

CHAPTER THREE - The Dani Church

The Indonesian Republic has five principles, better known as the *Pancasila*, as its basic philosophy. The first principle, and the one that concerns this thesis, is that of a belief in one omnipotent God. The others include, in order, humanity that is just and civilised, unity of Indonesia, guided democracy and social justice for all Indonesian citizens.²⁰⁵ Included in the principle of one Almighty God, is the requirement that all Indonesian citizens claim a major religion as their own.²⁰⁶ The choice may be made from the five world religions of Islam, Buddhism, Hinduism and Christianity, either Protestantism or Catholicism.²⁰⁷ Although the *Pancasila* was created under Sukarno,²⁰⁸ Indonesia's first President, the requirement that everyone possess a religion in Indonesia today has been greatly emphasised, particularly following the downfall of Sukarno and Suharto's succession. The transition followed events which brought about the elimination of communism in Indonesia along with the death of numerous communists, suspected communist supporters and friends of communists. Many Chinese Indonesians were captured and tortured as the links between the communist party of Indonesia and Chinese communism exacerbated the racial and political hatred and fear many Indonesians had of the Chinese. Where there was a strong Islamic representation, the massacres of communists were particularly intense, not merely because of ideological differences but also for the purpose of revenge. As communism is theoretically atheistic, it became increasingly important to ensure that citizens aligned themselves with one of the major religions in order to free themselves from the possibility of being branded a communist and being victimised at a community or official level. Neighbours would be able to determine one's religious standing as they observe the involvement of other citizens, or lack of it, in any religious activities. At an official level, it would be obvious if any citizen were either atheistic or communist as every citizen is required by law to carry an identification card or KTP (*Kartu Penduduk*) on which their professed religion is stated. Any former communists have this

²⁰⁵ J.Echols & H.Shadily *Kamus Indonesia Inggris*, (Penerbit PT Gramedia, 1989) third ed., p.406

²⁰⁶ W.Bonar Sidjabat *Religious Tolerance and the Christian Faith*, (BPK Gunung Mulia, 1982), pp.42 & 54

²⁰⁷ M.Natsir *Islam dan Kristen di Indonesia*, (Media Dakwah, 1980), p.1

²⁰⁸ Bonar Sidjabat *Religious Tolerance.*, p.70

stamped clearly on their card. In Irian Jaya however, communism was not a problem, as it was not present and so the people were not influenced by it. Even when the Indonesian Republic was going through its crisis in 1965, those who were in Irian Jaya during the interim period of the Indonesian government were relatively unaware of it.

The first principle of the *Pancasila* has also come to include the requirement of religious tolerance amongst the adherents of different religions living in the one country. Sukarno stated "By the recognition that God is omnipotent, almighty, it actually has already taken the positive stand that everything that exists is from and by God ... At the same time it also recognises the rights of citizens to worship one and the same God in their various and different ways."²⁰⁹ Indonesia is quite proud of its emphasis on religious tolerance. The majority of Indonesians are Muslims, although many of the 90% often quoted are nominal Muslims and, unlike the more devout, would not welcome the establishment of an Islamic State in Indonesia.²¹⁰ President Suharto, while formerly not a great supporter of Islam himself has given Indonesians and other observers throughout the world the impression that his support for Islam is increasing. In 1990 he completed the Haj, the Muslim pilgrimage to Mecca. On the sixth of December of that year the vision of Suharto "clad in distinctive mosque attire, striking a large mosque drum (*bedug*) to call to order the first ever meeting of the Association of Indonesian Muslim intellectuals (ICMI, *Ikatan Cendekiawan Muslim se-Indonesia*)" was broadcast throughout Indonesia.²¹¹ His endorsement of ICMI, and the increasing strength of this association, has been regarded with suspicion by sections of the Indonesian community, not least by the military and members of the Islamic community such as the widely respected Abdurrahman Wahid.²¹² The re-politicisation of Islam seems to be of major concern as ICMI seems to consist of numerous government personnel.²¹³ Leading Islamic figures such as Djohan Effendi have warned against this as he feels that ICMI may "undermine the hard-won accomplishments of cultural Islam ... and

²⁰⁹ *Ibid.*, p.42 quotes Sukarno "Indonesia, A Spiritualist Among Nations", in *The Indonesian Spectator*, II: 18, August 1958 (Jakarta)

