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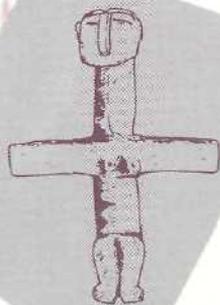
BENNY GIAY

Zakheus Pakage and His Communities

*Indigenous Religious Discourse,
Socio-political Resistance, and
Ethnohistory of the Me of Irian Jaya*



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ZAKHEUS PAKAGE AND HIS COMMUNITIES

Department of Cultural Anthropology/Sociology of Development
Vrije Universiteit, Amsterdam

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Zakheus Pakage and His Communities

Indigenous Religious Discourse, Socio-political
Resistance, and Ethnohistory of the Me of Irian Jaya

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door

BENNY GIAY

geboren te Onaago (Irian Jaya)

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Preface

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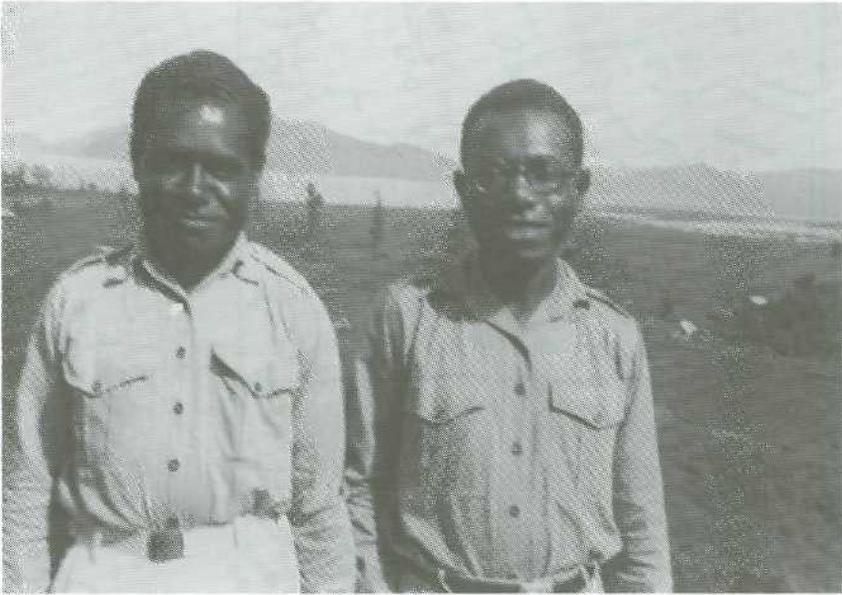
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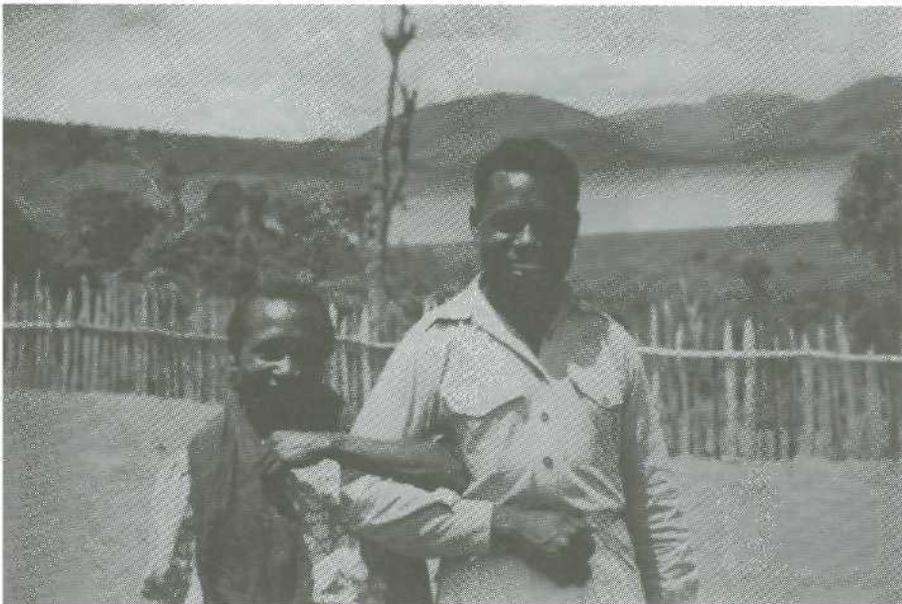
Finally, I would like to acknowledge the support, understanding and encouragement of my wife, Rukiah Arun who also typed some parts of this thesis and made this book what it is today. I also thank my children: Libby and Ligia for not creating too many distractions during the course of the writing of this thesis.

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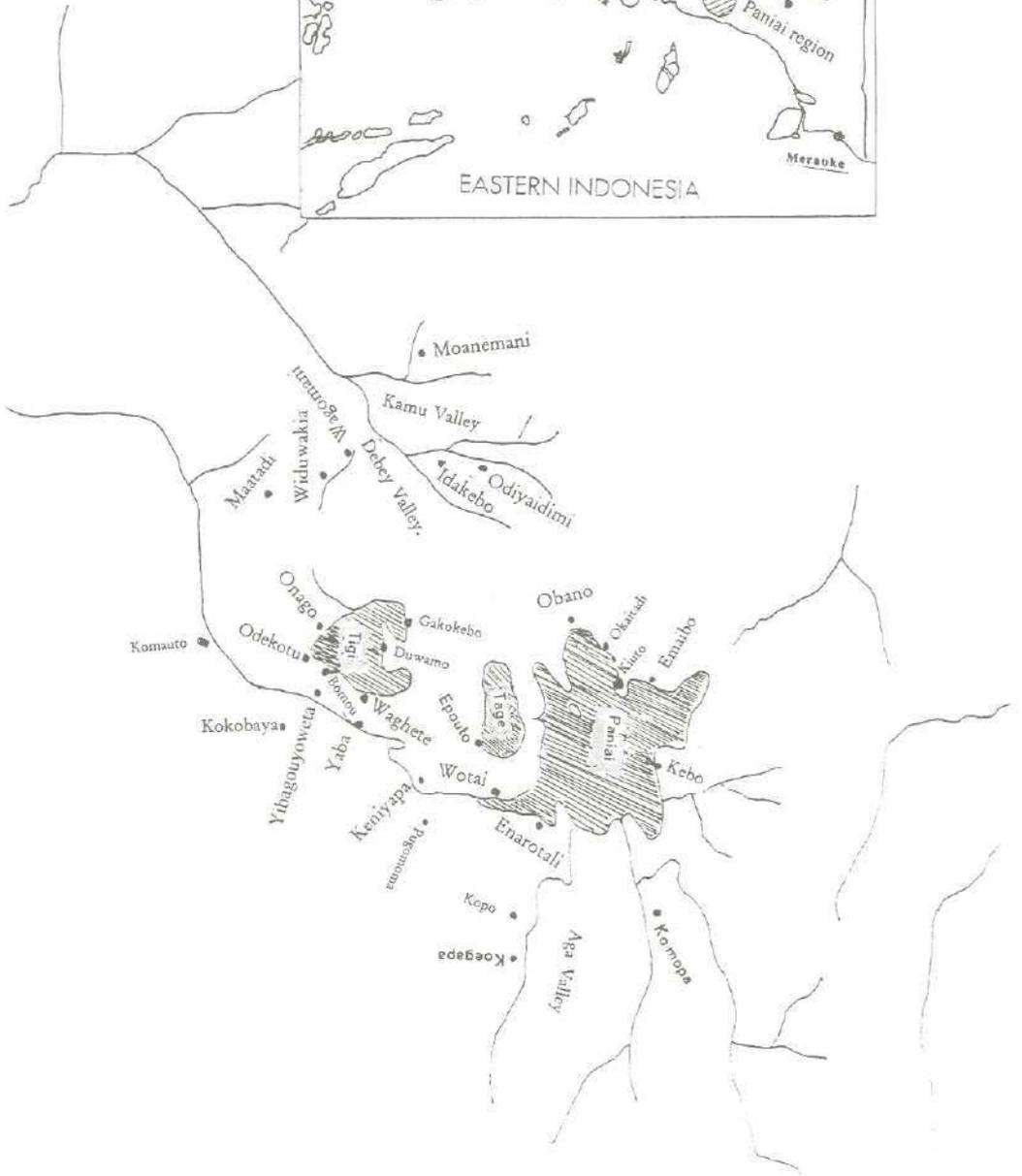
BENNY GIAY
Oegstgeest, April 1995



Zakheus Pakage (l) and Karel Gobay (r) after their return from Makassar (1950)



Zakheus Pakage and his mother, Lake Tigi (1951)



Glossary¹

Acts of free choice

This refers to a plebiscite held under the auspices of the United Nations mandate in 1969 with the intention to allow the people of Irian Jayan to decide whether they wanted to form an independent state of West Papua or to be a part of Indonesia. The people were deprived of their freedom to determine their own political destiny, as Jakarta had another agenda.

CAMA

is an abbreviation of The Christian & Missionary Alliance which is an Evangelical Missionary body from North America committed to establishing indigenous churches throughout the world, including in Indonesia and in Irian Jaya. In Irian Jaya, their missionary work was introduced in 1939. In this study I will only use the term mission referring to this missionary agency. *Missionary* or *missionaries* is used in this study to refer to the missionary personnel who are connected with this body.

Church, the

The 'church' in this study is used to refer to the church which resulted from the missionary activity of CAMA which in this part of the world is known as the GKII-Gereja Kemah Injil Irian Jaya. This is also the church for which I work.

God

The term God used in this study generally refers to the people's concept of God, which is developed in the context of interaction with Christianity on the basis of pre-contact religious belief. If the Biblical notion of God is meant it will be mentioned.

Me, the

The people who are the subject of this investigation have been known as *Kapauku* -through the work of Pospisil (1971, 1972, 1977) or Ekagi (Steltenpool 1969). In this study I have used Me which means 'the people' because that is the term they use when referring to themselves (see also Hyndman 1988).

¹ For the Me spelling see 'Brief notes on the Me orthography' in the Appendix.

OPM

is the Indonesian acronym for Organisasi Papua Merdeka—the Papuan Liberation Organization which—at least ideologically has refused to recognize the political integration of West Papua/Irian Jaya—and is still struggling to obtain political independence from the Indonesian government.

Zakheus' communities

is used to refer the groups of people from various places who decided to live together in a newly built settlements as an expression of their acceptance of Zakheus' socio-religious programs. Other terms used are: *Wege* people, or *Wege Bage*.

Local terms

ayii

a concept that has something to do with good life: no death/sickness abundance of food, etc.

akabade

is an economic event to exchange local commodities between different village groups.

buka - feast/piece of bamboo used to cut pork meat, etc.

bomoye - a type of cowrie shell.

bugii yagoo mee - a man who is has a special skill in making garden.

bodiya - fire, also another type of cowrie shell.

duta

a religious object which according to the Me Zakheus used to perform miracles.

ede pede - to do economic transactions.

epa mege - a type of cowrie shell.

enaa - good.

gau - dried bamboo or drain bamboo or schaaamkoker used to fetch water.

kopa - stick/staff.

koteka - penis gourd.

kabo - foundation.

kampung teladan

(Bahasa Indonesia) village of the year, which is an award given the government to the leaders of the village leadership created by the government to carry out their policies.

kamu tai

a religious ceremony (to drive out spirit being which brought in sickness or to bring in rain, etc.).

kapauku - a term used by the *ogai* to refer to the Me.

mege

is the local term for cowrie shell used as a means of exchange until the 1980s.

megebeto

is a tortoise-like animal which is believed to be the physical representation of a spirit being which can multiply the cowrie shell. Often it is also referred to as *mege bugaiya* -because megebeto consists of a pair: one male and female. According to the Me this *megebeto* is owned by a few people and has enabled them to have many cowrie shells, which in turn has brought them many pigs and wives. There are several ways through which one can obtain *megebeto*. It can be sent by a ghost of the dead or obtained by revelation. Another way of obtaining megebeto is through sale. But those who have megebeto have to observe certain conditions. One of them is that of making regular ritual sacrifices, at the place where megebeto is kept. Other rules includes: abstaining from doing certain things. As long as the owner observe such rules the megebeto produces mege.

moge - skirt

ogai

is the local term for all foreigners such as: missionaries, government personnel, Euroamericans, Indonesians and local people who work for the church alike.

pabrik

is taken from Dutch word *fabriek* which means factory; but the local people in the context of religious movement as any material objects which is taken as representation of God or female deity which can help produce material goods without man's involvement.

pakoba

another type sea shell used as a means of exchange before the mege became dominant.

patau - digging stick.

poti - rim of a fishing net.

tota - something which has existed or indigenous, not imported.

tota mana - religious rules or taboos.

udi - shrimp.

uwa - season.

wadi - a small digging stick.

Wege Bage

disturbers of peace and order. This is a name given to the Zakheus' communities by the *ogai* and their opponent.

Wege Mana

mainly used refers to the teachings or programmes of Zakheus or his communities.

wiwitiida - the time of immediate transformation of the world.

woti

a type of big sea shell used as means of exchange which was gradually replaced by a cowrie shell.

yapeewa - small hut built for the purpose of war.

yenu - handle of a fishing net.

yina - non-domesticated animals or insects.

yoo - a type of cowrie shell mainly used in the Lake Paniai area.

yuma mito

literally bones of your nose: (but) it means a special gift given by an immediate relatives of death.

Key figures/the main figures in this study

Koyeidaba

is a messianic mythological hero who is believed to have appeared in Idakebo, Kamu Valley, performing miraculous deeds by feeding the hungry people by just rubbing certain parts of his body. Later he was killed by the people and he disappeared. When the missionaries and the local church leadership began preaching about Jesus Christ of Christianity the people in this region argued that it was Koyeidaba which was being preached.

Pakage, Jordan

is Zakheus' elder brother who went about destroying people's gardens, burning houses and killing their pigs. His acts in this respect helped convince the government and missionary personnel that Zakheus and his communities were wege people- disturbers of peace and order.

Pakage, Zakheus

is referred to as Zaccheus by the missionaries, is a leading religious leader who is subject of this study. He was born in YIbagouyoweta, Tigi district around 1920. During World War Two he went to Australia with Dr. De Bruijn. After the war he attended the Theological School in Makassar—Ujung Pandang, South Celebes—returning to the Paniai region in 1950. There he began his work and built his communities but was rejected by the Dutch and the missionary personnel. In 1952 he was declared as mentally ill. He was sent to the Mental Clinic Irene in Hollandia Binnen, known as Abepura today. In 1957 he was released and went back to the Paniai region, but was sent back again to Jayapura. In 1963 he again returned to the Paniai region again and tried to take over the church and government leadership in this region but was sent back to the mental hospital in Hollandia Binnen/Abepura in the coming year. In 1969, he escaped. He went to Sentani where he died in 1970. Some regard Zakheus as a representation of Jesus Christ who had come to deliver them from politico-religious domination.

Troutman, Reverend

is an American missionary connected with CAMA who worked in the Paniai region from December 1947 until the middle part of the 1980s. He had met Zakheus in Makassar and knew him personally. He had worked in this region among the Me until he retired in middle part of the 1980s. He had a strong influence on determining the missionary policy in the region.

Glossary of geographical locations

Bomou

Bomou is just about a 15 minute walk from Waghete, the capital of Tigi district. The first local church was established in this place after Zakheus began his work.

This name is used to refer to Yibagouyoweta and Topuuto. This was the place in which the first burnings of religious objects took place as a response to Zakheus' work. Hundreds of people indicated their willingness to follow Zakheus.

Idakebo

This is also a very significant place, because Koyeidaba started his activities here. It is also the place where the leaders of the Wege community in Kamu Valleys grew up and started to preach their wege mana in midst of competition with preachers of other religious beliefs of the *ogai*.

Kokobaiya

In 1960 this was one the place which was considered to be the strong hold of the wege mana. It is located on the left bank of Jawei river. In the 1960s the population consisted of 140.

Paniai region, Wissel Lakes

is here used to refer to the areas around the Paniai, Tage and Tigi lakes, and to the Kamu and Mapia districts, which is the country of the Me. Until the 1960s it was also referred to as the Wissel Lakes region. Due to the colonial conotation of the latter term, it was changed to Paniai. Wissel Lakes will be used also in this study when referring to events before the name was changed.

Pugomoma

This place where Pugo river which flows to Jawei River originated. It can be reached within a 2-3 hour walk from Enarotali. This place is believed to be the place of origin of Koyeidaba before he went to take up his residence in Idakebo (see Idakebo).

Sentani

is a town on the Northcoast of Irian Jaya where the airport of Jayapura is located. Zakheus spent his last years there.

Yibagouyoweta

is in a settlement of about 40 people in Tigi district. Zakheus began his work here. It is also a significant place, because Ekata or Yupi (the founder of three clans including Pakage clan) chose this place to build his home.

CHAPTER 1

Introduction

1.1 Background

In the past fifty years there have been few publications about the Christianization of the people of the Central Highlands of Irian Jaya, Indonesia. Mostly they were written by missionary personnel, for the consumption of the missionary supporting communities or agencies (Gibbons 1981, Hitt 1962, Manning 1969, Mickelson 1968, Wick 1990).

