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RELIGION AND NATION-STATE FORMATION IN MELANESIA:
1945 TO INDEPENDENCE

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Doctor of Philosophy
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Declaration

Except where otherwise indicated

this thesis is my own work

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30/10/89

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In this thesis I argue that, during the period 1945-1980, Christian missions contributed in ways both intentional and unintentional to the formation of the independent nation-states of Melanesia. Although the missions did not necessarily develop clear concepts of "state", the pursuit of their respective sectarian interests contributed significantly to the nature of South Pacific societies. It was on the basis of emergent Christian, colonial societies, that the nation-states were constructed. As a regional study, the intention has not been to examine all facets of the missionary presence, and its relationship with colonialism, but to identify regional similarities in the course of church-state relations.

Chapters 1-4 examine facets of the missions' return to the region following World War II. The swift and forced departure of civilians at the beginning of hostilities gave secular authorities the opportunity to dictate the terms by which missionaries returned. Thereafter, missions were consulted by colonial administrations when formulating new policies, and received funds to prosecute certain areas of governmental development and welfare programs, particularly in the provision of education and health services. The effect of numerous missions placing themselves among newly contacted tribes, for evangelistic purposes contributed to the consolidation of colonial authority in those areas.

Chapters 5-8 examine mission involvement in fostering, or responding to, areas of significant social change. It is argued that many missionaries sought to direct the nature of social, political and economic change, according to their vision of Christian society. Such values, where colonial administrations shared them, became government policy. There were social values and mission activities, however, with which governments did not agree, and which provided contexts for church-state conflict.

Chapters 9-12 examine some of the missions' responses to the challenge of secularism, and to the emergence of strong colonial states. It is argued that most missions sought to maintain their "sectarian autonomy" by concentrating resources on their networks of schools, and clerical training institutions; and sought to influence both society and the state through educating personnel for public service and political offices. The extent of continuing mission influence in Melanesian societies, from village to government level, is attributed partly to the effective development of a Melanesian clerisy.

In the concluding chapters, 13-15, the consequences of the missions' close identification with the progress of the secular states, through colonialism to independent nations, are considered. The missions' extensive involvement in the provision of social services led to an emphasis on the role of Christianity in attaining material development; their assumption that they shared power with colonial administrations led consequently to the active participation of some European, and many Melanesian clerics, in party politics. It is concluded that the "Christian nations" of Melanesia bear the marked influences of missionisation, but also face some unresolved dilemmas in sorting the religious content of Christianity from the European culture in which it was received.
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PREFACE

Although this is a study of small countries, having small populations, over a limited time period, it is at once a study too vast to portray within the specified limits of PhD research and dissertation. I therefore acknowledge at the outset the deficiencies of the present work. I write about Melanesia, but refer only briefly to New Caledonia and Fiji. To have included them would have rendered this regional survey of church-state relations unwieldy. The complexity of Fijian society requires a separate study. New Caledonia has a similar complexity, and cannot yet be counted among the independent Melanesian nation-states.

The limitations of undertaking documentary research in what are essentially oral societies became clear during investigation. Through use of written records this study became primarily one of Melanesian elites, than of peasantry. State-formation and church-building are both, I suggest, exercises in the production of elites. Given the opportunity for interdisciplinary work, the themes developed in this study would benefit from complementary anthropological investigation at grass-roots level. Although missionaries from the continents of Asia, Africa, Europe and the Americas, as well as from Australasia, have exerted their influence in Melanesia, my research was necessarily limited to source materials within the region.

My task was eased by the availability of well-ordered government archival records in Australia, Papua New Guinea and the Solomon Islands, and I acknowledge the assistance of their staff below. Non-official archives, on the other hand, present more of a challenge to the researcher who faces strict time limitations. Mission societies have no obligation to preserve, order, and maintain past records, and the historian owes a debt of gratitude to societies which spare limited resources to do so. In the course of examining mission records I have perused micro-fiche, and I have dusted cob-webs, silver-fish and other vermin from mouldering and unsorted, uncatalogued, correspondence files. I have examined mission records stored in filing cabinets, tea-chests, and beer cartons. In the latter instances, there was no possibility of assessing the depth and breadth of a mission’s collected papers, and often difficulty in obtaining records for the exact time and location I anticipated and required. Unfortunately, for instance, the archivist of the Methodist Church of New Zealand was unable to locate records for the Western Solomons in the critical years relating to Silas Eto’s break with the Methodist Western District; and working in the unsorted records of the Presbyterian Church of New Zealand, I searched in vain for files concerning the critical years in which the Jon Frum movement on Tanna most affected the work of the Presbyterian Mission.

My endeavours in other non-official sources were, on the hand, most productive, and my narrative makes first use of some materials relating to the post-war period derived from records of the Australian Baptist Missionary Society, the South Sea Evangelical Mission, the Presbyterian Missionary Society of New Zealand, and the Anglican Church of Vanuatu.