²¹⁰ *Ibid.*, p.78

²¹¹ R.W.Hefner "Islam, State, and Civil Society: ICMI and the Struggle for the Indonesian Middle Class" in *Indonesia* 56, October 1993 (Cornell Southeast Asia Program), p. 1

²¹² *Ibid.*, p.21 & 24

²¹³ *Ibid.*, p.19

provoke the military to move against those who use Islam for political ends".²¹⁴ Meanwhile Abdurrahman Wahid who has stated "I am for Indonesian society, not just an Islamic one", claims that ICMI is "'exclusivist' and elitist rather than pan-Indonesian."²¹⁵ Following such public events and regardless of the validity or invalidity of establishing an Islamic state, many possible scenarios were being considered by Muslims, non-Muslims, Indonesians and non-Indonesians. It is a matter for dispute whether the actions of Suharto were political ploys to gain him the confidence of the large Muslim population in Indonesia or whether the Haj was a real pilgrimage for him, in his old age, but the general impression he gave was one of increasing support for the Muslims and decreasing support for the military.

It was into this Austronesian and predominantly Muslim nation that Irian Jaya was absorbed in the 1960s. As the Indonesian Government established itself in Irian Jaya, the system of residence permits or KTP was introduced. This system, with its requirement that each citizen profess a major religion that is then stamped on their citizen card, caused few problems for most Irianese, most of whom already professed to follow the doctrine of Christianity. A few years earlier it would have been a different situation, as the former animistic beliefs, not a world religion, would have been the major belief system. Nevertheless difficulties were encountered. The largely Christian Irianese population not only had to face problems of being a "black" minority within the Republic of Indonesia, but also a religious minority.²¹⁶ Despite the religious tolerance that reputedly exists throughout Indonesia, the church in Irian Jaya, including the Dani church, has had to face numerous problems and challenges in the forms of government regulations and personal confrontations over religious issues. While claiming to maintain a tolerance towards other religious groups, the church is not showing signs of syncretism or acceptance but rather, as will be discussed in the final chapter, regards the presence of non-Christians as an ideal opportunity to evangelise. Today, while Protestant Christianity remains the religion of the majority within Irian Jaya itself, with Catholicism further increasing Christianity's dominance, it is slowly losing ground as the number of Muslims, Hindus and Buddhists grows. (See Figure 9) This chapter will deal with how the Dani church has progressed since its

²¹⁴ *Ibid.*, p.20

²¹⁵ *Ibid.*, p.21

²¹⁶ D.Hayward *The Dani of Irian Jaya Before and After Conversion*, (Regions Press, 1980), p.163

formation in the early sixties, and the way it has dealt with the many challenges it has had to face while still in its formative years and as an increasingly mature church. This chapter, and more so the next two chapters, will rely heavily on the results from the survey I carried out in Irian Jaya, in the form of questionnaires and interviews. (See Appendix 1)

Figure 9

SECT	FOLLOWERS	%	CLERGY	PLACES OF WORSHIP
Protestant	981,229	57.50	3,552	2,851
Catholic	366,751	21.50	397	818
Muslim	296,742	17.38	1,623	639
Hindu	2,424	0.14	16	9
Buddhist	1,562	0.10	6	6

The Provincial Government of Irian Jaya *Irian Jaya: A New Frontier for Trade, Investment and Tourism*, (1993), p.35

The Independent Dani Church

The history of the establishment of the Dani church has already been discussed in chapter one, including the movements of conversion to Christianity amongst the Danis, the Bible teaching offered by the missionaries in the form of witness schools as well as the fetish burnings and first baptisms. Through all the missionary activities and the establishment of the church the missionaries maintained their goal of the "full self sufficiency [of the Dani church] in the foreseeable future".²¹⁷ Their own role, after introducing the Danis to Christianity and helping to establish the church, included the translation of the Bible into the Dani language and the continuing education of the Danis in both spiritual and material aspects to help them deal with the new world they were about to confront with their newly found beliefs. Regardless of the area of instruction that the missionaries were involved in, the final goal has been the independence of the church and the activities carried out by missionaries today are seen to be more supportive than directive.

