to them. The chief needed his people as much as they needed him. He was exalted by his people on the understanding that as he ascended he would draw his people higher economically and socially.

Many people today are economically higher than their village chiefs. This personal achievement by ordinary people challenges the economical monopoly of the chiefs. This has led many chiefs into using their position to manipulate their people. Many chiefs have turned a blind eye to the original value of mutual benefit.

### c. The Social Structure of Tukwaukwa Village

Tukwaukwa village is the biggest village in the Trobriand Islands with a population of 800 people. The village is divided into seven sections called 'katuposula'<sup>21</sup>. The "Guyolavalu" is Chief Kwewayaya Dahwai who belongs to the "Tabalu" clan. Kwewayaya's grandmother migrated later to Tukwaukwa. In the past, Tukwaukwa was not a 'viloguyau'<sup>22</sup> because it was not first settled by the Tabalu, but by different clans. However, once Kwewayaya's "Tabalu" clan entered Tukwaukwa, the chieftainship was handed over to his clan as a sign of respect.

Besides Kwewayaya, there are other clan chiefs or 'Kedadelavalu'<sup>23</sup> who at times are much wealthier than the chief, but are restrained customarily from exceeding the "Tabalu". These men are seen as the "pillars" of the village holding the affairs of the village intact. They manage the "katuposula" and support the chief in the running of Tukwaukwa.

Other recent positions had also been introduced to the community through Christianity and Western influence. The United Church Minister is also seen as a leader in Tukwaukwa. In addition to the Minister there is the Community Government Councillor, a position previously held by Rwewayaya. The new Councillor is also acknowledged as a leader. Obedience to the latter group of leaders is based mainly on rational grounds, that is, it rests on a belief in the legality of patterns of nominative rules and rights of those elevated to these positions. The Chief, on the other hand, is obeyed as a traditional obligation.

The overall structure of Tukwaukwa is based on the belief in the religious pattern of the deity, where there is a high god and other departmental gods who are responsible for specific areas of life. This structural model is seen in every Trobriand village, and also a model for determining status in the Trobriand society.

#### 4. RELIGIOUS BELIEFS OF THE PEOPLE

There is no society, however primitive without religion. I will not attempt here to fully define religion because religion has different facets like a diamond. Therefore, definitions differ, depending mostly on the standpoint of the definer. For instance, Anthropologists define religious beliefs and practices as they find them in living communities. Religion helps to unite people who share together and have a common explanation of life. It provides the community a pattern of human behaviour as a response to that life. Sociologists on the other hand see religion as a means which provides an agreed way of looking at the world. It gives an individual meaning and purpose of life. Historians have a different definition. They describe religion in terms of events resulting from beliefs.

##### a. Belief in Spirits

The simplest way to explain the religious beliefs of the Trobrianders is their "beliefs in super-natural spiritual beings". There is a lot of truth in the words of Simeon Namunu when he explained the religious beliefs of the Melanesians in his article SPIRITS IN MELANESIA AND THE SPIRIT IN CHRISTIANITY;

Traditional Melanesian ===  
of the spirits. Melanesian communities are spirit-centred,  
and all explanations as to how and why things happen are con-  
cerned with the super-natural activities of the spirits.  
Peoples' social, emotional, educational, political, economic  
and religious life is based on their feeling towards and  
belief in the spirits. The spirits in such traditions form  
and shape the direction and the pattern of behaviour to such  
an extent that everything one does is guided by this spiritual  
order. (Namunu 1984: 93)

The Trobriand way of life was originally believed to be an imitation of the real life lived by the spirits eternally in "Tuma". The life of a Trobriander from birth to death was controlled by the spirits. These spirits determined the end result of all activities of life. When things were good, it meant to the islanders that the spirits were happy. On the other hand, when things went wrong, the spirits were angry and so quick action was taken to remedy the situation.

Since Trobrianders viewed their existence in relation to the control of the spirits, they spent much time in maintaining the spiritual order. The spiritual disorder was manifested through physical misfortunes, ailments and natural disasters. In such cases the offender quickly got to work to restore the broken relationship, for example; by offering a sacrifice of pigs, yams or traditional valuables. My experience of this disorder was in 1981 while working in Port Moresby. It was in August (Milamala) when the spirits of our ancestors returned to the world of the living to join in the feasting. It was around 2am when my first born 'son who was six months old began to cry in a scary manner. My wife and I tried in vain to comfort him. The boy's crying woke my aunty who shouted to us from their room, "The spirits are angry because you have not been leaving aside money for them. Put some money on the windowsill and tell them to take their money and leave the child". I reluctantly did what she instructed. As soon as I said, "Take your money and leave my child", the boy stopped crying. I assumed that my boy's crying was caused by the unhappy spirits.

Such case and many other forces in natural phenomena were also assumed by Trobrianders to be a manifestation of spiritual beings. Therefore, Trobrianders' life experience was not limited to this visible, physical world, but also extended into the invisible and total cosmos. This second part required a lot of attention because the beliefs in spirits and the spiritual order constituted a greater part of Trobriand

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thinking. Details of beliefs and practices varied slightly among clans, totems and islands. However, the underlying truth of the way thoughts were expressed by Trobrianders supported the fact that the spiritual order was a focal point of life and existence for them.

#### b. Religious rituals

The Trobriand rituals were thought to have been given to the ancestors by their ancestral spirits in order to guide the worshipper into maintaining the spiritual order. There have been arguments that all rituals were formulated by man as a pattern of worship in his religious life. There were many things man could not explain adequately; awesome and mysterious, beyond his capacity of comprehension. Therefore religion was employed as a response to these uncertainties. The religious rituals were then formulated for worship in that particular religion.

Many Trobrianders I interviewed believed that religion, with its rituals could not have originated from man. It was not possible for a worshipper, who was only a man, to find the deity. It was through the self-revelation of the deity to the worshipper that religion became possible. The deity in a vision, in spiritual indwelling, or other means revealed to the worshipper how he (deity) wanted to be worshipped. This Trobriand view does not support the concept that religion was employed by man to come to terms with uncertainties. There may have been uncertainties in the Trobriand belief system, however, all explanations about life had their answers in the spirits. An old widow by the name of Bokadala, had this to say;

Man could not see spirits, but spirits saw man. The spirits lived a life of abundant wealth and joy. When they saw our ancestors' earthly life, they were moved by the poverty and sadness, so they came back in visions or by indwelling the person, their own relatives to teach them how to obtain or

achieve wealth and happiness (Bokadala 22/1/94)

### c. Magic

Magic was seen as a ritual formulated by the spirits and revealed who claimed the ownership of that particular magical formula. The power of the magic was not in the words, although

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they were important, but in the spirit. Because the spirit was the source of power, one had to say the magical incantation in the way the spirit wanted. No man could know the mind of the spirit except the spirit himself. Therefore, it could not have been possible for mere man to know the mind of the spirit. Malinowski, in *MAGIC, SCIENCE AND RELIGION* said;

In the case of almost all types of magic we find some story accounting for its existence. Such a story tells when and where that particular magical formula entered the possession of man, how it became the property of a local group, how it passed from one to another. But such a story is not the story of magical origins. Magic never 'originated'; it never was created or invented. All magic simply was from the beginning, as an essential adjunct to all those things and processes which vitally interest man and yet elude his normal rational efforts. The spell, the rite, and the object which they govern are coeval. (Malinowski 1925: 141)

Like religion, magic could not have been formulated by mere man without the self-revelation of the deity. Mircea Eliade supported this view in his book, *THE SACRED AND THE PROFANE* and said. "Man becomes aware of the sacred because it manifests itself, show, itself, as something wholly different from the profane." (Eliade 1957: 11). This self-revelation or manifestation was termed by Eliade as "hierophany", that is, the sacredness of the deity could be manifested in stones, trees, caves and other places that man saw as "taboo" or 'Boma'<sup>25</sup>. Those objects were not adored as they were. They were worshipped precisely because they were hierophanies.

The religious rituals and magic had been kept alive by the Trobrianders over many centuries, even dating back to the time of origin. Those rituals and magic, as discussed earlier, were not formulated or invented as man began to experience life, rather they were part and parcel of his whole life as he came to exist. For example, the 'Kabata'<sup>26</sup> clan had a magical formula called 'Kebulitauya',<sup>27</sup> which was believed to have been brought by the first ancestors, who emerged from the ground at Kabata. This magical formula was passed from generation to generation until the Mosulubogi<sup>28</sup> died with it. My two maternal uncles who are the current clan chiefs do not have it. When my 'turn comes to become the chief of the clan, I will not have in my possession "Kebulitauya."

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Although magical power was believed to be in the hands of the spirit, its controller was man. The outcome of the magic depended upon the "tolimeguva", who possessed the magical formula within his total being. Thus, the "tolimeguva" had to abide by various taboos or "boma" in order that the

magical formula achieved its goal. Whenever a magical formula worked, it was believed the "tolimeguva" had done every procedure correctly. He had kept himself sacred. Malinowski, in *MAGIC, SCIENCE AND RELIGION* said about the importance of the "tolimeguva" observing the strict taboos in the following words;

It may be here mentioned that the human body, being the receptacle of magic and the channel of its flow, must be submitted to various conditions. Thus the magician has to keep all sorts of taboos, or else the spell might be injured, especially as in certain parts of the world, in Melanesia for instance, the spell resides in the magician's belly, which is the seat of memory as well as food. When necessary it is summoned up to the larynx, which is the seat of intelligence, and thence sent forth by the voice, the main organ of the human mind. (Malinowski 1925: 76)

### SUMMARY

What perhaps is most striking in the total life of the Trobrianders is the principle of "kubagula bukukwam", meaning that one must earn his living. This principle discourages idleness and encourages communal participation in all aspects of life. The garden then becomes the centre of concentration and effort. Through the garden one is able to marry, have recognition and status in the community. However, this achievement cannot go to the extent of obtaining or acquiring chieftainship within the community.

Descent, kinship and every social relationship are legally reckoned through the mother, who from the very beginning became the strongest figure for the whole "dala". Chieftainship and 'koni'<sup>29</sup> is inherited through the maternal lineage. From birth to death a Trobriander remains within the territory of the privileges and rights of the "dala". The places of different "dala" within the community can never ever be changed. A "Tabalu" will always be a "dala", while a "Tokai"<sup>30</sup> will remain at the bottom of the social hierarchy

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One other remarkable practice that is very evident in the life of Trobrianders is the give-and-take principle. This principle reigns supreme also within the clan, totem and island. The Communal lifestyle instigates the concept of inter-dependency where Trobrianders rely upon one another. This inter-dependency strengthens the idea of reciprocity. As discussed earlier, the chief needs his people as much as they need him to govern. This principle also helps to keep the people together in their belief, thinking and practice.

All activities of the islanders, from toil to feasting is influenced by their belief in spirits who cause and direct their lives. The life that the Trobrianders live is but an imitation of what the life really is in "Tuma". This concept is very important for the Trobrianders as their life cycle begins from "Tuma".

In the next chapter, I will discuss how this life is believed to have started, and how the cycle continues eternally.

Figure 8: Boitalu and Bwadela, the sites of the original myths of death brought by the crab and the old myths of death brought by the crab and the old grandmother respectively.

Figure 9: Journey of the malicious being from Normanby to Kwadagila.

figure 11: Artists impression of "Vayaba", a mythical fish that the rejected are changed into.

Figure 13: The boundaries and the months when "Milamala" is held.

## CHAPTER TWO

### LIFE, DEATH AND DESTINY OF THE SPIRIT (BALOMA)

#### 1. MYTHS OF DEATH AND OF THE RECURRENT CYCLE OF LIFE

- a. The Bwadela Myth
- b. The Bwoitalu Crab Myth
- c. The Kwadagila Myth

#### DEATH - CAUSES AND RITUALS

- a. Causes of Death
- b. Rituals of Death

#### 3. THE JOURNEY OF THE SPIRIT TO Tuma, HIS ARRIVAL AND RECEPTION

- a. Version One - Malinowski
- b. Version Two - Bokadali

#### 4. COMMUNION BETWEEN THE SPIRIT AND THE LIVING

- a. Communion by dreams and visions
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#### THE RETURN OF THE SPIRIT TO HIS VILLAGE DURING THE HARVEST FEAST "MILAMALA"

- a. The return of the Spirits and their welcome
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#### THE RETURN OF THE SPIRIT THROUGH REINCARNATION

#### SUMMARY

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### CHAPTER TWO

#### LIFE, DEATH AND DESTINY OF THE SPIRIT (BALOMA)

The belief in immortality and the worship of the dead was an important element of the religious life of Melanesian societies. This faith was based on the survival of a person after death for a long time. The exact length of time has not been correctly ascertained. However, it was believed that the person, once transformed into a spirit being would continue the pattern of his earthly life joyous:: for eternity, without the effects of evil and suffering.

The destiny of the spirit and the state in which he lived was not commonly agreed upon by all Melanesian societies. Some societies like that of the 'Koitabu' people believed that the spirit would live a long time, but not forever. Frazer recorded in his book, THE BELIEF IN IMMORTALITY

that the spirit would "... grow weaker and at last die the second death, never to revive again..." Frazer 1913: 195).

On the other hand, the people of Tubetube<sup>2</sup> believed that there was no second death. The spirit would regain his youth and live eternally.

Frazer again recorded this in the following words;

In this spirit-land eternal youth prevails, there are no old men nor old women, but all are in the full vigour of the prime of life, or are attaining thereto, and having reached that stage never grow older. Old men and old women, who die as such on Tubetube, renew their youth in this happy place, where there are no more sickness, no evil spirits, and no death.  
(Frazer 1913: 209, 210)

The traditional Trobriand belief was similar to the second view, held by the Tubetube people, but with an additional belief that the spirit would reincarnate into the world of the living and be born a second time. The cycle would then continue forever.

