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Between Heaven and Earth: Missionaries, Environmentalists, and the Maisin

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The arrival of my wife and me in Uiaku village on the northeast coast of Papua New Guinea in November 1981 triggered a great deal of speculation. I had made contact with the local priest and village leaders through the good offices of the Anglican Church, and some of the people who met us were clearly familiar with the odd pursuits of researchers. Some fifteen years later I learned that some of the older people had speculated that we were returning ancestors who would hopefully rejuvenate the fortunes of the Maisin people (the language group that lived in Uiaku and surrounding villages). Others, perhaps more in tune with the national times, hoped that we would draw upon our vast business connections in "America" to bring development to the Maisin. These reactions were the kind we expected in light of what we had read and heard about New Guinea. What we did not expect was that the majority of villagers had already decided that we were missionaries.

Villagers were very concerned with what kind of missionaries we were. Although the Maisin had been dealing with missionaries since 1890, only one white missionary ever resided with them, and he had left after suffering an emotional breakdown some sixty years earlier. The Maisin were now second- and third-generation Christians and the Anglican Church itself almost completely localized. Still, some people obviously hoped that they were at last getting the white priest they had long hoped for. Others, observing that I did not seem at all priestlike, speculated that we were with the Summer Institute of Linguistics and had come to translate the Bible into Maisin, or that perhaps we were evangelists from one of the Pentecostal sects that had begun to make inroads into the Anglican religious monopoly elsewhere in the Northern Province. This last theory prompted intense discussion, for the Maisin had heard stories of how all-night Pentecostal revival meetings turned into sexual orgies. Some parents related their knowledge to us, clearly on to our tricks. Around the same time, I was approached by some

young men who wondered, a little too hopefully, if I might be into gospel gatherings.

Anthropologists working in Papua New Guinea expect to encounter "strange" customs and "exotic" beliefs, by which we mean phenomena that we assume to be indigenous in origin, that make sense within the distinctive logic of a cultural "Other." We tend to be decidedly less impressed by things that look familiar—churches, schools, trade stores, and the like. Anthropologists have always studied such things, and in recent years these studies have become quite sophisticated, but usually as signs of the impact of outside agencies with which, as outsiders ourselves, we are already familiar. Like other anthropologists who have worked in the Oro Province in recent years, I could not help but be impressed by how central the church was in Maisin life in the 1980s, but I still perceived it largely as an import that duplicated Christian institutions elsewhere. So too, incidentally, did the Maisin. But Maisin notions about the nature of and their need for "missionaries" provided an early clue that much more was at work here. Christianity was an import, but one that Maisin had over the course of decades remolded to fit with their own cultural orientations, the contingencies of interacting with outsiders, and aspirations for social and economic improvement in their community. In greeting my wife and myself as missionaries, Maisin gave us our first clue that Christianity meant something different for them than it did for people in our own country.

The first part of this chapter traces the origins of the Maisin's understanding of missionaries. I then turn to a more detailed consideration of how they conceptualized the concept of missionary during my early fieldwork in the 1980s. The third and longest section of the chapter brings the story to the present. When my wife and I arrived in Uiaku in 1981, most Maisin longed for missionaries (of the "right" sort, of course) who would assist them in achieving political and moral unity and, thus united, economic prosperity. In the mid-1990s, this dream seemed to be coming true. The Maisin have gained practical and moral support from a wide variety of nongovernmental organizations, most of them involved in environmental conservation. The activists do not think of themselves as missionaries, anymore than my wife and I did. They tend to view the Maisin as an autonomous indigenous people whose traditional ways of life are now threatened by the rapacious forces of multinational corporations, particularly logging and mining interests. I do not think that their perceptions are entirely wrong. I do want to suggest, however, that the Maisin have been dealing with outsiders for a long time. Their prior experiences necessarily shape their perception of and ways of dealing with the newcomers. And to a considerable extent, they are treating the environmentalists as if they were the long-awaited missionaries.

Before plunging into the narrative, however, I need to head off a possible misunderstanding. There often is, unfortunately, fierce rivalry between different groups that work in partnership with indigenous peoples. Often one group will claim to understand and represent the true interests of the indigenous group, accusing the others of serving their own selfish or ideologically driven interests. There is a longstanding rivalry of this sort between some anthropologists and missionaries, although their battles tend to pale when compared to the nasty sectarian sniping that occurs between missions and between rival environmental organizations. One could read what I write here as a putdown of the environmentalists who have arrived in large numbers in Collingwood Bay in recent years (see Figure 25.1). This is not my intention. I feel tremendous respect and gratitude for the generous time, energy, and imagination that these activists have put into direct assistance to the Maisin and to the development of projects meant to benefit the community. Indeed, I have joined their ranks, as we shall see. I do hope, however, that twenty years of researching and thinking about Maisin society and history have provided me with some insights that will be of interest and use to my new colleagues. I use the term "colleagues" here deliberately. I have myself become a missionary in the Maisin sense. And much of the analysis that follows has an autobiographical

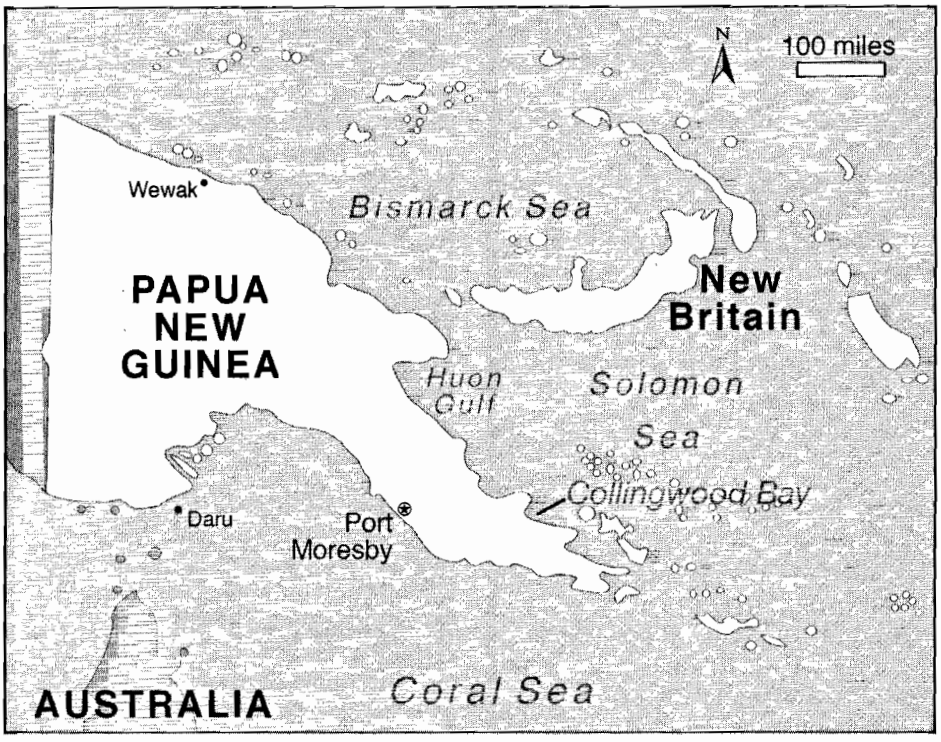

Figure 25.1 Papua New Guinea

undertone—it is an attempt to make sense of my own shifting relationship with the Maisin community.

THE ANGLICAN MISSION

Numbering around 3,500 people, the Maisin occupy four village clusters along the southern shores of Collingwood Bay on the eastern edge of Oro Province. They are among the largest of the five language groups occupying the bay. The villages are divided into contiguous hamlets occupied by patrilineally related men who share rights to certain lands for gardening. Like their ancestors, villagers today get most of their food through subsistence gardening, fishing, hunting, and gathering. They rely upon the resources of the rainforest and mangrove swamps that surround their homes for much of their material culture, including houses, canoes, and mats. Villagers eke out cash from periodic sales of copra and tapa cloth,[1] but Collingwood Bay today is an economic backwater, as it was through the entire colonial period. But the Maisin are not deprived, at least by typical rural standards in Papua New Guinea. They enjoy a relatively high level of education. Since the 1960s, a majority of Maisin has graduated from at least grade six and many have gone on to secondary and tertiary institutions. At least a quarter of the Maisin population have migrated to urban areas, most of them holding well-paying jobs in the public and private sectors. Their remittances, in cash and manufactured goods, has come to form a crucial subsidy for their village relatives. As we shall see, the Anglican Church bears a large responsibility for the present economic situation.