²¹⁷ *Ibid.*, p.213

The supportive, as opposed to instructive, role of the missionary amongst the Danis today is readily noticeable when attending any church functions. In the early days, while there were Dani ministers following the first baptisms, the missionaries played a large role in the church as ministers and also taught and trained the Dani pastors in the Bible Schools that were established in the North Baliem. In contrast, all the ministers today are Danis, and if a foreigner, a missionary preaches, it is at the invitation of the Dani church. The decline in missionary involvement has been influenced by the increase in the number of Bible school and theological students and graduates. The Dani pastors do not only work in the North Baliem but also in the Baptist churches on the coast in the district of Jayapura.²¹⁸ Those who teach at the Bible schools in Tiom, Danime and Pyramid are Danis, as are the majority of teachers or lecturers at the theological colleges on the coast. The Baptist Theological College or IThBIJ (*Institut Theologia Baptis Irian Jaya*) at present has, out of about 15 members of staff, only two Australian members, both of whom are returning to Australia at the end of this year, 1994.

The Expansion of the Dani Church

As the role of missionaries amongst the Danis has become less directive, the Danis themselves have become more instructive, both as evangelists amongst their own people or their fellow students, or more specifically as missionaries to other tribal and cultural groups who have not yet heard the Christian message. Some have made their way to other islands of the Indonesian archipelago. Many have gone to tribes on the coastal lowlands in the south of Irian Jaya while others have ventured amongst those who live near the Danis.²¹⁹ In all these situations they are learning another language and going into a culture that is distinctly different from their own. Those who go to their neighbours also come up against a largely resistant people to whom foreign missionaries have previously attempted to present the Gospel. In addition there is the knowledge that, as neighbours, they may still be considered to be enemies and may be placing themselves in danger. Yet the Dani Christians are excited about the message of Christianity and are keen to share it with others.

²¹⁸ P.Wandik *Pelayanan Pelaksanaan Perkembangan Gereja Baptis Sentani*, (Unpublished paper, 1991), p.11, 12

²¹⁹ J.Burt *On His Majesty's Service*, (RBMUInternational, 1993), pp.35 & 49-51 Also corroborated in interviews with Danis.

One incident occurred just prior to my visit to Irian Jaya and I had the privilege of hearing the young lady involved speak of it at a church service. She had just come out to the coast with her husband to further her theological training and gave a testimony of this experience. She had been praying for one particular neighbouring tribe that had a reputation of being opposed to the message of Christianity because of the resistance of its chief and hence the entire community to the introduction of Christianity. The reason she gave for her sudden interest and concern for this tribe was that God had convinced her of their spiritual needs. Yet she knew that they had consistently resisted outsiders. One night she claimed God told her to write a letter to the chief and his people to make them aware of her willingness to tell them more about the Gospel of Jesus Christ if they wanted her to. She attested to the miraculous answer she received from the chief which was in the affirmative, and which provided her with the opportunity to go and share with this formerly resistant tribe. Following a short period of instruction the chief accepted Christ and proclaimed himself to be a Christian along with a number of other members of the tribe. Many more were to follow in their footsteps shortly thereafter. As this account was related, we were told that the chief's willingness and eagerness to receive Christian instruction resulted from the presence of Muslims in the area, attempting to convert him and his people. According to her testimony, after hearing what they had to say the chief realised that the gospel the missionaries had attempted to teach them years ago was the truth. He now wanted to learn about the Christian gospel in more depth, in order to accept Christ as his saviour. Another interpretation could be that the move towards Christianity was rather a move away from Islam and the pressure of the Muslims. Christianity, as the religion of their neighbours and the majority of their fellow Irianese, might have been more appealing than the alien Islam. Following the service it was obvious by the general discussion that the trust in God and the initiative of this young Dani lady has inspired and encouraged many Danis and the foreign missionaries as a sign of the increasing Christian maturity of the Dani people.

Those who have left Irian Jaya as missionaries to the Javanese have also been successful from the Christian perspective. Christianity has been accepted as Danis have worked amongst Muslims, establishing growing churches. One Dani went to Java as a student, and during his years of study involved himself in Javanese communities. Within

three years he had established three churches as Muslim families converted to Christianity through his witness to the Gospel.²²⁰ A number of Danis have also furthered their theological education and training in Java²²¹ or Menado with the aim of returning to their homes as evangelists and ministers or to go and work amongst other cultural groups either in Irian Jaya or elsewhere in the Indonesian archipelago.