So far only the acculturation of the Muyu of South New Guinea/Irian Jaya (Schoorl 1993) and the Western Dani people and their response which has been subjected to the anthropological investigation. In the case of the Western Dani, the first investigation was made by O'Brien and Ploeg in the early 1960s. According to them the Western Dani people were receptive to the Euroamericans when contact occurred.

The attitude towards the Europeans was favorable because the new arrivals had an abundance of highly valued objects, such as cowrie shells, bush knives and steel axes (O'Brien & Ploeg 1964: 283).

Later this positive response resulted in the mass-renunciation and destruction of their traditional symbol objects of spiritual security (O'Brien & Ploeg 1964: 284ff). More recently Hayward drew a similar conclusion in a study which outlines this process of drastic group conversion to Christianity. Western Dani 'display a significant lack of satisfaction with their own culture' (1980: 108). This was 'demonstrated by an attitude of restlessness, of openness to change, and a concern for survival' (1980: 106). Therefore 'they were open and ready for change which came with the arrival of the missionaries' (1980: 110). This attitude toward the Euroamericans resulted in the birth of religious movement which in turn gave birth of the Western Dani Church (Hayward 1980: 129, 1992: 3ff).

In contrast to the Western Dani's experience, the Me who form the subject of this study generally resisted the advent of the Euroamericans into the area. Integration of Christianity among the Me took a long period of time. Therefore Reverend Mickelson who returned to the Paniai region in October 1946 in order to reintroduce the missionary work, expressed his frustrations due to

the lack of converts two years later and planned to move the missionary station from Enarotali, Lake Paniai (Mickelson 1968: 136). But when Zakheus Pakage began working in 1950 mass conversions took place. Hundreds of people came to Zakheus and expressed their desire to follow what he taught. Those who came to him were the first groups to form what came to be known as the Zakheus' communities.

1.2 The subject of this study

1.2.1 *Zakheus and his communities*

This study investigates the work of Zakheus Pakage and his communities. Zakheus is the key figure in this study. Zakheus was born in the Tigi district, around 1920 (see p. 285 'The Life of Zakheus Pakage'). In May 1943 he accompanied De Bruijn. After World War Two De Bruijn became known as Jungle Pimpernel. They retreated further into the Eastern Central Highlands of New Guinea/Irian Jaya in order to escape from the Japanese forces who were approaching the Wissel Lakes region. In July 1944, Zakheus and other Me who had accompanied the Dutch government officer were taken to Australia. While in Australia the Dutch entrusted four of the men to the CAMA mission to be trained in theology in Makassar, known today as Ujung Pandang, South Celebes, Indonesia. In 1946, Zakheus and Karel Gobay and two others entered theological school in Makassar. Zakheus went back to Wissel Lakes and began his work in August 1950. His preaching activities resulted in the birth of the *Wege* communities or his communities. A year later after his return, he was arrested as he came into conflict with the *ogai* and the local headmen. Zakheus faced much opposition from various directions. In spite of opposition Zakheus continued to build his 'Christian communities'. In April 1952, he was declared as mentally ill and was sent to the mental clinic in Hollandia known today as Jayapura which is on the north coast of Irian Jaya. His communities continued to grow in spite of his absence. He went back to the Paniai region several times, but the *ogai* kept him away from his communities by sending him back to the coast. He died in January 1970 after he had escaped from the mental clinic several months earlier.

This study is an investigation of the life history and work of this religious leader. It is also a history of interaction between two cultures: that of the *ogai* and of the Me.

In this study, Christian communities which Zakheus attempted to establish, are referred to as: Zakheus' communities, *Wege* communities, or *Wege Bage*. This study reviews the activities of Zakheus Pakage, the birth and the

development of the *Wege* communities in the Wissel Lakes region, the Western Central Highlands of Irian Jaya. In the final analysis the main concern of this study is the indigenous religious views as expressed by the *Wege* communities and the Me in general at various stages.

1.2.2 *God, salvation, the Bible, Jesus Christ, and eschatology*

Although this study deals mainly with the activities of Zakheus and his communities, the main concern of this study is the religious views of the Me people in general. I have concentrated on several central themes. This is necessary simply because according to the *Wege Bage*, the Western Christian doctrinal themes found their local or indigenous counter parts in the pre-contact religious views. The *Wege Bage* interpreted Christianity in terms of these perceived pre-contact religious motifs. The pre-contact religious motifs on which the *Wege Bage* built and developed their indigenous religious discourse are the following:

- a. *God*—as *Ugatame*—the male deity who was believed to as male creator deity. He had been in contact with the past generations of the Me from his dwelling place in the upperworld.
- b. *Bible* is seen as *touye mana* or *tota mana*—or the religious rules or teachings (similar to the 10 commandments of the Christian Bible) which have been in existence long before the contact with the *ogai*. *ogai* is a local term used here to refer to Euroamericans, Indonesians or local people who are associated with them (for further explanation on the local terms used see Glossary).
- c. *Salvation*—is understood as *ayii*, a concept which refers to a state of life where there is no sickness and suffering, where the people never grow old, and live a life full of happiness. It is assumed that it is possible to experience this kind of life quality here and now if one carefully follows religious rules believed to be given by God.
- d. *Jesus Christ*—was seen as *Koyeidaba*—the local messianic figure who was believed to have visited Paniai region but was killed in the Kamu Valley. Some viewed Zakheus himself as a messiah appointed by God.
- e. *Eschatology*—the Me see Christian doctrine of the second coming of the Lord as *wiwitida*—which means the time of consummation of the world and history.

These perceived indigenous religious motifs became the framework or model through which the *Wege Bage* developed their own theological views which later collided with the religious beliefs of the *ogai*. The invention of new reli-

gious ideas on the basis of such existing pre-contact religious views is the subject of this investigation. Before stating the problem and method, a brief remarks about the issue of 'pre-contact religious motifs' as alluded above will be made.

1.2.3 *The issue of the Me's pre-contact religious beliefs*

The *Wege Bage* claim, and I quote my informants, 'we have known the Christian doctrines being preached by the *ogai*, because such religious motifs, had already been known to our ancestors long before the *ogai* came to this region'. This is a crucial statement. Because the religious views to be discussed in this study are built around this argument. The question now is how can we know that such Christian motifs had already been known in the region since its pre-contact times. I think their historical and socio-cultural setting in which they expressed this view can provide a possible explanation to this question. It will be shown in the following chapters that the *Wege Bage* lived in two inter-related context: a drastic socio-cultural and economic change and preached their views in the midst of a strong opposition from the *ogai*. Seeing the *Wege Bage's* claim above, in the light of the setting in which they lived, there are three possible explanations regarding their claim of 'having access to the pre-contact religious knowledge': cultural, socio-political and the invention of new religious ideas. From cultural view point, the Me assume that religious ideas such as: God, the male creator deity-Ugatame or Wado-mee, messianic figures etc. can be found in the Me healing rituals, folk-tales, legends, mythological beliefs at least in its elementary forms. Being a Me myself, I have shared such assumptions. While, from a socio-political view point, such religious contention of the *Wege Bage* is highly political in their attempts to defend their views which was being suppressed by the *ogai*. This political element dominates the *Wege Bage's* theological discourse as will be shown in Chapter 5. Further, when caught in the process of change and opposition the *Wege Bage* also invented new religious ideas. In this respect the *Wege Bage* while integrating elements of Christian beliefs, also invented new religious ideas and made use of the existing religious/cultural ideas to support their views and attacked the *ogai*. Methodolocially therefore, the *Wege Bage's* view that they had 'pre-contact religious knowledge', is questionable. Their knowledge about 'pre-contact religious beliefs' as such is informed by the socio-political setting in which they lived and their exploitation of the existing religious assumptions.

1.2.4 *The importance of the study*

Zakheus Pakage is an important figure in the Me's socio-religious history. What is surprising is that the *ogai* who had written about Christianization of the Paniai region and the Central Highlands of Irian Jaya had not mentioned the work of Zakheus (Hitt 1976, Wick 1990) with the exception of Mickelson (1968). Instead of recognizing Zakheus, the *ogai* who had dealt with him painted a bad picture of Zakheus. He was seen as a man who 'was possessed by the devil' (*De Pionier*, Maart 1963, No. 3). Another *ogai* described him as false messiah 'who through subtlety of Satan was used to influence thousands of innocents people to make a false decision' (*Behind the Ranges*, May 1970). Or an evangelist through whom 'a great revival swept over the area where he was working, who later succumbed and completely sell out to the powers of darkness' (Karel & Zakheus n.d.: 6) The government official in Waghete similarly saw Zakheus as a man who was 'stirring up the people of the region and creating disorder and conflicts' (*The Alliance Weekly*, September 12, 1951).

To the Me however, Zakheus is 'the Me people's Jesus'. In spite of the condemnation by *ogai* of Zakheus as 'false teacher', today Zakheus is seen as an undisputed indigenous church leader who suffered for the cause of the church. Within the church communities Zakheus can be regarded as 'the apostle to the Me'. This is particularly true for church communities in Tigi, Debei, Kamu and Mapia districts which can be seen as the fruit of Zakheus' evangelistic programs. Until August 1950, the year Zakheus began his activities, these areas which belonged to the Catholics. The Catholics had distributed material goods such as: axes, swords, etc to attract the Me when Zakheus began to preach his theological views (BE Jayapura 2 August 1992). By returning to his place of birth and preaching Christianity, Zakheus invaded these areas and built his communities which later became the nucleus of local church' communities. These church communities today form strong indigenous congregations. The church communities and the people in general today view Zakheus as an influential religious leader in the religious history of the Me. The *Wege Bage* who hold new religious views—which is combination of Christianity and their traditional religion—in the Paniai region see Zakheus as a man who had taught the true 'religion' which was not preached by the *ogai*. In this respect Zakheus can be seen as a man who laid down the foundation for the rise of various religious cults in the succeeding years in Paniai region up until now.

On the grassroot level the work of Zakheus and his views continue to shape the life of many of the village communities in Paniai region today. This

is evident from the following cases which shows the way the people attempt to relate their experience today with the life and work of Zakheus.

a. I remember my uncle Widiyaibiwode—my father's older brother, who was the village chief, making references to Zakheus' teaching in a meeting in 1965 when he made an important speech in the community. Between 1964 and 1968 the people in the Tigi area had been thrown into the sea of panic, as head-hunting rumors became very prevalent. It is important to note that these type of rumors are still common not only in Irian Jaya but also in the rest of Indonesia (see Drake 1989, Forth 1991 and Erb 1991). It was said that the Indonesian authorities were hiring a number of people to go around to various village communities in the Tigi area in search of human heads. Such human heads were intended to be buried in the ground under an airstrip which was under construction in Waghete or under the bridge and road projects which were underway in the coastal town of Nabire. It was said that such a sacrifice was needed to strengthen the airstrip or to make the road or bridge more durable. The people were afraid to go even to fetch fire wood or to gather their food. And Widiyaibiwode, as the chief called the people and challenged them not to be fearful by referring to Zakheus' words saying 'this was already predicted by Zakheus. If you can spare some time and reflect on what Zakheus had said, you will know that it is according to the plan as Zakheus had predicted it' (see paragraph 5.5 'Local Eschatology', particularly section 5.5.2). The war against all people of the world) As far as I can remember this reference to Zakheus' teachings helped the people to weave their world which was falling apart. I was part of this community and shared those views. Zakheus' teachings provided a kind of framework through which the people saw their history and their world.

b. The above is not the only case. The Me have been interpreting the historical events in the past four decades from the perspective of Zakheus' teachings. On one occasion Zakheus is said to have gone to the city market in Sentani and then he took off his clothes and stood naked at the market in Sentani. He was escorted back to Pos VII, Sentani where he was staying. Today, the *Wege Bage* argue that Zakheus' act in this respect was showing the future politico-religious destiny of the Irian Jayans. The Me say that in those days the people did not want to listen to him; therefore Zakheus sought a different method to teach the people by acting out and dramatizing his teachings about the future destiny of the Irian Jayans this way. The people who have seen the development activity in the region through which the people's land was taken and the natural resources exploited, now argue that the last thing the Irian Jayans will experience after they lost everything is that their clothes will be taken

away and they will die naked in their own land as Zakheus had demonstrated (BP Jayapura June 12, 1992). It will be seen in this study that Zakheus' activities indeed shaped and will shape the people's political and religious thinking in the future.

c. Today many acknowledge Zakheus as the pioneer of the community development in the Paniai region. This idea was developed by the people in the 1980s when two villages¹: Bomou and Tenedagi/Tigi district received the *Kampung teladan*—village of the year award from the government from the *Bupati*—the Head of the Paniai regency stationed in Nabire. This award was given to the village leadership as recognition of their success in creating a clean and healthy surrounding, with a proper office and with its sign board and the managing the village administration, etc. The people argue that the reason why the two villages got this award was that the men who helped winning this award for the two villages were that the elementary school teachers who were born in the former *Wege* communities. Some of the former *Wege Mana* followers argued that 'community development program' introduced by the state today was Zakheus' important agenda four decades ago. Later in June 1992, when Bas Suebu, the former Irian Jaya Governor introduced his strategy of 'village based development program' he was seen by the Me as 'reformulating Zakheus' development agenda. In fact one of the Zakheus' sympathizer call him Zakheus II, or reincarnation of Zakheus. Again, I have cited these cases to show that Zakheus and his work continue to shape the people's socio-religious history.

Furthermore, Zakheus' views on Christian mission seem to be relevant for today's church' responsibility of meeting the socio-economic needs of the people. I think he was 40 years ahead in thinking than the *ogai*. This is based on my understanding of his twofold missionary program.

His first goal was to spread the gospel as he understood it from his socio-religious frame work. He was convinced that God preached by Western missionary was already in existence in the history and culture of his people. In relation to missionary work, it is in my understanding that a right starting point is to come up with a more local and contextual expression of Christianity; bearing in mind some problems involved in this process. His second aim was related to what was noted above: community development. Zakheus was concerned with the need to help the local communities to get them integrated to wider national society. Through his preaching, he tried to introduce his village development program by establishing Christian communities and

¹ This village consists of several former settlements which created by the state government with the intention to penetrate the society within the state ideologies.

encouraging such communities to work hard and to plant crops which would bring them into the cash economy. This is an important aspect of the missionary task today which Zakheus had introduced in August 1950. I think this was a timely missionary program intended to avoid economic and political domination from the *ogai*. It is here that I sympathize with many people today, who have expressed their feelings of regret for not taking Zakheus seriously. The Me have indeed ample reasons to regret in the light of the present fear of socio-economic and political domination by the new settlers who carry socio-economic and political powers. 'Had we had enough courage to work hard as Zakheus had taught, today we would have been the ones to teaching and expanding or introducing development projects among Indonesians and to other people, and not the other way around' (BE, Bomou September 5, 1992).

This investigation is intended to deal with this key figure who shaped the Me's socio-religious history.

1.3 The problem and the method

The questions which the study addresses began to emerge as I listened to people telling their stories about their involvement and their views about Zakheus and his programs. Some of the questions addressed in this study are: In what conditions did the people, Zakheus and his communities live? What motivated the people to join Zakheus' communities. What induced Zakheus to preach? What did Zakheus want to achieve through his activities? These are some of the questions which this study attempts to address. Before showing the methods adopted to address these questions, a brief review is made to explain the logic of the methods used here.

1.3.1 *Recent approaches to the study of religion*

Quarles van Ufford and Schoffeleers have, in my opinion, rightly said that in the past approaches to the study of religion has traversed three distinct phases which more or less coincided with three successive stages in the history of Third World nations: colonial era, the era of political struggle and the post colonial era. During the colonial era the study of religion was mostly centered on beliefs on cults or witchcraft which was viewed from conservative and functionalistic terms. In the succeeding era of nationalism, Anthropologists paid attention to the revolutionary potential of religion. Religion was seen as source of resistance and aspirations for liberation. During the post indepen-

dence period roughly from the 1950s the study shifts to religious symbolism divorced from political processes (Quarles van Ufford & Schoffeleers 1988).

In the course this historical sequence new approaches to the study of religion has been introduced. Droogers lists some of the models employed in the study of religion: functionalist models, intellectualist model, neo-Marxist models, informants model, semantic and the semantic model (Droogers 1985: 101ff). However, the call for new models continues. In response to this 'waste making' of models for the study of religion, Droogers calls for 'recycling' arguing that models should not be regarded as mutually exclusive but inclusive and therefore suggested an eclectic use of models. 'This is essential partly because of every model justifies itself by means of its own presuppositions and judges other models by its own criteria' (Droogers 1985: 101).

This eclectic approach is being used here in this study: cultural, socio-political and local people's history and identity

1.3.2 Cultural approach

This approach takes religion as an expression of system of meaning. Geertz who introduced this cultural model saw culture as 'an historically transmitted pattern of meanings embodied in symbols, as system of inherited conceptions expressed in symbolic forms by means of which men communicate, perpetuate and develop their knowledge about attitude toward life' (Geertz 1973: 89). With this view of culture he defines religion as 'a system of symbols which acts to establish powerful, pervasive and long lasting moods and motivations in men by formulating conceptions of a general order of existence and clothing these conceptions with such an aura of factuality that the moods and motivations seem uniquely realistic' (Geertz 1973: 90).