In this chapter I will endeavour to discuss and trace the journey of the spirit from the land of the living to Tuma, where it was believed the life cycle originated. This belief was dominant in the life of Trobriand people in the past, and many looked forward to joining their relatives in Tuma, the "paradise" of the spirits.

## 1. MYTHS OF DEATH AND OF THE RECURRENT CYCLE OF LIFE

The belief in life after death and the cycle of life held by the Trobrianders was based on various myths which told of the existence of humanity underground. That existence was compared with the existence of spirits in the nether world. Thus, a mythological reconciliation was made between those two existences. That link formed the basis of Trobriand explanation and understanding of the "everlasting" existence of the person in spiritual form. The parallel between the human existence and the spiritual one was drawn even further into the belief that the spirit of the deceased entered the spiritual world through a hole - a sort of reversed proceeding to the original emergence of humanity. Even more importantly was that the spirit, once became old and wrinkled could rejuvenate by shedding the skin. Human beings had that same power of mind to rejuvenate until that faculty was lost by an apparently fateful event when that ability escaped man's power of control. From that time on, Trobrianders died.

### a. The Bwadela Myth

A very long long time ago there lived in the village of Bwadela (figure 8) an old woman with her daughter and grand-daughter; three generations of matrilineal descent. The grandmother and grand-daughter went out one day to bath at the tidal creek. The girl stayed on the shore while the old woman went further up the creek to bath. After going some distance, and out of the girl's sight, she

"took off" her skin and placed it at the bank while she washed. As the tide came in the old skin floated away and got caught on a dead branch that fell into the creek. After searching for some time the old woman transformed into a young woman and came to her grand-daughter. The girl was somewhat startled by the appearance of the new visitor and yelled, "go away, who are you". The grandmother was greatly humiliated and angry and so went back to her place of bathing, found her skin and put it on again. Later she joined the young girl who told her of her meeting with a young woman. The grandmother then said, "no, you did not want to recognize me. I came to seek for help but you chased me away. From now on I will not shed my skin anymore. When I grow old, I will die, and all of you will follow the same fate". On their return to the village the grandmother told her daughter what had happened at the tidal creek. The daughter was furious with the young girl, but it was too late to make any amends for the grandmother had already stated her desire for death. From that time onwards Trobrianders lost the power of changing their skin and, of remaining youthful.

The ability of changing the skin was brought from the ground when Trobrianders first emerged. However, the first people, according to the Bwadela myth, lost this faculty in that fateful event. Some animals did retain the power because they remained in the ground. Such animals like snakes and lizards were not affected by the "curse" of death. All other living creatures that emerged out of the ground with humanity and decided to live on the surface also lost the power with man.

The Bwadela myth alone cannot fully explain the cycle of the belief of the Trobrianders in the life vs. death and the cause of death. Malinowski stated in *MAGIC, SCIENCE AND RELIGION* that. "In order to understand the full cycle of their beliefs it is necessary to study the factors of illness, decay, and death". (Malinowski 1948:128) Trobrianders were optimists in their attitude to health and illness. They believed that the body in its natural status had strength, vigor and perfection. That perfection could only be affected by supernatural causes originating from the spirits. Death was not seen as a natural event, but was caused by the spirits.

#### b. The Bwoitalu Crab Myth

According to this myth,. Trobrianders did not experience death until a crab brought it to them. My informant, 'Chief Kwewayaya Dabwai'<sup>3</sup> confirmed the crab myth as it was told to Malinowski some 70 years ago.

A crab lived in a grove near Bwoitalu village (figure 8) many many years ago. Some versions had it that the crab emerged out of a hole in the grove while others believed the crab travelled by air and dropped into the grove. A man and his dog went out hunting one day and came across the crab which was red because it was full of sorcery. The dog saw the crab first and tried to bite it. The crab which had supernatural powers killed the dog. It then killed the man. However, on hearing the moan of the man as he was dying, the crab had pity on him. The crab decided to bring the man back to life. The man paid his killer and later saviour a large payment 'pokala'<sup>4</sup> and asked if he be taught the magic. The crab gave away the magic to the man who immediately used his newly found power to kill his benefactor. He then began to further test his power on his own maternal relatives. After that he became the owner of the magic. It became a custom from that time on that all magic owners tested their powers on their own maternal relatives first before using them on their enemies. The crab also changed into black because the sorcery had been "drained" out of it. The crab retained the ability to shed its old skin and live for a very long time because it was the originator of life and death.

### c. The Kwadagila Myth

This myth tells of how a malicious being of human shape but not of nature floated to the southern island of Vakuta a piece of bamboo from somewhere on the northern shore of Normanby island. A man from the nearby village of Kwadagila (figure 9) heard a voice in the piece of bamboo and opened it. The demon thanked the man for setting him free and taught him the magic. Another version of this myth had it that the malicious beings, three in number walked across the sea of 'Pilou'<sup>5</sup> on a big tree which fell across the ocean with its base at Normanby and the branches touching Vakuta island. The malicious beings taught the islanders the magical powers. From that time onwards the Vakuta islanders became the originators of the magical power of "flying witches". This type of magic enables the performer to "fly" in her spirit to other places while her body is left in an unconscious state, but not totally cut off, for when the spirit enters the body again, the performer is fully aware of what happened. Malinowski in his book, *THE SEXUAL LIFE OF SAVAGES* described the flying witches in the following words;

A witch and be it remembered that she is always a real woman and not a spiritual or non-human being - goes out on her nightly errand in the form of an invisible double; she can fly through the air and appears as a falling star she assumes at will the shape of a fire-fly, of a nightbird or of a flying fox; she can hear and smell at enormous distances; she is

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endowed with sarcophagous propensities, and feeds on corpses. The disease which witches cause is almost incurable and extremely rapid in its action, killing, as a rule, immediately. It is inflicted by the removal of the victims inside, which the woman presently consumes. (Malinowski 1929:39)

Those three myths and many similar myths, including that of 'Tavvau'<sup>6</sup>, who were responsible for epidemics formed the basis of the Trobriand explanation of illness and death, yet death was not seen as an end in itself but a "spring-board" to another sphere of life.

## 2. DEATH - CAUSES AND RITUALS

### a. Causes of Death

In the proceeding section note a mention of the myths which formed the basis of Trobriand explanation of death. Therefore, death to Trobrianders was caused by war, poison and sorcery. As

discussed earlier death was not seen as a natural event. The origin of sorcery had been explained. War came when emerging clans started fighting for land, status and power. Poison was used as a means of suicide by drinking in excess the juice of the 'Tuva'<sup>7</sup> vine, which was used for poisoning fish, and also from the gall bladder of 'soka'<sup>8</sup>, a poisonous fish. Death by climbing a tree and throwing oneself down (in Kiriwina - "Lou") or by drowning were classified under war. Sickness was the result of sorcery and magic.

The reason for grouping death in those three categories was the belief that in Tuma, when the spirit entered, he would be lead into his paradise according to the type of death he died. I will discuss more of this in the section on the journey of the spirit to the nether world.

#### b. Rituals of Death

The death rituals in the Trobriands start before the actual death occurs. When death seemed imminent workers would come into the house to bath and dress the stricken person. The workers were usually sisters of the person's father or other relatives of the persons father. In most cases elderly children of the dying person showed their love and last respect to their father by bathing and dressing him. They dressed

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the dying man in his most elaborate tradition with ceremonial decorations signifying his rank in the society. The decorations were necessary for recognition of the person when he entered Tuma. It was believed that the spiritual forms of the decorations went with the person to the nether world. The decorations (of valuable) also served the purpose of paying for "admission" to the paradise. At death the matrilineal kinsmen of the dead man did not get involved in the handling of the person, rather they remained as observers, or later paid the mourners and workers. This was how Malinowski described it;

From the moment of his death, the distinction between his real that is matrilineal, kinsmen (veyola) on the one hand, and his children, relatives in-law and friends on the other takes on a sharp and even an outwardly visible form. The kinsmen of the deceased fall under a taboo; they must keep aloof from the corpse... The kindred must also not display any outward signs of mourning in costume and ornamentation, though they need not conceal their grief and may show it by weeping/

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The series of feasts or distributions started with 'sigiliyawali'l' (figure 10) the first distribution held on the day following burial.

On that day, the women gathered around in a circle and distributed bundles of dried banana leaves called "doha" to all workers. This distribution was known as 'selubulabu'll. After that the men performed another distribution of food in the 'Ligabwa'<sup>12</sup> where mourners from all villages were "paid". The 'Lumi'<sup>13</sup> was also performed, where individuals get paid for singing or digging of the grave. Payments varied and depended on the individual, status. Chiefs and other recognized elders were given bigger *Lumi*. During the "Lumi", the *yolova*<sup>14</sup> was also performed. This distribution of valuables in terms of claypots, stone axes and shell money were given to people who actually carried

the corpse during the night or to the grave the next day. Those workers who bathed the dead person just before death were also given valuables in the "yolova". After "yolova", came the *sigiliveguwa*<sup>15</sup> where the exchange of valuables were given in return of *wayala kebila*<sup>16</sup> which the maternal clans of the widow gave to the kinsmen of the deceased. (This is another clear example of reciprocity as mentioned in chapter one).

The second distribution, usually held a day after the first distribution was called *tadabali*<sup>17</sup> where women's wealth was distributed. This distribution released some of the taboos placed upon the spouse of the deceased who, on the day of the death of her husband had been placed upon a very high bed called *libu*.<sup>18</sup> During *tadabali* the kinswomen of the deceased, assisted by the daughters of the deceased gave away bundles of banana leaves, grass-skirts and other women's wealth to the relatives of the spouse. The clanswomen of the spouse after receiving the gifts shave their hair to show their signs of mourning. Other little distribution were held in this second stage of distribution as well.

The third and final distribution which occurred after a year was called *lisaladabu*<sup>19</sup>. In that distribution a bigger feast was held for the spouse and her clanswomen and clansmen, who had mourned and shown the signs of mourning lot over a year. The distribution of wealth at that very important feast at times became very complicated, yet Trobrianders who have held the ritual for many generations found the last distribution easy and not complicated. After that the ritual of 'winelawoula<sup>20</sup> was performed in which the widow was washed with crying by the clanswomen

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of her late husband and set her free of her mourning obligations. Later she was then allowed to get married again.

#### THE JOURNEY OF THE SPIRIT TO Tuma HIS ARRIVAL AND RECEPTION

The Trobriand word for spirit or soul is "Baloma", which is clearly distinguished from the ghost and shadow of a person. The baloma in this sense is a positive form of the spirit because it leads a positive form AM like the living. Malinowski described the halo., as the "male of the spirit" and gave his reasons in the following words;

call this the main form because the baloma leads a positive, well-defined existence in Tuma; because he returns from time to time to his village; because he has is dead and seen in Tuma by men awake and men asleep, a, Lo were almost dead, yet returned to life again, plays a notable part in native magic, and even I.,. firings and a kind of propitiation; finally, because he his reality in the most radical manner b/ returning to e of life, by reincarnation, and thins leads a continuous existence. (Malimowski 1948: 154)

Today there are different versions of how the spirit enters. Some say he sailed there in a canoe, others say he walked into Tuma through "Topileta"<sup>21</sup>, while others say the spirit went straight to his village in the nether world. For the purpose of comparison, I will discuss two of the versions in this section.

#### Version One - Malinowski

According to information given to Malinowski, the "baloma" left the body after death has occurred and went to "Tuma" essentially the same way as some living person would take in order to go from his village or island to "Tuma". That was if the "baloma" was from an inland village, he would go to a nearby coastal village to take a canoe to "Tuma." Because "Tuma" is a small island all spirits would have to go by canoe to reach it.

As the canoe struck the sandy beach of "Tuma" island, the "baloma", full of grief and clinging to his sore and tender heart stepped out onto the beach. Then he proceeded to a stone on the beach called 'Modawosi'<sup>22</sup>

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where he sat facing "bweyowa", in the direction of his village and cried for his parents or children and his loved ones. On hearing the cry of the sole spirit, other "baloma" would join him squatting around him, some wailing while others would sing a death chant to join in the lamentation. Then, the "baloma" would go to a well called 'Cilela'<sup>23</sup> where he washed his eyes to render him invisible. From there he proceeded to "Dukupuala", a spot in the stoney part of the island where he struck two stones called 'Dikumweyoi',<sup>24</sup>. When the first stone is struck, there would be a great thunder, and when the second one is struck, the whole island, including the spiritual world would shake. The whole world of the dead would come alive with people coming from all directions to welcome home the newcomer.

Somewhere during this entry, the spirit had to face "Topileta", who acted as Saint Peter in so far as admitting spirits into "Tuma". Malinowski admitted that his informants did not know at what stage of the ingress the spirit met "Topileta". He wrote;

At which stage exactly Topileta meets the stranger my informants are unable to say, but it must be somewhere in the early part of his adventure in Tuma, because Topileta lives not far from the Modawosi stone, and acts as a kind of Cerberus or St. Peter in so far as he admits the spirit into the nether world, and is even supposed to be able to refuse admission.  
(Malinowski 1948: 15k)

When the spirit presented himself to "Topileta" he is required to pay a "once-for-all" payment for admission in terms of traditional valuables. These valuables are the spiritual form of the exact valuables adorned on the person when he died, as already discussed earlier. After accepting the payment "Topileta" asked the newcomer the cause of his death. The cause of death determined the

path to the spirit's new home.

If the death was caused by war or suicide, it was seen as a good death, if by poison, not so good, and if by sorcery, it was the worst kind of death. Those who failed to pay the "admission fee" would be rejected by "Topileta" who caused them to change into a 'Vayaba'<sup>25</sup>, a mythical fish which has the head and tail of a shark and the body of a stingray

(figure 11).