The Foundation of the Church

Despite its growth, the Dani church has had problems, one of which has been, particularly in its formative years, its legalistic interpretation of Biblical injunctions.²²² Douglas Hayward provides an example of this legalism as "When told that Sunday should be a day of rest, some Dani would refrain from even going to the edge of the village and pulling up a tuber to eat when they were hungry."²²³ An example of this form of legalism that is present in some churches today is that of the length of prayers, with the lengthier prayers supposedly being more holy and meaningful. Yet at the same time the Dani Christians believe in the authority of the Bible and depend on it to lead them as they become more independent. The ability of church members and leaders to handle constructive criticism, together with their dependence on the Bible seems in itself to be indicative of a Christian church that is progressively becoming stronger and more mature. The Dani church is now firmly grounded upon a more widely accepted, realistic understanding of Christianity and the Christian faith than it has been in previous years. Apparently this has helped to decrease the emergence of Cargo Cults and millenarian movements.²²⁴

The phenomenon of syncretism, which is evident in many areas where people have accepted a new religion without letting go of their previous beliefs, has not been a problem in the Dani church.²²⁵ Unlike the Javanese mystics who integrated Hinduism, Buddhism and finally Islam with their traditional mystical beliefs, the Dani Christians have been

²²⁰ *Ibid.*

²²¹ I.A.Mattinson *The Word of God and Wholistic Ministry to the Dani of Irian Jaya*, (Unpublished paper, 1988), p.43 Also corroborated in Interviews with Danis who had actually studied there

²²² D.Mountford "A Report on Dani Thinking" in *Baliem Beginnings*, (Camden Baptist Church, 1976), p.86 & Hayward *The Dani of Irian Jaya*, p.196 Corroborated by interviews

²²³ Hayward *The Dani of Irian Jaya*, p.196

²²⁴ *Ibid.*, p.151

²²⁵ *Ibid.*, p.215 & Burt *On His Majesty's Service*, p.45 & E.Wendaneby *Penyembahan Roh Orang Mati Dalam Kepercayaan Tradisional Suku Lani*, (Unpublished paper, 1993), p.1

overwhelmingly convinced that they cannot be Christians if they retain their former beliefs or ways. This was first evidenced in the fetish burnings, particularly in the areas where the missionaries were less enthusiastic about fetish burnings taking place. Draper relates that "In 1960, when the wave of enthusiasm for burning fetishes was spreading through the area ... we were concerned, believing that the North Baliem folk did not fully understand the implications of such a drastic move. ... Amonen and his villagers came up with a compromise: would we instead bind up their fetishes for some months so that they could try to live without them, trusting only God? We did that and at the end of the trial period, Amonen and his elders became the first Tiom group to destroy their charms entirely".²²⁶ There was a weariness and a disillusionment with the animistic religion that had trapped them in a cycle of unrest and uncertainty which offered no answers or consolation. Yambonep states that "When I think of those days ... our lives were limited and twisted; we existed from day to day under strong fear and oppression.". ²²⁷ Although initially Christianity and the coming of the missionaries was seen in the light of the traditional Dani beliefs, over time and with a greater understanding this changed and the faith the Danis had in Christ deepened.

While there may be instances where individuals claim to be Christians but never completely let go of their former belief, the majority of those Danis professing to be Christians see the total contradiction between the two and have nothing to do with the animistic way of life.²²⁸ The church itself has not incorporated any animistic beliefs into its doctrine.²²⁹ The attitude towards the Catholic church, one of which has recently been established outside the village of Tiom, is one of sorrow and disgust as the Danis see the way that old and new beliefs and teachings have been syncretised. They do not regard Catholicism to be Christianity and in some instances it is seen to have a negative impact, along with Islam, on those Protestant Danis living in the same area. While the Protestant Danis are not combining animism with Christianity, neither should their faith be seen as simply a cultural "import". Initially pre-service dancing was a trait of the church as people

²²⁶ N&S.Draper *Daring to Believe*, (ABMS, 1990), p.219

²²⁷ *Ibid.*, p.251 quoting Yambonep

²²⁸ *Ibid.*, pp.226 & 243 quoting Miyaawarak & Tiogumbiya This attitude reflected by the Danis interviewed also.

²²⁹ Burt *On His Majesty's Service*, p.45

joyfully danced and sang.²³⁰ Despite the dancing having almost disappeared, the popular Dani Christian chants remain an important and meaningful part expression of Dani worship and Christianity continues to be a "dearly-held indigenous faith" amongst the Danis.²³¹

Church Administration

Together with the increasing Christian maturity of the Dani church has come increased administrative responsibility. This is a result of independence from the mission organisations as well as in order to fulfil the requirements of the Indonesian government. The latter states that the Christian church of Irian Jaya must come under one umbrella organisation.²³² This is reflective of what happened with the mission organisations, when nine Protestant missions were grouped under the umbrella organisation TMF or The Missions Fellowship.²³³ The localised world view of the Danis has already been discussed and it is useful to keep it in mind when discussing the requirement of one overall organisation. Although the Dani world view has expanded, and continues to expand, the Danis' experience of dealing with and organising such a wide reaching organisation is extremely limited as yet. This is one area where the missionaries are offering assistance by teaching administration skills that are required for handling a large organisation.