Kamma (1972) and Peter Lawrence (1989) studied religious movements in Irian Jaya/Melanesia from a similar perspectives. Both Kamma and Lawrence attributed the rise of new religious movements in Irian Jaya/Melanesia as redefinition of the people's indigenous mythology and belief systems. I have partly shared this view and therefore take religious discourse of Zakheus and his communities as revival of the pre-contact religious tradition. And yet, at the same time I do not totally agree with them, simply because they neglect the historical context in which such a religious views were formulated. Another objection is that taking the religious movements only as revitalization of the past religious tradition is a static view and fails to see the dynamic nature of human's religious life.

1.3.3 *Socio-political approach*

The above cultural model has been criticized; since it neglects the socio-historical and political dimension of religion (see Asad 1983, Bax 1987, Kooiman *et al.* 1984). Those who are critical of the cultural approach see religion as an expression of people's aspirations for socio-political liberation (Guillot 1985, Quarles van Ufford 1980). In the study of religious movements two scholars who had used this approach are: Lanternari (1965) and Worsley (1968). The people's religious views are seen as a reaction to the foreign politico-religious and economic powers. Being aware of their plight of living under domination by such powers the 'believers' argue, 'At first we had the land and you had the Bible. Now we have the Bible and you have the land' (Lanternari 1965: 21). The historical context and the circumstances in which Zakheus and his communities lived and carried their activities, convince me to share this socio-political approach. However, here again, it is impossible to argue that religious views of Zakheus was completely inspired by his political agenda. To do that would mean that we would adopt an exclusive approach; where in religion is separated from other spheres of human's life such as man's search for meaning. Man is also concern with his perceived past which informs his/her understanding of himself which also shapes his/her future.

1.3.4 *Local history and indigenous religious discourse*

Religion is also seen as a part of the collective memory of the society's past which shape its views of itself and its identity and the aspirations of the society to preserve such aspirations. The religious beliefs and socio-political aspirations of the society are always based on its history or its memory of its past. In this respect Zakheus' activity is seen as a program to recollect, bring forth and to preserve their past history which was being undermined and challenged by the *ogai*. The rise of Zakheus's communities and indigenous theological awareness can be seen as a new consciousness to preserve the history their communities and identity in the midst of change and opposition.

I have taken this broader view out of the assumption that the two tools mentioned earlier are too exclusive and static. When in actual daily life setting, religious views are always in the state of flux following the believers' moods and aspirations which are shaped by their changing historical and cultural context.

1.4 Research viewpoints and problems

1.4.1 *Research viewpoints*

This study is done from a particular view point with specific concerns resulting in specific problems. In this section I would like to point out these concerns and problems.

First of all, this study is done from a sympathetic view point toward Zakheus and his activities. I see Zakheus and his communities as attempting to formulate their own version of Christianity from the stand point of their own cultural background. I accept this as fact, simply because all human beings see the reality from the cultural views of the group in which they have been brought up. This attitude will be reflected in this study. As a church worker I want to see the development of an indigenous church: a church which is in the hands of indigenous leadership, which takes up the task to spread Christianity by its own means, which bears its own financial responsibility. It is a church which is engaged in critical theological reflection without being fear of being accused of being 'syncretistic' by the *ogai*. By being 'critical' I mean theological reflection which is critical toward its own indigenous views and critical towards the *ogai* and their value orientations from a Biblical stand point.

In this respect, I have taken a different position from the tradition of my own church, which has been adapting a rather intolerant approach toward the local religious expressions such as the one which is under the present consideration. For the church communities whose growth I have been attempting to encourage, this approach may be shocking, or even heretical. In fact, my own mother thinks that the kind of study adopted in this study is heretical. She was upset when she finally realized that the information she had given was used to establish a dialogue with men who had been teaching a different gospel, which was in her eyes not the gospel at all (ED, Enarotali December 13, 1992).

Secondly this study is a personal one in two respects. This study has something to do with socio-religious history of my parents and the village community where I was born. It attempts to investigate the activity and participation of my own parents and the modest contribution they made—although in this study they are mentioned once or twice in passing—in the process of dealing with change and conflict. Because as soon as the people heard that Zakheus was giving such instructions two of the village chiefs—one of them was: Widiyaibiwode, my father's elder brother—went to visit Zakheus. Later around

November 1950 the chiefs and the people in my village invited Zakheus to come to preach in my village. In response to his sermon, the people burnt their religious objects and they established a 'Christian community'. He distributed vegetable seeds to enable them to earn the Dutch currency. Following this decision to follow Zakheus, the two village chiefs attempted to destroy the house of a teacher who was sent by the Catholics to this village. They were put in jail, as a result. After their release (in June-July 1954) my uncle—Widiyaibiwode, who was referred to as a 'Christian chief'—and other people from my village went to spread Christianity in Kamu and in Mapia districts (*The Alliance Weekly*, August 4, 1954). A year later, Widiyaibiwode and his men were on the road again to preach Christianity; which was at the same time a 'business trip' to the countries of other tribes such as: the Monis, the Ndugas, the Ndanis and the Damals. His preaching among the Damals of Beoga resulted in the 'conversion' of the local chief who was present and a large number of people groups. Seeing this open response to Widiyaibiwode's sermon, the Reverend Gibbons, who was in the early stage of introducing Christianity in that region, invited him to preach at several places (Gibbons 1981: 209). This 'conversion of the Damal chief' was an important event since this chief in turn encouraged his tribesmen to accept Christianity. The Damals who had intermarried with the Dani brought this message of conversion to the Danis and later the Dani followed it by the burning of their religious objects. This was the beginning of the birth of religious movements which inspired other Western Dani groups to accept Christianity, which was described as 'acculturation movements' by Hayward (1980, 1992), O'Brien and Ploeg (1964) and Larson (1992).

Thirdly, this study is personal in the sense that it expresses my sympathy for men like Zakheus who had to go through suffering because of his views. In Irian Jaya—Indonesia and elsewhere, Zakheus represents many others who had suffered in the hands of political powers who had used the strategy of confrontation and suppression toward indigenous political and religious leaders. This present study is done with my personal view to call for a more human approach which respect the politico-religious rights of all human beings.

Fourthly, this research is done with the view to broaden the present understanding of the religions of Irian Jayans/Melanesians. It seems that the anthropological study on the religions of Melanesians/Irian Jayans in the past has centered on this 'cargo' motif as exemplified by works of Worsley (1968), Lawrence (1992) and Kamma (1972). Such works have prevented us from exploring other religious motifs such as: the indigenous people's view of God, Jesus Christ, or salvation and eschatology. The present investigation is different in that it attempts to take other religious motifs which has been neglected

and treat them comprehensively by taking the view that they cannot be studied separately. Simply because such religious motifs are inter-related.

1.4.2 Source of information and the problems in the collection of data

The information for this research came from different sources: 1) My parents provided and shared their views and experiences when they joined the *Wege* community; 2) Three other men from my village who participated in the *Wege Bage* were able to share their own experience with me. Several pastors who formerly were 'preachers of the *Wege Mana*' were willing to tell what they know and remember about Zakheus and his programs or about the *Wege Bage* and their activities; 3) Further three other leaders of the *Wege Mana* in Kamu shared their views on several occasions in June 1985, July 1987, July 1989, June 1990 and during August 1992 and December 1992. It will be noted that these interviews and discussions held with these leaders were carrying 'apologetic' overtones in the sense that they used the occasion to defend their views and at the same time attack me/the *ogai* simply because I represent the *ogai*; 4) For material on the socio-cultural and historical background I rely on Boelen (1955), Dubbeldam (1964), Pospisil (1978), Rhys (1947), Smedts (1956), De Bruijn (1978) and Van Hoeven (1964). For the life and work of Zakheus I had access to Mickelson (1968), government and missionary letters and annual reports; 5) Regarding the letters, relating to Zakheus Pakage there are few from missionaries which can be found at the A.B. Simpson Library at the CAMA Headquarters in Colorado Springs, USA. While from the Dutch government side there are several which also can be found in the National Archives (Rijksarchief) in The Hague. Several reports which are related to Zakheus are missing. Two of which can be mentioned are: the investigation of the Police Commissioner in Hollandia regarding Zakheus' affair which was made in the Paniai region in October 1951 and De Bruijn's preliminary report of *Wege Mana* dated July 14, 1960. To this it must be added that the Catholic's reports are not available.

1.4.3 Problems of data collection

But the process of obtaining the data in this respect has been confronted with a set of problems which will be mentioned here.

This study has something to do with my interest in ethnohistory or history and activities of the local leaders such as Zakheus who have shaped the history of their communities. One of the problems was how to obtain data on the 'historical Zakheus', because all available sources of information were extremely biased. On the one hand the missionaries' reports and the church'

information has been deeply judgmental toward Zakheus' work from Christian doctrinal stand point (see for example Smalley I 1977: 616-624) on the other hand, the data from local indigenous religious leaders—who accept Zakheus as 'an apostle sent by God and or local Jesus'—are framed in terms of what Zakheus will do when he returns to this world.

Another problem is the use of the occasion for my research by the people who attack the *ogai*—because I have been as part of the establishment of the *ogai* which has been attempting to eliminate them. Having realized these problems I turn to my personal history and several people from my village—including my parents and relatives—in my attempt to compare the data from the sources mentioned. The research has given me an opportunity to recollect all information which I had heard about Zakheus as member of this tribe during the course of my life. Nevertheless this study can not escape the possible use of the occasion by the informants to attack the *ogai* and justify their views.

As it was noted, I am a part of the indigenous church which has been trying to eliminate the activities of Zakheus and other related religious activities done outside the wall of the church' which has been rising in the past three decades. The church leaders agreed to allow me to do this research in order to open up new ways of dialogue with the religious cults. At first I was received with much suspicion by the men who tried to develop their own view of history, God and salvation. Another problem was that, the response which I received was the ones that are agreeable to the church position. There is also the possibility that my research would encourage or strengthen the position of the leaders of the *Wege Bage* who had been resisting the church and the mission or the *ogai* in general. But this step was necessary to bridge the gap that has separated us. Furthermore, the church leaders who were former *Wege Mana* preachers and the members of *Wege Bage* might have felt that I was going to judge or examine their doctrinal errors by using Zakheus and later I was going to recommend the church to expel or examine them. This had framed their response to my questions. Fifthly, Zakheus is the pioneer and the leader of the church in the Paniai region; therefore it is hard to obtain any information related to the past religious practices which has been condemned by the missionaries and pastors since the early 1960s. The Christian communities believes that Zakheus preached Christianity but the people made 'their religion' out of his activities.

This section in general has outlined the concerns, the sources of informations and the problems encountered during the time the research was carried out. This study will bear all the consequences of these problems and concerns. All that can be said is that, this study is made with the awareness of these issues

which directly influence the study. It is hoped that the future research on Zakheus would be made and it would be more 'objective' than the present one as the politico-religious atmosphere becomes more favorable; and as more data about Zakheus become available. The simple reason is that data from Catholics and some reports of the investigation from the Dutch government conducted between 1951 and 1952 could not be located at the time of this study.

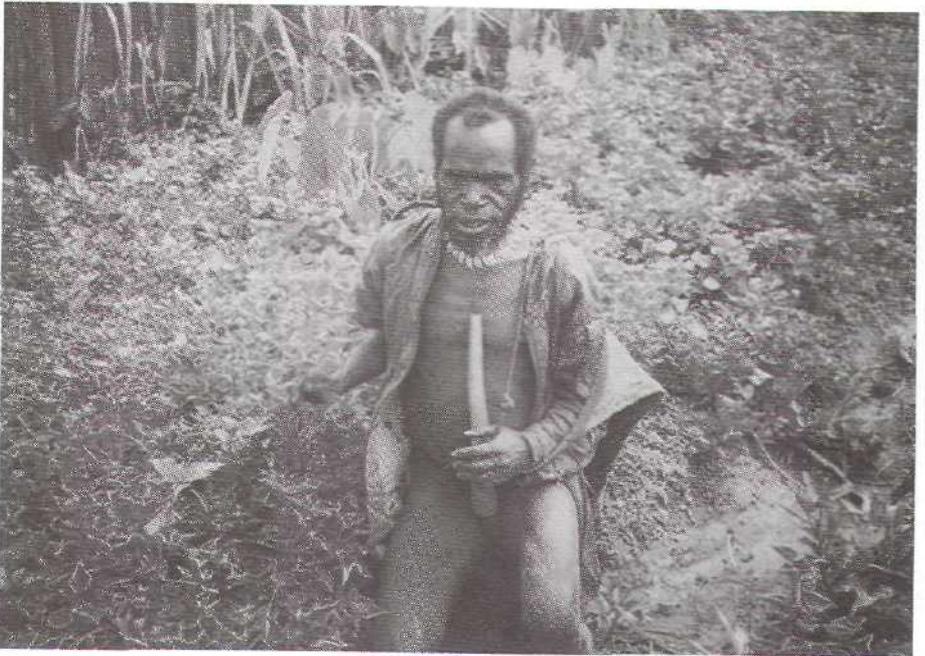
1.5 Composition of the study

This thesis is divided into six chapters. The first chapter is the introduction. The second chapter is a brief ethnographic account. Aside from giving a general ethnographic information, this chapter plans to present a picture of the local economic and leadership situation: especially headmen or big men some of whom have cooperated with the *ogai* to oppose Zakheus. This is followed by Chapter 3 which is a historical description of how the *ogai* settled in the Paniai region. The discussion in this chapter includes: contact history, missionary and government activities up to 1950 (the time Zakheus begin his activities), politico-religious conflicts and socio-economic change which occurred following the encounter between the two cultures. Chapter 4 deals with historical side of Zakheus' activities and the birth and development of his communities. This chapter outlines Zakheus' biography and his activities and attempts to reconstruct the history of *Wege* communities in the midst of opposition.

Chapter 5 considers indigenous religious views of *Wege* communities and other religious leaders which serves as a driving force of their activities presented in previous chapter. In this chapter the attempt will made to explore the Me's view of God, the Bible, Jesus Christ, salvation and eschatology. Chapter 6 is the concluding chapter. It will address questions raised in earlier, gives some thoughts on the idea of indigenous theology and will propose several agenda for future research, and point out reasons for adopting a more tolerant approach toward the local people's politico-religious views.



Dance house



One of the leaders of the *Wege* community in the Kamu Valley in their communal garden

CHAPTER 2

Ethnographic notes

This chapter provides a brief ethnographic background.¹ This chapter will only briefly deal with the people's origin, their technology, their economy, their leadership style at the time of contact with the *ogai*. Where necessary, I will show how this brief account of ethnography is directly related to present study: Zakheus Pakage and his communities.

2.1 Origins

The Me believes that their forefathers came to the Paniai region from the east. The stories of migration speak of the movements of people from the east to the western direction. The people today traced this history of migration of the founders of their clans and then go on to restate the history of their settlements up to the present place. Each clan or sub-clan has their own story of how their forefathers came and settled where they live today. Such origin stories are kept secret and often are used to legitimate positions particularly by shamans or cult leaders today or when there is a land dispute, etc. The origins stories are also important in shaping the people's religious orientations today. The religious leaders in particular make use of such account to support their arguments that when their forefathers migrated to the Paniai region generations ago, they were accompanied by Gods, guardians spirit of the clan, who had chosen the location which they occupy today. The history of Zakheus Pakage's clan and the stories of the origin of the Pakage clan is an example to this. This will be shown in Chapter 5 as to how the people interpreted the work of Zakheus in the 1950s.

¹ For more detail ethnographic account by the time of contact with Western culture see Pospisil (1971, 1972, 1977).

2.2 Technology

By the time of contact with Western culture the Me were utilizing their natural resources to meet their needs for shelter, food and weapons. The people devised various tools to meet their needs. These tools were mostly made of bamboo, wood, stone, rattan, etc. Bamboo or bones of an animal were used to remove splinters or arrows tips from war victims, and *yuma mito*—nose plugs used for decorative purposes. The people made arrows out of bamboo; but also *buka* which was used to cut pork or meat. The people also made *gau*—which was used to fetch drinking water from the river or lake.

Wooden tools used in land cultivation were: *kopa*—a long digging stick to make holes for seeds to be planted, *patau* and *wadi*—two types of short digging sticks, the former was used by males to make ditches for drainage and the latter was used by women to dig up sweet potatoes; tree bark for women's skirt, raft, dugout canoes, and its paddles for transportation on the lakes and along the rivers, *poti* and *yenu* for fishing shrimp and crayfish in the lakes.

Weapons

Bows and arrows are made of bamboo and variety of woods. These arrows were used in hunting and warfare.

Clothing

The primary clothing of the people consists of *koteka*—a penis gourd for man—and *moge*—a woman's skirt—made of dried tree bark. The *koteka* vines are still grown in or near the village mostly in the swampy areas and river banks or in lake. The gourd fruit that are still young are eaten but the old ones which have turned yellow are picked and dried. Then their contents are removed and the outer part is scrapped clean. They then are ready to be sold or used as a penis cover. The gourd is kept in its place by string made of dried tree bark.