There were three roads leading to three villages in the nether world. One led to "Tuma proper", the other to "Wabwaima", and the third to "Walisiga". "Topileta" led the spirit to his new home. The female spirits were led by "Topileta's" wife, "Bomiamuia". Malinowski's informants were not certain whether or not there was any connection of the three paths to the three villages with the three types of death. However, the names of the villages or places may indicate levels or stages of "Tuma", or realms of the nether world. "Tuma" suggested a common place while "Wabwaima" (yam storage house) was a higher stage, and "Walisiga" (high platform of the chiefs) indicated the highest stage in Trobriand hierarchy. This may have some connections to the three types of deaths. Evenstill, my hypothesis carries very little certainty on the connection of the deaths to the villages in Tuma.

Having passed "Topileta", the spirit entered his new village where he would dwell for eternity. On his arrival his relatives would take him to stay with them until a new house was built for him. It was similar to what Trobrianders did when some relatives moved from their father's village to their own village, as discussed in chapter one.

Malinowski again described the initial meeting in the following words;

At first the spirit wants to weep for those left behind; his relative baloma protect him, saying, "Wait, let him have a spell; let him cry". If he has been happily married, and has left a widow for whom he cares, he naturally wants to be left for a somewhat longer time to his grief. All in vain! It seems ... there are many more women in the other world than men, and that they are very impatient of any prolonged mourning. If they cannot succeed otherwise, they try magic ... The stranger's grief is very soon overcome, and he accepts the offering called nabuoda'u - a basket filled with buai (betelnut), mo'i (betelpepper) and scented herbs. This is offered to him with the words "ham paku", and if accepted, the two belong to each other. (Malinowski 1948: 159)

The newcomer would eventually marry the woman from whom he accepted the "nabuoda'u" offering. Then they would start a new family in their paradise.

#### b. Version Two - "Bokadala"

One of my informants, 'Bokadala'<sup>26</sup> told me a shorter version of the journey of the spirit and his

reception in "Tuma". As soon as the person died, his spirit would leave the body and travel to 'Budibudi'<sup>27</sup> the beginning of the Trobriand world, for this was where the sun raised from. From "Budibudi" the spirit would travel back along Kiriwina to "Tuma" island, the end of the Trobriand world, for this was where the sun went down into the sea. The spirit on "Tuma" beach would face Kiriwina (Obweyowa) and bid his last goodbyes. Then, he would go to a well called "Gilela" to wash his face to render him invisible. At the well there was a tree called 'wageva'<sup>28</sup>, whose leaves the spirit used to wash his face with. After that he pulled out all the coconut fibre and other foreign matter stuffed into his nostrils, mouth, ears and other openings of the human body. The water of "Melo", not only rendered the spirit invisible, but also rejuvenated the-"baloma" and he raised like the full-moon. Then he stepped on the stone "Dukumweyoyu" which sent an earth-quake throughout the entire spiritworld.

The earthquake reminded "Topileta" that a newcomer has entered "Tuma". Liter on Topileta would change into a tale and ugly being whose ears expanded like a sail of a canoe. As the stranger came closer "Topileta" then turned to greet him with the worlds "so you have come." "Topileta" would then lead the spirit to show him die way to his new home. Topileta" would then lead the spirit to show him die way to his new home. As he enter the village people (spirits) would join him with singing and dancing to welcome him home,. The former spirits would be asking the new- comer whether or not he has brought some presents for them from the land of the living. This was because when people died back in the upper world, relatives of those who have died before would send gifts with the dead man for their loved ones in the other world. The spirit relatives of the newcomer, then would take him home to start a new life there, or rather to continue his earthly life in another world.

When I asked "Bokadala" how the spirits looked like, she said; They have no deformities and look like ripe pawpaw with blue eyes. They are of finest stature and their faces shine like the full moon which radiates bright yet gentle light around them. They are forever young. They walk, talk and live like we do but in a better environment than ours. They look very attractive, and one can easily fall in love with them. No wonder they marry as soon as they go to Tuma.

(Bokadala/Ketobwau recorded interview 24/1/94)

This shorter version is not necessarily a different version. "Bokadala" has agreed with many of the things told in the first version. She even confirmed that "Topileta" has a wife, the well "Gilela", and She even confirmed that "Topileta" has a wife, the well "Gilela", and the stone "Dukumweyoyu". Her version was rather more general without

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little details of the spirits ingress into "Tuma". However, it generally agrees with what Malinowski has recorded.

## COMMUNION BETWEEN THE SPIRIT AND THE LIVING

When the spirit was in "Tuma", he was not completely and entirely out of reach and touch with the living world. In fact, the spirit was believed to have an access to the living world anytime of the year. He would visit his village from time to time in an invisible form, although there have been instances were persons witnessed seeing the spirit in physical tom. Nearly all spirits came back to the land of

the living during the 'Milamala\* harvest festival. This will be discussed in this section.

### Communion by dreams and visions

I know of people who have had some encounter with the spirits on the island of "Tuma". A man by the name of Tomwasila from Kaduwaga village was stranded on "Tuma" for a week due to bad weather. He told me of how he heard voices of people fishing and lighting fires some fifty metres from where he was camping. He was also awakened by people in the night and was called by name. Another man by the name of Tobulayayu from Tukwaukwa village told me how he and four other men saw a man they recognized walking towards them on the beach of "Tuma". When the man came closer, he vanished for sometime, and after passing them, reappeared again and walked away from them to continue his journey. This man died not long ago.

Other people have also seen spirits when they were very sick or about to die. Dudumina from Teyava village was considered dead by her own relatives. She had gone into a coma for more than six hours. During that time she, in her spirit walked the path leading to the underworld "Tuma". On the way she met a young woman from Kapwani village, all dressed up in her traditional decorations. They both came to the well of "Gilela" where the young woman washed her Face and walked into a dark tunnel. She called back to Dudumina saying "come", but Dudumina could not see her way through the tunnel and yelled back saying, "I cannot see a thing". The young woman then said, "you are not dead yet,

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that is why you cannot come through this hole. You must go back". When Dudumina came out of the coma, she told her husband and family what she saw. On the next day news reached Teyava village that the same woman Dudumina met had died around the time of her encounter. Tobulayayu had a more fuller experience by going into his own village in the underworld. He also went into a coma during which time he walked into Tukwaukwa village of the underworld. He met Motukuvata, who died six years ago on the road leading to the village and was given a large yam to eat. He was told that Tebei, another man from the same village who died earlier, was holding a big feast. Tobulayayu entered the village and started looking for his father. He could not recognize him when he first met his father because he was young and very handsome. He went with his father to his father's house and sat on the verandah and witness a dance. He recognized Inuboutu, a young girl who died some years ago leading the dance. He also met many people from Tukwaukwa who had died in the past. He also had problems identifying many people who had died many years ago. This is how he described the underworld and the people;

There are no old people. Everyone looked young and healthy. This earthly Tukwaukwa is rocky with muddy beaches, but the Tukwaukwa in Twna has no stones and the beaches are covered with very fine white sand. The houses are built on the ground and are lined in straight rows with yam houses in front of every house. Young girls like Inubouta who had never lead a dance in their earthly lives, lead the dance very well in Tuma. The place is just too good to compare with anything I have seen in this land of the living.

(Tobulayayu/Ketobwau recorded interview 15/1/94

Tobulayayu really wanted to stay in "Tuma" because the life was very easy and joyous. However, his father sent him back saying that he was not ready yet. When he regained consciousness he found himself surrounded by his wife, children and relatives crying over him. He told them the story which I had just told.

#### h. Communion through Mediums

Besides these occasional glimpses of the spirit life, the living are brought into touch with the spirits of the dead in a more intimate way, through the "Tokesivila", who have the powers to mediate between

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the two worlds. These people are rare and of both sexes. Their powers also differ vastly. In Kaituri village "Bokadala" described how she first went down to underworld "Tuma";

My husband, Sevau was overcome with sorrow when his brother Yayaki died. He was led in spirit to Tuma by his enemies who continued to torment him. Sevau wanted to see his brother so we both brought valuables to Sigimutu of Dayagila village who in return gave us some leaves to place under our pillows in order to go down. Sevau could not because his spirit was "heavy". I tried but failed. Next day my husband and I took some more valuables to Tosila of Okupukopu village who had a stronger power that enabled me to go down to Tuma. I later told my husband about his brother's condition. From that time on. I have been visiting Tuma from time to time.  
(Bokadala/Ketobwau interview 24/1/94)

"Bokadala" explained that not all who acquired the power were able to go to "Tuma". Some had "heavy" spirits like her husband Sevau. She did not explain the reasons why some people have heavy spirits while others like herself have lighter spirits. However, one explanation could be that those who have heavy spirits doubted the power while the light-spirited people totally believed. Another reason could be that the "Tokesivila's" powers vary. Of course, some lied and used their so-called powers only to gain wealth. Those who claimed to have gone to "Tuma" came back with stronger magic for gardening, new spirit songs and good news of their dead relatives.

In an unpublished article by Patrick Tobigabwela Tumausi, he gave one reason why people went to "Tuma" and what they have brought with them in the following words;

The parents and relatives who desperid, , wont to go to Tuma to

see their relatives will go to "Tot' ", a magician with special magical powers, who can see spirits to Tuma while they sleep to personally see their loved ones. Many generations of people from bweyowa, earthly people have travelled to Tuma and have brought back with them special ceremonial songs and dances learned from their ancestors. 'WosiTuma', 'Obusibusi' and 'Kamwemya' are some of the songs which have been brought back from Toms. (Tomausi 14/3/94: 1-2)

The learning process in which the "Tokesivila" went through was faster than any earthly process. For instance, when "bokadala" first went to "Tuma", she entered her father's house, without hesitation, dressed in her dancing costumes and joined in the dance she never danced before. She never made a mistake in the dance. When she woke up from her "temporary sleep" she got out a drum and started beating the rhythm of the new song she had brought back from "Tuma" with singing. Her son, Molibusu, who was not "on the trip" or a witness of the dance, had no problem dancing the newly acquired spiritual dance. When I asked him how this happened, he said it was somewhat "automatic". The beats of his mother's drum brought some sort of a spiritual indwelling and the knowledge filled his total being. This indwelling directed his dancing movements. Molibusu and his mother later taught their village people the new dance. Molibusu found it hard to explain this spiritual knowledge, but was sure that his total being was controlled by his ancestral spirits who actually danced the newly acquired song through him. He was used only as a channel through which the spirits taught the living another joyous dance.

Visitors to "Tuma" did not follow the path that was walked by the spirit when he died. Instead, they "fall" into "Tuma" from a point on the Northern part of Kiriwina called "Bomatu" (figure 12). From "Bomatu" point the visitor went straight into his village in the spirit world. Taboos have to be strictly observed by the visitor. The most important of all was abstaining from eating or drinking anything given to him in "Tuma". Tomausi puts it this way;

During a person's temporary visit to "Tuma", sent by Tokesivila he should not eat any food offered to him by his ancestors, because if he eats the food offered to him, his spirit will not return to 'Obweyowa' (earth) to re-enter his body. He will stay at "Tuma" and his body will be buried as dead.  
(Tomausi 14/3/94: 2)

The communion between the spirit and the living was a strong foundation on which Trobrianders base their faith in the life after death. In other words, without this communion, Trobrianders would never know what lay ahead for them after death and would settle with the belief that death was the end of life.

#### THE RETURN OF 'flit SPIRIT TO HIS VILLAGE DURING THE HARVEST FEAST

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## "MILAMALA"

The intercourse between the living and the spirits discussed above referred only to what took place in dreams or visions or short glimpses

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of spirits as seen by men while awake and in a normal state of mind. The cases of "Tokesivila" were more intimate, but all these meetings were private and in most cases accidental and did not involve the whole community. But there were occasions on which the spirits visited their villages to take part in certain public functions. The spirits were received by the community collectively with certain attention strictly regulated by the customs.

Thus, every year during "Milamala" the spirits came back to the world of the living to join with the relatives in the harvest festival. Malinowski described this return in the following words;

there is a marked pause in the gardening, because the new gardens cannot be seriously tackled yet, the natives have a time of dancing, feasting, and general rejoicing called Milamala. During the Milamala the baloma (spirits) are present in the village. They return in a body from Tuma to their own village where preparations are made to receive them, where special platforms are erected to accommodate them, and where customary gifts are added to them, and whence, after the full moon is over, they are ceremonially but unceremoniously driven away. (Malinowski, , 172) ???

The activities or rituals of Milamala slightly differ from section to section. The prime reason for the slight difference is the month on which Milamala is celebrated. The Kitava islanders celebrate Milamala in July (Kalmwalasi), the Southern coast of Kiriwina in August (Milamala), the Northern part of Kiriwina in September (Iyalaki), and in November (Iyakosi) the Southern part of Kiriwina (figure 13). For the purpose of our discussion I will be concentrating on the rituals and activities done by the people of the southern coast, covering the sections or districts of Kulumata and Kuboma. All other sections or districts follow a similar type of activities with very slight differences.

### a. The return of the Spirits to Kiriwina

As previously mentioned, the spirits determined the activities of the living, thus, they are well aware of the seasons. During Ilebisila (June) when the harvest took place, the spirits would prepare themselves to come back to the world of the living to join in the celebration. In the same month the strong Southeast trade wind (Bwalimila) blew. At the end of July (Kaluwalasi) when the yams were brought into the villages and

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loaded into the yam houses (figure 14) the wind would change to the Northwestern direction called "Yavata". This wind blew from the direction of "Tuma" island, and the spirits would sail into Kiriwina in the Yavata. On their arrival at the beaches of their villages, they would camp on the beach until the

new moon of Milamala (August) was seen in the Western part of the sky. The spirits then moved into the villages and dwelled in the midst of the living in their invisible form. At this time of the year Trobrianders were very careful not to treat any member or kin cruelly for fear that the spirits would take the mistreated person home with them.

