

TO the Committee.

The facts of the situation would seem to be as follows :-

- (1) Primarily (and this is the real stonewall which withstands all efforts toward battering it down) the Church is considered to be the property of mai dimdim. e.g. The Papuan Clergy. O vivi-mai dimdim. Teachers are giped as being bariau. The conduct of school house boys when rebuked; they dash off the calico and put on N. ara.
- (2) Custom and tradition are age old and deeply rooted in native life. Idolatry is not a feature of the Papuan character but ancestor worship would seem to be. In spite of what a Papuan will tell you when questioned about his spirit beliefs there is a real acknowledgement of the living state of the departed spirit and ~~disinclination~~ disinclination to change the customs even simple and unimportant ones presumably such as the traditional method of tying the canoe outrigger is largely due to a fear lest the departed spirits of the ancestors will regard it as a criticism of their method and be displeased and visit their displeasure in some happening form with evil.
- (3) There are certain advantages attaching to membership in the Christian Church which appeal to the uneducated mind of the Papuan native. (a) He likes to be well thought of by mai dimdim. One of the greatest punishments is to have his line of action disapproved. He will sin cheerfully and ~~sometimes~~ in some instances communicate regularly during his defection so long as he is not found out. Then he absents himself and keeps out of the way of the Priest one aggrieved. (b) It gives him a standing in the community. He can speak as an oracle when the Priest discovers something untoward in the life of his village. (c) There is a glamour of a sort in joining in with any popular movement. This ~~very~~ may account for the increase of aspiring Catechumens once a class has been started. Alas that it should have deceived us and left us with the added problem of numbers of nominal Christians whose lives give no real evidence of conversion.
- (4) Added to these is the problem of the children of Baptized persons which has been dealt with by Fr Gill in his paper. In my opinion these points constitute the background of the present day situation. Many manifestations of conduct may spring to the mind and suggest a ~~fatal~~ further basal section of the problem but whilst I do not claim to have exhausted the basal features I believe that my survey covers a good portion of the difficulty.

In consequence we are faced with a formalism which is disheartening to us to say the least of it and a spirit of self satisfaction which refuses to be subdued - a twofold barrier to conversion. Satisfac

self is born of two factors. i.e. (1) They have already received the Christian Giv in extenso during the Catechumenate period and with Baptism have received the new Name. (2) The Church way is quite fitt for mai dimdim but N.G. methods ~~off~~ for N.G. people. This brings me ba to the point from which I started. i.e. The Church is the property of the white Missionaries and certain N.G. people such as the Papuan Clergy and Teachers. These latter have ceased to be N.G. and have be mai dimdim.

To this defection from reality I wonder have we contributed. I find there is a real divorce of thought between native Rites and Christian observance. Take two things for concrete observation. (1) The long period of seclusion during mourning. (2) The painting of face and ti of hair so dear to Papuan fancy. These two are really two patterns the one fabric. The one involves the ~~off~~ covered head, blackened b and woven arm and leg bands. The other is a decoration of another colour but never-the-less they ore of a piece in that they both incl something put on for a sign. Both are accompanied by absence from Church Services. It is all of a piece with native idea that it is unseemly for a mourner to appear in public ~~with~~ with head uncovered. on the other hand have frowned upon the covered head in Church, right or wrongly may be open to question but ~~where it is~~ it is and it forms part the policy which has forbidden the feathers and other finery togethe with the painted face at Church Services.

One consequence is that the Church being regarded as foreign is subordinated to the requirements of native custom and wtiquette.

C/f. The painted and oiled face of the bride at a wedding. permitted at one time why not at another?

A question has been asked "Can a native be New Guinea-oina at the same time a really practising Christian"? The answer given by thinking Papuans is an unqualified "Yes". Yes but there are barriers and we have helped to erect them and encouraged thereby the opinion that the Church and N.G. are in contradiction. It is natural for the Papuan to deck himself with finery. He feels he cannot retain that come to Church so he simply stays away and being a creature of habit continues his absence from Church.

The problem is rendered more acute by certain features of the Papuans daily life and practices. There is (1) the mode of the single room for the whole family and in some districts long terraces of roof occupied by the families of the Dams - rooms which open upon each other. By this means even young children grow up in an atmosphere of knowledge far beyond their years and there is scarcely any age which answers to the age of innocence in the more civilised races. There is no privacy whatever. No need to shout affairs from the housetop. Every incident public property as soon as it is enacted. One result of this is laxity in matters of sex so common amongst growing boys and girls in some districts. I believe that in times past such laxity was almost unknown when it did occur was severely dealt with. ~~Now/the/wh/te/dan/~~

Now the presence of the white man who has assumed the directing of native life has led to the neglect of the sanctions which formerly safeguarded native moral life. The Papuan has not kept pace with the change which has been both radical in character and rapid in operation.