The women skirts were made of different types of dried tree bark taken from the forest. The trees useful for skirts did not grown in nearby forests. For this reason men were responsible to supply women with tree bark. The men usually spent days and night to secure them. After they took the bark home, women in turn made skirts, string bags or fishing nets.

Shelter

The pre-contact house of the Me had a rectangular type. It could have a number of rooms, depending on the needs. The wives and children usually lived in the smaller rooms. Each rooms had its own fire place and entrance door. The grown up boys and men occupied the main room.

The *Wege Bage*, who are the subject of this study, particularly those in the Kamu area, attempted to preserve their customs and culture which relied on this simple wood, stone and bone technology. When the *Wege Bage* began their activities in the Kamu Valley the leaders attempted to get their followers use and make wooden tools such as: wooden spoons instead of buying the ones made by the *ogai*, which were being sold at a government subsidized price in the early 1960s.

2.3 The economy

The Me economy entered on three interrelated activities, namely: the cultivation of sweet potatoes pig raising and *mege* or cowrie shell making activities. The sweet potatoes production is essential for pig raising. There are two methods of cultivation. In the mountain slopes a slash and burn technique is used. On the valley floor 'intensive complex cultivation' as Pospisil calls it, is carried out. In the second method the soil is turned over with a *patau*—a spade like tool. A system of rectangular beds with drainage ditches surrounding them is made (Pospisil 1978: 8).

After cutting down trees and surrounding the prospect garden with a fence—in case of garden in the mountain sides—and after the garden beds are formed—on valley floors—by the men and the women take up the responsibility of burning, planting, weeding the garden and harvesting the crops. As for pig raising, women and children are responsible for feeding the pigs; men furnish the pigs with a place of shelter. Aside from this the man spends most of his life conducting business meetings with other fellow men to earn as much *mege* as possible. These meetings take place almost everyday: where three or more men get together, they exchange *mege*, buy and bargain and borrow.

By the time of the first contact with Western culture took place the Me were practicing what Pospisil calls 'primitive capitalism' which according to Pospisil has the following characteristics: the existence of true money in the form of *mege* shells, saving and speculation, a market regulated by the law of supply and demand, an emphasis on wealth that in its magnitude surpassed that encountered in the Western society, the dominant position of sales in the exchange of commodities, the use of paid labor and of lease contracts, combined with a strong indigenous version of individualism (Pospisil 1978: 29). Pospisil is right on his comments on the people at the time of his research that 'they had replaced typical preoccupation with the supernatural and ritual by secular and profit-motivated outlook on life' (Pospisil 1978: 4). For this reason some sectors of *Wege* communities observed this development and at-

tempted to change the course of their history. These *Wege* communities who were concerned for religious renewal argued that 'the people's mind at that time was blinded by the *mege* and the pig' (MK, Idakebo June 12, 1988).

Indeed, by the 1950s, the cowrie shell among the Me served as a true money in the modern society. With this money the people could buy anything, from food, domesticated animals, various artifacts, to payment for different forms of services such as: building a house, fetching firewood or repairing a bridge or a garden fence, payment for a bride, etc.. It was assumed that in order to survive one had to have *mege*. For this reason the leaders of *Wege Bage* who are the subject of this study reacted by arguing that 'even without the cowrie shell we can still go through life'. In fact, according to the latter a better life could be enjoyed without the *mege*.

Local commodities changed hands through sales. Marketing of such commodities took place every day. As it was shown above, generally women worked in the garden and raising pigs, while men were involved in *ede pede*—direct *mege* making activities such as: selling pigs, or other domesticated animals, visiting the distant relatives to collect their long-overdue loans, or to look for people who could loan them some cowrie shells. The pig feast is a most important institution in the Me society, which serves as a political and economic institution. 'Often well over a 1000 sellers and buyers gather in order to offer their produce for sale or to make necessary purchases with their money. Usually hundreds of pigs are slaughtered during this day and the meat is distributed through sales, loans or repayment of debts. The trading is, of course, not limited to pork and pigs. The people offer for many other products of their labor such as salt, bamboo and gourd containers, bundles of dried inner bark, axes, knives and necklaces. Since a pig feast attracts people from far away places, even from other Papuan tribes, this feast function also as an important institution of inter-regional as well as intertribal trade' (Pospisil 1978: 21).

The price of the commodities were determined by a number of factors. One of them is relation between the buyer and the seller. The price tend to be lower when the buyer is a relative or close friend with the expectation that the buyer would give similar price to the former in the future. More important is the supply and the demand. If the supply exceed the demand then the price of local commodities fall. When *udi uwa*, the time when supply of shrimp went up, a string bag full of shrimp can cost one *bomoye* but at the time supply exceed the demand rise three or four bags of shrimp can cost one *bomoye*. The same is true for the sale of sweet potatoes. When the water surface goes up due to flood the people who have their gardens usually get panic in search of buyers in face of gardens that are sinking. When this happens the price drastically falls.

It is important to stress that the sweet potato production in this region was the people's foundation of life. As will be noted in Chapter 5, when the production of the sweet potato declined due to floods and to other environmental crises in this region, it affected the people's existing socio-religious and economic situation. This change brought about the emergence of new religious leaders who claim to preach a new era of socio-economical and political freedom.

2.4 The leadership

The local influential leaders whom Pospisil calls the headmen organized socio-economic activities at the time of contact. They achieved their position due to their success in the sweet potato production, pig breeding and the accumulation of large numbers of *mege*, and by exercising their speech-making skill in expressing their arguments.

The Me headmen's situation come close to the Mount Hagen Big-men described by Strathern:

They are polygynists, using their wives and the wives' relatives as resource base for the production of pigs and for intergroup diplomacy. They held together groups of men in a society which until the Australians came, recognized no authoritative rulers. They settle disputes by exploiting subtle cross-cutting pressures and appealing to overall values of group solidarity in the face of enemies. In the past they both planned warfare and were prominent peace-makers. They hold no position as of right by birth, although in practice there is a good deal of de facto succession to big-man status between fathers and sons. Instead, they must depend on the force of their arguments, their oratorical powers, and their ability to manipulate situations with reference to men's interests in exchanges of wealth. They are prominent too in speech-making at marriages when new alliances are created between families of different clans through the transfer of goods in bride wealth exchanges (Strathern 1979: xvii).

They maintained their support for their position by extending loans or credit to those who were in need such as: those who needs money to pay for their debts, or those who want to hold a birth feast following a child's birth or to pay for a bride. Conducting negotiations with representatives from other groups outside of their own is another strategy to advance their leadership position. A headman's role is that of deciding war and peace and within the

group his role is one of an authority in handling conflicts or problems arising among his supporters. His words carries weight in economic and social aspects. Being an important man, the headman decides the date of a pig feast and pig markets, and inducing others to become co-sponsors for pig feast (Pospisil 1978: 51ff). They also managed and decided the date of *akabade* which is wealth exchange institution, because they were the ones who were prominent in raising, giving and receiving wealth exchange.

Again what Strathern says about the Mount Hagen leadership when the first *ogai* arrived in the area is similar the Me headmen.

The big man had built up an elite network of exchanges based on labor, pigs, credit and pearl shells (as well as other categories of shells). But these networks never hardened into hereditary chiefship, aristocratic lineages or any rigid social stratification. Warfare's exigencies led to people seeking refuge, family circumstances and sickness brought ill-luck to some individuals. Big-men sized upon these situations to increase their domain of power and they certainly did extract labor from other men of least status converting it into prestige for themselves (Strathern 1987: 259).

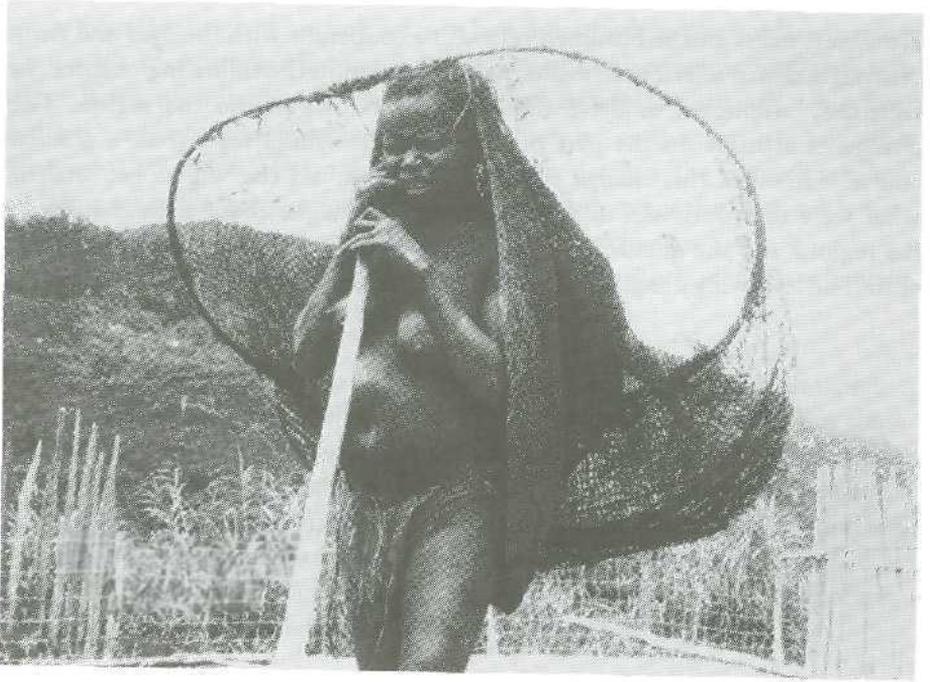
Their supporters consist mainly of their close relatives, debtors and other people who come from poor families who rely on the support of the headmen. There were others who come to stay there and work for them for some months to obtain financial aid particularly to pay for the bride price. Other than these were the so-called immediate relatives who in one way or another support the headmen due to their emotional ties or the networks of duties, rights and expectations for their future economic and social guaranties it brings.

As noted earlier, their position as leaders, is not permanent one. It can be lost. As Pospisil said,

Since the basis for political leadership depends on successful pig breeding which in turn are affected to a great extent by the state of individual's age or quality of judgment, the political structure and leadership pattern in the *Kapauku* society is in a constant flux. New individuals emerge as influential leaders only to lose their positions some years later to younger and more successful pig breeders and traders (Pospisil 1978: 49).

When the *ogai* came to the Paniai region, this socio-economic situation underwent a drastic change. A few of the Me local leaders took the initiatives to closely associate themselves with the *ogai*. Some of them were: Weakebo Mote, Auki Tekege, Bowadi Mote, Moniwatia, etc. (Boelen 1955: 178-199).

However, many of the headmen refused to cooperate with the *ogai* and demonstrated this in a series of revolts, as will be seen in the following chapter. In fact, they attempted to drive the new settlers away from the region. The change of attitude on the part of people in the village level took a gradual course. How did this change come about? How did the whites get settled? what were their activities in the region which brought about such changes in the region? and the question of how did the people view the activities of the *ogai*? The following chapters will attempt to address these questions.



A woman with her fishing net



A headman

CHAPTER 3

The encounter with the *ogai* (1935-1950): socio-cultural change and conflicts

The previous chapter attempted to present a general idea of the life of the Me before the contact with outside world. This was 'the world' of the Me who came to interact with the world of the *ogai*. At the time of contact, the Me in general did not want to give up their way of life, and they refused to cooperate with the *ogai*. In addition to the questions raised above in passing (in Chapter 2), this chapter attempts to highlight the history of the contact with the outside world, thus the ensuing socio-cultural changes and conflicts. This description provides the setting for the activities of Zakheus and the members of his communities.

The discussion of these issues will be centered on three headings: 1) The contact history and missionary activity. This section provides a brief review of the contact history and missionary work in this region up until 1950; 2) Socio-economic changes. It seeks to present the work of the local evangelists and the police agents connected with the *ogai*'s establishment; the devaluation of the cowrie shell as the local currency and the socio-economic impact of the revolts and the Japanese invasion; 3) Politico-religious conflicts. This section will deal with the politico-religious conflicts which occurred as a result of contact. The discussion centered on: a) theological conflicts and b) political resistance. Conflicts in the religious sphere took place as a result of collision of local religious assumptions and theological views of the missionaries which informs their policy toward Zakheus and his communities. This section therefore will discuss theological views of the missionaries who came to interact with Zakheus and his communities. Then a brief survey will be made about the Me revolts which expresses the Me resistance against the presence of the *ogai* in the region.

3.1 The history of contact

3.1.1 *Initial contact*

The first Europeans who came to the Paniai region were members of a Dutch Anthropological Expedition led by anthropologist-physician Bijlmer and

Father Tillemans in December 1935. Father Tillemans who had been in contact with Auki—the headmen from Mapia prior to this contact—joined this expedition team. Tillemans had been contemplating the possibility to begin some missionary work in the Mapia district. The expedition team left Mimika on December 7 and arrived in Modio, Mapia District on December 26, 1935. This expedition was met by Auki, who was an influential leader in the Mapia area. Auki then invited other local influential chiefs from Kamu, Tigi and Paniai districts and two other Moni big men to meet the first Europeans. Auki introduced these local leaders to the expedition team (Bijlmer 1939: 113-184). During that contact they were given gifts such as matches, knives, handkerchiefs, salt, etc. Thus the *ogai* directly established special ties with the local headmen.

The second contact was made in December 1936. An airplane chartered by an oil company passed through this unmapped area of the Central Highlands of New Guinea. Lt. Wissel, who piloted the plane flew over Paniai, Tage and Tigi lakes (Boelen 1955: 12) and took some made aerial pictures. Following this flight the three lakes were named after the pilot and henceforth were known as the Wissel Meren [Lakes]. When the report by Lt. Wissel about this 'discovery' was published, it stirred up the interest of the Dutch government and many missionary agencies sent their personnel in order to launch their missionary work in the area.

Upon reading Wissel's report, W. Cator, the assistant Resident stationed in Fak Fak, was instructed to organize an expedition team to explore the possibilities of opening a government post in the region. During September and October 1937, Cator and his men traveled to the Wissel lakes region, but they failed to reach the area. Later the effort to reach Wissel Lakes was resumed again in December 1937 when Cator arrived in Enarotali (Boelen 1937: 12). Similar to the first contact, Cator established contact with the local headmen. Based on Cator's report, Jan van Eechoud, a police Commissioner, was assigned to establish the government post in Enarotali. On May 16, 1938, Jan van Eechoud left the south coast of New Guinea and arrived in Enarotali near the end of May. There he established the government post still known as Enarotali. In November 1938 J. van Eechoud returned to his post in Manokwari (Van Eechoud 1953: 99ff). Van Eechoud was still in this region when Tillemans arrived and expressed his plans to establish schools. This plan, however, was postponed at the instruction of the Resident in Ambon (Van de Berg 1974: 690-691). Stutterheim took over the responsibility as the first head of government post in Enarotali for three months. In January 1939 he was replaced by Controleur J.V. de Bruijn as the government representative in Enarotali with two other officers: one medical doctor and a radio operator.

This government post in Enarotali became a target of the Me opposition. This will be shown later, however now we must turn to the missionary activity in this region.

3.1.2 *Missionary activity*

A mission leader who responded to Lt. Wissel's report about the 'discovery' of the Wissel Lakes and the Me who lived in that region, was Robert Jaffray. Jaffray was the Head of the CAMA mission in the Netherlands East Indies stationed in Makassar—known today as Ujung Pandang, South Celebes. Upon reading the report written by Lt. Wissel, Jaffray secured permission from the Dutch Government in 1938 in Batavia and Ambon to open the area for missionary work (Hitt 1976: 36-38).

3.1.2.1 *Missionary work before World War Two*

The first two missionaries who attempted to come to the Wissel Lakes region to share the 'Christian view of the world' were Russel Deibler and Walter Post. They left Makassar for New Guinea in early December 1938 and arrived in Uta, on the south coast of New Guinea on December 24. Post returned to Makassar, but Deibler joined a Dutch government expedition team which was heading for Wissel Lakes at that time. This team arrived in Enarotali in January 1939 after walking for eighteen days. After one week in Enarotali, Deibler returned to the coast and from there to Makassar.

Two months later in March 1939, Deibler Post and twenty Indigenous Dayak Christians of Borneo origin left again for New Guinea to launch the missionary work in the area. These Dayaks had volunteered to go to New Guinea to spread the gospel in the Paniai region. The missionary party arrived in Enarotali in April 1939. The early days of the missionary activities were devoted mainly to putting up their homes and making gardens, learning the language and establishing contact with the Me. The Dayaks who accompanied the missionaries helped getting building materials such as planks, bamboo and later they helped in building their homes.