From the early nineteenth century to the present, Christian missions have been among the most ubiquitous and important agencies

of change in the Melanesian region (Garrett 1982; Barker 1990a; Trompf 1991). The missionaries who sought converts from the western Pacific islands were primarily inspired, as are Christian missionaries everywhere, by the message of salvation embodied in the New Testament teachings and example of Jesus Christ and by Saint Paul's injunction to take that message to all the world. But the process of conversion has never been straightforward or entirely predictable (Burridge 1978). The missionaries interpreted the Christian message through the filters of their own cultural backgrounds, their languages, the theological orientations of their home churches, and their personalities. The historical contingencies of working in the Melanesian islands—the logistical support for the missions, the presence of other Europeans, the slow growth of commercial enterprises, and so forth—served to subvert a purely Christian message further. Last, but certainly not least, Melanesians reinterpreted Christian teachings and missionary initiatives in terms of their own cultural orientations and shifting understandings and aspirations. The missions have been enormously successful. Virtually all Melanesians belong to one or another of the churches that today form a central presence in the towns and villages (Ernst 1994). Yet this success has not resulted in a uniformity of culture and belief. To a considerable extent, Christian Melanesia continues to express its famed pre-Christian diversity.

In 1884 the British and German governments divided control over the eastern half of New Guinea and adjoining islands. Unbeknown to themselves, the Maisin along with others in southeastern New Guinea became subjects of the British crown in the new territory of British New Guinea, later to be ruled by Australia as Papua.[2] The London Missionary Society had been working along the southeastern coast since 1871 and was joined by Roman Catholic missionaries in 1884, but the northeast remained largely unexplored. The fledgling colonial administration, which was expected to pay its own way, courted missions as partners in the task of controlling and "civilizing" the tribal peoples of British New Guinea. In 1890 the administrator of the territory, William MacGregor, invited the Methodist and Anglican churches in Australia to establish new missions in the Papuan islands and along the north coast of British New Guinea respectively. Up until the 1950s, each of these four missions enjoyed a religious monopoly within their respective territories. They ran the schools, operated the hospitals, and often provided employment to converts on mission-run plantations and other commercial enterprises. As Papua New Guinea moved toward independence in 1975, the government took control of several of these services, notably education,[3] and the established churches began to face competition from a host of newly arrived Christian sects. Still, the Roman Catholic, United (formerly London Missionary Society and Methodist), and Anglicans remain among the largest and most influential churches in the country.

The Maisin first began encountering missionaries during the 1890s, when members from the newly founded Anglican mission made brief forays into Collingwood Bay from their base at Dogura, about eighty kilometers to the east.[4] In 1898, after a site in the Maisin village of Sinapa proved to be too swampy, the Anglicans established a district station at Wanigela, a few kilometers to the north of Maisin territory. Three years later, Percy John Money, an Anglican lay missionary, built a magnificent new station at Uiaku, entirely from native materials. It included a huge church capable of seating a congregation of 550 and a commodious school awaiting more than 200 pupils (Money 1903). The mission, however, was unable to find a white missionary to staff the Uiaku station and it never lived up to the ambitions that Money held for it. Except for a period starting in 1917, when a sensitive young Australian priest spent a miserable three years enduring drumming and pigs, the Maisin learned Christianity and the rudiments of reading, writing, and arithmetic from men who looked very much like themselves. The first of these teachers were New Hebrideans, recruited from the sugar plantations of Queensland. They were later replaced by Papuans, trained at the mission

headquarters as teacher-evangelists, and eventually by Papua New Guinean priests.

The Anglicans were typical in this respect. Most missions in Papua at that time relied heavily upon Pacific Island converts to staff village schools and churches (Munroe and Thornley 1996). The Anglicans' method of missionizing was also a standard one for the time. Most of their efforts were geared to reproducing in the new village settings the liturgy, institutional structure, religious programs, educational system, and discipline of the home church in Australia and England. Although the church buildings and schools were built from the same bush materials as village houses, supervising missionaries made sure they were arrayed along straight neat paths, bordered by flowers, with the whole mission compound fenced off from surrounding villages. Indeed, school children spent a good deal of time building and maintaining these church structures as well as gardens to support the teachers. And although the teachers—particularly the first generation recruited from Queensland—often possessed only a rudimentary education themselves, district supervising missionaries regularly visited them to assure that at least the scheduled weekly rounds of teaching and preaching were maintained. Encouraged by the supervisors, many teachers made a fetish out of schedules, developing—if elderly Maisin are to be believed—elaborate forms of torture for pupils who came to class late. In the words of a senior missionary, the school and the church provided key environments within which to impart to children "a christian (*sic*) habit of life" (Gill 1929). If most children failed to grasp the intricacies of reading and writing from their school experience, they did at least gain a preparation in European orientations to time, to work, and to discipline.[5]

The Anglican mission, however, did differ from other missions in Papua in two key respects. First, the early bishops and most of the senior clergy were staunch Anglo-Catholics who embraced an ideal of Christian worship and belief modeled upon the medieval church. Many of the missionaries idealized Papua village life, perceiving in it values that they feared were being eroded or destroyed in the West. Consequently, senior clergy were reluctant to authorize interference in local customs except where these clearly contravened Christian teachings, as in the case of polygyny, or basic human values, as in the case of cannibalism. The Anglican leaders imagined their church merging with a preexisting society rather than replacing it, to the benefit of both church and village. The Reverend Henry Newton, for instance, wrote that the church "is not to be a body distinct from the native life, but rather one that permeates the whole by its influence. . . . The Mission has not come . . . to change native life into a parody of European or Australian civilization" (Newton 1914:251; Wetherell 1977).

Some missionaries gained intimate knowledge of Papuan societies, but most remained quite innocent. This was probably just as well, because the mission possessed very few resources to change the social ways of villagers. This was the second major difference between the Anglicans and the other missions: They were profoundly poor. Constant shortages of cash and staff retarded the mission's expansion and left district missionaries and teachers heavily dependent upon villagers for most of their support. The Anglicans could not simply impose their version of Christianity and civilization. They required the cooperation—indeed, the active support—of villagers. Typically, the missionaries turned what many would see as a weakness into a virtue. The bishops and other leading clergy wrote scathingly of the materialism and corruption of Western countries, contrasting this with the "simple faith" of village-based Christianity. Some missionaries actively discouraged young men in the villages from signing up to work on plantations or in mines. Compared to other missions, the Anglicans developed very few commercial ventures of their own and provided little in the way of technical education for their students. Their economic policies, in other words, were consistent with their vision of a village-based Christianity.

Mission records indicate that the Maisin were usually very supportive of the mission (Barker 1987). The schools at Uiaku and

Sinapa (established in 1905) enjoyed large classes and steady attendance. The absence of a white missionary delayed baptism, but after 1911 large numbers of young people were deemed well prepared and accepted as fully baptized members of the church. By the early 1920s, around a third of the population, mostly graduates of the village schools, had become Christians. Church councils had been established in both Uiaku and Sinapa. Despite these indications of progress, however, European missionaries remained skeptical of the sincerity of many of the Maisin converts. They complained in particular about the unwillingness of converts to abide by the mission's strict marriage rules. But they also wondered, in the absence of a "strong" white missionary presence, whether Maisin commitment and understanding of Christianity ran very deep. For many Maisin, the presence of the mission may have been of greater significance than its message. The mission teachers were the villagers' most-common trade partners, a significant conduit of valued tobacco, steel tools, and other goods. The villagers likely perceived the labor and food they donated to the mission, their willingness to allow their children to attend school, and (albeit limited) tolerance of mission rules as "gifts" that created a moral relationship between themselves and the powerful white missionaries and their god.[6]

Collingwood Bay was absorbed quickly into the emerging colonial system with the arrival of the government and mission at the turn of the century. By 1915, most young Maisin men routinely left the area to work on plantations or mines elsewhere in Papua, returning after eighteen-month stints with valued manufactured goods. A few Maisin joined the police force at the district station on Cape Nelson and some went on to the mission headquarters to train as teachers. Most, however, settled back in the villages to resume a subsistence routine that predated the conquest.