Then there is (2) the betrothal of infants and the question of Kovog in this connection. The principal feature of betrothal would seem to be the making of a good bargain commercially. Hence the haggling over payments. Another factor which gives betrothal a commercial aspect is the withholding of permission from betrothal unless a quid pro quo in the form of a person of the opposite sex can be promised in return. So the girl cannot be betrothed unless the boy whose parents wish it has a sister who may be betrothed to the girl's brother and so save the packing of a well filled Goba. By both these means certain ill-effects are brought about with their consequent tangles whose ramifications are so well known to every Missionary.

(3) The Poraga, Poropata, Banivi etc. of which others are more competent to speak than I.

(4) The superstitions connected with Parauma and the practices of Baravu.

A Papuan of many years faithful service told me that originally the practice of Parauma was only for purposes of health. Since the advent of the white man and presumably due in some measure to the education of the mind in contact with a superior civilisation the old order has changed and the witches and sorcerers have assumed power over death as well as over life hence the working of evil by suggestion. Reverence for the old order has given place to fear in the new and the spirits of the ancestors are invoked for deliverance from the effects of fear. There is little doubt of the administration of poisons. As a matter of fact there is a considerable amount of evidence to show that it is being done. In consequence the care free native of popular fiction has no existence in fact. Instead we have the Papuan in constant dread of sorcery and poisons and this leads to a diseased state of mind and colours his outlook upon his own life and the life offered to him by the Christian Church.

It is inevitable that the native Papuan will have quaint ideas of abstract movements. He is in close contact with the hidden things of nature - conscious of the mystery of birth, sickness and death, the phenomena of the rising sun, the eccentricities of the wind, rain, light and darkness, the growing food and the ripening crops. He has hazy ideas of the effects of the phenomena of nature on the garden. His whole

physical existence is dependent upon the food grown. Consequently it occupies a great deal of his thought and any departure from a reasonable progression from planting to harvesting is viewed with suspicion and interference from outside influences suspected. Thinking about and talking it over with his friends over the convivial betel nut a lime pot leads to conspiracies of ~~thought~~ conception and interpretation and thus superstition comes to the birth. When two and two (Known quantities) do not make four some speculation as to cause must be indulged in and speculation in the untutored mind may lead to wrong conclusions. This may account for the rise of quaint beliefs in the dim past and these in turn have become part of the tradition.

If he supposes that the planting of a few twigs in a certain position in the garden or the inclusion of a Croton or other favourite or flavoured plant will protect his garden from evil interference it can scarcely be counted a crime to him. If however he seeks by similar means to injure his neighbour's garden what opportunities for the Gospel of Christ to educate a conscience. Similarly he has a conception of the continued life of his departed relatives and invokes the aid of his ancestors at all times of crisis in his life.

He is at heart a ceremonialist and deals with the mysteries of life in a ceremonial way. He dances - the jubilant dance when harvest prospects are good - the placating dance to propitiate spirits whom he feels to wish him evil. He dons the headdress to strike fear into his foes etc. On this basis also he conducts his associations with his fellows. e.g. The betel nut token taken from the girl to the dancing boy of her fancy. So "Sum, Farum, and so on ad lib. The majority of these things have lost any anona they may have had in the beginning in the process of being handed down and I firmly believe are mostly harmless amusements. Perhaps we clothe them with a meaning they do not have.

Thinkers amongst the Papuans seem to be of the opinion that the N.G. races are not destined to survive. One reason given is that they are Equator ravai and living in a uniform heat can never be really strong either in body or in mind. They lack the invigorating qualities of change from heat to cold and so on. This may be at the back of their general indifference toward anything that is not essentially of N.G. and their lack of reaction to the aesthetic impulses which mean so much to more advanced peoples. It is doubtful if there is anything in their lives approximating to the between sexes for instance. Self interest and self love are very prominent and loom to greater importance than anything which demands a giving of self. They live in the present with its boons of feasting and dancing, devouring the produce of the garden whilst in season and trusting to luck to find something to eat during the lean time when the Taro fails in summer. Why in the years of their experience they have not made some provision for lean time is a puzzle until we recollect ~~that~~ the youth of the mind which does not concern itself with providing for the future. Their whole life and attitude towards the things of life are of one piece.

and thoroughly consistent and this consistence includes their attitude toward Christian Teaching. In mind they are in the Kindergarten stage why not then try the Kindergarten method? Are we giving them some form of spiritual indigestion both in the matter of Church Services (including the Occasional Offices) and in instruction in the tenets of Christianity? I have in mind instruction in the doctrine of the Blessed Trinity, the Virgin Birth and so forth.