Less than a year later, in March 1940, missionary activities were disrupted as the political situation in the world became uncertain following the German invasion of the Netherlands. The future of the Dutch colony in the East Indies became uncertain. All of government and missionary personnel stationed in Enarotali were evacuated. The missionaries returned to Makassar while the Dutch government personnel were taken to the coastal town of Biak, North New Guinea. In October 1940, however, the government post was reopened again. De Bruijn and 20 policemen arrived in Enarotali, accompanied by 40 Aitinyo tribesmen from the Bird's Head region. These Aitinyos

served as carriers. Early December 1940 the air transport which linked Makassar, Ambon, Fak Fak and Babo, with Manokwari was extended to Enarotali. From this time on there was a weekly flight which helped linked this region to the outside world (De Bruijn 1978: 137-141).

Missionary work was resumed again in March 1941, since the Germans showed no interest in the Dutch colonies. Eight other Indonesians who had attended theological training in Makassar joined Mr. and Mrs. Post,—a CAMA missionary couple—who returned to resume their missionary work in the Wissel Lakes area. These students of theology were instrumental in putting up a few village schools.

Once again their effort to evangelize the area was stopped, this time by World War Two spreading to the Pacific region. In January 1943 the mission and government post in Enarotali were ordered by the Dutch authorities to be closed. The Dutch government then sent in an airplane. On May 24, 1943, all mission and government personnel were evacuated to Merauke, one of the few towns in South New Guinea which never fall into the hands of Japanese. From there they were flown to Australia. By the time when missionaries were evacuated in May 1943, it was said among the Me,

there were two main stations and eight outstations in the area. On one of these outstations about sixteen *Kapaukus* [Me, BG] sought the Lord for salvation, but because of the language difficulty we could not accurately determine whether they were truly born again. If not, they were at least very near the Kingdom (*The Pioneer*, August 1947).

3.1.2.2 *The Me and the Japanese*

By December 1942, the Japanese who had reached south coast of New Guinea, immediately ordered the government and missionaries in Enarotali to come to the coast in order to surrender. As it was said above, the government and missionaries personnel were evacuated to Merauke and from there to Australia. The Japanese arrived in Enarotali in the last week of May 1943, one day after the evacuation of the Dutch government and missionary personnel. De Bruijn and several guards decided to remain in the Central Highlands of New Guinea. Later De Bruijn and his men, known as the Oaktree Party and some local people retreated to a small hidden village called Margrietdorp which had been built in January 1943. But in June 1943, De Bruijn and the Oaktree Party left Margrietdorp and went further east retreating from the Japanese who were pursuing them (De Bruijn 1978: 185ff). They remained in the hiding for one year and later they were evacuated to Australia (Rhys 1947: 121ff). One of the local men who had followed De Bruijn up to Margrietdorp

and later to Australia, was Zakheus Pakage, the man who triggered the rise of the *Wege Bage*.

As soon as the Japanese arrived in the Paniai region, they began to threaten the Me for failing to cooperate with them. Later many local people were beaten when the Japanese failed to get information they needed to arrest De Bruijn and his men who were in hiding. Being unsuccessful in their effort to capture De Bruijn, the Japanese blamed the local people for not providing the right information they needed. Several villages in Komopa were burnt to the ground. Some people lost their family members as the Japanese shot them (Boelen 1955: 15). Economically, the Me suffered since the Japanese depended on the local people's food supply, which they obtained by means of force. At first the Me were willing to comply with the wishes of the Japanese out of fear. But later the Me demanded payment. The Japanese responded by beating the people and burning some villages. Again villages were burnt to the ground, including Bomou, the home village of Zakheus. This village was wiped out first by the Japanese. Later it was bombed by the Allied Forces from the air in their effort to destroy the Japanese army bases in the region, and still later by the Dutch. Following this Japanese invasion of the Paniai region and their manner of treating the Me, the people refused to cooperate with the Japanese. The residents in some areas united in an effort to drive them out or at least to kill them. Many of the Japanese were actually killed but others committed suicide. The rest of Japanese who survived and headed for coast and were ambushed (Boelen 1955: 15-16). The Me still had a hostile attitude when the *ogai* returned to the Wissel Lakes area after the war.

3.1.2.3 Missionary activity after World War Two (1946-1950)

As indicated above, after World War Two, CAMA resumed its missionary work in the Wissel Lakes region in 1946. Mickelson and three Dayaks returned in October of that year. The Me reaction to the missionaries was extremely hostile. They argued that they had to kill this mission party to prevent the Japanese from coming back to Wissel Lakes to wipe out the Me (Mickelson 1968: 99). The occasion of pig feasts were used to discuss possible ways to drive the *ogai* out of the region. Later the Me refused to sell vegetables and sweetpotatoes to the foreigners. This situation forced the *ogai* to go to Uta—south coast of New Guinea—to purchase food. The local people's hostility increased in 1947. The local people began steal from the *ogai*'s gardens and the *ogai*'s goats and chickens in their effort to stop the policy of Christianization. The hostility against the foreign invaders continued even up to the 1950s (Mickelson 1968: 99ff). However, the actual attacks did not take place at that time.

Against this stream of hostility toward the *ogai* from early 1947, a few local headmen cooperated with the *ogai* (Mickelson 1968: 114ff). But the rest of the people remained hostile towards the missionaries. In 1947, despite of the local headmen's cooperation with the missionary party, the Me continued to threaten them. As the people continued to resist the missionary's program to Christianize the area, Mickelson and his Indonesian colleagues began to collect timber in order to repair and re-open the theological school to train local leaders (Mickelson 1968: 134, Wick 1990: 54). This was possible as the number of missionaries increased. Troutman and two other missionary personnel arrived in February 1948. Later, in July 1948, Paksoal and Wattimury; two Indonesian workers, arrived in the Wissel Lakes region. With this additional personnel and three other missionaries who had already arrived earlier, the missionaries established a Bible School in Enarotali in August 1948. This missionary party felt safe at this time of the year, as the government had reestablished its government post deserted years earlier. In July 1948, the Police Inspector A. Boer arrived in Enarotali with 30 men who were assigned to this government post. This police inspector was instructed to rebuild the government post and reintroduce the government program in the region. They were flown to Enarotali in a Dutch Navy plane: a Catalina from Surabaya—today the capital city of East Java, Indonesia. Five planes were used to fly them to the Highlands. Three months later in October 29, J.R. Meijer Ranneft was assigned to be the head of the government post in Enarotali.

In 1949 the people grew restless. Rumors spread that the Japanese were returning to attack the Me who had killed them. The people were saying that there would be war again (Wick 1990: 57-58). The rumor said that, when the Japanese retreated they were not actually going away. They went to recruit more personnel, more guns and more supplies. The situation was uncertain. But in the midst this rumors the church was growing. By the end of that year it was reported that there were 60 baptized believers, men and women, who were attending the church services on Sunday. There were 38 young men who were enrolled at the theological school in Enarotali. On the weekends they went to their villages or other villages to share what they had learnt (Wick 1990: 58).

In 1950 when the Dutch recognized sovereignty of the independent state of Indonesia, the Dutch Navy base was moved to Dutch New Guinea which made it possible to fly to the Highlands once a week (Boelen 1955: 18). By 1950 the government and missionary activities were expanded in spite of the people's hostility. This hostility was expressed in several uprisings which will be mentioned later in this chapter. This is a brief account of the contact and the missionary activity in the Paniai region. The following section deals with

socio-economic changes and conflicts which occurred as result of this contact between the two cultures.

3.2 Socio-cultural and economic change

3.2.1 *Socio-political change: the work of the local evangelists and police*

It was said that the Me in general resisted the change introduced by the *ogai*. In bringing about socio-cultural and religious change at the village level, the local evangelists and police agents played an important role. This section briefly outlines the activities of the evangelists-pastors and the local police in order to make the hostility of the local people understandable.

When the first contact with the outside world occurred the *ogai* directly established their ties with the headmen. Later the Dutch seemed to be interested in preserving the old position of the local elite. Few of the local leaders enjoyed this privilege by their association with the government personnel. (Boelen 1955: 178-199). Other headmen however viewed the presence of the *ogai* in the region as a threat as they were confronted by the new policies introduced by the *ogai* in the region. These headmen were confronted with changes introduced in the village level by local police and evangelists who were employed by the *ogai*.

3.2.1.1 *The local evangelists*

1. Indigenous evangelists and the work of Christianization

Up until the 1950s the Me in general remained hostile to the missionary activity in the Wissel Lakes region. Christianity remained a 'mission station religion' as the Me continue to follow their own ways. This fact forced missionary to train the local people to carry out the work of Christianization. As noted above, in July 1947 the missionaries had planned to establish a theological School, but the plan was implemented the following year, in August, 1948 (Mickelson 1968: 134). In 1949 this school had 38 students enrolled (Wick 1990: 58). The graduates of this School became pastors of various church communities, not only in the Paniai region, but throughout the Central Highlands New Guinea. After they finished the theological school course, the students were sent out to preach what they had learned. Mickelson described the activities of the students of this theological school in those early beginnings of their work.

After a few weeks of training, the students were sent out to witness for Christ on the weekends. They would scatter in various direction after

classes were over on Friday. The canoes could be seen radiating out over the lake from Enarotali. They had been drilled in the Gospel story that they were to relate. Sometimes they were not so good at remembering important details of the story they were giving out. Nevertheless, definite prayers and improvement in this phase of their training was noticed. These students would return to Enarotali on Sunday afternoons. On Monday morning, the students would report the reactions to their ministry over the weekend to the students gathered in chapel session (Mickelson 1968: 161-162).

2. The student evangelist as a middle man

These student evangelists who had been to the theological school at the mission station in Enarotali, were also instrumental in sharing and explaining the good intention of the Dutch government personnel in Enarotali to the village communities they went. How did this take place? At the request of Mickelson, Meyer Ranneft—the government officer in Enarotali—was willing to teach at the theological School an hour every week. On this occasion Ranneft lectured on the purpose of the coming of the *ogai* to Wissel Lakes and what were the responsibilities of the government in the region. Following these lectures, the theology students went out telling the people wherever they went. This kind of information later became the subject of discussion in various local communities wherever the students of the Mission theological school went to preach during the weekends. After this went on for sometime Ranneft said, I find [that] the presence of the mission in the interior had made it easier for me to administer this area (Mickelson 1968: 160-163).

3. The student evangelists as preachers of 'the religion of the *ogai*'

In the early years of the missionary work, the student evangelists were viewed by the local headmen and the local traditional healers as 'preachers of the religion of the *ogai*'. This was due to their rejection of polygyny and healing ceremony performed by the traditional healer. The latter gradually lost their influence. The headmen on other hand took strong measures against the evangelists and pastors who came and prohibited polygynous marriages. These local headmen saw the prohibition as a direct attack on the very foundation of their interest: their goal of life was to increase the number of wives and children who could take care of their gardens and to feed their pigs which in turn would bring more cowrie shells to enable them to expand their socio-political and economic networks and to add more wives. It was this motivation which brought about forced-marriage which also became the target of attack from the church. The revolt led by the local headmen—which will be

presented below—can be seen as reaction to such work of local evangelists and police agents who were seen as threatening their interests.

4. Local pastors as the village school teacher

The local pastors too were seen as a threat to the headmen because they also functioned as school teachers in various communities. They were accused of drawing the children away from their traditional obligations. The reason was that they were responsible for opening schools wherever they were assigned. These pastors performed a double task: establishing a church but also establishing village schools. On Sundays they preached in the Church but from Monday until Saturday they gathered the children and taught them how to write and read and simple Biblical stories. The headmen rejected this, as the children were seen as an economic asset especially because the headmen always had many pigs and needed children to take care of those pigs. The children were obliged to take care of the pigs; which was 'a school' in itself in the sense that they were taught how to raise pigs which would enable them to follow the footsteps of their parents. The school program run by the local pastors run against this custom; but it opened the way for the children to enter the world of the *ogai*.

5. The local evangelists, education of the girls and the big men

Another issue which brought tension was the missionaries' program to educate the girls. When the mission established the Bible School in Enarotali in August 1948, many teenage girls came to the mission station expressing their wish to enter the school. The missionaries were prepared to admit them in the school but they had no dormitory to accommodate them; these girls willingly took up residence in the various homes of the local people around Enarotali. First they were taught reading and writing in their own language. Later they were taught songs (Mickelson 1968: 161) and Bible stories. This prepared them to enter the theological school. The goal of this program was achieved as the girls became the wives of the young people who attended the theological School.

The activities of the *ogai* and local evangelists actually affected the local elite and the Me in several ways.

Firstly, the young people who attended the schools and who were employed by the mission and government had become independent either economically or politically. They were now challenging the existing local elite with the support of the *ogai*.

Secondly, the newly emerged leaders employed by the missionaries were seen as the headmen's competitors. This was true especially when the young girls who had gone to the school felt free to chose their own mate. This was

the idea of the missionaries that the girls who had gone to schools would marry young people who had gone to schools which they had established. In many cases the parents who had seen by the *mege* presented by the big men were even willing to go to school and dragged the girls out of the school. Quarrels and fights between school teachers and the parents/big men were unavoidable at times. This process of change brought conflicts which were very common in the 1950s and even in the 1960s.

Thirdly, the conflicts brought in by the evangelists. Just as Jesus Christ had said 'I have come to turn against his father and a daughter against her mother' (Matthew 10: 35), so these evangelists brought conflicts within family or inter-family divisions. Such tensions occurred between the family members or families who had become Catholics and those who wanted to become Protestant or those who were hesitant to follow the religious beliefs of the *ogai*. In many instances the conflict ended up with the division within the village: Catholic and Protestant. Quarrels between the religious factions often ended in fighting and the burning of the church buildings or beating one another in the name of the two religious systems were prevalent. Interestingly these have been changing in the last 20 years. I am glad that there has been good cooperation between the followers of these two religious systems; as indigenous leaders took the church leadership. This is also the result of the absence of Western missionary personnel in the area since the end of the 1970s. It is hoped that this will continue as a younger and a better educated generation will take up the church leadership in the region.

Although some headmen attempted to chase the pastors out, others willingly cooperated with the *ogai* to advance their own interests. One such case is Madawogi Pekey, a headman from Kegebutu, north of Lake Paniai. When he heard that there were three student evangelists who were coming to start a church in his village he went out and threatened them to kill them; he did shoot at them but missed. He said 'you come here and build a church and you will go on begging *mege*, pigs, and sweet potatoes from us, go home now and do not bother us'. Madawogi said, if his wives and children go to church, no one will take care of his pigs and garden; which would make it difficult to help paying for the bride price of unmarried young men who were around (YP, August 4, 1992) Another headman from Kebo, Tanituma Nawipa, shot his first wife in her feet. Simply because she had supplied food and fire wood to the first pastor who came to the area. She recovered and continued to support the pastor during the early stages of the work (EGN, August 4, 1992). As will be seen below, other big men attempted to organize revolts against the new settlers.

In spite of rejection and threat from the local elite, the local evangelists gradually were able to establish local churches throughout the region with the

moral support of the mission and government. It is also these local evangelists who opposed the activities of Zakheus and his communities. Later after the expulsion of Zakheus, Zakheus' communities became the nucleus of the local congregations and these evangelists took over the responsibility of integrating those *Wege* communities in the church. Going back to the topic of the discussion in this section, it is clear from this discussion that the change which took place in the village level in this region was due to the efforts made by these indigenous church leaders in the midst of conflicts and opposition. No wonder, in each local church communities these first evangelists are seen as the 'local church fathers'.

3.2.1.2 *The local police: the preachers of the Pax Neerlandica*

If the missionaries had local evangelists and pastors to go to the remote communities to preach the Kingdom of God, the local police were the Dutch officer's right hand to preach 'the message of the Kingdom of the Netherlands' in order to establish the Pax Neerlandica in the region. Together they cooperated in introducing change, and later shared the same conviction to remove Zakheus and stop him from carrying on his activities in the region.

In the Paniai region from the 1940s the head of the government post was the 'Controleur'. He was the spin or the web of control. He was at the center of all government and missionary activities in the region. He was entrusted with the task of maintaining peace and order in the region: to establish the Pax Neerlandica in the region. The police force in the region were his 'hands and feet' in accomplishing this task. In the mid of 1950s the Wissel Lakes Police Force consisted of Europeans and some coastal Papuans agents. The former came from the coast with their families and were stationed in this region for a certain period of time. The latter were local people who were at first recruited as *hulp-agenten* (assistant policemen). Later they were sent to Hollandia to attend the Police School. It was these Me police men who later played an important role in making the people of various communities in the region 'listen' to the orders of the Controleur. Their career started as help-agents and after their 'rites of passage' consisting of six months of training in the Police Training Institute in Hollandia, they were promoted from their status as ordinary people.

They could be seen as travelling the region, carrying out the orders of the Controleur with their special helm with the initials AP—Algemene Politie—on their heads. This helmet symbolized their new status. As noted above, their work was crucial to the government in those days to make the people subject to the Dutch authorities. Their activities were carried out by the following methods:

1. The use of the local tricks

As local people the police agents knew the area and how to go about carrying out government orders. This fact made their work more successful and which made many of the local police agents unwelcome in various village communities. Boelen mentioned the success of a police agent who was able to locate and arrest a man who had escaped and fled from prison in Enarotali. Instead of bringing one he returned to the government post with two men. The police inspector who was surprised by this success asked him how and why, the police agent said *Tuan, saya bikin politik kecil*--sir, I have used simple political tactics. The people from the village where the prisoner came from, were not willing to let him come with me, unless I would bring another man who had informed me about the place where this man was hiding. Here are both of them, he said (Boelen 1955: 23).