Another government requirement has been in the form of church constitutions for each different denomination. The constitutions are fairly extensive and involved. Some sections seem to be written with greater enthusiasm, while most sections are more stilted. This is not surprising as according to Hayward the church constitutions "reflect(s) the legal requirements of the government rather than the practical needs of the Dani churches".²³⁴

While there are numerous Christian denominations in Irian Jaya, those amongst the Danis basically fall into three groups. Firstly there is the PGBIJ (*Persekutuan Gereja Baptis Irian Jaya*) or the Baptist Church of Irian Jaya, which has been established in the areas where the Australian Baptist Missionaries worked,²³⁵ and it is this church that is predominant in the North Baliem, the area being discussed in this thesis. The PGBIJ was

²³⁰ Hayward *The Dani of Irian Jaya*, p.207

²³¹ Burt *On His Majesty's Service*, p.51

²³² *Ibid.*, 36

²³³ D.Pickell(ed.) *Indonesian New Guinea: Irian Jaya*, (Periplus Editions, 1994), p.46

²³⁴ Hayward *The Dani of Irian Jaya*, p.208 e.g. *Persekutuan Gereja-gereja Baptis Irian Jaya*, (PGBIJ, 1987)

²³⁵ *Ibid.*

established at a meeting held, less than four years after the first baptisms, on 14 December 1966 which was attended by 276 representatives from 78 Baptist churches in the Makki-Tiom district.²³⁶

The second church organisation, KINGMI, was established in the areas where the American CAMA missionaries were present and is relevant to us as it includes Pyramid and the area surrounding it which is home to the Western Dani, where the North Baliem Valley borders on the Grand Baliem. Finally there is GIIJ (*Gereja Injili Irian Jaya*) or the Evangelical Church of Irian Jaya. This church grew up in the areas where three mission organisations worked, namely RBMU, APCM and UFM and as such is not established amongst the Western Danis of the North Baliem.²³⁷ While the Danis are aware of the other Christian denominations within Irian Jaya, especially as they encounter them on the coast, they are not the denominations that the Western Danis are involved with or that are present in the North Baliem.

Despite the slight variations in the doctrinal aspects of these different organisations, there is a general unity and co-operation amongst them, especially between the PGBIJ and KINGMI in the North Baliem as they have the same goals and the same basic beliefs. This unity is assisted by the fact that many church leaders and other church members are close friends and even relatives. There have also been cases of theological students from either church organisation becoming ministers or leaders in a church affiliated with the other organisation.

The expansion at the administrative level, either as separate denominations or as a united Christian group has led to problems not only with regard to the administration but also in the aspect of church leadership. Dani society is essentially organised at a local level, although the Indonesian government is slowly changing this as they appoint village headmen in the villages. The leadership of large groups in the context of the church has at times caused difficulties, with the making of decisions effecting thousands of people who may or may not be in agreement. Awareness of such problems on the part of the leaders has led to a worthwhile but at times quite lengthy process of consultation before decisions are made.

²³⁶ K.Wakerkwa *Pertumbuhan Gereja Baptis di Wilayah Pirime*, (Unpublished paper, 1992), p.6

²³⁷ Hayward *The Dani of Irian Jaya*, p.208

This cumbersome process apparently has resulted in many regarding as necessary the investment of greater authority in the church councils and yet in reality the consultative form of organisation continues to be widely used.²³⁸

Church Finances

The financing of the church is dependant upon the same process as in many other churches throughout the world - donations from the church members. This presentation is made to God, with the understanding that it will be used by the church for work God wants the churches to carry out. This includes the continued Bible teaching of the members as well as supporting missionaries and members of the church studying at theological college to become church leaders and ministers. The Dani people bring their offerings or tithes - one tenth of their "earnings" - to God in the form of produce from their gardens.²³⁹ This is quite logical as the Dani people are farmers and even those who may have other roles within the village rely on their gardens to provide them with food.