This changed abruptly in July 1942, when Japanese forces landed near Buna and Gona villages on the central coast of the Northern District. All able-bodied Maisin men were soon after made to serve as carriers and laborers for the Australian and, later, American troops. As elsewhere in Melanesia, the Maisin were profoundly transformed by the experience. In the Kokoda campaign, they witnessed some of the most brutal fighting of the Second World War. They were touched by the friendly and egalitarian attitudes of Australian and American soldiers. Most significantly, they came back to the villages inspired by the idea that they themselves could construct a new way of life to achieve the material standards enjoyed by Europeans.

Ironically—for most Anglicans had been at best indifferent and often hostile to commercial development in Papua—the mission provided Maisin and other people of the Northern District with a model of how this might be achieved. After barely surviving a four-year stint as a Japanese prisoner of war, the Reverend James Benson returned to his former base at Gona village where, in collaboration with Samuel Ungega, a mission school graduate and former member of the Papua Infantry Battalion, initiated an experiment in Christian socialism: a village cooperative. Benson idealistically hoped that the cooperative would improve the diet of villagers while deepening their understanding of Christianity through the discipline of daily prayers and regular labor (Dakeyne 1966). The Gona cooperative attracted attention from across the district. Missionaries spread the word, as did a number of individuals who visited Gona. One of these, Samuel Garandi, returned to Uiaku in 1949 bearing new ideas and rice seed. Under the encouraging eye of the district missionary, the Maisin called a grand meeting at Uiaku to proclaim a new era of peace and prosperity. Leaders ritually broke a club and spear to signal the end of animosities between rival clans. The members of the Uiaku-Ganjiga Christian Cooperative Society then planted the rice, sending the first harvest to the missionaries at Wanigela (Barker 1996).

Although villagers took up the ways of Christian cooperatism with alacrity, the prayer meetings, seed blessings, and hard work clearing and planting produced meager results. They tried a series of cash crops, but many proved difficult to cultivate and even

more challenging to get to distant markets. The cooperative leaders had little idea of how to handle "shares" villagers invested into the ventures or the rare profit that came in. Afraid of being accused of stealing money, most seem to have simply stashed the cash in their houses. Villagers rarely saw any return on their efforts. By the early 1950s, the mission had lost interest in the cooperatives and the local administrators, worried that the mission had touched off a potential cargo cult, were wary. Despite these setbacks, Maisin kept returning to the cooperative model. They had one major success. With the assistance of the district missionary, who agreed to open a bank account on their behalf, a group of Uiaku Maisin raised enough cash mostly through copra sales to buy materials to build a semipermanent church building, the first in southern Collingwood Bay. The church was consecrated in a major celebration in 1962 by George Ambo, the first indigenous Anglican bishop, who at the same time installed a Papua New Guinean priest to serve the Maisin. The Maisin surrounded the new church with a special fence made up of the tree emblems representing different clans, something that had never been done before. In doing this they signaled, as they had with the ceremonial breaking of the spear and club thirteen years earlier, the new unity of the Maisin people established through cooperative activities and the Anglican Church.

Twenty years later, witnesses to this event still considered it a defining moment (Barker 1993). For this generation of Maisin, the consecration of St. Thomas Church represented the climax of a carefully constructed exchange relationship. The Maisin had given the missionaries (and the Christian god) their prayers, their labor, and their children. In return, the mission had given them the gift of the cooperative. The relationship established, villagers had continued to shower God with prayers and labor. The church symbolized a unity that surmounted the petty squabbles and incessant gossiping that divided villagers. It also promised a future economic prosperity if the moral unity of the church community could be maintained.

The Maisin had a second reason to want to cultivate relationships with the missionaries during this period. In 1947, the Anglicans opened the Martyrs' Memorial School in the central part of the Northern District. In the early years, Martyrs' offered only a couple of grades beyond basic village school education but eventually it became a full-fledged high school, one of the first and still regarded as one of the best in Papua New Guinea. In 1956, the Anglicans added a second high school, Holy Name, to serve girls. Stimulated by the need to prepare students for these schools, and encouraged by the colonial government, the Anglicans also worked to improve the standards of village schools and advanced schools at the district stations. Long familiar with mission schools, the Maisin were well placed to take advantage of these enlarged educational opportunities. By the early 1960s, a majority of Maisin village school graduates were spending a portion of their late teens studying at one or another of the mission high schools. Many went with the express blessing of the district missionaries and other senior Anglican clerics. Most intended to become "missionaries" themselves. That is, they imagined themselves serving within the mission infrastructure that comprised most of the employment opportunities at that time in the Northern District. Even after they learned that there were other possibilities, working, for instance, within the colonial administration, a large number opted to become priests, nurses, doctors, medics, and teacher-evangelists.

In the late colonial period, the Anglican mission came to enjoy an enormous influence over much of the Northern District. Many villagers like the Maisin looked to the Anglican missionaries for information on the nature of the outside world and guidance in dealing with the changes sweeping over the country at the time.[7] The extraordinary respect local people showed the mission during this period cannot be adequately explained merely as a response to the services—actual and hoped for—delivered by the church. The colonial administration also provided people with services and clearly had access to great power, yet administrative officers continually

complained that the local people did not treat them with the same respect they accorded the missionaries.

Many hoped that by forming relationships with the mission, they would eventually gain access to the vast wealth and power enjoyed by white people. This would happen through an exchange of moral equals, an exchange that would preserve the moral integrity of local people through Christian faith while elevating their material way of life. This was the crucible in which Maisin formed the notion that I would encounter in the early 1980s, of the missionary as a necessary partner in facing the challenges of an expanding world.

WE ARE ALL MISSIONARIES

The Anglican mission reached the pinnacle of its influence during the 1960s. The mission now administered a network of churches, schools, teacher and theological colleges, and medical clinics covering most of the Northern District, but it did so on a miniscule budget dependent mostly upon contributions from the colonial government and overseas supporters. The mission owed much of its success to its long association with villagers and the fact that it offered the majority of positions at that time for educated Papuans. This situation changed dramatically with the decision of the Australian government in the 1960s to fast-track Papua New Guinea for rapid independence. Graduates of Anglican schools now found their options enlarged as the administration practically overnight created a system of secondary and tertiary schools providing general and technical training in a variety of areas. To their immense frustration, missionaries watched many of their prize students lured into jobs in the government or public service—jobs that offered immensely better pay and heavier responsibilities than anything the mission could hope to match. The mission suffered an additional decline in influence when the administration established a set curriculum for village schools and, by the early 1970s, took responsibility for accrediting and paying teachers. The Anglicans remained nominally in charge of the schools, but limited their role to religious education. In most respects, days of the "mission" properly speaking were over. Almost all of the clerics were now Papua New Guinean, as were several bishops. In 1974, in recognition of this transformation, the Anglican Church of Papua New Guinea came into being as its own ecclesiastical independent province, no longer a missionary diocese of the province of Queensland, Australia.

The Maisin and other local peoples in the Northern District, as we have already seen, played a large role in defining the nature of Anglicanism—broadly, of the mission—in village society. Even as the institutional mission became a national church, beginning a slow decline, villagers continued to organize their societies and make sense of their relationships with the outside world in terms of their conception of the nature of the church and its mission. I had come to study the long-term impact of Christianity upon the Maisin. I quickly came to realize that they had localized an understanding of mission, drawing in equal parts upon received indigenous notions of moral and political action and their reinterpretations of missionary teachings.