When the moon was positioned 45 degrees to the East, relatives prepared special cooked taro in big claypots called "mona", brought out ripe bunches of banana, betelnut and mashed long yams called *towamata* for the spirits to eat. The brothers and maternal uncles together with the sons of the deceased would prepare this important meal and exchange this food, as the spirits' *kalabubwaluwa*<sup>31</sup>. In this exchange the brother of the deceased would bring any of the above to his paternal uncle with the words, *kalabubwaluwa tamagu* (my father's saliva). The spiritual form of the food was believed to have been eaten by the spirit, and the physical form, smeared by the spirit's saliva, was to be eaten by either his brothers, maternal uncles or his sons. This exchange was done only for the spirits of the recent dead. Those households who had no recent dead, did it also for the "former" spirits. Thus, every household and family prepared the sacred meal to welcome their relatives back from *Tuma*.

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The day following the full moon, tall platforms were built and laden with cooked yams for the spirits. Besides these tall platforms, people performed a special ceremony called *seyoyova* where traditional valuables were displayed in front of the individual family houses for their spirit relatives. The valuables were taken indoors at night and displayed again the next day. The *seyoyova* continued from three to four days until the time when the spirits were driven away. These two activities were seen as offerings of Thanksgiving for protection and providence. Meanwhile, dancing which had started at the beginning of *milamala* would continue day after day. At night young people danced the *kalibom*, an erotic type of dance which encouraged sexual activities. This also went on for the entire length of *milamala*.

#### b. Chasing away of the Spirit-Yoba

On the last day of "Milamala", the eve of the 'Yoba'<sup>33</sup> when spirits were "chased" back to "Tuma", the dancing would continue throughout the night until about four o'clock in the morning when the dancing stopped and the drums beat the "yoba" rhythm. The drums were accompanied with shouts and the words *baloma !, bukulusi !*, meaning "spirits go away". "Yoba" was done in the early hours of the morning for the spirits who have no deformities because in the spirit world it was beginning to get dark, so the fit spirits were able to travel in the dark to their homes. The lame spirits were chased away in the afternoon when the sun was about to rise in the spirit world. The lame spirits would see their way in daylight to their homes. It was the belief of the Trobrianders that spirits could not live with the living all the time because when angered they could cause illness and even death. Therefore, after celebrating together and giving them offerings, they were chased back to their paradise. To ensure that none of the spirits especially the lame ones, stayed back the women would join in the chase by throwing cooked and raw yams at the group doing the "yoba" when they returned to the village. A great amount of yams got smashed all over the village. This marked the end of a good year.

It is interesting to note here that the belief of the lame spirits contradicted the belief that all dead people take upon themselves a spiritual body that is free of deformity after washing at the well of "Cilela". When I asked my father, Ketobwau why there was this contradiction, he said, not all

Trobrianders believed in the changing power of "Gilela". Some believed that the lame retained their handicaps, so to accommodate that belief, two stages of "yoba" was done.

## G. THE RETURN OF THE SPIRIT THROUGH REINCARNATION

Apart from the return of the spirit in spiritual form back to his original village, Trobrianders in the long past believed that the spirit was able to return to his village in physical form through the process

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of reincarnation. That is, the spirit was able to change into an embryo and be inserted into a woman by her dead mother, maternal aunties and clanswomen. This was the reason for the strong "Motherly Right" in the Trobriand society. As discussed in chapter one, the child wholly belonged to the mother because of that belief.

The belief in reincarnation is not unique to the Trobrianders alone. Other primitive societies believed in reincarnation also. For instance, the Aborigines of Central Australia believed that the spirit child could enter the woman and be born in the natural way. Frazer, *THE BELIEF IN IMMORTALITY*, described the Aborigines' belief in the following words:

They believe that the souls of the dead do not perish but are reborn in human form after a longer or shorter interval. During that interval the spirit of the departed are supposed to congregate in certain parts of the country, generally distinguished by some conspicuous natural feature, which accordingly the natives account sacred, believing them to be haunted by the souls of the dead. From time to time one of these disembodied spirits enters into a passing man and is born as an infant into the world. (Frazer 1913: 1117)

In a similar sort of process a spirit child got inserted into the womb of a woman and born into the world with the living. The process started with the shedding of the skin by an old spirit in "Tuma". When a spirit grew old and weak, he went to the beach and bathed in the salt water to rejuvenate himself. Once transformed into a child (embryo) he was immediately taken by a maternal clanswoman to Kiriwina and waited for an opportunity to insert the child into one of her clanswomen. Some versions have it that the child was not immediately taken, but was left in the salt water, which acted as the womb, to grow and develop. After this he was taken back to the land of the living and inserted into a woman.

The process in which the spirit child entered the woman also differ slightly. Some versions say the child was left to float in the floating debris called "popewa", others have it that the child dwelled in floating logs, while others say the child was directly inserted by the spirits into the woman when she was battling in the sea during the high tide. Because of this belief, single girls avoided washing in the sea during

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high tides when floating debris and logs were plentiful. But married women who wanted children would directly strike the "popewa" and floating logs in the hope that the spirit child would enter their

bodies. My women informants told me that when the spirit child entered the woman there was a slight pain as if she was beaten by a small fish.

The belief of a mature man reincarnating was not as strong as the belief in children who were born dead. According to my father, it was previously believed that those children who were born dead did not enter "Tuma" but were left floating in the debris ("popewa") around "Topileta's" home. They formed some sort of a nursery where spirits took back to the living world upon requests by their maternal clanswomen. Whatever the version was of the process of reincarnation, the underlying belief was that spirits were able to come back to life in the physical form.

## SUMMARY

Chapter two has enabled us to understand the essence of the beliefs of the Trobrianders on life after death. This belief was strengthened and had its foundation on the original myths strongly held by the people, especially on the notion that death was not part of the original destiny especially on the notion that death was not part of the original destiny of man. Death was a "newcomer", brought in by some fateful event in the Bwadela, the Bwoitaln, and the Kwadagila myths.

Now that death became a fact of life, Trobrianders had to address it. This was done by mythologically reconciling their existence with the existence of spirits in the netherworld. At the same time, believed strongly in the link which became their explanation and understanding of the everlasting existence of the person in spiritual form. What perhaps is most notable about this belief was that Trobrianders were able to trace their existence into "Tuma", the paradise of the spirits.

Thus, when a man died, he did not cease to exist but transmigrated into a spiritual being and entered the spiritual world through a hole, a sort of reversed proceeding to the original emergence of humanity. His existence in "Tuma" was a continuation of the pattern of his earthly life in a higher and more fuller dimension. He was not entirely out of reach in a higher and more fuller dimension. He was not entirely out of reach because from time to time he visited his village.

The communion between the spirits and the living was an important link which ensured the continuation of the cycle of life. Because the living had glimpses of the spirit world, and because they were able to trace the journey of the spirit to "Tuma" and back to the world of the living the concept of life after death was real to the Trobrianders. Therefore, their life was built around the understanding that the life they lived was but a foretaste of the real life in "Tuma". To them "Tuma" was the highest point of achievement.

This is not very strong today because of the internal and external influences which penetrated into the belief systems of the Trobriand society. In the next chapter I will discuss these influences and their effects on the belief system of the Trobrianders.

Figure 15: First Methodist modern house at Oyabia.

Figure 16: Rev. Lepani Gumagawa, Convenor of Kiriwina Circuit Group.

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### CHAPTER THREE

#### THE CAUSES AND EFFECTS BY BOTH INTERNAL AND EXTERNAL INFLUENCES

##### CHURCH AND FOREIGN INFLUENCES

- a. Religious Changes
- b. Political and Economic Changes
- c. Social and Moral Improvements

##### CHRISTIAN CONCEPT OF

##### SUMMARY

### CHAPTER THREE

#### THE CAUSES AND EFFECTS BY BOTH INTERNAL AND EXTERNAL INFLUENCES

There is no society in the world, that has never experienced change. The society's culture changes as people change. This means that cultures are never static, but are subject to changes from influences both within its boundaries and from outside. These changes occur because of the fact that when two ideas meet, they influence and change each other, and so, the ideas are never the same again after the meeting. The Trobriand culture, with the belief system the people have experienced a lot of changes during the last century. Much of the changes occurred due to external influences brought in by Christianity and the European system of Government. These new patterns of belief and government influenced the people so much that they somewhat changed their approaches and perceptions towards life. The people's cultural values and customs changed as they assimilated the new customs and beliefs into their systems. Many were very much influenced even to extent of viewing their traditional ways of life as inferior.

Internal influences have also played their part, though in a lesser degree, in changing the overall culture of the Trobrianders. These changes occurred mainly through dissatisfaction of the current pattern of life by influential community leaders, who exerted influence on others and drew a following.

In this chapter I will further discuss the changes caused both by internal and external influences. More particularly, I will concentrate the discussion on the belief system, which became the basis for all the changes and approaches towards the total life of the Trobrianders.

## . CHURCH AND FOREIGN INFLUENCES

In 1892, Dr. William E. Bromilow, the pioneer missionary to the Papuan Islands visited the Trobriand Islands to make way for the establishment of a Methodist mission station there. Dr. Bromilow went to the

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islands with his wife, a Fijian teacher and two Dobuans, in the company of Sir William Macgregor, the Administrator of the British Territory of Papua. Two years later in 1894, Rev. S.B. Fellows with his newly-wedded wife and Mr. Andrew were stationed at Kiriwina to pioneer the work in the Trobriand Islands. That was the beginning of an era of material, moral and spiritual changes for the Trobrianders (figure 15). However, not all the changes were positive. Some of the changes helped to destroy the traditional belief systems of the islanders. In the next section, I will discuss some of these changes.

### a. Religious Changes

The impact of Christianity on the religious life of the Trobrianders was great. Just less than fifty years, on a special anniversary of the Methodist mission in Kiriwina, Miss Molly Hodge reported in her article, a local teacher admitting the impact by saying, "one thing Mr. Fellows brought with him will never be destroyed or lost. That was God's Word" (Hodge 1949: 7). It took only a short time for the new religious belief to penetrate into the lives of the same people who at first feared and rejected this new thing called "Tapwaroro". Hodge also reported the initial rejection in the following words;

Fear of the huge steamer, fear of this new thing Tapwaroro, which would kill their food and eventually kill them, filled these primitive people with misgiving. (Hodge 1949: 7)

The people at that time had no idea how much effect "Tapwaroro" would bring after it was accepted. However, Chief Pulitala, who accepted Dr. Bromilow on his first visit, had foreseen the impact Christianity would bring, and objected the idea of establishing a mission station on Kiriwina. Dr. Bromilow stated in his book, *TWENTY YEARS AMONG PRIMITIVE PAPUANS*, the objection of Chief Pulitala in the following words;

I heard, too, that Pulitala had expressed himself in favour of occasional visits from the missionary with tapwaroro, which would do no harm if it was not too frequent, but objected to the settlement of a missionary. His opposition was easily explained by the fact that as chief he was himself a leading practitioner of sorcery, and therefore did not wish for the introduction of a rival system. (Bromilow 1929: 189)

The "rival system" was seen as a threat to the existing belief

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systems of the islanders at that time. The chiefs, like Pulitala, were the representatives of the duties, and held power of influence over the people. Now they were about to lose their followers over to the new hand of missionaries who were presenting an unknown God. The God was not only unknown, but had a name that was meaningless to the Trobrianders. The name for God used by the Methodist missionaries was *Eaubada*<sup>2</sup>, a Suau<sup>3</sup> word meaning "I am Great".

The shift of belief in polytheism to monotheism was the greatest hurdle Trobrianders had to overcome. Their belief and thinking patterns had to be redirected to accept the One True God, who was presented anthropomorphically as loving, forgiving, patient and just. "Eaubada" was presented differently to what they understood gods to be. This "Eaubada" was now in charge of their fishing, gardening, dancing and all other activities. It was difficult for them to understand a God who was all powerful and all knowing. Yet the "new way" seemed very attractive because of the way it was presented by the white people. Therefore, many accepted Christianity not as a totally new thing that would replace their traditional belief, but as an addition onto their belief systems, something from the white men for extra power and recognition. 'Rev. Lepani Gumagawa'4 (figure 16), the current Convenor of the Kiriwina Circuit group, and also the grandson of Chief Pulitala described this misunderstanding in the following words;

The people of Kiriwina were not sure which belief system they should follow; the new way or the old one. Many held strongly onto both ways and tried to harmonize them. Many saw both ways as the same and could not separate them. They saw their chants and incarnations as prayers to Eaubada. Therefore their tapwacorn was all mixed up. Even today, many people are still struggling to differentiate the two ways.  
(Gumagawa/Ketobwau interview 12/1/94)

In addition to the name and nature of the new God, Christianity taught of a new place for eternal rest of the person when he died. When Christianity taught of Heaven, somewhere up in the sky, most Trobrianders became confused. They knew where the eternal place of rest was. It was in "Tuma". As mentioned in chapter two, "Tuma" was the highest achievement for all Trobrianders, because the life they lived was a portion of the real life in "Tuma". Trobrianders had gone to "Tuma" to witness that life. On the other hand, no one had gone up to Heaven, thus making it

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difficult for them to live a portion of the heavenly life on earth.

This confusion did not end with the first generation of Trobriand Christians. Today's third and fourth generations struggle with this dilemma. Rev. Gumagawa found this as a problem for most Trobrianders in his 13 years as a lay Pastor and 36 years as an Ordained Minister, working with the people. He stated the following when I interviewed him;

Trobrianders believe that there is a place for the spirit when

it leaves the body. This place was Tuma. Missionaries came and taught that the spirit went to Heaven. For that reason, when a person died, the relatives dressed him in white clothes as a sign of going to Heaven. If the body was adorned with traditional valuables, feathers and other ornaments, the spirit was destined for Tuma.