Weekly offerings are made and then the produce is either directly distributed amongst the church leaders, or otherwise, as is more common today, the produce is sold and the money used to support those who are studying or working as missionaries elsewhere.²⁴⁰ While the ministers may receive a small amount of sweet potato each week, they basically work voluntarily in terms of receiving a wage. Whether in their home village or not, they too rely on their own gardens to provide for their family's needs.²⁴¹ This total dependence on farm produce also lends some variation to the ability of the church members to give, as the weather determines the success of their crops and hence their livelihood. This is a particular problem at Kwiyawagi which, as has already been mentioned, is situated at 9,000 feet, and is the highest inhabited area. At this altitude the weather can become very cold, leading to hail and the destruction of crops, which in turn affects not only the ability of the church members to give but also has been known to result

²³⁸ *Ibid.*

²³⁹ Wakerkwa *Pertumbuhan Gereja*, p.26 & B.Kogoya *Suatu Penilaian Terhadap Perkembangan Gereja-gereja Baptis di Wilayah Danime*, (Unpublished paper, 1992), p.16 & A.Yigibalom *Suatu Analisa Sumber Pendapatan Gereja-gereja Baptis di Wilayah Tiom*, (Unpublished paper, 1992), pp.1, 6 Corroborated in Dani interviews.

²⁴⁰ Wakerkwa *Pertumbuhan Gereja*, p.27 & B.Kogoya *Suatu Penilaian*, p.16 Also corroborated by interviews.

²⁴¹ Yigibalom *Suatu Analisa*, p.1

in a period of famine and hunger. While Kwiyawagi provides an extreme example, the fluctuation in the availability of produce is evident throughout the North Baliem²⁴² and is inevitable in a farming society.

Those on the coast studying at the theological colleges also face times of hardship as they receive support from their home churches. There are increased difficulties at the times of decreased productivity in the villages, but they struggle also as they attempt to live in a city environment where the cost of living is much higher than in the villages of the North Baliem. A number of students have had times of hunger and poverty as they attempt to live on what they receive from their homes. Many of those in the villages do not realise this as they have never been to the coast. Even if they did realise it, however, they would have difficulty providing greater support from what they have. A young man from Danime reports that the monthly income of the church in that area ranges from a 5,000 rupiah minimum to a 10,000 rupiah maximum or in Australian dollars \$3.50 to \$7.00.²⁴³

Apart from the weekly offerings of produce, there are also special occasions when offerings are made to God. An offering is made when a new garden is opened and again with the first harvest of a newly opened garden.²⁴⁴ Following the harvest the entire crop is offered to God as a thank offering. Another offering accompanies the occasion of a marriage. One aspect of Dani culture that has not disappeared, but that has been transformed, has been that of the bride price or *mas kawin*. Previously the bride price could be exorbitantly high as it ranged between two and ten pigs. While attempts were made to abolish it during the early years of the church, it has survived although at a fairly stable price. Although a point of contention in the church,²⁴⁵ the retention of the bride price was seen as necessary in order to ensure that women were not devalued as the Danis emerged from a culture where women were valued as objects rather than people. As attitudes have changed over the years, with women becoming more highly valued as people, so has the relationship between a husband and wife. One old Dani man stated that with the acceptance of Christianity "Men have learned to love and care for their wives."²⁴⁶

²⁴² *Ibid.*

²⁴³ B.Kogoya *Suatu Penilaian*, p.16

²⁴⁴ Wakerkwa *Pertumbuhan Gereja*, p.27

²⁴⁵ Hayward *The Dani of Irian Jaya*, p.174

²⁴⁶ Draper *Daring*, p.211 quoting Amonen

The general bride price continues to largely consist of pigs, where three are given to the girl's parents while one, with a value of approximately 100,000 rupiahs, is offered to God.²⁴⁷

At the time of a child's dedication an offering is also made either in the form of money or of an animal such as a rabbit, chicken or pig. Other large occasions are also accompanied by the offering to God of produce, money or animals. Finally, church members also make voluntary offerings²⁴⁸ not to show their thanks for anything in particular, but rather to show as Christians, their overall gratitude to Jesus Christ and God for their salvation, which is something that they often express in everyday conversations. When the Danis have very little or nothing that they are able to give, then they are always willing to offer "supportive labour",²⁴⁹ which reflects their community mindedness.