In the early 1980s, the Maisin universally continued to refer to the Anglican Church of Papua New Guinea as a "mission." Although they were by then mostly third-generation Christians and served entirely by Papua New Guinean clergy and teachers, Maisin called the complex of classrooms, residences, playing field, and church at the center of Uiaku a "mission station." They did not associate the term "missionary" with the act of proselytizing. Instead, the term referred to those people and groups associated with and through the village church. Most major public events in the 1980s occurred on the grounds of the mission station, from saints' day feasts to independence celebrations at the school. Maisin regarded these, along with the routine tasks of maintaining station buildings, paying the priest's salary, and practicing traditional dances for upcoming church celebrations and fundraisers, as comprising "mission-side" activities. Much to my surprise, I found an abundance of "missionaries" resident in

Uiaku: retired clergy, lay evangelists, teachers, members of the Mothers' Union church group, and associates of Anglican religious orders such as the Melanesian and Franciscan Brotherhoods. Once, as I attended a church service in honor of "women's day," the head of the Mothers' Union volunteered that now, "We are all missionaries here."

To most Maisin, "missionary" referred to something more than offices and church pursuits; it implied certain attitudes and orientations. The missionary's main duty, according to the Maisin I interviewed, is to "care for" (*kaifi*) the people. They do this by giving the people *giu*—roughly, accurate knowledge and sound advice. Those people who "respect" the missionary and "hear" the *giu* live good moral lives. My informants saw the Bible as the major source of the *giu,* but they had a quite vague notion of its contents. They tended to speak of it in a general sense, as a kind of knowledge that clarifies understandings, dissipates confusion, and allows a person to perceive the truth. Christian faith, in their view, was based upon a fundamental relationship in which the missionary acts as a mediator between the truth as revealed by God and the people. Most of the Maisin represented this as a collective relationship. They saw the missionary as caring for all the people, not for individual sinners.

This last assumption was in accord with the paternalistic model of the relationship between the "father" priest and his congregation favored by the Anglo-Catholic missionaries. But it also reproduced indigenous assumptions about hierarchy. The Maisin, in common with many other coastal peoples in New Guinea, distinguished between two types of ranked clans and associated leaders, usually described as "peace" and "war" people (Chowning 1979; Hau'ofa 1981; Lutkehaus 1982). The Maisin thus distinguish between higher-ranking *kawo* and lower-ranked *sabu* clans. In the past, the *kawo* clans held the ritual prerogative of hosting feasts in their hamlets, feasts to which lower-ranked *sabu* clans brought food and danced. *Kawo* leaders had the responsibility of hosting intertribal feasts, building alliances between groups by sharing food and other gifts with outsiders. The *sabu,* in contrast, were said to be hot tempered—driven by their passions. They had the right to throw the first spear and thus initiate fighting.[8] In their oral traditions, the Maisin imagined the *kawo* as "older brothers" to associated *sabu* clans. Like older and wiser brothers, the *kawo* were supposed to temper their younger brothers' anger by offering sound counsel. When fighting occurred, they should make the first efforts to restore peace. Each type of clan had its own leaders. Maisin today refer to these leaders by the English term "chief," but this is rather misleading. The Maisin possessed no inherited political offices. Rather, the leaders of *kawo* or *sabu* clans tended to be senior but still physically vigorous men who attracted followers through their own demonstrated abilities in organizing feasts, conducting raids, and so forth.[9]

The Maisin likened the missionaries to *kawo* and themselves to *sabu.* Like many other Christian Melanesians, for instance, Maisin represented the arrival of white missionaries as a moment of episodic change. It was a transformation from a condition of Hobbsean violence to peaceful relationships, from an absolutist *sabu* state to *kawo* bliss. They more frequently applied the model to their contemporary situation, portraying the relationship between missionary and villagers, like that between *kawo* and *sabu,* as an exchange relationship. The missionary should dispense the *giu* and, in return, receive the respect, obedience, and material support of his dependent congregation, acting like proper *sabu.* The hope was to bring the two exchange partners into a perfect balance (*marawa-wawe*). From such balance, the Maisin believed, came not only peaceful relationships but also the bountiful blessings of both the Christian god and the ancestors.

It would be tempting but I think quite misleading to see this as an instance of cultural appropriation, as an indication, on the one hand, of the enduring power of Maisin culture and of a superficial grasp of Christianity, on the other. The distinction between "peace" and "war" leaders is quite ancient and widespread in coastal Melanesia, but I suspect that

Maisin notions of the opposition were strongly influenced and reinforced by mission teachings about the transforming power of Christianity. The Maisin formulation about missionaries is better understood as a historical product of a long conversation between Maisin and Anglican missionaries and teachers. It bears the traces not only of indigenous cultural categories but of Anglo-Catholic conceptions and the direct experience the Maisin had with the mission, particularly during the cooperative years of the 1950s and early 1960s.

The localized model of the mission provided Maisin with a framework within which to make sense of their current predicament. Most villagers at that time perceived themselves as poor and their communities as backwards and "dirty." They resented their growing dependence upon remittances from working relatives in town, but worried about how to find money to cover school fees, the priest's salary, and purchases of clothing and other manufactured goods that people now consider necessities. It was universally believed that the Maisin had only once achieved the desired state of *marawa-wawe,* of balance between the missionary and his congregation. The construction and consecration of the church at Uiaku in 1962 provided the model for the desired state. At village meetings and in private, Maisin conducted a great deal of soul searching to determine the reasons for their failure to bring economic riches—"development"—to the villages. Following the logic of the model, many blamed themselves for an assortment of lapses: People gossiped too much, did not provide generous offerings to the church and other public institutions, and were too "lazy" to work hard on community projects organized by village leaders. Overall, people did not listen to the *giu.* There was too much arguing and division and, as long as this was true, the Maisin villages would remain mired in poverty, sickness, and sorcery.

But the missionary model suggested that "missionaries" could just as easily be to blame for the sad state of things in the villages. As we have seen, most villagers could be viewed as missionaries of some kind or another. Maisin focused their criticisms on leaders whose connections to the church and to outside institutions and knowledge put them in the position to (ideally at least) dispense the kind of useful knowledge that would bring health and prosperity to the village. Village leaders were criticized for being lazy or greedy or sometimes for stealing money. But their worst fault, in the imagination of the people, was that they tended to favor their own relatives over others. A missionary, according to the model, brings unity by serving all. And this is probably why the most promising missionaries in the Maisin imaginings were outsiders who might stand above the incessant bickering of village family politics.

It is interesting to note that at this time many Maisin were quite critical of the bishops and leaders of the Anglican Church. Many villagers complained that the mission had failed to provide the people with plantations and other forms of economic development that might help lift them from their poverty. David Hand, then the Archbishop of the Anglican Church, provoked an outraged protest from village leaders in 1983 when, on a visit to Uiaku, he spoke out against a proposal to allow commercial logging in the rainforests behind the Maisin villages. Father David used to be a good missionary, I was told, but he had "forgotten" the people and no longer looked after their interests. Villagers were eager to do their part to bring prosperity. They needed new missionaries who would respond to their gifts and provide help. Hence the keen interest and anticipation when my wife and I first arrived in Uiaku late in November 1981.

FROM SAVING SOULS TO SAVING THE RAINFOREST

The independence of Papua New Guinea and the creation of a national Anglican Church might have been expected to bring the era of the mission to a close. But in many parts of the country, including Collingwood Bay, missionary campaigns have in fact intensified in recent years. These new missionaries can be roughly divided into two groups, religious and secular.