(Gumagawa/Ketobwau interview 12/1/94)

The traditional belief system, which was the basis of their total life had been disrupted by the new way. Up until today Trobrianders have been struggling to live the best of the two lives with the two belief system, as the foundation. Their loyalty and commitment had to be somewhat They were continually urged to relinquish the old ways and fully accept Christianity. Many tried their very best outwardly, but deep within them, it was difficult to bury values and practices they were so accustomed to. Even today, Christianity and the traditional Trobriand religion continued to look for ways to oust each other. The question that needs an honest answer, not only for this situation in the Trobriands, but also in all societies is; Can two belief systems be synthesized? I attempt to answer this question in the next chapter.

#### b. Political and Economic Changes

Christianity came to the Papuan Islands, including the Trobriands, on the request of Sir William Macgregor who was "... wishful that the whole of his savage province should be brought under missionary influence" (Bromilow 1929: 58). The "missionary influence" did not concentrate on moral and spiritual aspects only, but included the political and economic arenas. It was not unusual for missionaries to foster the promotion of their so called "Christian Government" systems in their missionary work.

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Patrick Tomausi put it in the following words;

Christian churches play a dual role where ever they go... They preach the good news on one hand and manipulate the Capitalist production on the other hand... Capitalism does not only refer to economic domination but also to political domination. It creates class structure, antagonism, racial prejudice, bias and sets up an economically and politically powerful class of minority group in the country (or society). Christian churches are among the makers of this political crisis. (Tomausi 1994: 7-8)

History showed that missionaries brought with them the Gospel and their countries' political and economic systems into new lands they evangelized. A good example of this dual role of the missionaries was recorded by Sione Latukefu in his book, CHURCH AND STATE IN TONGA. He described the missionary strategy as follows;

The missionaries who went to Tonga during the first half of the nineteenth century inherited the political views of Wesleyan Methodism in England at the time. Loyalty to monarchy, country and constitution was unquestioned and could thus be regarded as the basis of the society's political views. It is not surprising that in the course of their work in Tonga they deliberately and persistently fostered the promotion of a central monarchical authority... and the establishment of constitutional rule in the country... Furthermore, they believed that their work would be accomplished more readily if a replica of the constitutional monarchy of their homeland were to be established in Tonga. (Latukeyu 1974: 83)

The strategy used by the missionaries in Tonga was repeated again in Papua. This time it was by the London Missionary Society. The LMS missionaries, who came to Papua in 1872 made way for Papua to be declared a British Protectorate in 1884 and later annexed to the British Crown in 1888. I assume that the prime reason for declaring Papua as a British colony was to protect British subjects and interest in Papua, including the missionaries.

The same approach was again used in the Trobriands by the Methodist Missionaries. Their "dos and don'ts" became the new legal code for the people. Their teachings that all men were equal in the sight of God, everyone was sinful by nature and that in order to go to Heaven, everyone including the chiefs had to submit to the moral discipline they taught created opposition from the chiefs. The new teachings were undermining the state of affairs determined by chiefs, who were the law givers.

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Another factor that brought more opposition was the establishment of mission stations away from the villages. Whether or not this was done intentionally, the mission stations were out of the village chief's jurisdiction, thus denying him of his right of control over his own people.

Furthermore, while Christianity preached equality, the western education system made few people better than the rest of the community. Those who went to school felt more important than the rest. They wore better clothes and spoke the white man's language. They accepted the teaching of equality in the sight of God and perceived the traditional rank system as ungodly. They felt lifted out of the simple toiling into a better life. Sister Beryl Coulson, a Methodist worker confirmed this "lift" in lifestyle in her article, TRANSITION IN PAPUA, in the following words;

Are being lifted out of the simple village life with reaching back for generations. Men and women want desiring to better themselves and to rise to a higher standard of living... You cannot lift a people unless Christian living and education in all its aspects go hand in (Coulson 1957: 6)

Those who were lifted got a further lift when the government station was established at Kiriwina. They were employed as carpenters, cooks, tea-boys and interpreters. The very little money they received made them economically (in the Western sense) higher than most people, including some chiefs. Traditionally, it was wrong to exceed the chiefs in economic terms. Yet this "lift" created desire in the people, who disregarded the traditional economic system and strived for status and

recognition.

Prior to the Western influence, the Trobriand political and economic system was justly administered for the mutual benefit of the chief and his people. However, when that system was disturbed by the Western way, people began to misuse it. Chiefs from that time felt threatened and began to protect their status by building their own empires. That was not a Trobriand pattern of thinking, rather it was more the European Capitalist way. Trobrianders who previously thought communally began to think individually. Chiefs began to use their positions to manipulate their people to their advantages and benefits. Even today the Chiefs

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who have formed a body called, Council of Chiefs, are fighting for recognition by the Papua New Guinea Government. This shows that the traditional political and economic system was greatly injured by the Western system, but not killed. This is because the chiefs still have a lot of power and influence in the Trobriand Islands.

### c. Social and Moral Improvements

Social and moral improvements is an undisputed fact. Socially, Christianity brought better health and services to the islands. In 1957 it was recorded that outpatients numbered up to 100 per day. Health centres and Aid Posts were built by the missionaries, which made way for the introduction of government medical services. New and healthier ways of cooking, childcare, and house keeping were taught to the people. The gospel message also brought rival clans and villages together to love and respect one another. The successor of Rev. Fellows, Rev. Gilmour "adapted education to the life of the people, lifting and improving the building of native houses in the villages" (Hodge 1949: 8). He also initiated young men into the mysteries of cricket, drawing their attention away from fighting.

Moral changes were also evident, even in the early years of Christianity in Kiriwina. Early missionaries thought the Trobrianders had many immoral customs. Dr. Bromilow, while appreciating some aspects of Trobriand life, branded others as "degrading". This is what he wrote;

Their skill in house and boat building is great, and chiefs' houses and the larger canoes are decorated with carvings and colours of excellent design and workmanship... But, upon this picture, pleasant thus far to look upon, there fall the shadows of customs unspeakably degrading. (Bromilow 1929: 180)

Miss Hodge also wrote that Sir William Macgregor, in the Government report in 1897 described the Trobriand women, in saying, "The licentiousness of the women of Kiriwina is almost without parallel in modern times", (Hodge 1949: 7).

It is sad to say that those so called degrading customs have been destroyed, thus denying us, the younger generation of the right to know them. However, on the other hand, it may have been good in saving us

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from the shame of holding onto customs that are not acceptable in other societies.

## CHRISTIAN CONCEPT OF HEAVEN

The Christian conception of Heaven originated from the Jewish and Greek assumptions or beliefs of the survival of the person in spiritual form after the physical death. The Jews believed that the spirits of the dead continued a shadowy kind of life in Sheol. The Greek also believed that the spirit left the body at death and went to an eternal existence. There was no idea of Heaven in the original conception of Sheol. It was just a common place for all the dead. However, the concept of Heaven began circulating among Jews of the Intertestamental period when the faithful were being persecuted. It originated from the thought that although the faithful were persecuted now, their will be Heaven after their death.

In the Old Testament, special divine revelation led the Hebrews to see history not as a recurrent cycle, like most . Moses, but saw history as moving towards a future goal. The goal was that God would banish evil and establish a permanent age of salvation, peace and righteousness in a transcendent world. Of course, many Old Testament prophets looked for God to bring judgement and salvation within their time of history, at the same time hoped for a final resolution of history. The type of thought was characteristic of apocalyptic, which reached its peak in the great age of apocalyptic writing from 2nd century BC to 2nd century AD.

Jesus Christ took over the prophetic and apocalyptic thought patterns in the New Testament, but with a crucial difference. In his ministry he claimed that the long-awaited and longed-for time of salvation had drawn near, "The time has come, The kingdom of God is near" (Mark 1:1) HIV.). Jesus' possession of the Spirit, his miracles and his total ministry were evidence of the nearness of God's Kingdom, or the kingdom of Heaven. Yet the kingdom had not been fully come, for despite the miraculous works of God through Jesus Christ, evil, death and uncertainties of life remained. The complete realization of the kingdom lay in the future, at the return of the Son of Man, who would take the faithful to the place he had prepared.

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This thought-form was also taken by many New Testament writers including St. Paul, but there was tension between what was already known and experienced (because Christ had come) and what is not yet experienced (because Christ is yet to come back). In order to ease the tension latter New Testament writers came up with the conviction that Jesus initiated a new community where the future is to be lived by them here and now. The life they daily lived became the foretaste of Heaven. The fulfilment of that heavenly life will come in future when Jesus returns.

Christianity taught that Jesus will come again to welcome his people into his presence. They will be resurrected and transformed to be with him eternally. Resurrection and eternal life was the Biblical view of the day, for man was not seen as immortal. Immortality belonged to God alone, and by grace bestowed on by him as a gift. Therefore, the New Testament writers emphasised more resurrection and eternal life than immortality. That thought also emphasized that because Christ's first coming had already inaugurated the Kingdom of God, eternal life could be experienced during the present life therefore, those who belonged to that new community of believers were assured of the eternal life, which implied not only of everlastingness of lite derived from relationship with Christ.

Thus, the life of God's ultimate kingdom was the completeness of that life in Christ experienced now. The essence of this thought and the central message of the preaching of Jesus was that the Kingdom of God had become earthly reality. Heaven then is a state of life that starts now, and finds its full expression in the after-life.

Besides Heaven, Christianity taught of Hell, a place where those who did not belong to the new community of believers went. Without having to get involved with the theological arguments of whether or not one went straight to Hell at death or not till the great judgement day, there was thought of of a place called hell. Hell was translated from the Greek word "Gehenna". brew, "Gehinnom", the valley outside Jerusalem. That remain a symbol. of condemnation because child sacrifice had been uttered during the reign of King Ahaz of Judah around 741 BC. The gospels' of "Gehenna" as a place of indescribable darkness and unquenchable fire and symbolized the destruction and the total separation from the presence of God. That total separation was clear in Jesus' teachings and also of Paul's although "Gehenna"

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was not mentioned.

Heaven and Hell did not have equal status in God's purpose for humanity. Hell was not made for humanity, but for the devil and his angels, according to the Biblical teaching. However, those who rejected the kingdom of God, which had already come found themselves heading for destruction in Hell, not because God wanted them to suffer there, but because they have rejected their true destiny.

The Trobrianders had to come to terms with that pattern of belief presented to them by the missionaries. Many looked forward to Heaven as a place of rest and happiness in a greater degree than "Tuma". However many missed the central message of Jesus that the Kingdom is experienced here and now. Many opted to live a life of suffering here on earth because their reward awaited them in Heaven. Many who left their villages and sent to school became alienated from their society. They were unable to become like the 'dimdim'5 as the European education tried to shape their minds into thinking and were not able to retain their true identity as Trobrianders for they have regarded their own traditional ways as inferior. They got caught up in an identity crisis.

A very good example of this happened in early 1940's when a young man who belonged to the "Tabalu" clan married a young man who became a lay Pastor. They left Kiriwina and worked in other islands. Most of her children were born outside Kiriwina and grew up as 'koyakoya'6. Her sons, who were the heirs to the "Tabalu" position in their village were pushed out by a lower ranked *tabalu*. They no longer hold the highest position in their village, when they returned to their original village.

## SUMMARY

Although many positive contributions were brought into the Trobriand society by Christianity, the Western influences had greatly affected the beliefs and thinking patterns of the people. In the beginning all the people, except few like Chief Pulitala, did not foresee the impact Christianity would bring into their total lifestyle. Many concentrated their sights on the material and external changes

Christianity brought but ignored the internal disturbance that came with every change. Many struggled for decades to readjust themselves to fully accommodate the new way. Those who thought they were successful became more confused and alienated from their society. None of them could successfully live a Western type of life and the Trobriand life, blending them harmoniously together. That was because, while one was more communal, the other was individual.

The political, economic and social life, which had their base in the Chief system was challenged by the European way. Their spiritual belief which was the basis of their total lifestyle was also destroyed. The missionaries, with their anticultural approaches somewhat shattered the total traditional Trobriand belief system, thus causing chaos, rather than peace in the inner part of the people. They "dumped" the Trobriand way for their own way without considering the values of the people's practices and beliefs.

In their effort to "lift" the "natives" the missionaries succeeded in creating a trend of a capitalist mentality that still exists today. The people I interviewed stated that the cause of disorder in the Trobriands was because the Chief system, who administered order had been crippled by the white man. One such man was Molaboma<sup>7</sup> who said;

In the past, no one questioned the chief. Whatever he said was final. Now, many young people who go to school think they are better than the village chiefs. That may be true in education. the Western way, but traditionally the chiefs are more wiser than every villager. Not because they are born wise, but because they have wise councillors who help the chief to run the affairs of his village. You may be clever because you went to school, but if you came back to the village, what you got from school will not be enough to run a village like the chiefs do. (Molaboma/Ketobwau 13/1/94)

The Christian concept of Heaven, which was the goal of the Christian teaching brought more confusion to the Trobrianders. To many Trobrianders, Heaven is an abstract concept because no Trobriander had gone there and back. They knew of "Tuma" because living men had gone there to witness the life. It made it easy for them to live a portion of that life because they knew it. To foretaste the heavenly life on earth is hard for the Trobriander up until today. They continually ask question: IsTuma heaven? I will attempt to answer this question

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## CHAPTER FOUR

### Tuma AS HEAVEN

#### 1. SIMILARITIES AND DIFFERENCES OF Tuma AND HEAVEN

##### a. Religious Similarities and Oneness

- b. Glimpse of the Paradise
- c. Physical Differences

## GOD'S PLACE IN Tuma

### THE HIGHEST ACHIEVEMENT FOR A TROBRIAND CHRIS.

#### THE RISE OF A NEW TROBRIAND CHRISTIANITY

- a. Jesus Christ - The basis of Trobriand Theology
- b. Accepting Christ as a Trobriander

#### SUMMARY

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## CHAPTER FOUR

### Tuma AS HEAVEN

Both "Tuma" and heaven are destinations of two different religions which have many unities, as well as differences. Both are viewed as resting places of spirits or souls of the faithful followers of those religions. The reality of their existence is unquestionable, though they cannot be rationally proven.