Tithes and offerings in the city churches, mainly on the coast, are monetary as they are in other areas throughout Indonesia. As a result those Dani pastors and church leaders who work in the coastal cities are the only Dani church leaders receiving a monetary wage.

Theological Training

The pastors of the Dani church are chosen by the church councils not on the basis of their education but rather on "their spiritual maturity and their community's recommendation"²⁵⁰ and it is not a quick and easy process to become a minister of a church. Initially those who believe that they should be church leaders need to contact a training school or college and then approach their church to determine whether they feel it to be an appropriate step and whether support will be offered.²⁵¹ Theological studies can be undertaken either at the Bible Schools in the highlands or at the Theological Colleges on the coast. In the North Baliem there are two Baptist Bible Schools, one in Tiom and one in Danime. The studies at the Tiom school are carried out in Indonesian while in Danime they are undertaken in the regional Dani language. The importance of study being made available in both languages is seen not only in that it provides the choice of studying in the cultural or

²⁴⁷ Wakerkwa *Pertumbuhan Gereja*, p.26

²⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, pp.26-27

²⁴⁹ Hayward *The Dani of Irian Jaya*, p.174

²⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, p.209

²⁵¹ ie. *Ibid.* Also from the general history of the Dani Bible Schools and from interviews with Danis

national language, it also prepares students to work confidently in one language or another as a minister or as a public speaker.

The majority of Dani churches in the North Baliem conduct their services in the Dani language. There are also a number of Indonesian speaking churches in the North Baliem and they also have Dani ministers. In Makki for example, the Dani and Indonesian services run at the same time in adjacent buildings. The Indonesian service provides an opportunity for Austronesian Indonesians to be involved should they want to. Meanwhile, at the Baptist church in Wamena, Dani and Indonesian services follow each other. The Dani services in both instances were overflowing. While the numbers at the Indonesian speaking services were substantial they were quite small in comparison. No generalisations can be made about those from the younger generation being the ones who attend the Indonesian services as there was no clear distinction and just as many, if not more young people attended the Dani speaking services.

Another Western Dani Bible School is a part of the KINGMI church and is established at Pyramid. Even after completing their study potential pastors must then *melayani* or assist at a church for approximately three years before they are qualified and can be chosen as a minister. It is a long and arduous process, particularly considering the voluntary nature of the career.

Community Involvement

Since their establishment, churches have been, and continue to be, prepared and willing to serve each section of their community. Bible studies, youth groups and Sunday schools have been established as have women's groups.²⁵² The entire community is able to be involved and active within the church rather than just attending the Sunday services. According to Hayward this is the ideal situation as he sees the lack of opportunity for lay people to be involved in the church to be dangerous. It is a situation that could lead to the emergence of Cargo Cultism as people strive to have a greater input into the spiritual life of their community.²⁵³

²⁵² B.Kogoya *Suatu Penilaian*, pp.6-11

²⁵³ Hayward *The Dani of Irian Jaya*, p.151

Bible studies have deepened the Danis learning and knowledge of the Christian doctrine as well as the history of Christianity. Here they are able to deal with difficult issues. One trait that is consistently apparent in church and everyday life is the importance the Danis place on the Word of God - the Bible - and prayer.²⁵⁴ All the community groups are involved in Bible Studies, and there are also other avenues of involvement such as the women's group. The role of women in Dani society is now distinctly different from when they were possessions, producers of heirs and outcasts from the spiritual realm of the community.²⁵⁵ Today women are highly valued and respected in the community and undertake leadership roles in the church together with the men. While women may not be ordained ministers yet, it is not because the opportunity is not open to them. Rather they have just not yet taken advantage of it. At present a young Dani woman, whose husband has accompanied her to Jayapura, has begun theological studies.²⁵⁶ Women are involved in the organisation of the church as well as the spiritual well-being of the community. Next there is the Sunday School which is strongly attended by the village children and depends upon volunteer teachers.²⁵⁷ Sunday School teachers are highly valued as many of the second generation children consider that their own decision to become a Christian believer was made through their teacher's influence and teaching.