The new religious missionaries, while all Christians (so far at least), differ from earlier Anglican evangelists in several respects. Most promote forms of Christianity focused upon individual salvation and morality. They challenge the older tendency to identify community unity with membership in the Anglican Church. Overt sectarianism began to appear in the early 1990s in the form of small congregations of Pentecostals, Jehovah's Witnesses, and Seventh Day Adventists, mostly made up of Maisin who had converted to these sects while living and working in urban centers and brought them back to the villages. But the old association between church and community was also weakening among the majority who still belonged to the Anglican Church. Encouraged by visits from Australian Charismatics, by the ready availability of popular gospel music on the radio and on cassettes, and by an expanded program within the Anglican Church to encourage youth "fellowship," young people in particular were embracing individualistic evangelical styles of worship and belief, leaving behind the established Anglo-Catholic traditions as stodgy and conservative.

On the other hand, the secular "missionaries" are made up mostly of environmentalists interested in conserving the great rainforests of Papua New Guinea. Environmentalists make up the largest part of a burgeoning group of nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) that has become a prominent feature of political life in Papua New Guinea since independence in 1975. Colin Filer estimates that, as of 1996, somewhere between 100 and 150 NGOs were operating in the country, a third to a half concerned with forest policy (Filer 1998:264). NGOs range from organizations with global reach, like Greenpeace and the World Wildlife Fund, to organizations run entirely by local villagers. They are largely staffed by national citizens, but many receive differing degrees of funding from international environmental organizations, national and international church bodies, foreign government aid agencies, and international development organizations like the World Bank. Many make use of expatriates for senior staff positions and as consultants.

This explosion of NGOs results from the conjunction of both local and global developments. Papua New Guinea has experienced a massive intensification of resource exploitation, mostly by transnational corporations, in the years since independence (Zimmer-Tamakoshi 1998). Large-scale mining, logging, fishing, and oil projects have brought funds to the country but also created serious social disruptions, pollution, and corruption. Papua New Guinea is unusual in that some 97 percent of the land remains under customary ownership, giving local peoples a fair amount of political influence over projects in their traditional lands. Many landowners have found it useful to work with and to create their own independent NGOs to attempt to influence government and corporate decisions on projects, to claim compensation for the damages incurred in past projects, or to work out conservation plans to protect lands from overexploitation. This same period has witnessed a rising concern, particularly in the industrialized world, with the impact of the global economy upon the world's forests, waters, air, and climate. The global conservation movement has taken many different forms—from organizations opposed to commercial developments to those working closely with them or in corporations attempting to "green" their image (if not always their practices). Papua New Guinea presented an enticing target for the movement, as the home of the largest remaining primary rainforest in Southeast Asia. The national NGO movement in general, and the conservation movement in particular, is thus the result of the synergy between both local and global developments. Global organizations looking to invest funds and expertise for conservation have found ready partners in the local NGOs.

Since the mid-1990s, the Maisin have been working with a host of both foreign and national conservationists attached to different NGOs. While these activists do not bring an overtly religious message and are not trying to build a church, it is clear that many Maisin visitors think of their relationship with them in ways that strongly resemble how villagers viewed Anglican missionaries in the 1960s. In

other words, they imagine themselves in an exchange partnership with these outsiders, one that requires a unity of identity and purpose on the part of the community and a willingness on the part of the outsiders to connect villagers with outside sources of knowledge and wealth. In this section, I wish to assess the nature of this relationship from the point of view of the villagers. I also want to consider the implications for Maisin society of a growing separation of religious and community commitment.

First, I must justify my use of the term "missionary" to describe the environmental activists and their associates. This is a designation that I am applying. I have never heard Maisin call environmentalists "missionaries." I know that many of the activists who condemn the Christian missionary project in principle would be quite offended to be labeled as such themselves. There are, I readily admit, vast differences between the projects of most Christian missionaries and those of environmental activists. Yet I think the designation is helpful, if used cautiously, to remind us of the reality that, from the point of view of local villagers themselves, the foreign activists who arrive to work with them to save the rainforest bear a number of striking similarities to foreign missionaries who work to save their souls. And they treat them in similar ways.

There are a number of crucial commonalities between the religious and secular missions:

1. Foreign-sponsored agents, like missionaries or environmentalists, working with rural people in Papua New Guinea have a primary commitment to concerns that transcend localities and nationalities. Missionary agents usually perceive themselves as serving and often protecting the interests of local people from other outsiders bent on exploitation. This is because they assume that the real interests of local people are identical to the transcendent truth they wish to communicate. This assumed commonality is critically important for it helps legitimize the mission itself. Older missionary texts are replete with instances in which heathens beg missionaries to send them evangelists, to make them fully Christian. By the same token, environmental tracts often present "indigenous" people as inherently conservationist. The missionary or activists thus present themselves as coming to protect and build upon a truth that is already present.
2. Foreign missionaries and secular activists who work intimately with members of rural communities are prime agents of *cultural* globalization. Different and conflicting as their ideological mandates might be, missions and environmental organizations share an underlying commonality reflected in their routine operations and organization. Both are international bureaucracies whose operations require fundraising, budgets, plans of action, and so forth. To the degree that they participate in the routine work of mission or environmental organization, local peoples gain a practical sense of the cultural logic of these global enterprises. This often is not entirely voluntary. That is to say, if members of a local community want to attract and hold a mission or environmental agency, they will be obliged to conform to some of the key values of the foreign group.
3. Local peoples often identify enthusiastically with the ideals of the outside agency. They want to be part of the global Christian community; they feel pride at being one of the "tribal" peoples who have the wisdom to save the rainforest. All the same, they bring their own cultural orientations and historical experience to these concepts and inevitably understand them in ways that differ, often profoundly, from the official understandings of the foreign agency. This provides fertile ground for both creative and destructive mutual misunderstandings. While the relationship between foreign agency and local people is fraught with inequalities, it is nonetheless a dialectical one, which eventually transforms both parties.
4. Once they enter the local scene, the projects initiated by foreign missions and activists alike become subject to local politics. In poor countries like Papua New Guinea, where the government provides few and often inadequate social services, independent organizations like the missions and larger environmental organizations may provide major material assets for the local communities lucky enough to attract them. Local leaders build their reputations by

attracting foreigners to "help" their communities. By the same token, these leaders are subjected to the constant criticism and intrigue that characterize the competitive ethos of village politics.

As a last point, I would add that I am using the term "missionary" in the elastic sense used by villagers in the 1980s. A missionary for the Maisin is not necessarily a proselytizer. While a few of the activists who have worked with the Maisin over the past few years hold their beliefs with something akin to religious fervor, most are very focused upon practical projects with specific benefits. I myself have now become a "missionary" in this, the Maisin, sense. I have raised money overseas to help Maisin defend their lands from logging and I recently led a delegation of Canadian aboriginal people and a film crew to the area to help publicize the Maisin cause and to promote a relationship that I hope will benefit both parties (see Figure 25.2). I have myself thus entered an exchange relationship in which I am perceived (with some discomfort on my part) by many villagers as "caring for" them, much as a *kawo* leader must care for his *sabu* or an older sibling for a junior. I have thus finally become a missionary, and not a moment too soon.[10]

The Maisin came to the attention of environmental activists in the mid-1990s when villagers launched a public campaign, including prominent ads and interviews in the national newspapers, to prevent the national government from permitting commercial logging on their ancestral lands. Ten years earlier, Maisin leaders had actively courted logging companies, seeing this and the subsequent planting of commercial plantations as the best option for bringing economic development into the area. Most villagers at that time, however, voiced strong objections to any scheme that would pay higher taxes and royalties to the national and provincial governments than to the landowners. Villagers perceived this latest scheme, which had been