Trobriand Islanders in the past did not have a definite doctrine of paradise, *Tuma*. Different clans and Islands had their own explanations of "Tuma". Trobrianders agreed that "Tuma" existed. The fact that living people had visited "Tuma" strengthened the belief in its existence. There are no questions asked and no doubts entertained in the belief system of the islanders. However, when the Christian concept of Heaven began to creep into the traditional belief systems it created doubts and raised questions on the existence of "Tuma". Islanders began to divert their attention from "Tuma" to Heaven.

Very few Islanders have successfully absorbed the Christian concept of Heaven into their systems. Many have opted to retain "Tuma" as their highest achievement, but the majority of the Islanders have found themselves "sandwiched" by the two concepts. They began to ask questions such as, Is "Tuma" Heaven, Can the Christian God live in "Tuma"? and What is the difference between "Tuma" and Heaven? I will attempt to answer these questions in this chapter, In discussing the similarities and differences of these two destinations. I will also attempt to identify God's place in "Tuma", and suggest some ways in which these two concepts can be harmoniously married.

## SIMILARITIES AND DIFFERENCES OF Tuma AND HEAVEN

The beliefs in the realities of "Tuma" and Heaven are one, but in different forms. Both systems require faith as the only true knowledge of their existence. No scientific investigation or rational formulae can be employed to prove the existence of these paradises. The reality of their existence is based on faith alone. Although, these belief systems vary in physical expressions and may be regarded as two different systems, it does not necessarily mean they oppose or contradict each other. Both systems are complete in themselves, and are parallel truths.

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### a. Religious Similarities and Oneness

The Christian concept of Heaven, which originated from Jewish and Greek beliefs of the survival of the person after death, is parallel to the Trobriand idea of "Tuma". These two beliefs are part and parcel of the total beliefs of the two systems in their respective religion. Both religions believe in a supernatural being or beings. The practical results of their beliefs are expressed in worship and ritual, and have a particular view of the world and of the nature and destiny of man. Also, in these religions, there is a particular view of the way man ought to live his daily life in order that he may enter the everlasting destination.

The fact that no human being has ever lived without some religion is the joining factor of these two belief systems: no society in the world can dismiss religion. F.A. Farley, in *THE FAITH*, stated;

No human being has ever lived without some acquaintance with religion in some form. Every community of people, even the most primitive, has some religious beliefs and practices... Of course, there have been great varieties of belief, due to wide differences in powers of understanding, but the essential religious emotion or attitude is everywhere the same. (Farley 1938: 16)

Although, the doctrine of "Tuma" has not been highly developed, and belief clearly defined, it is in agreement with the Christian concept of Heaven as the destination of man. Therefore, the main similarity or oneness of "Tuma" and Heaven is the religious belief of their existence.

### b. Glimpse of Paradise

The reality of the existence of "Tuma" and Heaven has been strengthened by visits taken by living people into those places. "Tuma" had been visited by the "Tokesiyile and seen by those who were about to die. I have already discussed this in chapter two. Heaven, on the other hand,

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is not out of reach. The Bible records some experiences were living people saw Heaven. In St. Paul's Second Letter To The Corinthians, he told of a person he knew, who was caught up to the third Heaven, and told of many "inexpressible things" (2 Corth.12: 2-5). St. Paul may have been modest in his approach, not wanting to clearly state that he was the man. Also in the prologue of the Book of Revelation, St. John testified that he was shown the things of Heaven. Many other Christians claimed that they had visions of Heaven. Because "Tuma" and Heaven have been seen by conscious

men and women, it is difficult to dismiss their reality.

However, those "visits," are only a glimpse. Thus, it is difficult to ascertain that that if both paradises have been explored. For instance, if the Tokesivila only visited "Tuma", how do "Wabwaima" and "Walisiga" look ? Paul was caught up in the third Heaven, how many more stages on are there? Therefore, it is not totally incorrect to suggest that both "Tuma" and Heaven are part of each other, and can be seen as one.

### c. Physical Differences

In light of what has said above, I wish to highlight that the discussion on thi al differences of "Tuma" and Heaven do not necessarily mean that they are totally different. For instance, as a Melanesian, I am physically different from a Chinese, however, the physical difference does not make me an inferior being to the Chinese. Of course, there are minor differences between us in terms of appearances. Similarly, "Tuma" and Heaven may have many physical differences, but are really the same. There are a lot of physical differences between these two heavens, but I will discuss only a few of the major ones.

One major physical difference between "Tuma." and Heaven is their locations. While Heaven is believed to be somewhere in the sky, or above; "Tuma" is underground. because "Tuma" is underground, one can easily be tempted to conclude that it is inferior. However, it is incorrect to say that what is below is less than that which is above. It is correct in mathematical terms, but not in belief, for faith cannot be equated to mathematics. The cosmology of the Trobriand society is different from the Jewish and Greek societies. However, the idea of a higher destination beyond the world of the living is the same for both Heaven and "Tuma".

Another great difference is the destination of the rejected. In the "Tuma" belief, a spirit is caused to turn into a "Vayaba" when he is rejected by "Topileta". There is no idea of the rejected spirit experiencing undescrivable pain. However, his rejection will mean that his life's cycle has ended. He will never again experience rebirth, but will remain an "alien" forever. In the concept of Christian Heaven, there is a place called Hell, where the rejected spirit will experience torment for eternity. The causes for rejection in both places is different. One is rejected from "Tuma" when is to pay an "entry fee" of valuables. How he had lived his earthly life does not really matter and does not determine his entry. On other hand, the earthly life of a person in the Christian belief is what determines his eternity. Those that accepted Jesus Christ and became part of the community of believer on earth had the assurance of eternal heaven. Those did not belong to that community, end up in hell.

### GOD'S PLACE IN Tuma

When I raised the question of whether or not the Christian God lives or has a place is "Tuma", "Rev. Lepani Gumagawa" paused for a long time before answering. This is what he said;

Theologically, we describe God as omniscient, oumpotent, and omnipresent. These words mean that God knows everything, his power is beyond compare, and is present everywhere. If I say, God is not in Tuma, because Tuma is not the heaven Christianity

teaches about, then I am questioning the omnipresence of God.  
But if we believe that God is truly everywhere, then He must  
be in Tuma. (Gumagawa/Ketobwau 12/1/94)

"Rev. Lepani Gumagawa" did not at anytime of our interview suggest that because God is in "Tuma", then "Tuma" becomes Heaven in the Christian sense. His emphasis was on the fact that God is everywhere, and because of that, he is also in "Tuma".

The question of God's place in "Tuma" is not merely a question of his presence there. Rather, it is an inquisitive question on the total existence of God. The question is really asking, "Is there a God?" The traditional Christian faith affirmed the existence of God. Yet, that affirmation denied God's omnipresence when Christianity restricted God to remain in the Jewish and Greek Heaven. Christianity's "developed"

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doctrine somewhat placed God in a restricted zone with boundaries, thus restricting him from moving away to other heavens, like "Tuma".

This was exactly what the early Methodist missionaries did to God when they presented him to the Trobriand Islanders. Instead of identifying God's existence in the midst of the total life of the people, they tried to replace the Trobriand values and beliefs with the Western way. In so doing, they "restricted" God from entering into the total lifestyle of the Islanders. They denied God's existence in "Tuma, while at the same time taught, "God is everywhere". If God is really everywhere. then he is also in "Tuma".

When I asked "Bokadala", (my informant on Tuma) whether or not Christians who had died were sent to "Tuma," she said "Yes" without any further details. Another informant by the name of 'Mweyawata'<sup>1</sup>, made a mention that his father, Tosila, during one of his visits to "Tuma," came across, a place that was brightly lit with some light that was not from the sun. Tosila saw a great multitude, all dressed in white and standby around something that was glowing in the centre. Tosila hid in nearby bushes and gazed with amazement at the glory of the place. One of the whitely-dressed people saw him and told him quietly to leave because the place was highly sacred. Tosila had an undoubtable knowledge that those people were Christians. "Mweyawata" said his father, who was a great "Tokesivila" made it possible for "Hokadala's" first "Tuma" trip. He had visited "Tuma" many times but had not seen any place like this before. I was unable to confirm the story of "Mweyawata" because Tosila was old and had lost his memory. When I went to his village, I was told by his brother that Tosila was dying. He had requested for the Priest to come and give him the last sacrament. Consequently, he became a Christian after his experience of the highly sacred place in "Tuma". If this is sufficient to be taken as confirmation of "Mweyawata's" story of his father's experience, then God must also be in "Tuma".

In chapter two, section three, I stated that Trobrianders in the past believed that "Tuma" was in three stages. "Tuma", "Wabwainu", and "Walisiga" were stages which were not strongly believed to have any definite connection with the three types of deaths. Even "Tokesivila" like "Hokadala" mentioned about going only to "Tuma", which was generally believed to be the original setup of the Trobriand

community. Every village, road, beach, island in the underworld was exactly the same as those in the Trobriand Islands, but in a much better condition. They were in their perfect forms. There was no mention of "Wabwaima" or "Walisiga". Also, there were no mention of the stages or realms of "Tuma". Yet, the belief of "Wabwaima" and "Walisiga" implied stages or realms, because such words described the highest positions of Chiefs when exalted above everything else.

The question of whether or not Tosila did have some acquaintance of "Wabwaima" or "Walisiga" will remain unanswered. However, I am inclined to think that Tosila did have some glimpse of one of these two places or stages.

### 3. THE HIGHEST ACHIEVEMENT FOR A TROBRIAND CHRISTIAN

The highest achievement for Trobrianders before the introduction of Christianity was "Tuma". All longed to join their ancestors in the land of 'Kenvana'<sup>2</sup>, where happiness was everlasting. In the long past, those who were found guilty of unforgivable crimes like incest would choose suicide rather than live with the pain of been ridiculed by the whole community. Suicide was classed as a "good death", where the person would find happiness in "Tuma". Many more Islanders would rather be in "Tuma" than live in the world of the living with toil and hardship. "Tuma" then was the highest achievement.

On conversion, that is, turning to God and believing that He is the source of their power and total being, Trobriand Christians have shifted their efforts from wanting to go to "Tuma" to striving for a place in Heaven. The concept of Heaven, as the highest achievement was thought to have penetrated into their total being and directed their everyday living. Their lives had to be lived in the way pleasing to God. Their conversion meant that they would now seek access to God's power through Jesus Christ, the "one mediator between God and men" (1 Tim.2: 5 NIV). This also meant that their conversion was a turning away from all other mediators like the "Tokesivila", at least in their role as mediators who brought back power and wealth from "Tuma". Ancestors would still be venerated or respected, but not related to as the means and mediators of power through the "Tokesivila".

The conversion of the Trobrianders also meant that they have turned to a God who was seen as more transcendent than any spiritual being they have ever known. They employed the phrase 'Baloma Bomala' to describe this new God. Trobrianders used "baloma" for spirits and "bomala" to describe their sacredness. Yet, not at anytime before the introduction of Christianity did these two words put together to describe a superspiritual being. There was very little idea of a creator being. The explanation of their existence started from the myths of origin believed a man and his sister, both from the same clan "broke open" a cave, hole or a tree and led the whole clan out. Beyond the first emergence, no one knew. Therefore, the new experience meant that they had to come to terms with this God who was behind their emergence and existence, and who was believed to be above all other beings.

The characteristics attributed to him were also new and more attracting in the sense that they did not suggest any degree of negative fear. In describing this type of conversion. Evan Stilwell, in the MELANESIAN JOURNAL OF THEOLOGY, wrote;

Conversion in Melanesia therefore, means turning to a Spirit Being who does not easily fit into the Melanesian category of Spirit. Of great significance is the fact that the Christian God is a God of love, and a God who desires man to relate to him not on the basis of fear of the negative effects of his power but out of deeply felt spirit of thankfulness and love for him, as small children would relate to a good father. So conversion is fundamentally entering into a loving, obedient, dynamic relationship with the living God, and believing in his is the trusting commitment of one's life which issues in life-long faithfulness, long allegiance to him. (Stilwell 1993: 36)

What perhaps was difficult for Trobrianders to absorb was the concept of this "One true God" who originated the loving relationship with men. It was not the difficulty of accepting the idea of a loving father, but the difficulty of accepting a father who was foreign. A "father" to the Trobrianders was one who was the husband of their mother or all the maternal aunties, or the members of their father's clan. Anyone outside this circle was not regarded as a father. It was an insult to a Trobriander when one claimed to be the father of the other. It meant that person had a sexual relationship with the other's mother.

Therefore, when God was presented as a Westerner, he was regarded as a foreigner. Although, Trobrianders became Christians, they did not absolutely relinquish the values of their traditional belief systems. In actual fact, they carried over into Christianity what values and beliefs they were so accustomed to. One of them was the fear of the negative effects of the powers of the divine. How much more should they fear the "Jealous God", (Deut.5: 9 NIV) now that they had accepted him? Although his loving act meant to dismiss fear, most Trobriand Christians, even up until today still have the same fear they had of the Trobriand dieties.

The shift in the highest achievement may have been seen visibly, but that did not absolutely mean all Trobriand Christians had been transformed totally. Many wanted to go to Heaven while "Tuma" was still within them. In their struggle to accommodate these two ideas, they had placed themselves in a difficult situation. Up until today, Trobrianders are still confused on which destination to go to. Therefore, an appropriate Trobriand theology is needed to address the situation. In the next section, I will attempt to suggest ways of addressing this religious problem. The concept I will suggest is not without dangers and disadvantages. It will also be not exclusive, thus, it is open to debate and criticisms. Also, it is conscious of its inadequacy. However, there has to be a start somewhere, where Trobrianders can really claim the "One true God" as their own and not a foreigner.