2. Interference in the in the inter-clan or inter-village conflicts

The Me who were in conflicts or engaged in inter-clan war did not want the government to interfere in their affairs. The people wanted the government to stay away from their business. This was expressed by the people of two villages who were engaged in a war. In July 1952 a war broke out between people of Tenedagi and Odekotu, west of Tigi. The controleur sent several police agents to this place with the message: 'I will come tomorrow to punish the wrong doers and support the good ones'. The people responded 'This is the Me people's business: We will solve ourselves. We do not want you to interfere. It will be alright. You better go to Puyai¹, your police agents are being shot there' (Boelen 1955: 121). The controleur came the following day and intervened. He ordered the police to raid the nearby houses and collected hundreds of arrows and bows previously prepared by the people. Later the arrows and bows were burnt in public (Boelen 1955: 121). The people continued the war after the Controleur had left the village; which indicated their resistance to his policy.

3. The use of force

The police agents also were instrumental in carrying out their task with the use of force. This will be shown in the following section in their role in suppressing the revolts of the Kebo in June 1939. Or the revolt led by Pupubago of Aga Valley. The data on these two uprisings from the written sources of the *ogai* is meager. Although the Me considered them to be two important wars which they had fought against the *ogai* aside from the Obano revolt.

¹ Another village to the north east of Lake Tigi where another war was taking place. The Controleur sent a great large number of his police force the previous day to deal with the problem.

Written reports concerning Obano revolt is well-documented, thus, the extent and the impact of the war on the Me is shown. The effort to crush this revolt took two months and forced the Dutch to bring in an additional Navy Force from the coastal town of Biak, located on the island of Numfor, Northern Irian Jaya. The 'conversion' of the local people who refused to cooperate with the *ogai* took a gradual course in this region. The police agents who used force were responsible to bring about such a change at the village level.

4. Police agents and their personal interests

In many cases the police agents who carried out their duties often used their position to advance their own interests or that of their families. This was exemplified in 1949 when a war broke out between the Pakage and the Mote clans. Senen Mote—one of the influential police from the Mote clan in those days—was able to convince the Dutch to fight against the Pakage. The Dutch helped Senen Mote to destroy his traditional enemy by setting their settlement on fire a few months before Zakheus had returned to this place (Boelen 1955: 23). This made the Me in general hesitant to cooperate with the Dutch, simply because Senen Mote and others from his clan were exploiting the people from the remote areas of Debei, Kamu and Mapia. They manipulated the contact they had established with the Dutch government personnel and missionary, while pursuing their own interests. In reaction to this development many people from those areas sent their children to school with the view to work in the government in order to defend their rights in the future against Mote. Even today, the young people or the educated men from those areas which was exploited by Senen Mote and others still hold a grudge against the Mote. The point is that the local policemen like Senen Mote had their own hidden agenda when carrying out the government orders.

5. The police agents also acted as interpreter

But even in this respect often times the police agents and government clerks used the occasion to promote their own interests. This was shown by former leader of *Wege* community in Kiuto, the western shore of Lake Paniai. When the government officer called him and two other men to come to Enarotali to question about their activities related to the *Wege Mana*, the police agents and local clerk did not convey what he was saying. So what the controleur heard from his interpreters were not what the leader of the *Wege Bage* had intended to say. The police agents who were against Zakheus and his programs told the government officer their own ideas which were anti Zakheus and his communities (KT, YT, SP, Enarotali October 23, 1992).

The cooperation from the people and submission to the orders of the *ogai* came gradually. Partly this was accomplished by the local pastors and the

police agents by interference and the use of force. At times these local preachers became a stumbling block to the very policies of the missionary and the government whom they were representing. With respect to the *Wege Mana* the Dutch and the missionaries did not have time to question the anti-Zakheus information which was transmitted to them by their 'preachers' who had their own vested interests and anti-Zakheus preconceived ideas.

3.2.2 *Contact and economic change*

Contact with the *ogai* also brought a drastic socio-cultural change and conflicts which provided the background and shaped the religious thought of Zakheus and his followers. This section deals with the issue of socio-economic change. The discussion is mainly centered on: 1) 'devaluation of the cowrie shell and 2) impact of the political revolt organized by the big men and the Japanese activities during World War Two.

3.2.2.1 *The devaluation of the cowrie shell*

As shown on previous chapter, since the pre-contact times the *mege* among the Me had served as money. And yet at that time the number of *mege* in circulation was very limited. This underwent an abrupt change when the government and missionary personnel came. The flow of cowrie shell from the coast increased. The *ogai* used *mege* to hire the local carriers when they were traveling, for buying building materials for their homes, and for labor services for the work of construction projects such as bridges, and roads. For this reason, Fr. Tillemans, a Roman Catholic missionary noted earlier who started missionary activity in the Paniai region before World War Two instructed two Franciscan missionaries who were going to enter the region '... not to forget to carry along some cowrie shells which in Paniai is used as means of exchange (or serves as currency). If anyone does not have any cowrie shells he cannot do anything in this region. But beware that not too many cowrie shells fall in the hands of young men. Because if they do, they will have two or three wives' (*Tifa Irian*, 14 Augustus 1971).

Dubbeldam provides the following number of cowrie shells brought to the Highlands by the *ogai*:

1. Birdhunters (after 1910) in the North Eastern Highlands, unknown
2. Expedition 1920/21—Swart valley 6000 shells
3. Expedition 1926—Upper Rouffaer 5000 shells
4. Expedition of 1939—West Central Highlands, 10.000 shells
5. Archbold expedition 1938/1939—unknown quantities
6. Bijlmer, 1935 Mapia, Tapiro

7. Government (Dutch) in Wissel Lakes area after 1938 and during the war the Japanese; Missions—many boxes
8. Government (Dutch), Missions—in the Baliem Valley after 1956, a few hundreds kilos (Dubbeldam 1964: 299).

The presence of the Dutch government personnel also made it possible for the people to travel to the coast and to bring in a large number of *mege*. Some of these local people who were sent out by the government officials to work on the coast on the road construction project. While some Me big men who found favor from the Dutch government officer were sent to the coast. Weakebo Mote, was one of the big man who was even taken as far as to Ambon. When he returned to Paniai in December 1941 he brought back a five gallon oil tin filled with cowrie shells. Mickelson who travelled together with him to Paniai from south coast of New Guinea estimated Weakebo's *mege* to be around 8000 (Mickelson 1968: 18).

This regular supply of cowrie shells affected the existing economic system in several ways. First of all, it caused the other means of exchange such as: *pakooba*, *woti*, *yimo*—three different types big sea-shell types of beads—and many others which were used in previous years to lose their value. Many complained about the problem saying 'previously they used such sea shells in their domestic economic transactions'. This kind of complain was still expressed even as late as the 1960s. Secondly, the flow of a large number of *mege* also in my opinion accelerated and sharpened the process of *mege* falling into different denominations or categories based on its value. The first and highest were: *bomoye*, *epa mege*, *bodiya*. The later two are large in size. In areas around the lake Paniai there is also the *yoo*—the highest denomination. The result of this development was the change of values attached to the *mege*. The local commodities changed hands through sales which required the *bomoye* and other *mege* of highest denominations.

Dubbeldam rightly points out the third consequence of economic change on the headmen considered to be pillars of all socio-economic activities at the village level,

In the course of acculturation the leaders of the society, the tonawi, understood that the increase of new shells would interfere with their position. The Im [new shells brought in by the *ogai*, bg] found their way primarily to the pockets of the ordinary people, because every body could make and sell material objects to the foreigners and it was mainly the younger men who received the shells in payment for rendering services to them. The result was that these comparatively poor people found ways of becoming less dependent economically on the tonawi ... (Dubbeldam 1964: 301).

Further consequence of the economic change and the presence of *ogai* on the local social structure is opened up of the possibility of many young people to get an education and to find employment. These young people then became less dependent to the big men. Dubbeldam wrote 'For their education adolescents dependent less upon the old tonawi but went to schools increasingly. The group of disciples of the tonawi also diminished as young men left their villages for longer or shorter periods to live in the world of the guildler' (Dubbeldam 1964: 302). But the abundant supply of cowrie shells was not the only problem. There is another wider socio-economic issue to which we must turn.

3.2.2.2 *The socio-economic impact of the local revolts and the Japanese invasion*

At the village level there was an increasing socio-economic uncertainty. This uncertainty was largely brought about by the confrontation between the local headmen and the *ogai*. As will be noted in the following section the conflicts between the local headmen and government or missions, resulted in an unstable socio-economic and political situation. There are several ways in which the interaction between the two parties affected the local socio-economic activities.

In the first place socio-economic changes affected the position of the big men. The position of the local headmen as a business man was affected as the mission and government introduced a school program for children. It was noted that this school policy drew the children away from the family's control. The children neglected their domestic duties in favor of a new 'education program'. Previously, the children were the economic assets which the big men were proud of as the children were charged with the task of taking care of their pigs: from feeding to tending them. This was, as noted above in passing an education in itself. This was the only way they keep their children under their arms. As their future lies in the record of success they achieved during the early stages of their life.

A second issue was the destruction of local settlements and gardens by the government. In the following section, it will be noted, the way the government handled the headmen's resistance, by destroying gardens, or the people's settlements. One just need to look at the way the government destroyed the Kebo's settlements, or the settlements of the Pupubago or the Obano revolt. Or just count the number of people killed; pigs slaughtered, cowrie shells and gardens destroyed. And the starvation which the people underwent after such wars. On the top of this as it will be noted below, the local headmen who organized such wars were obliged to pay a large number of pigs to the relatives or family members who were killed during the war. Or they had to pay the people who lost their gardens or pigs during the revolt. So the way the

government dealt with the local uprisings created socio-economic tensions in various communities.

The arrival of the Japanese also, in the third place, had serious consequences. As related earlier, the Japanese' occupation of the Paniai region was short-lived, but it seriously disrupted the people's socio-religious and economic activities. At Mickelson put it,

As soon as the Japanese arrived in the interior, they systematically looted the property of the natives such as lived stocks (pigs) and garden produce. They killed children, rape-murdered, in addition to the killing of men (Mickelson 1968: 96).

When they arrived in Edeitedimi—a mountain behind Lake Tigi—, the Japanese killed a number of pigs. Later, some of those Japanese proceeded to Enarotali while others remained behind, on the hillside of Tigi. Only after some time they did come out of hiding. While they were in hiding they ordered people of the villages throughout the Tigi area to bring them food. When the Me demanded to be paid the Japanese responded by threatening the people. This did not stop the people from demanding payment. Later some of the villages refused to bring food. Those who refused to obey their orders were punished: the Japanese burnt and raided all villages which refused to comply with their wishes. The many places in Tigi districts which experienced such treatment were Bomou, Toputo and many settlements in the Debei Valley. The people from Bomou, who had heard the plan of the Japanese' raid days before had escaped and evacuated their pigs. But others lost most their belongings. Many were killed while some were wounded as they were running in search of shelter.

The people of the Debei Valley who also had refused to cooperate with the Japanese experienced similar treatment. At first two Japanese were dispatched to Debei with several local policemen. Their intention was to punish the local leaders who had encouraged the people to refuse to carry out their orders. The people who had heard of their plans had evacuated their pigs and their families shortly before the attack. Two men were killed on the spot during the raid, another man was wounded. The men shot back at the two Japanese and his men from their hiding place. Only one of the Japanese was wounded. Later five other Japanese and other local police were sent to Debei to raid the area. They were disappointed because the people had fled. They set several villages on fire. Several men were killed. After World War Two this valley became the target of the Dutch 'clean up' policy again. This occurred when a war broke out between two areas. Both parties ignored the order of the Controleur to stop fighting. The Dutch took strong measures in cleaning

up this area. The combined Police force from Waghete and Enarotali attacked this valley. Several villages were set on fire. Gardens were destroyed. About six men were killed during this 'cleaning policy'.

The village of Onago, which is located about a 10 minute walk from Edetaidimi (the Japanese' shelter), was not exempted from the terror the Japanese had brought to this area. During their stay in their hiding, the Japanese demanded food and pigs from people. Three village chiefs who were around feared the threat, tied up a pig and sent two young men to bring the pig to the Japanese. The pig was presented to the Japanese without consulting the owner of the pig who was not present. Later the rest of the people collected some *mege* for the owner. But the owner refused to accept it. He threatened to kill one of those who took his pig. The village was divided into two factions. The war was inevitable. The following day the people began to prepare arrows and bows for fighting. But this was discarded, when the two young men who had taken the pig to the Japanese returned and warned the people 'if you start fighting the Japanese will come and wipe out your gardens, families, your pigs and your village' (Demia, June 10, 1988).

Later, the Allied Forces bombed the Paniai region several times in several places. The first target was Enarotali which occurred on September 13, 1943. Three local people were killed (Rhys 1947: 196). Some time later three places in Tigi area: Bomou, Atouda and Waghete were bombed from the air. Many people lost their lives, their homes, relatives and their pigs. These killings and burnings by the *ogai* created a deeply felt attitude of rejection to the foreigners on the part of the people. At the same time it provide a cultural and psychological atmosphere conducive to accept new program for renewal and healing which Zakheus introduced later. The Me simply did not want to be treated as the object of policies of the *ogai*. The local headmen in several places aggressively resisted the foreigners. The conflicts with the *ogai* became inevitable. The following sections deals with the conflicts between the Me and the *ogai*. But before presenting the conflict, is essential to underline the point that the advent of the *ogai* brought about a drastic economic change and uncertainty to the region which became the setting in which Zakheus and his communities to preach the *Wege Mana*.

3.3 Contact and politico-religious conflicts

This section deals with a number of politico-religious conflicts which occurred following the encounter with the *ogai*. Such conflicts occurred on two fronts: 1) religious conflicts between existing religious views of the local peo-

ple and the theological views of the Western missionaries, 2) political tensions between local people and the *ogaz*.

3.3.1 *The religious conflicts*

The missionaries who attempted to Christianize the area brought along their theological views (some of which I share; although I have been trying to be more open and encourage the church in this region to do the same). But such theological views collided with the local religious assumptions. This section presents those theological assumptions which informed the position of the Western missions and the church toward the local theological assumptions and particularly Zakheus and his programs.

3.3.1.1 *Theological assumptions of the missionaries and the church*

The missionaries who came to contact with Zakheus and his communities are connected with what Quebedeaux calls 'establishment evangelicalism' (Quebedeaux 1974: 28-29). The roots of these mission agencies which represent this brand of Evangelicals, go back to American holiness and revival movements of 19th century Fundamentalism which in the 1940s broke away from the American Fundamentalism of the 1920s.

Establishment evangelicalism considers evangelism or proclaiming the good news their primary concern. There are at least three underlying theological assumptions behind this urgent evangelistic program.

The first assumption is its missionary eschatology. The leaders of 19th century fundamentalism—in North America and Europe—which later became Establishment Evangelicalism held on to pre-millennialism—the belief that Jesus Christ will visibly return to earth and establish a kingdom over which he will personally rule for a thousand years (Pyles 1986: 30). While waiting for his return on earth the church is not to watch passively but is to be engaged in preaching the gospel to every tribe and nation (Pyles 1986: 32). Immanency was singled out. *For this Gospel of the Kingdom shall be preached to the whole world as a witness and then shall the end come* (Matthew 24: 14). It is said that once the testimony of the gospel had been established in every tribe and nation the church would expect the Lord's return.

In the mission field in the Wissel Lakes region this theology affected Zakheus in two ways. Firstly, this theology deeply strengthened the existing belief of Zakheus and of the local people in 'the immediate transformation of the existing order of existence' (see section 5.5 'Local eschatology', for further explanation of this theme). So this missionary theology deepened Zakheus and the local 'eschatology'. This will be seen in the activities of Zakheus in

the following chapter—where he prophesied immediate destruction of this world by a big fire from God or ‘above’. We will now not go further on this since this will be discussed in Chapter 5. Secondly, this missionary theology was not prepared for recognition of the birth and development of an indigenous theology or indigenous expression of Christianity. The missionary activity was carried out to ‘bring back the King’ by fulfilling the missionary mandate. *It was not expected that a national church would rise up, but only that a few would be converted as a testimony. Hence, indigenous principles were not used* (Pyles 1986: 41). This was the case in 19th century.

Later in twentieth century, when changing times required the mission to apply indigenous church principles, the only formula available was ‘the three self models’,—self governing, self-supporting and self—propagating. According to this formula: the task of the missionary agency is to build a church which can meet its responsibilities in the area of: leadership—self-governing, financial matter—self-supporting—and in evangelism to win other segments of the society—self-propagating (see Schenk 1990). This model does not allow the indigenous people to express their religious experience in their cultural and socio-religious context. To become Christian according to this formula one had to make a complete break with his past cultural traditions. The fourth self or self-theologizing formula—the idea of allowing the local communities freedom to formulate their views of Christianity on the basis of their encounter with Jesus Christ in their own world view—is just a recent development to meet the demand of theological needs of the indigenous peoples (see Hiebert 1985: 193ff). Consequently this lack of awareness forced indigenous peoples to take over Euroamerican’s expression of Christianity and get them memorized foreign religious statements. As it will be seen in the following chapter, this assumption to large extent informed the missionary policy toward Zakheus and his programs. They had no other choice but to reject Zakheus.