Many people assisted me in the course of research and fieldwork. I wish to thank, without reference to titles or offices, the following interviewees: in Fiji - Niel Soucy and John Foliaki; in Papua New Guinea - Violet Hoehnke, Saimon Gaius, Rodney Hancock, Arnold Smith, Gordon Stafford, Helmtrude Tewes; in New Zealand - George Carter, John Stanley Murray, Peter Wedde, Gordon Parsonson, and Philip Baker; in Solomon Islands: Gertrude Blum, Adrian Smith, Dan Stuyvenberg, and Marietta Teuluata; in Vanuatu - Roger Bowden, Tony Deamer, Dick Joel Peter, Chris Foote, Timothy Kio, Graham Kalsakau, Kathleen and Pastor Lingi, Tom Namake, Ann Naupa, John Naupa, Titus Path, Fr Sacco, Willie Samuel, Philip Shing, Hari Tevi, Tuk Nowali, and Peter Noah; and in Australia - Misty Baloiloi, John Black, Judy and Rex Fisher, Cecil Gribble, J. Graham Miller, Jack Sharp, Kay Williams, and David Wilson.
For granting me access to their archives, or otherwise assisting me, I thank the Staff of the following institutions: the Mitchell Library, and the State Library of New South Wales, Sydney; the Alexander Turnbull Library, Auckland; Auckland Municipal Library; University of Auckland Library; Wellington Central Library; Victoria University Library, Wellington; Macmillan Brown Collection, University of Canterbury; Hewitson Library, Knox College, Dunedin; Hocken Library, University of Otago, Dunedin; the Church of Melanesia and the Solomon Islands National Archives, Honiara; the Australian Baptist Missionary Society, Melbourne; the Anglican Board of Mission Library, Sydney; the Menzies Library, Australian National University; the Commonwealth Archives of Australia, Canberra; the Melanesian Institute, Goroka; and the North Solomons Provincial Government Library, Arawa. I wish to thank J. Brian Lee, Uniting Church in Australia, for access to the Methodist Overseas Mission Records in the Mitchell Library; Ross Carlyon, Executive Secretary of the South Sea Evangelical Mission for his assistance in Laeleton; Ila Harris, of the Department of Communication of the Presbyterian Church of New Zealand, for granting access to the archives of the Presbyterian Missionary of New Zealand; and George Carter, of the National Archives of the Methodist Church of New Zealand.

I have benefitted considerably from correspondence with Brian Macdonald-Milne, Charles Horne, John Garrett, Theo B. Cook, Gerhard O. Reitz, Dudley Deasey, Sir John Gutch, Ann Lilburne, Michael Myers, and Keith Dyer; and from conversations with Hugh Laracy, Simon Rae, Alan Davidson, Jim Veitch, Gordon Parsons, David Hilliard and Dennis Steley. I thank Mariette and Hosan Leong for allowing me to obtain a copy of their interview with Pelis Mazakmat and Michael Homerang, and thank Betty Palaso for the translation from Pidgin to English.

For help in various ways during field work 1986-87 I acknowledge the particular assistance and friendship of Bruce Saunders, Earl and Audrey Cameron, Charlie and Barbara Pierce, Mariette and Hosan Leong, and Richard and Verona Lucas - although the list of friends to whom I am indebted for kindness and assistance while in the Pacific is considerably longer than this, and certainly too vast to unravel here. My hope is to have the opportunity at some future time to thank these dear friends by returning the hospitality I received in abundance from them.

Over a period of four years I have appreciated the assistance provided by support staff in the Department of Pacific and Southeast Asian History: Julie Gordon, Karen Haines, Sally-Ann Leigh, and Dorothy McIntosh. Also, I have been privileged to attend seminars offered by student and staff members of this department, as well as by various other departments within the Research School of Pacific Studies. Field-work was only made possible by the generosity of the Research School, which I wish to acknowledge here.

As much as I have benefitted from institutional support my parents, David and Judy Hassall, have provided the essential spiritual and material support which made my education possible. I cannot thank them enough.

For academic assistance, as well as friendship, I owe much to Ron Adams, who acted as a patient advisor to the project and critical reader of draft materials, during his time in the Department of Pacific and Southeast Asian History and after, having taken a position at the Western Institute in Melbourne. I have learnt much from the honest and direct approach to scholarship demonstrated by Dr Adams since our first meeting in 1985.

I very much regret that my thesis was incomplete at the time Gavan Daws retired his position as Professor of Pacific History. Nevertheless, I thank Professor Daws for supporting the idea of a regional study, and for his comments on my earliest drafts. In the later stages of writing, various chapters were considerably improved following the critical and knowledgable advice of Dr Hank Nelson, for which I am most grateful.

Finally, I express my thanks to my supervisor Niel Gunson, doyen of supervisors, in whose presence I have experienced the spirit of the scholarly path.
ABBREVIATIONS