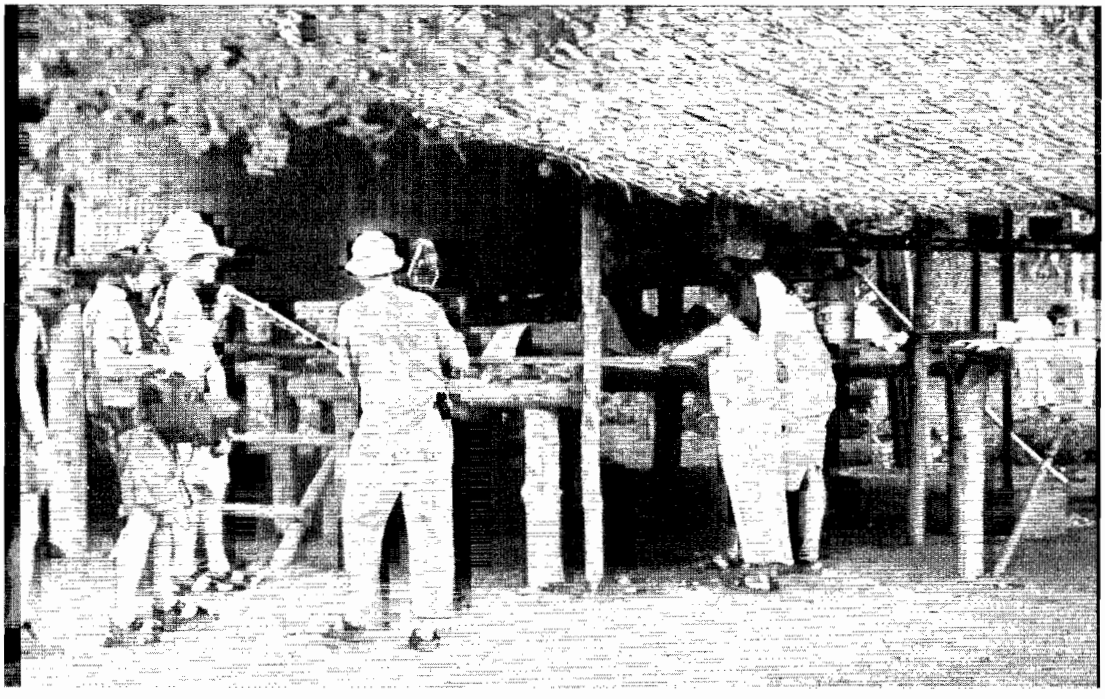

Figure 25.2 Canadian film crew

developed in secret between the government and a small group of urban-dwelling men claiming to represent Collingwood Bay, as little more than theft. There was now, however, an additional group, made up mostly of educated younger men in the towns, who had come to question the wisdom of clearing the forest itself. Sensitized by the squalor, poverty, and violence of the towns, these individuals—many of whom looked forward to retiring in the village—reminded people that the forest held many nonmonetary assets that would vanish with logging. The petitions, interviews, and ads presented a strong conservationist message along with the essential point that the Maisin alone would determine what to do with their lands.

The Maisin had already gained the important support of an activist from Greenpeace International. The public action to prevent logging attracted more support. The logging industry in Papua New Guinea had been the subject of innumerable complaints and a major government probe since the 1980s. Villagers around the country frequently complained that the logging companies had not given them promised compensation while racking up large profits for themselves (Filer 1998). The Maisin were quite unusual, however, in protesting a logging project before it even got off the ground. Their initiative attracted logistic and financial support from a number of international and national nongovernmental organizations (NGOs). Unfortunately, since 1994 the Maisin have had to call upon the support of their new allies to fend off additional development schemes, like the first launched without local consultation, which would result in the clearing of the forest on Maisin lands. Over the past two years, the Maisin have been involved in an expensive court battle with a land developer to contest a fraudulent "sale" of most of their forest lands.

Rejecting commercial logging did not mean rejecting economic development. At this time, several environmental groups were assisting rural peoples with small-scale development schemes meant to help them earn cash with a minimum of harm to the environment. In an odd echo of the origins of the cooperative movement in the late 1940s, a Maisin man employed at the Oro Butterfly Conservation Project in central Oro Province (as the Northern District had been renamed) returned to the villages to promote a scheme to form an "integrated conservation and development" organization (ICAD) to be run by the Maisin. The national Department of Environment and Conservation, with the prodding and financial assistance of international donors, had launched the first ICADs in 1993 (Filer 1998:246–248). The butterfly project, an endeavor sponsored by the Australian government to protect and commercially breed the rare Queen Alexandra birdwing butterfly, the largest in the world, had started in 1991 and then been reconceived as an ICAD (Filer 1998:254–255). It provided the basic model that was now presented to the Maisin villagers.

While clearly a creature of the environmental politics of the 1990s, from a local perspective the Maisin Integrated Conservation and Development group bears striking commonalities with the early cooperatives. Formally, it is an autonomous political body with its own elected officials and rules of procedure. Most villagers, however, regard MICAD as the embodiment of an exchange relationship between themselves and powerful outsiders (Figure 25.3). For their part, villagers give the "gift" of their time and attention to the efforts of environmentalists to teach conservation values and to conduct the necessary research on flora and fauna, as well as land tenure. The latter allows the Maisin land to be declared a conservation area under Papua New Guinea law. Most of these efforts have been conducted by Conservation Melanesia,[11] one of the larger national environmental NGOs that for several years worked exclusively with the Maisin and is now headed by a Maisin biologist (a graduate of the University of Papua New Guinea). In return, as it were, villagers have expected their partners to help develop enterprises that will bring cash into the villages.

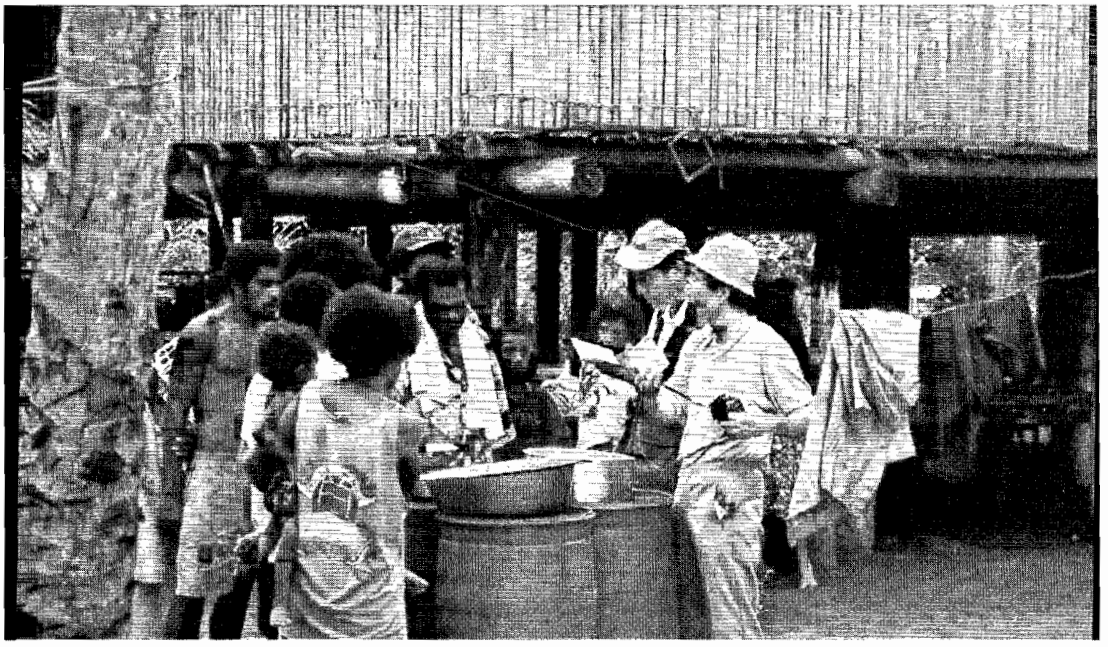

Figure 25.3 Japanese environmentalists with Sylvester Moi of MICAD

Another striking parallel is the insistence by MICAD leaders and ordinary villagers alike that the organization must represent all Maisin and embody a consensus of the community. This is enormously difficult to achieve logistically and very expensive, especially as the Maisin insist that MICAD must include Uwe, an outlying Maisin-speaking village some thirty kilometers to the north of the main territory. Finally, Maisin leaders have again proven adept at deploying symbols of "traditional" identity in rituals meant to shore up the new partnership and local unity. The arrival of the Greenpeace flagship in Collingwood Bay in 1998 was marked by days of traditional dancing and community feasts. While the occasion was very different from the more limited church feasts I knew in the 1980s, let alone the feasts orchestrated by *kawo* clan leaders in the past, Maisin represented it as a statement of their common heritage. The joint effort simultaneously indicated their common endorsement of the new partnership with the environmentalists.