The second theological assumption is the view toward non-Christian religion: No other name/the destiny of the unevangelized. The urgency of missionary activity was also motivated by their view of the destiny of the people who never had the chance to hear the gospel or to understand the gospel message. The Evangelicals generally agree that the people who never have heard the gospel are lost forever. Although the Evangelicals disagree in some minor points they as a whole hold this view (see McVeigh 1985: 370-379; see also Sanders 1992). All without faith in Christ will eternally be damned to hell. Bassham says,

The distinctive evangelical emphasis has been on the need for repentance and faith as the decisive step in accepting what God offers in Christ. From

this premise it is further argued that those who do not have explicit faith must suffer eternal damnation-such is the implicit presupposition of the statement that the 'repudiation of universalism obliges all evangelicals to preach the gospel to all men before they die in their sins (Bassham 1979: 350).

This conviction highlights the importance of mission and evangelism. The people in the Paniai region did not fully share this view. The people, as will be shown in Chapter 5, feel that salvation is possible without Jesus Christ; as long as one follows religious rules and performed ritual sacrifice properly, the people will be saved. Another theological view which led to the rejection of Zakheus and his communities.

The third theological assumption is the neglect of socio-cultural and economic issues. Based on the said missionary eschatology and its view regarding the destiny of the Unevangelized as noted above, the emphasis of the missionary work is laid on the religious dimension of the people's life. The primary task of the church is to evangelize the people and to 'win souls'. By doing this the church is not to be concerned with the socio-cultural and economic needs of the people. Although Evangelical missionary agencies in North America and Europe were involved in the ministry of meeting socio-economic needs of the poor in 19th century in North America (Dahms 1986: 49-74, Magnuson 1990) this agenda was later left out, perhaps as a reaction to the rise of social gospel (Pyles 1986: 40). There have been attempts to reintroduce this agenda in the missionary work but the North Americans Evangelicals have not taken it seriously. This is reflected in the relationship between the missionaries and Zakheus; as Zakheus attempted to introduce his programs of building churches and providing plans to improve the economic condition of those communities which Zakheus attempted to establish, the missionaries took it as a wrong program.

Other the essential beliefs of the Evangelicals. The Evangelical missions agencies which came to the Central Highlands of New Guinea carrying the evangelical essential beliefs included: a) Reformation doctrine of the final doctrine of the Bible, b) the real historical character of God's work recorded in the Scripture, c) salvation to eternal life based on the redemptive work of Christ, d) the importance of evangelism and missions and e) the importance of a transformed life (Marsden 1991: 4-5). Zakheus or his communities did not comply with this packet of evangelical beliefs and this disagreement led to religious conflicts and to the expulsion of Zakheus from church and missionary circles.

The fourth theological assumption is the idea that 'humans, despite their cultural limitations had some access to knowing the reality as it actually is, including historical reality or spiritual truths revealed in Scripture' (Marsden 1987: 288-289). Based on this view the Evangelicals assume that their theological formulations are universal truth which stands above other interpretations of the Bible made by indigenous peoples. Although such views has been criticized from within Evangelicalism during the last a few years by men as: Nida (1968), Hiebert (1985), Dyrness (1990) and Kraft (1979), those in the field have not yet given serious attention to this development. Kraft who represents this so called New Evangelicalism—which has been challenging the position of the Establishment Evangelicalism as mentioned above—aggressively expresses the view that the Evangelicals have failed to recognize the fact that all theological and ethical statements are culturally conditioned (Marsden 1987: 239). Kraft dismissed all systematic theologies as culturally bound, overly cognitive products of Greek cultural categories that encouraged intolerance of deviations (Marsden 1987: 288). Kraft, while affirming traditional evangelical statements about God, human sinfulness, and the necessity of faith in God for salvation, started with the assumption that,

whether we are dealing with the reality of the physical environment, the reality of human nature and psychology, or the reality of divine revelation, the process of coming to know always involves the process of theory and model building on the part of the observer. We perceive data in terms of some combination of the theories we have been taught and the theories that we construct. We never see that data except through such grids or filters ... (Kraft 1979: 28).

As it was said above this insight by anthropologically informed missionary theologians has not been taken seriously by the Establishment Evangelicals. In the mission field like the Paniai region the above theological convictions had justified the *ogai*'s policy of rejection of Zakheus' program. The church grew out of the missionary labor in the region, had shared such Evangelical beliefs and had been adopting a similar strategy toward the *Wege Bage*. Although I share some of these theological assumptions, I also found that such views have become a hindrance for church growth in the region. There is truth in the claim of 'New Evangelicalism' as shown above—we never except data through the grids or filters. Therefore I have tried to make contact with the leaders of the *Wege Bage* from the Kamu Valley, and this study is to some extent reflects this attitude.

Returning to the topic of discussion of this section, the above theological ideas came into conflict with the existing religious assumptions. While realiz-

ing that the indigenous religious views which were in conflict with theirs, the *ogai* continued to preach Christianity in the region. In the course of this interaction, the people rejected and selected the religious concepts presented to them to meet their changing needs. Out of this process of rejection and selection, gradually grew a new religion which was built on the existing assumptions. Zakheus can be seen as a man who provided an umbrella for the rise of this indigenous theological consciousness in this region. An open conflict developed when the missionaries and indigenous church leaders began to attack this new trend of indigenous theological awareness. Zakheus became the central figure of this religious conflict which occurred in the 1950s. Zakheus and his communities had no other choice than to defend their views. The Me's resistance was not only in the religious sphere but also in the socio-political domain, as it is demonstrated by a series of revolts led by the big man.

3.3.1.2 Political conflicts

The conflicts between the Me and the *ogai* went beyond religious sphere. The Me also came to conflict with the *ogai* in the Wissel Lakes region in other aspects. There were various communities who resisted the presence of new settlers from the beginning. Enarotali—the place where the government and missionaries put up their homes—became a symbol of Western power and became a target of the people's hostile attitude.

This section describes the way the people attempted to resist the policies of government. The people generally took up arrows and bows to fight against the *ogai*. In the following lines attention will be given to four examples: 1) the Kebo's people revolt; 2) revolt led by Pupubago in the years of 1953-1954 and 3) the Obano revolt which took place in 1956. The revolt against the Indonesians will be briefly described in the following chapter.

a. Revolt of the Kebo (1939)

As early as June 1938, the Me tried to drive out the *ogai*. When van Eechoud sent Sitanala—the Bestuursassistent in Enarotali—to carry out registration among the people in Kebo, he was surrounded by the people who were armed with arrows. They wanted to kill him, he therefore was forced to withdraw. A year later in June 1939, the Netherlands Geographical Society and the assistant of De Bruijn—the head of government's post in Enarotali—were forced to withdraw again after the same people made similar threats (Rhys 1947: 68). The people from Kebo even encouraged other people groups to join them to drive out of all the *ogai* from the region. The pig feasts and other gatherings were used by the organizers to encourage the people of other areas to join them. Later they sent a message to De Bruijn to challenge him, 'if the Controleur is not brave enough to come, then we will come to Enarotali to

show him that we are not afraid of him' (De Bruijn 1978: 142). Following this threat De Bruijn sent some local headmen from Enarotali to talk to them, especially to the headman who was master-minding this threat against the foreigners. These local headmen were asked to find out the reasons behind this hostility towards the *ogai*. The people of Kebo said 'you clothes-wearing people make our people sick ... we don't want to have you in our country' (De Bruijn 1978: 142). Clothes were seen as a symbol of the foreigners and their culture who came to settle in the region. There was no submission on the part of the people from Kebo and its surroundings. De Bruijn then asked for permission from his superior: the Resident Jansen in Ambon to go and attack this people. This request was granted and De Bruijn carried out the attack on the people from Kebo and its surroundings.

From the government side, there were about 200 people who volunteered to go and attack the people of Kebo and its surroundings. Aside from them there were fifteen local police men who went to meet the challenge made by the Kebo people. Rhys described the government's attack on the Kebo people in the following words,

When they [De Bruijn's party, BG] were about 300 feet from the shore, more shouting was heard. The village people had advanced unseen and unheard through the long swamp grass. They were jubilant, because they thought the party was afraid and withdrawing. Yelling wildly they came out of hiding, some three hundreds or four hundreds strong, their women-folk with them, acting as ammunition carriers and supplying the men with arrows. The Kebos shot fiercely, but the distance was too great and their arrows fell short. A landing here was hopeless, so the party turned again and came back to their original landing site. They got ashore, and dividing the patrol, went round the two sides of the marsh, firing a few warning shots as they went along. On one side the patrol met with good deal of trouble, but the Papuans fought steadily and the enemy could not hold them and retired to the village. The leader of this disturbance was a Kebo chief who danced and dashed about so frantically that it was almost impossible to fire a shot or to shoot an arrow at him, but finally one got home, and when he fell the others retired in confusion and hasty flight (Rhys 1947: 81-82).

Six local people were killed during this attack. Several others were wounded. The village was in shambles. Destruction and disorder was apparent. Rhys describes the scene in the war zone and its consequences following the attack.

The Papuans who till now had been so steadily were running riot, setting fire to the houses and killing the pigs. Fierce-looking white-branded figures, covered with blood carried off the carcasses or ran about with live and very noisy piglets in their arms ... The party returned to Enarotali carrying a much heavier load, with wriggling pigs and bloody carcass (Rhys 1947: 82).

Following this, a peace initiative was taken by De Bruijn. He sent one man to Kebo to make peace with the people. But it was impossible because the people had already retreated. Later this man was able to convince one 'much-subdued Kebo warrior' to make peace feast. He was offered presents of shells and axes by the government in its effort to bring the Kebo people back to their village. This man also was in turn able to convince a few others to come to the government post in Enarotali to discuss the possible date for peace feast. They were also given gifts and were sent back to Kebo as ambassadors. This was followed by a peace feast in which three hundreds people of Kebo came to participate while bringing a lot of pigs with them. Some of the men wounded during the Kebo revolt were treated in Enarotali; one of them was sent to the coastal town of Babo with one of his relatives. They returned after three months. This was the first attempt by the people to challenge the *ogai* but they were defeated. However, this was also the first experience and the beginning of the people's attempt to chase the *ogai* out of the region.

b. The revolt against the Japanese 1943

Later, in 1940s the advent of the Japanese stirred up a similar revolt. Space does not permit to devote the description of the people's revolt against the Japanese. We can only state here that the coming of the Japanese and their abuse only deepened the Me's hostile feeling against the *ogai*. As it was indicated in the preceding section, the people who had seen their families killed by the Japanese, rose up and revolted against them. As a result one time 200 around men revolted against the Japanese in Enarotali. Six Me were killed. When Mickelson returned to the Paniai region to reintroduce the missionary work this hostile attitude toward the *ogai* was still prevalent. Plan after plan was made to kill this missionary party but the actual killing never took place.

c. Revolt led by Pupubago of the Aga Valley in 1953-1954

Three years after the Dutch returned again to this region after the war, the people from Aga river, north of Lake Paniai made a similar attack against the *ogai*. The revolt this time was led by Pupubago, one of the local chiefs of the Aga Valley, northeast of Enarotali in 1953-1954. Pupubago's revolt started when he and his men from the Aga Valley decided to protect their area from

the influence of the *ogai*. Dabakamoye—another headmen from Kebo—who was around promised to support Pupubago. 'My people from Kebo will be prepared to fight with you against these foreign invaders if the controleur and the police come and attack', Dabakamoye said. This plan was carried out first by prohibiting the people who were wearing clothes from entering the area. Wearing clothes was viewed as symbol of an act of cooperation with the *ogai* who had settled in Enarotali. Later, the people changed their decision and demanded axes from the people wearing clothes, passing through their area. A week after they made this decision, a number of local police passed through the area. They were held by Pupubago's men. The reason was that they did not have axes and they were sent back to Komopa; and thus then failed to carry out the orders from the Controleur to visit Kemandoga—the country of the Moni people. Following this, Pupubago organized a meeting and told people during this meeting: 'it is time that we take a direct approach to protect our area from the *ogai*'s influence'. With this decision, Pupubago and his men planned to chase away an Ambonese pastor-teacher who was stationed in Komopa. During the night, Pupubago and several others threatened the teacher and chased him away from his station. He was told not to return.

The following day, the Controleur and 20 police men well-equipped with guns, left Enarotali, boarding two long boats. Their destination was Komopa to attack Pupubago and his men. As the government forces reached Komopa, they were met with first a group of people who began to shoot at them from their 'bunkers', or in the Me *yapewa*—temporary huts made of tree leaves and grass for the purpose of war. The people had built these 'bunkers' in which they stored their arrows and bows. From these 'bunkers' they shot their enemies. The first war victim was a local police agent. He died on the spot. After a week of fighting the government forces took possession of the first village. The village was set on fire. The gardens were destroyed and the pigs were killed. Reaching the second week of fighting the police continued to take village after village. Pigs were killed and gardens were totally destroyed. The position of Pupubago and Dabakamoye began to weaken. Their food supply began to dwindle and eventually they gave up. Pupubago lost six of his promising men. This revolt lasted one month. This was followed by starvation. On top of this Pupubago had to pay six pigs to the controleur (Van der Hoeven 1964: 9-17). The reason for this revolt according to van der Hoeven was that after the *ogai* began to settle in the Wissel Lakes area, they began to impose own their world views, their rules, and the new settlers suppressed their *adat*—the existing custom of the people (Hoeven 1964: 9ff).

d. The Obano revolt (1956)

In spite of suppression, the hostility toward the *ogai* was still strong in the early 1950s. When the missionary work was expanding rapidly (1950-1955), those who were resisting all forms of change initiated by the *ogai*, became restless. It was in this state of stress that the people came to see most of their pigs dying. Many said it was due to tape worm brought in by the *ogai*. This was coupled with complaints over the production of sweet potatoes which according to the people was drastically declining in terms of its size and the amount. One solution proposed to deal with these problems was to drive out the new settlers and eliminate their influence in the region. In October 1956, a strategy was drawn up during a pig feast held in Wotai, located at the Yawei River, south of Enarotali. Missionary personnel, school teachers and policemen who were stationed in Obano were their first target. On November 4, the Obano revolt broke out. Ruland Lesnusa—an Ambonese pastor and teacher—was the first one to be killed. Mrs. Lesnusa pleaded to save her life but the people responded by killing her and two other children who were staying with them: Martha Rumaseb and Robert Paksoal. One of the policemen from Biak, the island of Numfor was also killed during the attack, while another local policeman was able to escape. From the Catholics' side there were two families who were killed. All school buildings and other facilities were burnt to the ground. The mission's Cessna plane dedicated previous day was also chopped to pieces. After the Dutch had enough security personnel, they began to attack the local people. It took about two months for the Dutch to suppress the revolt (see also Van Nunen (1957, Hitt 1976: 147-162). The people from villages who had adopted Christianity from the region sided with the Dutch security forces to combat the spread of the uprising. More than 200 hundred people were killed, and a large number of pigs and gardens were destroyed. The people underwent a severe famine after the Obano revolt was over. The tensions continued as the areas involved were ordered to work on the road construction as sanction for the revolt.

Zakheus carried out his activities in the midst such conflicts. Interestingly, the religious views of Zakheus and his communities reflect the same spirit of resistance and as such, their views can be seen as religious arrows directed against the *ogai*'s policies in the region which were seen as a threat to people and their existence.

3.4 Conclusion

The aim of the discussion of this chapter has been to attempt to show the setting in which Zakheus emerged as a key figure. As shown above, the years

Zakheus and his communities began their crusade was characterized by 1) drastic socio-economic change and 2) politico-religious conflicts between the Me and the *ogai*. As noted the *ogai* did not receive a favorable response from the Me. This was due to several factors such as: the political and theological conflicts between the *ogai* and the Me and the Japanese invasion of which deepened the Me hatred towards the *ogai*. Before the return of Zakheus, the Me had expressed their anti-*ogai* attitudes through a series of revolts but they had failed. The Me were defeated and were forced to recognize the *ogai* and their superior weapons. At this time of frustration for failure to drive the *ogai* out of the region Zakheus appeared and began to introduce his programs. As it will be shown the Me response to Zakheus was remarkable, and it will be seen that this openness to Zakheus' program has something to do with the people's failure to regain their autonomy in the region from the *ogai*.