a/ - acting
AA - Australian Commonwealth Archives
ABM - Australian Board of Mission
ABMS - Australian Baptist Missionary Society
ADO - Assistant District Officer
ANGAU - Australian New Guinea Administrative Unit
APBM - Australian Presbyterian Board of Mission
APCM - Asia Pacific Christian Mission
ASOPA - Australian School of Pacific Administration
AV - Anglican Church of Vanuatu
BSIP - British Solomon Islands Protectorate
CD - Census Division
CLTC - Christian Leaders Training College
CM - Church of Melanesia
CMML - Christian Missions in Many Lands
CRTS - Commonwealth Reconstruction and Retraining Scheme
CWS - Catholic Welfare Society
DAC - District Advisory Council
DASF - Department of Agriculture, Stock and Fisheries
DC - District Commissioner
DDA - Department of District Administration (in 1969 became a division of the Department of the Administrator)
DDSNA - Department of District Services and Native Affairs
DEO - District Education Officer
DH - Diocese of Honiara (Marist)
DLSM - Department of Lands, Surveys and Mines
DNA - Department of Native Affairs (PNG)
DNA - Department of District and Native Affairs (SI)
DNAD - Department of Native Affairs and Development
DNG - Diocese of New Guinea (Anglican)
DO - District Officer
EA - Evangelical Alliance
ELC - Evangelical Lutheran Church of Papua New Guinea
HC - High Commissioner
LGC  - Local Government Council
LMS  - London Missionary Society
MCA  - Methodist Church of Australia
MCC  - Melanesian Council of Churches
MCNZ - Methodist Church of New Zealand
MM  - Melanesian Mission
MOM  - Methodist Overseas Mission
MNZ - Methodist Missionary Society of New Zealand
MSC - Congregation of Missionaries of the Sacred Heart
MVT - Methodist Church of Australasia. Victoria and Tasmania Conference
OFM - Order of Friars Minor (Capuchin)
OIC - Officer in Charge
OM - Oceania Marist Province
PCNZ - Presbyterian Church of New Zealand
PCV - Presbyterian Church of Vanuatu
PMB - Pacific Manuscripts Bureau
PO - Patrol Officer
PRS - Pacific Regional Seminary
PTC - Pacific Theological College
RAP - Restricted Area Permit
RC - Resident Commissioner
SDA - Seventh Day Adventist
SHD - Southern Highlands District
SICA - Solomon Islands Christian Association
SIL - Summer Institute of Linguistics
SM - Society of Mary (Marist)
SSEM - South Sea Evangelical Mission
SVD - Society of the Divine Word
TPNG - Territory of Papua New Guinea
UCA - Uniting Church of Australia
UFM - Unevangelized Fields Mission
VCC - Vanuatu Christian Council
WHD - Western Highlands District
WPHC - Western Pacific High Commission
A NOTE ON OFFICIAL TERMS

From 1921 Australia ruled New Guinea by Mandate of the League of Nations. The Territory of **Papua and New Guinea** first came under joint administration in July 1949. A Legislative Council was established in November, and was replaced by the House of Assembly, which had an elected indigenous majority, in June 1964. The Territories were renamed "**Papua New Guinea**" in July 1971. Self Government was granted in December 1973, and full independence came on 16 September 1975.

The islands of the **New Hebrides** were jointly administered by Britain and France under the 1914 Anglo-French Protocol, which followed conventions dating to 1887. From 1922 the group was administered by Resident Commissioners by order in Council, and in 1955 an Advisory Council was established with British and French Resident Commissioners presiding over a bi-annual meeting of British, French and Melanesian representatives. The New Hebrides became the Republic of **Vanuatu** on 30 July 1980.

The Protectorate of the **British Solomon Islands** dates to 1843. Some northern Islands formed part of a German Protectorate between 1845 and 1885. In 1960 a new constitution was enacted, by which a Legislative Council was established, and to which members were elected from 1965. The British Solomon Islands Order of 1975 changed the name of the dependent territory to **Solomon Islands**. Internal self-government was attained in 1976 and independence was attained on 7 July 1978.
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INTRODUCTION

In 1945 there had been no talk of independence for the territories of Papua and New Guinea, the British Protectorate of the Solomon Islands, and certainly not for the Anglo-French condominium in the New Hebrides. Rapid social and political transformation in the subsequent four decades, however, brought into existence the independent nation-states of Papua New Guinea (1975), Solomon Islands (1978) and Vanuatu (1980). In the Western Pacific, only the French overseas territory of New Caledonia retains its dependent political status.

The strong presence of Christian missions in all facets of Melanesian societies - social, political, economic and intellectual, as well as religious - is well known and documented. The concern here is not to produce a history of missions. Rather, this is an attempt at understanding, for the period 1945-1980, the power-relations between two dominant Western elements in the colonial process: civil administrations, as agencies of secular power that possess ultimate political control over the affairs of a territory; and missionary organisations, which acknowledge, usually, the temporal authority of the civil administration, but which seek to provide spiritual, moral, or ethical guidance to their adherents.

This is thus an enquiry into the relations between "civil" and "religious", or "sacred" and "secular" powers - although care must be taken with the use of the latter terms, which have developed so much complexity in the modern period. It could be labelled a study in church-state relations, excepting that there is an added dynamic: the religious powers are dependent mission organisations engaged in efforts to become autonomous churches; and the civil powers are colonial administrations with mandates of varying intensity to become self-governing, or independent, states. They are "churches" and "states" in various stages of formation.

The discourse between these evolving churches and states generally occurred for either one of two reasons. Firstly, there was an overlap in their respective programs, with Colonial administrations and mission organisations communicating with each other on matters of mutual concern. The dominant mutual concerns in the post-war period, which thus formed the basis for most church-state dialogue, were the provision of welfare services: health and education.

The second occasion for discourse concerned moments of crisis. The missions communicated

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1 A general survey of the modern period is given in Charles W. Forman, The Island Churches of the South Pacific: Emergence in the Twentieth Century, (USA, 1982) also, Garrett, in progress.

2 Protestant missions generally espoused the formula dating to Henry Venn, of seeking to establish a self-governing, self-supporting, self-propagating indigenous church. This was the goal that John Kuder, for example, Supt. of the Lutheran Mission, gave to the Australian administration in Papua New Guinea as being the object of the Lutheran church's work in the Territory: TPNG. 310 - 33/4/2.
with civil powers their concern on issues which most affected them. Occasionally governments shared their concern, but, significantly, it did not always do so. Put another way, the missions often took issues that concerned them to the government: less frequently did the government take issues of concern to the missions. What does this say about the relationship between the two centres of power?