#### 4. THE BEGINNING OF A NEW TROBRIAND CHRISTIANITY

Western missionaries, after experiencing a new kind of religion, namely Christianity felt they had to share the urgent message with others. Therefore, they came to Melanesia, including the Trobriand Islands with the Gospel of Jesus Christ. Their message did help in many ways to reform the Trobriand society. For all that they had done, Trobrianders are thankful. However, with all the positive changes, they brought destructions to the culture which included social organizations,

political and economic systems, religious systems, and the total activities of the Trobriand habits, ideas and customs. The Gospel was not presented as it really was. The "content" of the Gospel (Jesus Christ) was presented together in the Western "container". Jesus was not presented as the Son of God who became flesh and made his dwelling among all peoples, pitching his tent, igloo, cached-roof house or other forms of dwelling. He was not presented as wanting to be in the midst of different peoples so as to make possible for them to be redeemed (John 1: 14). He only made his dwelling among the Westerners, so it seemed, because missionaries wanted dwelling among the Westerners, so it seemed, because missionaries wanted the Trobrianders to relinquish their ways and follow the whiteman's.

They wanted the Islanders to accept the Gospel, the valuable content in the container they were offering. It was impossible for the Trobriand container, even if it was viewed as having a lesser value, to be relinquished by the people. The container was their total life.

Because of what has been said above, many Trobrianders today see Christianity as identical with Western imperialism. As more and more Trobrianders become liberated and develop in both secular and religious circles, they will see how much destruction Christianity has done to circles, they will see how much destruction Christianity has done to their culture. The more they are educated, the more they will question the value of this "foreigner" religion. Some have already identified the negative aspects of the Western Christianity. One such person is, Patrick Tobigabwela Tomausi, a graduate of Political Science from the University of Papua New Guinea and formerly a senior Public Servant for over twenty years with the Papua New Guinea Government. This is what he said about Christianity;

Western churches because of their original root inherited the characteristics of Western culture. That is, they have materialistic attitude which is commonly known as CAPITALISM. Furthermore, they have pre-conceived ideas and myths of the people they preach to and teach. They called the people HEATHENS or PAGANS because they are not enlightened by their Christian teachings. Christian Churches play a dual role where ever they go, including Papua New Guinea. They preach the good news on one hand and manipulate the capitalist production on the other band... They are among the wealthiest institutions in Papua New Guinea. (Tomausi 14/3/94: 7)

Views like that of Tomausi's would not have been expressed if Christianity was presented in "content" only without the "container". If Jesus Christ was presented to be accommodated in the more communal Trobriand way, the capitalism would not have been vigorously attacked by educated Trobrianders. However, as it is, many Trobrianders see Christianity in no different terms with that of Western imperialism.

This type of situation calls for an urgent apologetic approach to defend Christianity, not in every aspect of it as seen and interpreted by Europeans, but the basic truth of the Son of God who is the means of redemption for the Trobrianders. Jesus must be viewed by the Islanders as one of them who knows their aspirations, joys, sorrows, strengths, and weaknesses. Trobrianders must read the Bible

and interpret it in their own way so that the Gospel becomes appropriate, relevant and meaningful to them in their own context.

a. Jesus Christ, The basis of Trobriand Theology

God's plan of salvation found its fulfillment in Jesus Christ. God, who initiated the wonderful fellowship and relationship with men revealed himself to man in the way man understood best. He became man himself through the incarnation of Jesus Christ. The New Testament tells of how Christ "made himself nothing" and not considering equality with God, became like us and lived as a servant (Phil-2: 6-7). The reason for such an "emptying" is that- "whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life", (John 3: 16 NIV). The "world" that God loved so much may have initially meant the Jewish world because Jesus was speaking to a Jew at that time. However, the Genesis account of the creation of man in God's image, and the commission given by Jesus to go to all nations (Matt.28: 19), include the Trobriands.

Thus, the incarnation of Jesus Christ to the Jewish community does not restrict him to be a Jew only. Rather, the Jewish race was used as the channel of God's blessing to "all peoples on earth" (Gen.12: 3 NIV). Jesus Christ's incarnation was really an incarnation to the whole humankind. We do not deny the fact that Christ was born a Jew and would remain a historical Jewish figure. However, as far as common human characteristics are concerned, Christ was both Jew and Trobriander. If this thought is seen as blasphemy and impossible, then the concept of incarnation to the whole world is false.

Joe Gagurae, who made the first attempt to recognize Christ as a Melanesian argued that if Christ's incarnation to the whole world is to be accepted, all races, especially Melanesians in this case none claim him as a Melanesian also. In his article, INDIGENISATION AS INCARNATION, he wrote;

... we do not attempt to make Christ become a Melanesian. We cannot make him a Melanesian. He is already a Melanesian.

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The incarnation affirms the fact that he is already a Melanesian. He has been indigenised or Localised by God Himself. We cannot do what already has been done. We only have to recognise the fact. We just have to wake up to the fact that through incarnation Christ has already incarnated and identified himself with the whole of humankind, not only Jews... If it was possible for Christ to become a Jew, what can stop him from becoming a Melanesian to me? (Gagurae 1985: 213, 214)

What can really stop Christ from becoming a Trobriander also? Only the finite human mind can reject this truth and continue to see Christ as a Jew or a Westerner. Many finite minds with many limitations think they know God and can restrict him to a certain locality and race only. Yet, many theologians like Emil Brunner believe that God cannot be fully known either by scientific methods or by faith. God is beyond human conception. He is not within our knowledge, rather our knowledge is in God.

God. In his book, OUR FAITH, Brunner stated;

No man can know who God is. The cleverest scholar knows nothing more concerning God than the simplest man. There dwells of course within every human heart a feeling of something higher than itself, a dim apprehension of a power ruling all that is, and giving his law to all that lives... What variety of ideas have of "God" and "the divine" - - and how many have no conception of the matter whatsoever. Who dare to say, "I know who God is. I know His plans and purposes?" This much we know of God: He is the great mystery. (Brunner 1949: 63)

No man has seen God except the Son of God, who claimed in John 14:9 that anyone who has seen him has seen the Father. His Father was the one whom people claimed as their God (John 8: 54). Jesus Christ is that great mystery revealed. This self-revelation of God through Jesus Christ is the only fundamental basis of our knowledge of God. Of course, not all people know God in Jesus Christ. It all depends on what Jesus means to them. Those to whom Jesus is only a noble, wise and obedient man, and the greatest of all religious leaders and saints, do not have God. But those who have the Son as the "God revealed" have the fulfilment of God's saving act through the incarnation, death and resurrection of Jesus Christ. Therefore, he is the basis of Trobriand theology, or any theology for that matter.

#### b. Accepting Christ as a Trobriander

In order for Trobrianders to accept the finished work of Christ's atonement, they must first accept Him as the true revelation of God. This can be done only when they identify Christ in their own belief system and pattern of thought. Christ must dwell in their midst and be one of them. Christ must be seen as a Trobriander who understands them

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in their joys and sorrows. They will be able to accept the fact: that Christ is the "high priest", who is able to sympathise with their weaknesses. He was tempted in every way like them yet not sinned. He will become their *kabogigisa*<sup>4</sup>, the one who came not to do away with culture (human activities, achievements and beliefs) but to fulfill it. He will be able to change, reform and restore the Trobriand because he is in that particular culture and understands every facet of it. A foreigner on the other hand, can never bring reformat able to the Trobrianders because he does not understand the Trobriand mind and being.

The only purpose for the atoning work of Jesus Christ was because man had sinned and had fallen short of God's glory. The image of God originally created had been spoiled- by sin. That is. God's purpose for man had been replaced with what man wanted to do for himself. The culture which constitutes man's total lifestyle given by God, had been corrupted by man himself. So God came himself in Jesus Christ to reform and renew that culture. He continues to come again and again in his

Spirit to reveal his plans for reformation and change in societies. Yet, that reformation is not experienced by all cultures because changes are dictated by one particular culture only. It is difficult because it is like using a screwdriver to mend a torn 'laplap'<sup>5</sup>. Because of this, changes have been viewed negatively rather than in a positive way.

The sad thing is that many Trobriand Christians have accepted the use of Western ways as taught to them by early Western missionaries as the only means to reform their own cultures. An attempt made by a lay Pastor namely, Toboeta, to sing praises to God and the Christian message in the traditional tune seemed very funny to them. Yet the initiative taken by Toboeta was a positive step towards identifying Christ as a Trobriander. For only a "Trobriand Christ" can change the Trobriand culture. His spirit which indwells within Trobriand Christians enable them to bring forth reformation and change to their own society. As they partake in the mission of Jesus Christ in reconciling man back to God, they will experience liberation, reformation and change in their own "Jerusalem" first. Thus, they will experience the kingdom of God

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which had already come upon them and became an earthly reality. They will foretaste the heavenly state of life here and now and fully experience it later with God wherever he is. The assurance of eternal life in Christ is sufficient enough for any Trobriand Christian. It is better than attempting to know where God really is, whether it be in "Tuma" or the Jewish and Greek Heaven.

#### SUMMARY

In all Melanesian societies where the belief of life after death was accepted, there was a place where the spirit of the person went to continue his life, but in a different form. Those places were thought to be in a better form than the earthly ones. Therefore, Melanesians looked forward to going to those places. There were seen as the highest achievements for all Melanesian societies. The Trobrianders had *Tuma*, where everyone wanted to go to. When life seemed too hard to bear, Trobrianders would even commit suicide so that they would escape the hardship and be with their ancestors in *Tuma*. Those places, like *Tuma*, were believed to be true, and no one doubted or questioned their existence. *Tuma* was real to the Trobrianders until Christianity challenged the Islanders' faith.

When Christianity was introduced, people were taught about a new place called Heaven. They were led to believe that "Tuma" did not exist. They were also taught that their belief systems were ungodly. They needed to relinquish their ways and accept the new "Western" way in order that they might go to Heaven. Many accepted and tried genuinely to live according to the Christian standards set by the early missionaries. They saw many changes take place in their lives, but they were mostly external. Within them, they struggled with the problems of harmoniously living a life with two different belief systems. Those who thought they had successfully solved the problems found themselves alienated from their own societies. However, the majority of them became more confused than before. They wanted to go to Heaven but *Tuma* was still in their total being, for the life they lived was but a portion of the real life in *Tuma*.

As more and more Trobrianders became educated, they began to see both the negative and positive contributions by Christianity. While they greatly appreciated what the Westerners did through

Christianity, the negative destructions had caused more damage to their total life-styles. Therefore many educated Trobrianders have taken a negative attitude towards Christianity as a whole. This situation needed to be addressed urgently.

The "fault" was that the Western missionaries presented the Gospel in their own way rather than the way people had known for ages. In presenting Jesus, the "content" of the Gospel, the missionaries wanted the people to accept the "container" also. The "container" was the Western view of the total life. Trobrianders found it impossible to relinquish their "container" because it was their total life. So their confusion grew bigger and bigger until some have already taken a negative view of Christianity. Trobrianders began to see the Christian religion as a "foreigner" religion. They have equated it with the Western imperialism they had witnessed from the Whiteman. If no attempt is made to defend Christianity, not in the sense as it was seen and interpreted by Westerners, more and more people will have negative view of Christianity.

One way in which the central message of Christianity can be accepted is to identify the Christian God in the Trobriand society. The God who is all powerful and everknowing had already revealed Himself to mankind through the incarnation of Jesus Christ. However, when Jesus was presented only as a Westerner, it was difficult for Trobrianders to accept that someone other than a Trobriander was able to understand their deep aspirations, joys and sorrows. Only a Trobriander could understand the Trobriand way. Therefore, I am suggesting that Christ must be seen as a Trobriander first before he can be able to reform the culture. It is not an effort to make Christ, the revelation of God, a Trobriander because God had already made him one. Christ's incarnation to the whole mankind meant that he also incarnated into the Trobriand society. If this can be accepted by Trobrianders, then they would partake in his mission to reform, change and fulfill all cultures. Once the culture is reformed by Christ, they will foretaste the heavenly life here and now and not, to bother too much of their greatest achievement either in "Tuma" or Heaven. For the assurance they will have of eternal life in Jesus will become a guarantee for them to be where God is in Heaven or "Tuma".

## CONCLUSION

The questions raised by Trobriand Christians are commonly asked by those who saw that Christianity had failed to address their situation meaningfully. The Christ, as presented by the missionaries who held strongly on the traditional christian view, did not fit well into their lifestyles. The pattern of belief they were so accustomed to had been disturbed by the introduction of Christianity. Although the basic elements of the two religious systems were seen as one, presenters of the "new way" viewed the 'old way' as ungodly and misleading. Therefore, who got converted into the new belief system were told to relinquish their old "pagan" ways and totally accept the new way in the way it was presented.

What the missionaries failed to see was the fact that the traditional religious experiences of people, in this case, the Trobrianders became the basis of all their religious experiences. By this I mean, the traditional Trobriand religious experiences and the belief of a spiritual realm made possible for them to accept Christianity. If Trobrianders did not believe in the powers of the spiritual beings, it

would have been impossible for them to accept the Christian concept of a transcendent God. In other words, Trobrianders accepted Christianity because they had already experienced some religious experiences themselves.

The Trobriand religious experiences were not separate from all other experiences. Rather, their whole day-to-day experiences were nothing but religious. Their lives revolved around the world of spirits. Their political, social, economic and other activities of life were influenced and guided by the spiritual order. Nothing happened without the spirits, and nothing was possible without their powers. Their total being and existence depended entirely on the spiritual order that was born in and with them from the very beginning.

This study has enabled us to understand the inner realm of the Trobriand religious experiences. It has also enabled us to understand the confusion Trobriand Christians have gone through. While the basic elements of both their traditional religion and Christianity were one

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they could not harmoniously marry the two. This was because the new way was disturbing their total lifestyles. Where they originated from, what they did and where they would end up was never questioned before. Christianity taught of a different path and pattern of life the people never had any knowledge of. It was hard for them to comprehend because it was foreign.