Finally there is the youth group which is quite large and professionally administered. In the areas I was able to visit, the youth groups were established with a Head or President, a treasurer and a secretary. Other members of the youth group were selected to take charge of different aspects of youth group life including evangelism, the spiritual health of the youth group members, music, sport, art and youth group equipment.²⁵⁸ A Dani student stated that the youth groups are striving to provide for the needs of the entire person, spiritually, physically and mentally.²⁵⁹ The importance of the youth group was

²⁵⁴ Wakerkwa *Pertumbuhan Gereja*, p.13 & Yigibalom *Suatu Analisa*, p.20 & Burt *On His Majesty's Service*, p.45

²⁵⁵ Draper *Daring*, p.227 quoting Miyaawarak

²⁵⁶ Personal communication in Jayapura

²⁵⁷ B.Kogoya *Suatu Penilaian*, p.6

²⁵⁸ L.Kogoya *Pelayanan Pemuda di Jemaat Baptis Diakonia Sebagai Pola Bagi Pelayanan Pemuda se-Wilayah Pirime*, (Unpublished paper, 1993), p.29

²⁵⁹ *Ibid.*, pp.8, 21

stressed by many Danis as it represents the strength of the church in providing the future leaders of the Dani church and the community.²⁶⁰

²⁶⁰ *Ibid.*, pp.5, 7

The Church and the Government

As was mentioned previously, in the war of rebellion that took place in 1977, the church would not take sides with either the rebels or the Indonesian military. Even today, while the control of the Indonesian government has brought great changes to the lives of the people of Irian Jaya including the Danis, the older Dani Christians have very little to say about it. They have accepted the new regime and are living as Christians within it, and facing the challenges that are emerging from the situation. One young Dani man claimed that there was a need for coordination between the church, the village heads and the government in order for it to be recognised by the authorities that the church is not aligned to any particular side. As such its evangelising ability would be increased.²⁶¹ The position the church takes within its own region is noteworthy. It does not take sides and is cooperative unless asked to be involved in something that is contradictory to their Christian beliefs. At the same time the absence of a rebellious attitude does not seem to result in passivity. Rather the church communities seem to be more active than disaffected communities that are being strongly controlled by the authorities. The lack of complaining made by the church and its members has allowed it the freedom to continue its work.²⁶² At the same time the Christians are not allowing themselves to be downtrodden. Mistreatments that have taken place are not taken lightly, but once confronted and dealt with they are not dwelt upon.

One issue that the Danis are anxious about is the rapid decline in the number of missionaries in Irian Jaya. While the missionaries are pleased about in their changing role amongst the Danis as the church matures, and realise that the missionary presence in Irian Jaya needs to decrease, they too are disturbed by the rapidity with which the missionary numbers are decreasing at present. The low mission representation in Irian Jaya today illustrates not the indifference of former missionaries, but rather the Indonesian Government's legislation that there will be no missionaries left in Indonesia by the year 2000.²⁶³ Many missionaries who have worked in Irian Jaya for years have had their visas cancelled without explanation. The situation of the missionaries has also been put into

²⁶¹ Wendaneby *Penyembahan Roh*, pp.85-86

²⁶² Personal experience and observation

²⁶³ W.Goodlet *Indonesian Field Report ABMS*, (Unpublished, 1994), p.2

question by the ruling of the Jakarta Government that any "foreigners engaged in social development work would be given visas valid for just two years, extendable for one year only. Missionaries fall within this category."²⁶⁴ This year, within two months, more than twenty missionaries and their families left as their visas had been cancelled, and others were preparing to leave.²⁶⁵ Interestingly, despite the government's legislation affecting the missionaries, and creating an uncertain period for both the missionaries and the church, the Danis do not show any anger towards the government. Rather they, together with the missionaries, appear to be aiming to prepare themselves as much as possible before the missionaries depart.

Many Danis have claimed that the Dani churches are growing strongly and continuing to develop both in spite of and indeed as a result of new challenges. More churches are being built and the number of students interested in, and working towards, becoming missionaries, ministers or church leaders is increasing. Yet the challenges the church faces are far from exhausted. The Dani church has matured a great deal since it was established in the early sixties following the introduction of the Christian gospel by the missionaries. Yet it is still relatively young and the new problems it faces will test its maturity. A Dani church leader is quoted by Jocelyn Burt as saying "It is very easy to bring a child into the world, but very hard to bring it through to maturity. Our church is that child."²⁶⁶

²⁶⁴ J.McBeth "Mission Impossible" in *Far Eastern Economic Review*, February 17, 1994, p.25

²⁶⁵ Personal communication with missionaries in Irian Jaya, both those who were in the process of leaving and those who, as far as they know are able to remain there. I stayed with a couple of mission families who are family friends and who were preparing to leave.

²⁶⁶ Burt *On His Majesty's Service*, front page