Power cannot be possessed absolutely. It can be attracted, retained, or lost, by degrees. It is ethereal in the sense that it surrounds, and cannot be contained. "Power", in the social sense, can be ascribed specifically to politics, economics or morality, but these manifestations of power cannot be completely isolated one from another. Encoded in the terms "religious power" and "moral influence", of the missions in Melanesia, are references to other sources of power and influence. The missions sought, exerted, and attempted to retain, in addition to moral power, political power, economic power, and knowledge-power. Because social power, here defined, has many dimensions, this allegation about mission intentions is neither negative nor subversive. It is the purpose for which social power is engaged that determines the subversive or constructive nature of power's use. No matter how loudly the missionary spoke of the separation of church and state, some desire to predict and control the course of social relations was present.

There are three dominant themes in the course of relations between religious and civil powers in the post-war period. The first of these is the emergence and growth of the civil-state. The relatively non-interventionist colonial administrations of the 1940s, within which missions exercised a great degree of autonomy, were to become in the 1970s independent nation states in which mission autonomy was considerably circumscribed. Missions which had existed in isolation from civil authority lost some of their social functions, and people became aware of the existence of two separate yet interconnected powers, church and government.

The growth of the civil state led to greater interaction between church and state. Channels of communication were improved and a perception of common interests grew. The suspicion and sometimes hostility prominent in mission attitudes toward the secular state in the 1940s evolved into a greater accommodation with it. The ethic that welded together the civil state was nationalism. The quest for nationhood has long been a religious quest, and has not been confined to Christianity: Islam has also sought social order by uniting tribes into nations. In the present century, the Christian impetus to nationalism remained, especially in the Pacific.

Scherer referred in 1939 to the Christian Church as the "universal nation", and suggested that "there can be a church for a nation and a church in a nation, but not a national church". Christian apologists have thus been jealous of the use of the term "nationalism", and most would distinguish it sharply from the secular nationalism which has swept through the Pacific. National sentiment in Melanesia, once aroused, provided the political will for the amalgamation of diverse traditions, belief

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systems and ethnicities into single states, and was accompanied by a general increase in the participation of people in the affairs of the state. There was an increased desire for self-determination, and a search for nationally unifying languages and traditions, together with an influx of scientific and technological advances, improved communications, greater geographic and social mobility, as well as increases in religious toleration and urbanisation (if not industrialisation). Most importantly, there was a secularisation of political and cultural life, and the civil state established significant welfare programs. With few modifications, Melanesian nationalism emerged bearing similar traits to models of Western nationalism.4

These themes suggest the contours of mission involvement in the emerging nations, even if the missions' motivation for involvement was more likely to have been self-interest, than part of a conscious effort to help consolidate the civil state. Efforts by missionaries to standardise religious beliefs and rituals, cultural practices, festivals and languages, whether of a clan, region, or island, occurred for practical as much as for theological reasons. Little thought was given at the time to the relevance of these "practical" changes to the tasks of the colonial government. Max Warren made the point that missions, whether they realised it or not, stood in some relation to the state,5 and such was certainly the case in Melanesia, where activities undertaken by missions in pursuit of their mission-oriented objectives, generally benefitted the state at the same time.6

The traditional "stateless" societies of Melanesia, generally based on kinship - small family units, or lineal descent groups with moveable boundaries - were welded through Western intervention into nation-states.7 These "secondary states" (for they were formed through outside contact rather than as with "pristine states", through internal development) were based on an emergent stratified society which required, for its maintenance, formal instruments of social control: a bureaucracy, military, treasury, taxation, ritualists, producers and consumers of resources. In this process religion has often provided new ideas of hierarchy and subordination and a new worldview, legitimating the social order, and the role of the individual within it. In the colonial states of Melanesia, through their tutelage to independent nation-states, the Christian missions proposed a new moral framework, within which

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6 Ballard, writing of Papua New Guinea, suggested that encounters with all intruding agents of European culture, whether in official employment or as missionaries, miners, planters or labour recruiters "were encounters with the state". J.A. Ballard, "Ethnicity and Access in Papua New Guinea", (ms), 11.

7 Use of the term "Nation" is problematic. Barth's description of the Baktaman as "a nation of 183 persons occupying a tract of mountain rainforest near the centre of New Guinea" uses the term "nation" to describe the sovereignty of the group: Frederic Barth, Ritual Among the Baktaman of New Guinea, (New Haven 1975). 15. Smart suggests "a nation wishes to possess its own territory and to administer itself, undominated by others". Although, in Melanesia, this definition is as appropriate for the description of separatist and regionalist sentiments, as much as nationalist, it is sufficient as a broad definition: Ninian Smart, "Religion, Myth, and Nationalism", in Peter H. Merkl & Ninian Smart (eds), Religion and Politics in the Modern World, (New York, 1983).
Melanesians could be assisted in understanding the new social order.

Some have found the idea of "nationalism" incompatible with traditional Melanesian thought, and wonder if Melanesian societies have sufficient commonality of values, practices and beliefs, to survive the transition from colonies to independent nation-states. Where nationalism is found, it is identified with a conception of society compatible with Christianity, and often rejects aspects of traditional Melanesian culture. The "Christian nation" is, perhaps, that part of a territory and of its cultures, that have been effectively Christianised, and have absorbed Western/Christian values.

The subtle difference between the notions of the "Christian nation" and the "nation-state" is embodied, geographically, in mission boundaries which did not necessarily co-incide with those of colonial, and later, national, states. The Melanesian colonies each had a unitary, permanent political base, but a multiple, permeable, religious superstructure. A sense of "territoriality" accompanied the missionary task, and the geographic and demographic "fields" within which missions attempted to exclusively evangelise, educate, heal and administer - determined by their human and capital resources, and propagative energy - were not always identical with the boundaries of colonial states.