We have also seen in this that God was seen as foreign because of the way he was presented. The missionaries did not consider or entertain the idea of identifying God, who incarnated through Jesus Christ in the Trobriand culture. Although Jesus Christ was presented as the means for salvation, Trobrianders found it hard to accept the idea of a foreigner saving them. How could he? He would not know their deep aspiration, values, joys and sorrows. Only a Trobriander would know what Trobrianders value in life. How could a foreigner save them then? They knew that their salvation came from their gods and spirits who had their real and perfect existence in "Tuma". "Tuma" was their heaven where life in its perfectness was experienced.

The confusion did not end with the next generation of Trobriand Christians. After 100 years of Christianity in the Trobriands, people have not settled the confusion. Many educated Islanders have "freed" themselves from the confusion by having a negative attitude towards Christianity. They have concluded that Christianity is a foreign religion with no relevance to the Trobriand way of life. The Western culture that came with Christianity was the real cause for the rejection. They have equated Christianity with western imperialism.

Even in the Christian circle, Pastors and church leaders are finding it hard to successfully sort out the age-long confusion. The central message of the Gospel is not understood well. Christian activities have become monotonous and uninteresting. The church has become a mere human institution lacking the dynamic saving power of God. Efforts have been made to revive the Gospel but have failed to last. God has been made to be seen as a failure because he could not penetrate into the culture.

In this paper I have stated that before God can appropriately address Trobriand situations he must become a Trobriander first. This

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paper suggests that God, who incarnated through Christ must first be identified as a Trobriander. Only then can He be seen as capable of becoming the means of salvation for the islanders. The truth of God's incarnation through Jesus Christ to the whole humanity can be accepted. Trobrianders would look back into their traditional religion which was the basis of their culture to identify God there. They would view their pattern of life as means of salvation which has found its fulfillment in Jesus Christ. This would enable them to view their religion and Christianity as one rather than seeing them as two separate systems in conflict with each other.

I want to conclude this paper by suggesting some ways by which God can be made more meaningful in the life of Trobriand Christians.

Firstly, Trobrianders must accept the fact that the incarnation of Jesus Christ has already made him a local. He is able to reform, change and liberate the culture because it is his culture too. His incarnation meant that he had come to bring the Trobriand race back to God. God's will and purpose for their lives will be known, thus, creating a better world for them to live in.

Secondly, the Christian rituals and liturgies be redesigned to include the Trobriand ways which have great meaning to the people. Songs must be sung in traditional Trobriand tunes and sung in the way people love best. Trobriand values and beliefs be rediscovered and christianized.

Thirdly, local theologies be encouraged from mature Christians who have not been brainwashed by the Western Christianity. Graduates from theological colleges be sent back to their own people first to present Christ in the way people are accustomed to. When United Church posts young graduates to other areas and different ethnic groups, Christ is presented as a foreigner to the people. What I mean by this is that a Trobriand graduate of Rarongo for instance must first of all serve in his own area for at least five years so that he may present Christ in a more Trobriand way than what he was previously presented.

It is understood that no one pattern of thought is accepted by everyone. Many Trobrianders may disagree with this paper, and I take full responsibility for this. However, there has to be a start somewhere where Christ can be made more meaningful in the lives of Trobriand Christians. The joy and deep value of God's salvation through Christ can again be experienced in its fullness.

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## CHAPTER ONE NOTES

1. *obukula* Name of the hole where it is believed the Trobriand people emerged from. This is the most accepted myth of origin strongly held by the

islanders.

2. *Ugwawaga* Literally meaning - "visitors" who migrated to the Trobrianders in canoes many generations ago.
3. *Kayasa* Competitive gardening year organized by a chief or village elder for a hotter harvest.
4. *Kabutu* Arrangements of casual labour for a job to be done urgently.
5. *Migimwamwasila* Happy and approachable face. "migi" for face wamwasila" happy or joyful.
6. *Kuwa* necklace made of red spondylus shell.
7. *Paya* Ear rings made from tiny rings of turtle
8. *Kalomwa* red spondylus shell attached to the bottom of the paya.
9. *Kwasi* black armbands made out of bush strings.
10. *Vana* Herbs that are placed in the "kwasi" as perfume. The mint plant is mostly referred to as "vana".
11. *Kemwasila* A type of love magic for attracting attention and agreement from others, especially the opposite sex.
12. *Missionary language* This dialect was used in hymn and catechism. The Bible was also translated into this dialect.
13. *Waiwaia* Child, baby, infant.
14. *Tuma* The Paradise of spirits. Trobrianders believe that when they die, they go to Tuma.
15. *Dala* Unnamed ancestral beings through which Trobrianders trace their descent through women. Dala also means breed of type or group of people who have the same blood group.
16. *Tabalu* The highest clan of the Malasi Totem who, in the origin myth came to the Trobrianders with eminence and rank distinguished from other Trobrianders by special social and food taboos and a variety of body and house decorations.
17. *Guyola Valu* Chiefs of villages who manage that particular village. They are seen as smaller chiefs, but also have authority and influence over their own people.

18. *Toliwaga* Highest rank of the Lukwasisiga totem. Lukwasisiga is one of the four totem clans (Kumila) in the Trobriands, They were at one stage rivals to the Tabalu.
19. *Giyobwela* A good chief. Made up of two words; guyau (Chief) bwena (Good).
20. *Giyogaga* The opposite of "Giyobwela". A bad chief.
21. *Katuposula* Sections of villages managed by the "Kedadela Valu". In those sections, different clans live.
22. *Viloguyau* villages founded or first settled by the Tabalu. Not all Trobriand villages are viloguyau because they were first settled by another clan.
23. *Kedadela Valu* elders, clan chiefs who manage sections of the village. They are seen as "pillar" who support the village chief to run the whole village. Many of these people are richer than the chief hut are restrained customarily from exceeding the chief.
24. *Tolimeguva* The owner of the magic formula. Revealed to him by his ancestor
25. *Boma* Sacred, powerful and prohibited. The deity manifests itself in those physical things. The other word for taboo (tabu) is "Boma".
26. *Kabata Clan* A clan of the Totem Lukulabuta believed to have originated from Mt. Kabata in Woodlark. They sailed in 7 big canoes to the Trobriands through Gawa. (I am from this clan).
27. *Kebulitauya* A type of magical formula owned by the Kabata clan. This magic can cause the nose to be "blown off" leaving an ugly sore in the face between the mouth and the eyes.

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28. *Mosulubogi* Previous clan chief of Kabata who died in 1979. He was the caretaker (owner) of the clan magic (Kebulitauya).
29. *Koni* The traditional rights of status displayed by wearing of ceremonial decorations. Not all clans have koni. "Koni" can also mean a "load".

30. *Tokai* Dala of the lowest class having no status and no "koni".

## CHAPTER TWO NOTES

1. *Koitabu* Koitabu people are the original inhabitants of the country around Port Moresby. Their villages lie scattered for a distance of about forty miles along the coast from a point about seven miles South-East of Port Morema. to point on Redscar Bay to the North-West. The Koitabu people belong to the Papuan stock and live side by side with the Motuans.
2. *Tubetube* A small island of the Engineer group lying of the eastern extremity of the main island of New Guinea.
3. *Chief Kwewayaya Dabwai* Chief of Tukwaukwa village, the biggest village in the Trobriand Islands.
4. *Pokala* Large payment made as a sign of appreciation or a payment made in advance for security, wealth or land.
5. *Pilola* The sea between the D'Entrecasteau Islands and the Trobriand Islands.
6. *Tauvau* Malignant beings who bring upon the inhabitants of the Trobriand Islands epidemics. These beings are invisible and their place of origin is unknown.
7. *Tuva* A vine whose roots are poisonous, used for killing fish. Trobrianders used this method of fishing before the invention of nets called *sepu*.
8. *Soka* A poisonous fish that expands like a balloon when caught.
9. *Obulalibu* The house where the dead person's widow/children are accommodated. The house is owned by a maternal kinsman of the deceased. All mourners come to cry in the Obulalibu. The meaning of this term is "House of Libu." *Libu* is a high platform for the spouse of the deceased to stay on.
10. *Sigiliyawli* The first distribution where maternal relatives distribute food

to the mourners.

11. *Solubulabu* Women from paternal line of the deceased and his daughters distribute *doba* to workers.
12. *Ligabwa* Kinsmen of the deceased's maternal line divide yams and taros among mourners.  
  
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13. *Lumi* Individual gifts of yam and taro, bunches of betel nuts and bananas given to individuals as payments for their work.
14. *Yolova* Payments for those who actually carried the body before death or after death, or at any-time before burial.
15. *Sagaliveguwa* This exchange is the return of *wayala kebila* the giving of valuables to the spouse of the deceased by her own clansmen. The original valuables are returned with additional.
16. *wayala kebila* Valuables given by the widow's maternal clansmen which are returned with additional in the *sagaliveguwa*.
17. *Tadabali* a distribution of womens' wealth in terms of grass skirts in the first distribution.
18. *Libu* a high bed where the spouse of the deceased is placed upon. The bed is enclosed so that she may not be seen by outsiders.
19. *Lisaladabu* the final distribution where the widow is released of her mourning obligation. She is free to remarry after that.
20. *Winelawoula* Cleansing of the body of the widow. It is also a spiritual cleansing.
21. *Topileta* An invisible figure believed to be the owner of Tuma. He acts as a kind of cerberus or St. Peter in so far as he admits

spirits into Tuma. He is also seen as the god of the underworld.

22. *Modawosi* A stone on the beach of Tuma where the spirit of the recent dead went and sat on to cry his last farewell.
23. *Gilela* A well on Tuma that spirits bathe to purify themselves and render them invisible.
24. *Dukumweyoi* Two stones which the spirit strikes as a signal of his arrival in Tuma.
25. *Vayaba* Literally means sent as a parcel- Topileto changes those who fail to pay the admission fee into *vayaba*, a mythical fish possessing the head and tail of a shark and the of a stingray.
26. *Bokadala* An old widow from Kaituri village who has the power of communicate with the spirits. She has gone to Tuma on many occasions. I personally interviewed her on 24 January 1994.
27. *Budibudi* The local name for a group of atoll islands east of Woodlark. These islands are seen as the beginning of the Trobriand world. *Budibudi* also refers to small clouds that group on the horizon.
28. *Wageva* A bush plant whose leaves are used as a face towel. The leaves are also renowned for love magic face towel.
29. *Milamala* The Trobriand name of The month of August where the harvest festival reaches its peak.
30. *Tokesivila* Privileged people of both sexes who have special powers to go to Tuma and back. They also can send those who want to visit their relatives They are mediums.
31. *Kalabubwaluwa* Literally means, one's saliva. This name is given to the exchange of food between

the dead man's maternal clansmen and his sons. The food's spiritual form is believed to be taken by the spirit and the physical form, smeared by the spirit's saliva is eaten by the relatives.

32. *Seyoyova* A ceremony where valuables are displayed for the spirits. The valuables are seen as offerings of thanksgiving. Their spiritual forms are accepted by the spirit.
33. *Yoba* Literally meaning "chase" is done at the end of *Milamala* when spirits are chased back to *Tuma*. *Yoba* marks the end of a year.

#### CHAPTER THREE NOTES

1. *Tapwaroro* A Dobuan term meaning "a Way of life pleasing to God and fellowmen".
2. *Eaubada* Name for God used by the Methodist Missionaries in Papuan Islands. This word from Suau to mean Eau (mean), "Bada" (big). "I am great."
3. *Suau* A language spoken by people of the Southern tip of mainland Milne Bay Province.
4. Rev. Lepani Gumagawa The present Convener of the Kiriwina Circuit Group. He graduated as a pastor in 1948 and worked for 13 years. He entered and graduated from Rarongo in 1967, ordained in 1968 and has been in active service since then.
5. *dimdim* A term used to refer to Europeans, or white-skinned people.
6. *Koyakoya* Non-Trobriander. "Koya" means mountain. Because the Trobrianders do not have mountains, all outsiders except Europeans, who are referred to as dimdim, are called koyakoya, "Mountain People."
7. *Molaboma* village elder and clan chief from Tukuakwa village.

## CHAPTER FOUR NOTES

1. *Mweyawata* Son of Tosila, a well-known "Tokesivila" in the Trobriand Islands. Tosila made it possible for "Bokadala" to go to Tuma in the first place.
2. *Kemwana* Happiness that is inexplicable that is experienced by the spirits in "Tuma".
3. *Baloma Bomala* Literally means "Spirit that is sacred or holy". These words are used to describe the Spirit of God or the Holy Spirit.
4. *Kabogigisa* Model or good example.
5. *Laplap* A Pidgin-English word for , piece of cloth that is worn around the waist. Laplap is the common dress in Papua New Guinea.

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#### 5. BIBLICAL VERSION USED

The New International Version (NIV) has been used for all biblical references in this thesis.

Tuma " The Trobriand Heaven: A Study Toward the Value of Traditional Trobriand Understanding of Tuma as Heaven. I.T. Ketobwau. From Words to Objects to Magic: Hard Words and the Boundaries of Social Interaction. If a Trobriand Islander sees these idioms as external manifestations of inner states, then can we interpret them as a kind of ethnopsychological theory about the body and its role for emotions, knowledge, thought, memory, and so on? Can these idioms be understood as representation of Trobriand ethnopsychological theory? View. Show abstract. The Trobriand Islanders' eschatological belief system explains what happens when someone dies. Bronislaw Malinowski described essentials of this eschatology in his articles "Baloma: the Spirits of the Dead in the Trobriand Islands" and "Myth in Primitive Psychology". There he also presented the Trobrianders' belief that a "baloma" can be reborn; he claimed that Trobrianders are unaware of the father's role as genitor. This volume presents a critical review of Malinowski's ethnography of Trobriand eschatology " finally settling the "virgin