The partnership has been very productive during its short existence. In close consultation with village representatives, Conservation Melanesia has coordinated a multipronged approach to protecting the environment in Maisin lands. First, they have conducted independent surveys of flora and fauna in marine and forest environments and inventories of natural resources recognized and used by villagers. Conservation Melanesia has also organized a number of workshops meant to raise consciousness about environmental matters and landowners' rights in the villages. The main aim has been to establish the groundwork for the Maisin to declare their lands a conservation area, which would make it more difficult for the government to approve development projects there. Environmentalists have also played key roles in defending Maisin's rights over the future of their lands. They have given advice and funds on those occasions when villagers have had to fend off development projects.

They have also sponsored a number of initiatives to publicize the Maisin struggle to preserve the rainforest. Since 1995, small delegations of Maisin have traveled to the United States, Japan, Australia, and New Zealand to attend museum exhibitions featuring Maisin tapa cloth, to speak before audiences of environmentalists, and to seek out financial support for small-scale economic projects in the villages. As knowledge of the Maisin has spread, a steady stream of visitors have made the trek to Collingwood Bay. In 1999, both CNN and the Australian Broadcasting Corporation covered the Maisin story of resisting commercial logging. The story will receive even more attention as a subject in a fifty-minute documentary, *Shifting Ground,* aired on the internationally syndicated program *The Nature of Things* in early 2001.

Bringing sustainable local economic projects has proven more difficult. For many years now, the Maisin have sold tapa cloth both for a small national market (where it is used as traditional clothing in dances) and for tourists who purchase it in artifact stores in Port Moresby. Tapa has a number of attractions as a development project. Both the cloth and the dyes are made from fast-growing local plants so there is a minimal environmental impact. Further, the cloth is traditionally made by women, a target group that most of the Maisin's partners particularly want to support. A Greenpeace activist put in a great deal of effort to develop the international market for tapa while two Peace Corps volunteers, stationed in Uiaku, helped train Maisin to organize the local business and keep track of the costs and profits. These efforts resulted in a steady if still moderate increase in cash earned by villagers. Environmental groups have explored other economic options with the Maisin, including insect farming, with few results so far.

The environmentalists, through their very presence, provide Maisin with important material benefits. Visitors pay villagers for food and lodging and often leave behind gifts, adding to the remittance economy. In addition, partners have donated medicine, a satellite telephone, and (as a loan) a motorized dinghy. Conservation Melanesia assists MICAD with finances, including a bank account, lends money for those needing to travel to town, and provides a reliable alternative to the national post system.

Despite these achievements, the relationship between the Maisin and outside environmentalists has become increasingly stressful. The major victim of these differences has been MICAD, which seemed on the verge of collapse during my last visit to the area in July 2000. There are many points of tension, but I think that much of the stress can be understood in terms of the different ways Maisin and their environmentalist partners conceptualize their partnership. For the Maisin, the partnership represents, as we have seen, an exchange. For the environmentalists, much like the Anglican missionaries in the past, the partnership should be understood as a temporary alliance meant to bring about a permanent change in the indigenous society. While both parties are able to work productively together at first, eventually their differing perceptions create a clash that may be difficult, if not impossible, to resolve.

Exchange relationships are inherently unstable. While Maisin villagers have taken up the various initiatives proposed by environmentalists and MICAD leaders with enthusiasm, the initial periods of support have inevitably been followed by growing suspicions that things are not "fair," that someone is benefiting at the expense of everyone else. As gossip spreads, villagers quietly withdraw their support and the initiative falters. That MICAD has survived as long as it has is testament to the determination and diplomatic skills of a handful of leaders. But few Maisin can long withstand the growing whispers that they are pocketing money that rightfully belongs to the community or working only to benefit their own kin. It is hard to find individuals willing to serve on the MICAD executive board. Indeed, I have frequently heard members of that executive board express their conviction that their colleagues are only working for their own benefit. And many villagers, especially those most closely associated with MICAD, resent the fact that most of the

international grant money that funds groups like Conservation Melanesia does not come instead directly to the villages, and that museum shops in Australia or the United States themselves make profits from selling Maisin tapa cloth. A new threat to Maisin land or a new project can overcome such divisiveness, but only for a short time. It soon returns leading Maisin to conclude, as they did with the old cooperatives, that their greatest weakness is their apparent inability to remain unified (to enter into that graced state of social amity, of *marawa-wawe*). Environmentalists are poorly equipped to deal with village politics. Most, when they first come to Collingwood Bay, are seduced by the beauty of the area, the generosity of the people, the apparent resilience and strength of Maisin culture, and the compelling nature of the story line of an indigenous "David" resisting the "Goliath" of the international trade in rainforest hardwoods. The first complaint everyone hears is that some villages, usually Uiaku, get all of the benefits. Trying to deal with this suspicion requires visitors to hold meetings in all of the Maisin villages, an exhausting task that, as it turns out, does only a little to overcome the problem. (See Figure 25.4 for a villager's idea of what is needed.) The longer they work with the villagers, the more likely it is that the visitor will hear accusations of favoritism, theft of money, and so forth. While villagers overwhelmingly direct their complaints against each other, and especially at the leaders of MICAD, eventually partners become aware that similar things are being said of them—that they are reaping huge financial benefits at the expense of the Maisin. At this point, they may feel some resentment over the Maisin's apparent lack of gratitude for the sacrifices the visitor has made or feel some guilt that not enough has been done.

Few if any partners perceive the politics of the village in terms of the cultural logic of exchange. Instead, most of the partners working with the Maisin tend to see these complaints as a reflection of a "culture of dependency," itself a product of the colonial period during which rural people came to see the mission and government as the source of material

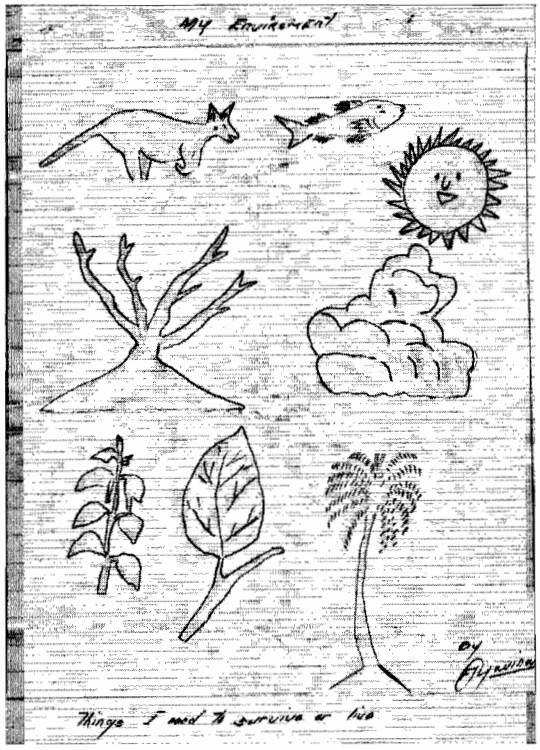

Figure 25.4 "My Environment," by Felix Jovisa

progress. They may dismiss the villagers' hopes for immediate material returns as "cargoism," an irrational belief that the mere presence of Europeans attracts wealth. Such mistaken beliefs can only be countered through education. The environmentalists aim to enhance the self-reliance of the local community, not make them even more dependent upon the outside economy that tempted them to allow the destruction of the natural environment in the first place.