Of the two Anglican Provinces in Melanesia, one includes mainland New Guinea (with five diocese), first established in 1898; while the other, the Province of Melanesia (also with five diocese), first established by Bishop John Selwyn in 1891, included the New Hebrides, the Solomon Islands, New Caledonia, and the New Guinea islands. Anglicans experienced a continuing dilemma over whether to retain New Britain, New Ireland and Bougainville in the Diocese of Melanesia, or to transfer them to the Diocese of New Guinea, to conform with the New Guinea-Solomon Islands border. Bishop Baddeley felt that New Britain and Bougainville should be transfered to the Diocese of New Guinea, and this occurred in the late 1940s.

Catholic missions also evolved across inter-colonial boundaries. There are six Catholic Archdiocese in Melanesia: Port Moresby; Madang, Mt Hagen; Rabaul (which formerly included Solomon Islands); Honiara (Solomon Islands); and Noumea (which includes the diocese of Port Vila).

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9 Several missions received permission to operate across colonial boundaries. Priests from the Anglican Diocese of New Guinea, for example, had regular contact with Torres Strait Islanders, in Australian territory, and priests from the Diocese of Melanesia travelled from Ontong Java in the Solomon Islands, to minister at Nukumanu, in Papua New Guinea.


11 The 1930 Lambeth Conference discussed the possibility of establishing a Diocese of New Guinea, Melanesia, Polynesia, and Honolulu, and Bishop Strong continued to advocate the formation of an Anglican Diocese for the region. P.N.W. Strong, Out of Great Tribulation, (East Cape, 1947).

12 Georges Delbos, The Mustard Seed: From a French Mission to a Papuan Church, (Port Moresby, 1985); Ralph Witgen, The Founding of the Roman Catholic Church in Oceania 1825 to 1850, (Canberra, 1979). Vicariates Apostolic became dioceses in most of the Pacific area in 1966.
The United Church of Papua New Guinea and the Solomon Islands, a supra-national Protestant church, evolved from the union of missions which operated in both colonies. Methodist missionaries had for long complained about the colonial boundary separating Bougainville and the Western Solomons. A letter from Kieta to Munda, a distance of 180 miles, which had to go from Kieta to Rabaul, to Sydney, to Honiara, and finally to Munda, provoked the question "when will governments look at people rather than fences!"

Seventh Day Adventist missions were likewise established on a regional basis. Until 1972 the Coral Sea Union Mission included the British Solomon Islands, New Britain, New Ireland, Manus and Bougainville: after that date, the Papua New Guinea Union Mission was created, encompassing the entire territory of Papua New Guinea, and the Western Pacific Union Mission incorporated the Solomon Islands, the New Hebrides, New Caledonia, and the Gilbert and Ellice Islands. The South Sea Evangelical Mission was the only major mission in Melanesia to develop into two autonomous national churches, (the SSEC of Papua New Guinea, and the SSEC of the Solomon Islands), rather than into one supra-national church. Numerous national Protestant churches evolved from missions which operated in only one colony: the five Presbyterian missions contributing to the Presbyterian Church of the New Hebrides provide one such instance.

The proliferation of missions, sects and denominations in Melanesia provides the second dominant theme in the post-war discourse between church and state. The rapid inflow of ambassadors of a wide variety of Christian theologies in the 1950s and 1960s were to upset the delicate politico-religious balance established between the few missions present prior to the war. In 1939 eleven mission societies were active in Papua and New Guinea, five in the Solomon Islands, and five in the New Hebrides. By the mid 1950s these numbers of societies in the colonies were to rise to 21, 6 and 9 respectively, and by the 1970s, to approximately 60 in Papua New Guinea, 10 in the Solomon Islands,
and 10 in the New Hebrides.16

The presence of so many Christian organisations had several implications for the civil administration. Their ever-expanding presence assisted governments in the pacification of little-contacted Melanesian societies in areas remote from the centres of colonial administration, and their resources in personnel and material allowed governments to provide increased welfare services. But the presence of so many alternative interpretations of the gospel also decreased the hold that any one mission could have over a community. Whereas previously, mission adherents had known of no other branch of Christianity than their own, the fact of Christian denominationalism - which could not have been kept from Melanesians forever - gradually eroded the "theocratic" environments which nevertheless continued in some places into the 1960s and 1970s.17

No one branch of Christianity can claim to have been the unique influence on Melanesian societies. Many among them have claimed a temporary ascendancy within a culture area, or geographic setting, but not all claims to have left an indelible impression are valid: other influences have also been present. Most importantly, the influence of traditional culture has continued, even when sometimes submerged beneath behaviour that was expedient in the circumstances. The new, so called "Western" or "modern" influences that have reached Melanesia in the present century as well as in the one before it, have not come from a single point: the Western influence has been a combination of nationalist, secularist, and religious influences.18

Numerous societies, both Protestant and Catholic, had been attracted to the Pacific in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries by the opportunity they saw to establish "corpus Christianum", a community of believers united in belief and practice and free of the traumatic sectarianism that afflicted post-reformation Europe. Virtual "theocracies" were established in some parts of the Pacific, where legal codes and constitutions emphasising the Ten Commandments were implemented as law.19

16 BSIP. "Religion and Education", Report on the Census of the Population of the BSIP. (England, 1970). 84. Other figures have been calculated from David Barrett, World Christian Encyclopaedia, (Oxford, 1982). These figures attempt to distinguish mission societies from churches, European or Melanesian, which are not involved with mission societies. The situation is further complicated if voluntary agencies are also to be considered. Religious affiliations and institutions are surveyed in Leonora Mosende Douglas (ed), World Christianity: Oceania, (USA, 1986). A map of mission areas in Papua New Guinea is given in Carl Loeliger, "Christian Missions", in David King & Stephen Ranck, (eds), Papua New Guinea Atlas: A Nation in Transition, (Port Moresby, 1982).