The form of the Holy Communion Office we are scarcely at liberty to alter but think of Mattins and Evensong as the daily services on the Mission Stations, of the lengthy and involved forms of the Baptismal Office and that of Marriage. The child mind cannot concentrate upon stages of mental processes required to use them intelligently and in consequence they mean nothing or at any rate very little to the Papuan.

I suggest that Baptismal and Matrimonial vows do not receive the reverence they merit because they are too clothed upon with features which lead up to and emanate from them that they are not sufficiently arresting. I doubt if our people are even so far advanced as the members of the early Church who were baptized on the simple profession of Faith in Jesus Christ.

I believe it to be not only highly desirable but also really important that the Services of Baptism and Marriage should be made as simple and concise as is consistent with the holy moment of their experience so that our people may the more readily grasp their real significance. I feel that this goes deeper even than I have suggested and should not be lightly disposed of if we wish ~~to do~~ our work in the Name of our Blessed Lord to be effective. This is one point I offer as a constructive suggestion. Our hope would seem to have its anchor in the Holy Spirit working through the Papuan Clergy and Teachers. They can reach the native attitude in ~~ways~~ ways which we cannot tread without ~~intrusion~~ intrusion and intrusion leads to loss of confidence.

You may think my outlook upon the relationship between our people and ourselves as rather dolorous. We may have to tread the Via Dolorosa as our Master did and to bear the disappointments and oppositions and even the spites of those who do not know Him as yet. If so we may do so in the sure confidence that the Redemption was not in vain and sustained by the thought that our Master can ~~remould~~ remould even misshapen material if it be sufficiently plastic.

We may then need to change our methods, to be less governmental in attitude seeking to bring ~~our people~~ the wills of our people into conformity with our own and be more of the shepherd leading the sheep, calling them by name, seeking the lost, tending the weak, until we can bring them face to face with their Saviour. This means exhibiting the spirit of the Master and using His methods. What were these?

- (1) Very specially tenderness with the sinner. "The writing on ground".

- (2) Stern warning to the deliberate self seekers. "Soul this night it shall be required of thee".
- (3) Rebuke to the profaners of Holy Things. (The cleansing of the Temple)
- (4) Even closing the door against the obstinate and self satisfied, when every other effort has been fruitless. (Shake off the dust)

In all things considerate. Teaching by means of simple everyday things e.g. The parable of the Sower. Revealing Him as the power over death and sin, as the burden bearer, the all powerful and sufficient Saviour sufficient to save to the uttermost all who come to the Father by Him

Their contact with white people has robbed them of much which formerly made life worth living and today they need an incentive to live. Can the Christian Church supply this? It is inconceivable that there should be any exception from the work of Redemption. The Christ is a sufficient answer to the need of the Papuan. But He must be the Christ of the Gospels and not one of our own conceiving. We are the actors in the drama of life and we must interpret faithfully the spirit of the Author.

In spite of the trials which beset our work through the lack of response in the apparently unsympathetic multitude to the voice crying in the wilderness there is much cheering evidence of the Presence and power of the Holy Spirit in the lives and conduct of a faithful few and when we get down to basal things we all are conscious of the working out of the purpose of GOD as year succeeds to year. In the working out of His Purpose He makes use of human agents and it is our privilege to be called to be co-operators with Him. Therefore what we do in His Name is very important. The power of Conversion and Sanctification is His and His only. Our part is to lead our people to Him by means of the Graces entrusted to us. We best can do our part if we face facts as they are and use our gifts to the best advantage as opportunity offers and the occasion demands. It is a mistake to expect too much too soon. I have recently been much impressed by words written to me by an old school teacher friend now retired. His words are these :- "Your work at Wanigela must sometimes appear to you to be slow but it is the slow progress that is permanent. The consolidation of all great movements in history has been brought about by degrees. Christian workers and reformers and others would often wish to jump to the end from the beginning but the middle section must be worked through and it is in the doing of this that the lives of millions of people are lived. Notwithstanding all the discouragements and set backs and sin, suffering, ignorance and oppression in the world in the end thousands of years perhaps the triumph of Christianity will be complete. Believing that one can do nothing else than work on the middle section!"

GOD leaves us free to plan and do but our work is worthy of the best methods. It is because ~~of that~~ we are not confident that our methods hitherto have been the right ones that this matter has come up for

consideration and I hope we are ready to take stock of them and if necessary replenish them or restock with fresh ones in order that we may be the better equipped for our work of making ready a people prepared for the Lord.

Wanigela
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