In the past, the Anglican mission also labored to create self-reliant communities. While seeing villagers and village life as essentially good, the goal of self-sufficiency still required practical and moral changes. The new environmental "missionaries" do not build schools or preach every Sunday, but they do require the Maisin who work with them to learn the mysteries of rationalized surveys, planning, book keeping, and regular reports. Maisin leaders have assigned young

men and women to these tasks, much like their own ancestors sent their sons and daughters to the mission school. But more overt attempts to transform village society can be met with resistance. Many of the Maisin's new partners, for instance, are ideologically committed to elevating the status of women. Maisin women enjoy a relatively high status by Melanesian standards. They lack the right to speak publicly or to inherit land, but they do make their opinions known through their brothers and husbands and suffer very little violence. Many of the activists working with the Maisin insisted on a much more visible role for women. In response, the Maisin formed a new women's organization, included women representatives in MICAD, and agreed that delegations headed overseas would include equal numbers of women and men. From the start, most Maisin men resented and resisted these changes, attempting to contain them to the times when valued partners were actually in the villages. By 2000 the resistance had become far more overt. In June, I led a group of five members of an aboriginal group from British Columbia on the first stage of a planned exchange between the Sto:lo First Nation and the Maisin people. The second part of the exchange is now on hold because of my insistence (on behalf of the financial donors) that half of the delegation be female. The (male) leaders of the Maisin villages insisted that women were too poorly educated, too shy, and unwilling to participate in public life and therefore only men should go. Several men politely but firmly protested to me and a female Sto:lo delegate against efforts of outsiders like ourselves to "change the culture," the first time I have ever heard this complaint made.

CONCLUSION

Present-day Maisin have responded to the emergence of an environmental movement in Papua New Guinea much as an earlier generation did to the Anglican experiment with community cooperatives. In both cases, Maisin assumed that they required a partnership with powerful outsiders to secure community prosperity and political unity. The village cooperatives and MICAD both emerged as intermediary institutions meant both to unify the Maisin and to demonstrate a moral and political unity that the people believed was the essential requirement for the creation of prosperity. While the integrated conservation and development model has proven popular in many parts of Papua New Guinea, few groups have taken up the program with as much enthusiasm—and none with such spectacular results—as the Maisin. A review of Maisin history suggests that they were already searching for "new missionaries for old" in the early independence period. Given their generally positive experience with the Anglican mission, the Maisin may have been quicker to see the potential in building partnerships with environmentalists than other communities. While successful in the face of immediate threats to Maisin lands, the relationship is nonetheless a fragile one, balanced between two contradictory perspectives. The Maisin for the most part continue to view their relationship with outside partners according to the logic and politics of exchange while the environmentalists seek instead to create a short-term alliance that preserves and strengthens the Maisin's self-reliance. The relationship, based in part upon creative misunderstanding, demands adjustments on the part of both partners if it is not to break down entirely.

History repeats itself, but never in exactly the same manner or under the same conditions. The Maisin of the 1990s had far more education and a far greater sophistication about the outside world than did the men who initiated the Christian cooperative movement. And the environmentalists were not Christian missionaries, let alone anything like the Anglo-Catholic Anglican romantics who dreamed of recreating an imagined medieval theocracy in the jungles of Papua. Both the cooperatives and MICAD began as local social movements drawing ideological strength by virtue of an imagined exchange partnership with powerful outsiders. But in the case of the cooperatives, the Anglican mission was too poor and too insular to offer much practical

support and Maisin were left to draw mostly from their own resources. In contrast, environmentalists have offered individual Maisin unprecedented access to institutions and organizations spread around the globe.

There are many other differences that one could point to, but perhaps the most important is this: In the early postwar period, the Anglican mission provided the Maisin with their major source of knowledge of the outside world and their major link to it. In those days, old people told me, they believed that Jerusalem and heaven were the same. The Anglican monopoly started to break down during the 1960s, as Maisin trained in mission schools suddenly found their skills and knowledge welcomed in the public service and government. By the early 1990s, Anglicanism had lost its monopoly within the villages and individuals became increasingly aware of different forms of belief, different approaches to the world. Some Maisin visited Jerusalem and returned to tell the people that it was really a city, much like other cities on earth. Many Maisin are still actively searching for "missionaries"—partners who will unite their communities, link them to the outside, and thus bring prosperity. But they no longer presume coherence between religious faith and political unity. Perhaps the time is not far off, as Maisin society becomes more individualistic, when the idea of a common partner for the Maisin people will cease to make sense.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

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NOTES

1. Tapa cloth was traditionally made across the Pacific Islands, usually from the pounded inner bark of the paper mulberry tree. Although Pacific Islanders have universally adopted Western clothing, a few groups in scattered parts of the Pacific still make tapa today for use in ceremonial exchange and as a form of tourist art. The Maisin may have begun selling their beautifully designed tapa cloths to visitors as early as the 1930s. By the early 1980s, they had found a niche in the small national artifact market for their cloth and, at this time, are the only group producing it for sale in the country.
2. The Australians took over German New Guinea during the First World War but elected to run it as a separate colony from Papua. Following the Second World War, the Australian government combined the two colonial adminstrations, leading to the creation of Papua New Guinea.
3. Since the early 1970s, the government has set the basic curriculum for the schools and provided most of the training and salaries of teachers. The churches, however, retain at least nominal control over most local schools and several secondary and tertiary schools in the country. Some churches, such as the Seventh Day Adventist and Roman Catholic Church, continue to largely finance and run their own school systems. Churches today still run a large portion of the national health system.
4. Wetherell (1977) provides an excellent history of the Anglican mission in colonial Papua. See Barker (1987) for a detailed account of early missionary activities in Collingwood Bay.
5. Scholars have long observed that Christian missionaries may influence indigenous cultures as much through the practical routines they establish for converts as through explicitly religious instruction. By participating in schools and churches, converts may gradually become accustomed to and even internalize the missionaries' own cultural orientations to such conceptual dimensions as time, space, work, and value (Smith 1982). Ironically, Western missionaries have been key agents of secularization in rural Melanesia, easing the incorporation of people into the hegemonic framework of global capitalism (Trompf 1977). This is by no means a simple process of cultural replacement, of missionaries forcing Western culture upon villagers, however. In their magisterial study of nineteenth-century Protestant mission activity among the Tswana in southern Africa, Jean and John Comaroff clearly demonstrate that even at the level of routine, local people resist, contest, and transform the cultural patterns missionaries work to

establish. In other words, they engage in a dialogue or a dialectic with the mission (Comaroff and Comaroff 1991; Comaroff and Comaroff 1997). In places like the Maisin villages, where missionaries had to work from a distance and through intermediaries, villagers played a larger part in determining popular Christian understandings and practices (Barker 1993).

6. This interpretation is supported by, among other things, repeated efforts by the Maisin to use the power of the mission to purge their villages of sorcery materials. In 1903, for instance, Money was startled when villagers presented him and the teachers with a large pile of "charms" to be destroyed (Barker 1990b).
7. An observer of the national election of 1972 reported that villagers in several parts of the Northern District assumed that the bishops of the Anglican mission would (and should) tell them which candidates to support (Jawodimbari 1976).
8. Maisin thus also refer to *kawo* and *sabu* clans as people who "respect the drum" (*ira ari kawo*) and who "respect the spear" (*ganan ari kawo*) respectively.
9. Although Maisin speak of "chiefs," anthropologists would classify their indigenous political system as a cross between a "big man" system, in which leaders largely achieve positions of influence, and a "great man" system, in which men gain renown through their ability to exercise certain activities (such as warfare, sorcery, or feasting), which are themselves inherited prerogatives passed down family lines (Godelier and Strathern 1991).
10. In 1998 when I was visiting the area to discuss the exchange and film, I'm told that a woman who had once been my wife's research assistant spoke up at a meeting I was not able to attend and said something close to the following: "Baka [my Maisin name] came here and lived with us for a long time, but he didn't do anything for the people. He went away. And then he finally thought about us. Now he is finally going to help us." The people who told me about this speech clearly thought it would please me. And they are probably right. After all, they do regularly speak of their own relatives working in town in such prodigal terms.
11. Like most of the larger national NGOs, Conservation Melanesia receives a considerable amount of its funding from foreign sources, notably the World Wildlife Fund and the Australian government. International organizations also provide Conservation Melanesia with expatriate experts to assist in developing conservation campaigns.

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