17 John Kolia reports villages in which church deacons, in recent years, had the power to decide when crops were to be harvested, to meet the needs of inter-village church celebrations, John Kolia, "Notes on a Village Court, Yap-Ambu", 3:4 Nov 1976, 247.

18 Western expansion was driven not merely by an industrial imperative: Gunson refers to a "social doctrine of the cross", by which English evangelicals, among others, attempted to "civilise" the peoples among whom they moved. They believed not just in the superiority of their religion, but of the European culture with which it was for them so implicitly related. W.N. Gunson, Messengers of Grace: Evangelical Missionaries in the South Seas 1797-1860, (Melbourne, 1978).

19 Forman describes the establishment of missionary-influenced Kingdoms in Tahiti, Mangareva, Hawaii, the Cook Islands, Tonga, Wallis, and Fiji: see Charles Forman, Island Churches, 9; Gunson, Messengers of Grace, esp. ch.15, "Advisors in affairs of State". Theocratic communities can only be said to have existed where the head of the community was "priest, ruler and intermediary with heaven all at once", T.M. Parker, Christianity and the State in the Light of History, (London 1953), 8. This was
In order to prolong the influence of each mission over its respective "field", comity agreements were entered into, defining and limiting the expansion of participating mission bodies. Division of territory on a wide scale had begun in the 1840s when representatives of the Melanesian, LMS and Wesleyan missions agreed that the LMS occupy the Loyalty Islands, the Presbyterians occupy the southern islands of the New Hebrides and the Melanesian Mission occupy the northern New Hebrides and the eastern Solomon Islands.

The impact of this agreement on the geographic pattern of denominational allegiance was still visible in recent years. In the late 1960s thirteen New Hebridean islands were recognised as Presbyterian in adherence and the mission had 90% adherence on a further twelve islands. Ten islands in the Torres and Banks Islands had totally Anglican populations and three others in the group had populations at least 90% Anglican. Thus, of sixty-four islands in the archipelago, thirty-eight were almost totally occupied by a single mission.

In Papua New Guinea the first comity agreement among the LMS, Wesleyan, and Anglican missions was co-ordinated in 1890 by the Governor, Sir William MacGregor, and in the 1950s missions entering the highlands districts and the remote Sepik district continued to make comity agreements. The Methodists and the Unevangelised Fields Mission agreed, for instance, that the latter occupy the area west of Tari in the Southern Highlands. Anglicans refrained from commencing mission work in Southwest Papua, between Mabaduan and the Irian Jaya border, until invited to do so in 1966 by the LMS, whose "area" it was by tradition.

The remoteness of numerous small outer islands led to their being influenced by a single mission. Emira, Lou, Tench and Mussau Islands were Seventh Day Adventist enclaves from 1931 into

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not always the intention of missions, even if it was affected. A state can only be considered theocratic if it had theological origins, and a design based on a theological conception of society. More often, missions dominated a region for more pragmatic reasons, for example, in absence of an assertive colonial authority: Anne A. Koskinen, Missionary Influence as a Political Factor in the Pacific Islands, (Helsinki, 1953).


22 For a concise description of this period see Torben Christensen & William R. Hutchison, Missionary Ideologies in the Imperialist Era: 1880-1920, (Copenhagen, 1982).

23 David Hand to D.M. Cleland, Administrator, 11 March, 1966. TPNG, 9369 - 40/2/7.
Figure 5: Comity agreements between missions in Western Division of Papua (source: LMS Papua District Committees, Annual Reports 1950).
the 1970s; 24 Yule Island and Kairiru Islands were thoroughly Roman Catholic domains; while the islands of Milne Bay were predominantly Methodist (later United Church) or Anglican. The Tsoi and Tingwon island groups, New Hanover, comprised entirely United Church adherents in 1970, while off the northern coast of New Guinea, Manam and Karkar Islands remained Lutheran preserves. 25

On the mainland, several remote districts were influenced by a sole mission until others began to arrive in the late 1940s. The Divine Word missionaries operated alone from Kairiru Island, in the Sepik District, until the arrival of representatives of the Assemblies of God and South Sea Evangelical missions.

Similar conditions existed in the Solomon Islands. In the 1940s when the Methodists worked mainly, but not exclusively, in the Western Solomons, District chairman John Goldie advised Methodist teachers on Guadalcanal not to expand into other areas in competition with other missions. 26 The Melanesian and Methodist missions agreed that the former would not work in the Western Solomons, if the latter retired from Ysabel, 27 and a Methodist - SEM comity agreement regarding the Western District was so effective that the latter mission sought government advice before commencing mission activity there in the 1970s. 28 The Church of Melanesia continued in the 1970s to be the only Christian denomination adhered to on Tikopia, Ugi, Santa Cruz, Anuta, Utupua, Vanikolo, Reef and Duff Islands, and retained almost total loyalty on Santa Ysabel. 29 Several missions continued to own and occupy small islands, particularly for use as schools and Bible colleges. 30

On Malaita and Guadalcanal, where several missions, (the Melanesian, South Sea Evangelical, Seventh Day Adventist, and Roman Catholic) were established, rules were proposed to regulate interaction between the mission communities. The SEM missionary Norman Deck proposed that missions refrain from entering, or seeking to enter, a village already occupied by another mission. They


26 Goldie to Scriven, 15 August 1941. MCNZ Solomon Islands District Correspondence with Rev. J.F. Goldie 1922-1951.


28 The Solomon Islands Government said that the agreement was "no longer binding under the new circumstances, in view of the freedom with people these days..." Michael Maelia. SEM, Solomon Islands Miscellaneous.


30 In the 1970s, eg, the Melanesian Mission commenced economic development projects on its island, Tasia, off Ysabel.
were not to place a teacher in it, nor build a church in it. Further, they were not to accept excommunicated members of another mission; not to employ members of other missions as teachers, or on ships; and were to avoid intermarriage and religious controversy.\(^3\) Visitors to Melanesia are familiar with this intense identification between church and village.

In addition to the many Western missionary organisations attracted to post-war Melanesia, there emerged not only cargo cults, whose members were mocked for their ignorance of the complexity of industrial society, but also more complex politico-religious movements - whose members understood something of what prosperity and authority might be theirs, and of how to obtain it. Movements such as Maasina Rule and the Mataungan Association, and individual leaders such as Tommy Kabu in the Purari Delta, and lesser figures such as Apelis Mazakmat on New Ireland, brought a new complexity to the mission field, and the missions were partly responsible for the emergence of such men.

Attempts by missions to protect their "sectarian autonomy" were related to the third, and most prominent, theme in the church-state discourse, the spread of secularism and the attempt by missionaries to either prevent it, suppress it, or at least, direct it. No battalion of the missionary phalanx was exempt from the battle against secularism - that environment in which people no longer make religion the guiding rule of their life - which they rightly perceived to threaten religious belief and consequently their religious authority. This concern reinforced not only attempts by missions to retain exclusive control over peoples and regions, but also suspicion of the motives of civil administrations.

While women were present in all missionary endeavours, they did not participate equally in questions of power. Their efforts in the field were often praised, but they were not included as equals in decision making processes. The Presbyterian J.G. Miller noted in 1947 that "wives do not rank as 'missionaries', though they are required to fill in the same application form as the male workers, and go through the formality of being accepted."\(^3\) Miller's observation, true enough for all mission societies in Melanesia, had its implications for the position of women in the relations between church and state. If women negotiated with colonial administrations, it was most likely to do with routine medical or educational matters, rather than with larger policy issues.\(^3\) There were also implications for the transmission of Christianity to what are essentially male-dominated societies: "Like indigenous cults,

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\(^3\) SSEM, Missionaries 1941. Non-observance of this mission protocol and comity agreements by the Catholic and SDA missions (and at various times by others) contributed to their gradual ineffectiveness. In 1974 SICA sponsored a meeting with an SDA representative to discuss "Things the SDA's are doing in some of our villages". UCPNGSI, "Solomon Islands Region, August 1974", MCNZ.


\(^3\) For this reason the Melanesian territories were not involved in conferences of the Pan-Pacific and South East Asia Women's Association, the tenth of which was held at Nuku'alofa, in 1964: Marie Lamb, Pacific Journal of Theology, 12, September 1964.
Christianity is dispensed by men".\textsuperscript{34}

The mainline Protestant and Catholic missions each accepted the traditional European worldview, that "church" and "state" were separate but equally necessary institutions, in which people worked for one or the other, and could not work easily for both. But in colonial environments where missions had been responsible for the major contribution to social development, the traditional division between church and state was often less distinct. The missions had entered the Pacific over several centuries for the purpose of saving "savages" from the grasp of errant co-religionists, and from the enticements of a fallen Western culture. They were not, now that they had established what they regarded as such an effective hold over sections of the population of Melanesia (as also over other parts of the Pacific), going to let their efforts be drained by the pagan pragmatism of so many secular officials.

Thus in the 1940s most missions had such exclusive influence in their sphere of operations that they disliked what they considered to be the intrusions into their affairs by secular authorities, and they perceived a sharp distinction between mission and government offices. The move by the Methodist medical doctor, A.G. Rutter, into the position of Senior Medical Officer with the BSIP Administration, to cite one instance, was regarded by the Methodist mission as a "tragic defection".

In the 1950s attitudes toward the civil administration became more friendly, at least within Protestant thinking - significant improvements in relations between Catholic missions and civil administrations followed the Second Vatican Council. Even with church-state relations improving, missions that also operated in colonies on the Indian sub-continent, in Africa and in Southeast Asia, realised the global nature of both secularism and nationalism (and communism), and knew that self-governing, or independent secular states would inevitably emerge in Melanesia.\textsuperscript{35}

The influence of the "secular state" did not spread across Melanesia in a uniform way: the intensity of government influence decreased as the distances from the capitals and provincial centres increased, so that on the more remote islands, and within the most rugged interiors, the "state" continued to mean no more than periodic visits from a government headman who collected taxes, inspected villages, and imposed fines.\textsuperscript{36} In such places, the "lotu" was by comparison much more intrusive in the lives of the people.

Whatever period of comparative isolation from secular authority a mission previously enjoyed, it had eventually to determine its attitude toward the secular state. Few missionaries were comfortable

\textsuperscript{34} Lisette Josephides, "Equal but Different? The Ontology of Gender among Kewa", \textit{Oceania}, 53:3, March 1984, 296.


\textsuperscript{36} Geoffrey White, "Bigmen and Church Men: Social Images in Santa Isabel, Solomon Islands", PhD, (University of California, 1978), 199.
with having to contemplate issues of state, and of their relationship with it; but theological guidelines were available. According to Peter and Paul, the secular power existed only with Divine sanction, and the duty of Christian citizens was to obey the laws of the government. Such had been the essence of Luther's teachings on obedience to the state, and was arguably the basis for most mission-administration interaction in the period under consideration. There were, in addition, Christ's declaration "My Kingdom is not of this world" (John 18:36) and the injunction "Render therefore unto Caesar the things which are Caesar's and unto God the things that are God's" (Matthew 22:21, Mark 12:17), which lead clerics, both Catholic and Protestant, to believe the missionary had no mandate to change society, to decapitate kings, overthrow republics, or to establish modern democracy, even though one or other of those things might help his own work. 

Seventh Day Adventist missions taught a complete separation of church and state, to the extent of not accepting government funding for the maintenance of their medical and educational projects. At the same time, they taught complete loyalty to the secular authorities. Anglican missions tended to assume the position of "state religion" and, along with other Protestant groups - notably Methodists, Presbyterians and the London Missionary Society, assumed the mantle of "loyal opposition" to the civil administration within colonial boundaries.

Less frequently, but more spectacularly, missionaries entered the field possessing an apocalyptic view of the world, inspired by the Book of Revelation. Short of an active call to rebellion, the apocalyptic notion presumed that earthly power was opposed to the Kingdom of God and would be destroyed by God at the "imminent" climax of history. Apart from Melanesian politico-religious movements, the Watchtower Association (Jehovah's Witnesses) came closest to embracing this idea, and its relations with colonial administrations were antipathetic, whether in Fiji in the 1930s, the Solomon Islands, or the New Guinea Protectorate.

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37 See W.D.J. Cargill Thompson, The Political Thought of Martin Luther, (Great Britain 1984), esp. chap. VI, "Luther's Teaching on Political Obedience and Rebellion".

32 Tim O'Neill, And We, the People: Ten Years with the Primitive Tribes of New Guinea, (London 1961), 31-2.


48 Pastor H. White, Superintendent of the Coral Sea Union Mission, assured Governor J.K. Murray that the purpose of his mission was "to prepare the native peoples to meet the impact of civilisation in a proper manner and to remain loyal subjects of His Majesty's Government under all circumstances". White to Murray, 12 July 1950. TPNG 15-8/172.

41 The Protectorate of New Guinea, for example, had been first proclaimed in 1884 at Poreporena, the mission-station of Dr Lawes, of the LMS.
Islands in the 1950s or New Ireland in the 1970s.42

This study commences with the close of the Second World War, since that epic conflict was the catalyst for significant change - social, economic, political, intellectual, and spiritual - in Pacific Islands societies. The physical destruction and spiritual suffering brought by the war exposed the ideological barrier between the black and white races. "The conviction has deepened", reported a New Hebridean Presbyterian synod in 1945, "that this inevitable disturbance of the status quo has ...led to a new conception of the capacity and courage of the native congregations".43 Although belief in the racial superiority of Europeans remained strong among the white colonial "mastas", the attitude of Europeans toward the black races changed over the next four decades, (if ever so slowly), away from a sense of absolute superiority. New attitudes brought new policies. Before the war, the missions had been left free to do as they wished in regard to development. Now, colonial administrations took charge of social, economic and political development to an unprecedented degree. A struggle commenced, in which missions attempted to return to their mission fields across Melanesia and regain the influence and prestige that in former times had been theirs; while colonial governments attempted to balance the interests of missions with the interests of European capital, the aspirations of the indigenous population, and of course their own strategic interests.


Figure 1: Map of the Melanesian Mission (Southern Province).

MELANESIA

A Solomon Archdeaconry (Solomon Is. Protectorate)
B Southern Archdeaconry (Gondominium Govt Br's)

SOLOMON ISLANDS

PACIFIC OCEAN

REEF &
SANTA CRUZ ISLANDS

NEREINE

TORRES IS.

BANKS ISLANDS

NEW HEBRIDES ISLANDS

AUSTRALIA

NEW GUINEA

MISSION STATIONS UNDERLINED give Mission
THE NEW HEBRIDES

WHERE THE NEWZEALANDERS WORK.

1. The Rev. E.G. Jansen,
   B.C. "Own Worker."

2. Miss V. McLean

3. The Rev. A.G. Horwell,
   B.C. "Own Worker."

4. Miss J. Dick
5. Miss B. Hay
6. Miss R. Hewitt
7. Mrs. V. Ridley
8. The Rev. J.R. Hislop
9. Miss A. Lilburne
10. Mrs. J. O. Cromie *
11. The Rev. W. D. Francis
12. Mr. B. R. Kinkston
13. Miss A. F. Rush
14. Miss W. Biggs
15. Miss E. C. Pearse
   * Two Fijian Workers
16. The Rev. R. W. Murray
17. Mr. A. M. Gibson *
   * Australians in N.Z. positions.

DID YOU KNOW

1. That Santo is one of the few places
   in Melanesia where pottery was
   made?
2. That there are no printed newspapers
   or radio broadcasts in the New
   Hebrides?
3. That over 50 Bible Class Volunteers
   have worked in the New Hebrides
   since 1962?
4. That there is only one Condominium
   in the world?

THE NEW HEBRIDES

EDUCATIONAL CENTRES.

1. District Schools.
   (3 New Zealand and 10 Australian)
   a. Lamenu
   b. Napagasale
   c. Ulei
2. Onesua High School.
4. Tangoa Training Institute.

MEDICAL CENTRES.

A. Vaemali Hospital.
B. Silimauri Health Centre.
C. Nguna Clinic.
D. Faton Memorial Hospital.
MAP SHOWING ALL MISSION STATIONS OF BOTH NORTH AND SOUTH SOLOMONS.