Furthermore, the contact, the missionary and government activity to build the Pax Neerlandica in this region also brought a drastic change to the life of the Me. Many were not prepared to face such changes. Such transformation challenged the Me's socio-religious assumptions upon which they had built their lives. I guess this 'foundation' was in the state of breaking into pieces and the Me needed a socio-religious program to weave and to hold together their world. When Zakheus returned, he was seen as a man who was going to meet this need of restoration of their identity. This was clearly shown by the people from his village which was first to be raided and set on fire by the Japanese; and later bombed again by the Allied Forces. A few months before Zakheus returned to this region the Dutch had set this village on fire, as Senen Mote had won cooperation from the Dutch to fight against Pakage. It is understandable that before the return of Zakheus, every time the people from his village saw an airplane passing through the area or came and land in Enarotali 'they were so excited, they were about to cut off their fingers'. This expression speaks of the state of the people's excitement and expectation about the return of Zakheus and what he was going to do after his return. Zakheus became the symbol of messiah who would bring socio-religious and political restoration to the region in a new changing situation. The time of his return was right and even his program was relevant. It was out of this high hope that the people formulated a new religion out of his activities. The Me interpreted Zakheus' sermon and program in the light of their theological and political needs. This will be seen in Chapter 5 when the discussion concentrates on the theological themes which motivated the people to join Zakheus' communities. But first we will turn to Zakheus and his activities.

CHAPTER 4

Zakheus and his communities: historical perspectives

4.1 Introduction

Zakheus emerged as a religious leader in the midst of socio-religious change and conflicts as indicated in the previous chapter. To be more specific, the people were resisting all types of policies introduced by the *ogai* when Zakheus returned to Wissel Lakes. Zakheus introduced his own vision and program which according to him eventually would lead to the transformation of society and the dawn of a new era of peace and prosperity. However, the government and missionary personnel opposed Zakheus, his programs and the people who accepted his teachings. The chapter will attempt to show how this opposition toward Zakheus' program came about and how Zakheus and his communities coped with this opposition, and interpreted the changes which they encountered. It will also attempt to show who the parties involved in opposition of Zakheus were and how they carried out their policy to stop Zakheus from continuing his programs. Those parties who cooperated to oppose Zakheus and his communities, dismissed him as 'a stumbling block' to their policies. The local people on the contrary, accepted him as a messiah who could improve their socio-economic and religious status.

This chapter attempts to explore: Zakheus' biography, his activities to introduce his views, the birth and the growth of his communities and the opposition which Zakheus and his communities encountered. As noted above, this chapter can be regarded also as history of Zakheus and his communities in the midst of opposition. Since early 1960, the beginning of the Indonesian era, Zakheus' communities in Tigi ceased to exist perhaps due to strong opposition they faced repeatedly by the *ogai* who in one way or another cooperated with some local headmen. However, several men from two of *Wege* communities—one in Kiuto and the other in Kamu—continued to preach their own socio-religious programs which they claim to be related to Zakheus' views until now. These two communities will be dealt with at the end of this chapter. The discussion of the activities of religious leaders of these two communities which has survived will be preceded by a brief review of the socio-eco-

conomic condition of the people of the Paniai region. The presentation of this chapter is related to the historical side. The ideological and religious aspect will be the focus of discussion in the following chapter. Most of the material for the work and life of Zakheus came from missionary reports, Mission news articles, letters and interviews. For this reason, it will be noted that the missionary's attitude toward Zakheus is based on their theological assumptions indicated in the previous chapter.

4.2 Zakheus' family background

Zakheus would be better understood, if we know more about his father Dodeiwode's social and religious background. This section therefore will deal with Dodeiwode's socio-economic status.

According the Me from Tigi, Dodeiwode, Zakheus' father was a man who was different from others. He kept himself and his house clean. He taught his children to observe cleanliness. He washed his food before cooking or roasting it. He only ate food which had been well cooked. He set a certain place which functioned as a toilet. Seeing from the Me traditional economic view point Dodeiwode, was born in a simple family and he maintained this way of life until he died. He had no ambition to raise pigs and to collect *mege* to support his family as other members of the society did. He kept himself away from others who were busy accumulating *mege*, ... Dodeiwode never distinguished himself through the possession of cowrie shells or pigs ... (Grootenhuis 1960: 14). Troutman provided further information on Dodeiwode.

Dodeiwode Pakage had some very peculiar beliefs which he supposedly obtained from 'Ugatame' [this term means 'male creator deity or God', see Chapter 5 'God: the Me people's idea', BG]. To him raising of pigs was forbidden or taboo. He also had a revelation that he was not to collect cowrie shells and was to live in poverty. As a result he was despised by many of the *Kapaukus* [the Me people, BG] and at pig feasts and other gatherings no one would sell him pork (see Troutman 'Wege Mana' in Smalley I 1977: 616-617).

But Dodeiwode was also an extraordinary man in cultivating the land. Therefore he was referred to as *bugi kabo yago me*,—literally, he was some one who has the foundation for making gardens—which means he was a successful gardener. Whatever he grew in his garden, it grew well. His life was bound up with his economic activities in the garden (BE, July 13, 1992; ME, June 29, 1992, KP, September 3, 1992). Therefore, his religious life was experienced in

relation to this field. There are stories told by the people regarding the miraculous events which took place in his garden. Such miraculous stories speak of how bananas which he had harvested were still there the following day, as if he had not harvested them the day before, and therefore they went there to harvest them for the second time. At another time he gathered a sweet potato from his garden, but the following day the potato which he had harvested was still lying there as if he had not harvested it the day before. Dodeiwode and the people attributed this phenomena as the work of God.

This was simply because he was a man who had devoted his life to observing *da mana*—the religious rules given by God such as: do not steal, do not tell a lie, do not commit adultery, etc. From religious perspectives,

even though he had never heard of the CAMA religion, yet he had invented much by himself which later on was preached by CAMA missionaries, though he did not know yet, who Ugatame was (Grootenhuis 1960: 14-15).

He did not know Ugatame as it was preached by Western missionaries, but he had his own conception about God, the creator. It was believed that the creator deity, had chosen Jupi, the founder of the Pakage clan in the Central Mountains of Irian Jaya named Dadi. God had revealed himself there to Jupi and entrusted religious commandments to him, which will be dealt in the following Chapter. He was charged with the task of teaching the people, how the people should live based on those religious commandments. The message of Ugatame was passed on by Pakage from father to son (Grootenhuis 1960: 7). Zakheus was one of those in line to receive such religious teachings. Zakheus and his father had shared the vision of sharing that message to the rest of the people.

Zakheus was raised in this 'Godly' family. He went through this type of religious education, even before the contact with the *ogai*.

Dodeiwode passed his revelations on to his sons. Zakheus was the one to receive what is called the '*Duta*' [which means secret religious knowledge, BG] even though he was not the oldest son. Zakheus was a small lad of about ten or thereabouts when the father passed this on to his son to be preserved. With the *Duta* and the beliefs mentioned above, there was also a messianic revelation. Dodeiwode was the eighth in line in the family, Zakheus is to be the tenth or the promised one, the messiah or King ... (Troutman 'Wege Mana' in Smalley I 1977: 617).

This 'religious education' within the family context became Zakheus' life asset when he set out his life journey.

When the contact with the *ogai* took place in 1935, Dodeiwode's religious views moved him to cooperate with the *ogai*. When the *ogai* came to the Wissel Lakes area Dodeiwode went to meet them. He met J.W. Cator in December 1935. Dodeiwode returned much impressed with what he had seen. These people did not quarrel, they did not use force. Neither did they live in dirt, as the Me did. From this moment on Dodeiwode emphasized, that they should cooperate with the *ogai* and conform to their ways of life. This he did himself, he washed himself, wore clothes and made a toilet. He also taught all these things to his children (Grootenhuis 1960: 15). Furthermore, Dodeiwode saw in the advent of the *ogai* to the Wissel lakes area as a possibility of realizing his ideas, since the *ogai* lived in the way God had revealed himself as found in the history of his clan. He instructed his three sons: Jordan, Zakheus and Okeiyamoye to follow the *ogai*. Okeiyamoye was too young, but Jordan and Zakheus went to Enarotali when the *controleur* De Bruijn lived there (Grootenhuis 1960: 8).

In May 1943, when the Japanese were approaching the Paniai region De Bruijn, the Dutch government officer in Enarotali asked for some volunteers to go with him. Zakheus who by that time had become young man volunteered to go. This decision led Zakheus to visit the world of the *ogai*.

4.3 Zakheus in the world of the *ogai*

This section presents Zakheus' travel to visit Australia, his return to Merauke (South coast of New Guinea); and his theological training in Makassar—known as Ujung Pandang, South Celebes, Indonesia.

It took a year and two months—from May 1943 until July 1944—of travelling and wandering around the regions in eastern Central Highlands of New Guinea before Zakheus entered the world of the *ogai*.

4.3.1 *Zakheus' journey into the world of the ogai (May 1943-July 1944)*

By May 1943 the Japanese forces who were advancing had reached the southern part of the Lake Tigi area. Following this development the Dutch government post in Enarotali was closed on May 25, 1943. As indicated above, when De Bruijn asked for some volunteers to go with him, there were many who wanted to go. De Bruijn only picked up 30 young unmarried men. Zakheus Pakage and Karel Gobay were two of those young men who volunteered to accompany De Bruijn's party which was later known as the 'Oaktree Party'.

After destroying the government post in Enarotali, they moved to Margrietdorp, a hiding place which De Bruijn had built in January 1943 furnished with all necessary supplies (Rhys 1947: 111).

Two days after the Oaktree Party had left Enarotali, the Japanese arrived in Enarotali and learned that De Bruijn was still hiding in Margrietdorp. The Japanese went straight to Margrietdorp to capture De Bruijn and his loyalists. As a result Margrietdorp was abandoned on May 28, 1943. The Oaktree Party established several bases in the further eastern regions with food supplies. Later as they moved further toward eastern direction to the countries of the Monis, the Damals and the Dems, the idea of establishing more than one supply base was maintained so that if one supply base should be attacked by the Japanese bombers they would still have other extra bases of supply.

After abandoning Margrietdorp, the Oaktree party retired to a northern base to a place called Uwagimoma and from there to further east and until they came to Wandai. This was a place where a mission station was established by Mickelson and had been abandoned several months earlier. After several days in this place Oaktree moved on to Zanepa and from there going back again to Wandai to meet another Oaktree man who had gone to guard another supply base. From this point on they kept moving between Wandai, Waniboega and Bilogai and several other locations. During this period of their stay the local headmen cooperated with De Bruijn. Indeed, De Bruijn admitted that he relied on their loyal friendship for food supplies.

The Me like Zakheus and others who had volunteered to go with De Bruijn served not only as carriers but also as his personal body guards and were involved in doing secret intelligence work in the Wissel Lakes region for the Dutch government. Several weeks were spent to train them how to use their guns, so that all people who were with De Bruijn could defend the Oaktree Party when necessary. There were two special trusted friends of De Bruijn: Dominggus and Bujani—one from Enarotali and the other from Waghete—who were heavily involved in this type of work. De Bruijn trained them in all kinds of things related to intelligence work. Their work demanded that they be constantly on the road most of the time, going back and forth between Waniboega—their base—and Enarotali, entering the Japanese camps in Paniai region in their attempts to obtain information over the Japanese and their activities in the region. This kind of information was later given to De Bruijn who then relayed them to the Allied Forces in Australia. The Allied forces in turn used them to bomb the Japanese bases in Wissel Lakes which eventually weakened the Japanese position in Central Highlands New Guinea. The first bombing of Wissel Lakes—Enarotali being the main target—occurred on September 13, 1943. Three Me were killed in this attack (Rhys 1947: 196).

At one time Bujani went back to Wissel Lakes and joined 200 men who revolted against the Japanese in Enarotali. Six local people were killed. This revolt made the Japanese hesitant to roam around freely in the area as they had done before. Dominggus recruited some young people from the Tigi district and took them to the Oaktree's base in Waniboega and trained them how to use guns in an attempt to strengthen their force. While for the Tigi area De Bruijn sent several guns and asked Dominggus to train several young people to weaken the position of the Japanese who were bringing a reign of terror in the region. Later on in September 1943 two Japanese' reconnaissance plane flew over Waniboega—one of the several Oaktree Party's bases in the Central Highlands of New Guinea. After three months of wandering, the Oaktree's supplies had declined and therefore food supply was dropped by air by the Dutch authorities with the use of parachutes in September 1943. Later on, in October 1943—a Dutch Catalina plane dropped a large supply of food and others needed things from the air again. This was followed by several supply drops later.

During this time of wandering around several Oaktree bases, Zakheus and others witnessed the shooting of three of their co-tribesmen. This took place as three out of six Me who had come to make trade with the Monis, the Damals and the Dani were charged by De Bruijn as being Japanese' spies. The three of them were shot by De Bruijn (Rhys 1947: 198). They were taken to a hill about an one hour walk from their base and there they were shot. This was something which Zakheus was taught to avoid. There is no information about Zakheus' reaction to this experience during the war: such as the killing of his co-tribesmen. But it is possible that it deepened his faith in religious teachings passed on by his father. From his religious views which will be shown later, it was possible that Zakheus had at this time viewed that the *ogai's* no better than the Me who fought or killed one another for the reason of land disputes; or for pigs or women and for money or cowrie shells. It is possible that he also saw Christianity as the religion of the *ogai* which was powerless to create a new society or to prevent such killings. This was something which prepared Zakheus for the task of preaching the Me's religious rules which he had inherited, because later Zakheus went to challenge the missionaries and said that 'you *ogai* have your own Bible just like we the Me people have our own religious commandments which we have received from our forefathers' (ES, June 19, 1992).

In September 1943, two Japanese planes made reconnaissance flights. It was impossible to stay on in the Central Mountains, therefore the Oaktree Party left their bases. The Oaktree Party feared that the Japanese were pursuing them. They went north and reached Haggars Lake. On July 26, 1944 Oaktree party and Zakheus and others which numbered 41 were taken out of

Lake Hagers by two Catalina planes and brought to Sydney, Australia. Zakheus entered the world of the Europeans and Americans.

4.3.2 *Zakheus' education: Zakheus in Sydney, Merauke and Makassar (1944-1950)*

After Zakheus and his party arrived in Sydney in July 1944, they were allowed to stay in Australia for some time. Later they were sent back by the Dutch authorities to Merauke. And from there Zakheus went to Makassar—what is known as Ujung Pandang, South Celebes, Indonesia. Beginning August 1946 up until August 1950 Zakheus attended the Makassar Bible School today known as the Jaffray Theological School.

When this party arrived in Brisbane, Australia a missionary couple: the Reverend and Mrs. Walter Post were there to meet them. Post and his wife had served as missionaries in Enarotali before the war broke out. According to Post, some of the men who joined the Oaktree Party were known and came from sections where churches were built and services held (*The Alliance Weekly*, December 20, 1947). After several weeks in Australia all the Me who had accompanied De Bruijn were sent back by the Dutch Government to the places on the coast of New Guinea occupied by the Allied forces.

However, while they were in Australia, the CAMA missionaries obtained permission to have Zakheus and three others to be sent to Makassar for theological training. The CAMA missionaries in Australia placed these four men in the care of the Indonesian pastor-teachers who were in Merauke. These Indonesians evangelists had worked with the missionaries in the Wissel Lakes region before the war. Therefore as soon as these four local people arrived in Merauke these Indonesian preachers took the four men and taught them how to read and write. For this reason Troutman said, Zakheus ... had some training during his stay in Merauke during the war, probably reading and writing in the Indonesian language (personal letter of Troutman May 19, 1993). Some months after the close of the war when the mission reopened the Makassar Bible School, the missionary personnel requested the Indonesian workers to come to Makassar along with the four men who were chosen to enter the Theological School in Makassar. Zakheus and Karel and two others went to Makassar to enroll in the Makassar Bible School there (*The Alliance Weekly*, December 20, 1947). Two out of these four men however, were not able to continue their training and therefore had to return to the Paniai region in October 1946 (Mickelson 1968: 92). Zakheus and Karel remained in Makassar to continue their theological training there.

In December 1947, Zakheus and Karel made a public confession in a local Church in Makassar. This public testimony was followed by the initiation of baptism in the same church (*The Alliance Weekly*, December 20, 1947).

While studying in Makassar—Ujung Pandang, South Celebes, Indonesia—in July and August 1948, Zakheus also was involved in helping Miss. Marion Doble, one of the missionaries who was in the early stages of her effort to reduce the Me language to writing (see Catto 1993). Marion Doble wrote, ‘shortly after our arrival we were able to begin the study of the Ekari language with Zaccheus, one of the students attending Makassar Bible School ...’ (*The Pioneer*, August 1948). And later she goes on,

... We begin the study in Makassar and then proceeded to Benteng Tinggi for two months of more intensive study in the invigorating mountain air. We concentrated chiefly on the problem of orthography that should be adopted in order that upon our arrival at the Lakes [Paniai region, BG] we may be able to prepare a primer and other reading materials for the schools we are trusting the Lord to be established (Ibid., see also letter May 18, 1993).

The last weeks of these two months of work which Zakheus carried out related to a number of Bible stories and other stories from his experience. Among the stories which she took at dictation for material for language analysis was the story of the first plane when the lakes were discovered and Zakheus as a young boy, and all the people were thrown into a panic (personal letter Doble, May 18, 1993). Regarding Zakheus’ personality she said, Zakheus was a very jolly and radiant person (Ibid). In terms of his intellectual ability in the Bible School in Makassar Troutman said, he did very well in his studies at the Bible School (letter of Troutman, May 18, 1993). While in Makassar, Zakheus was involved in other activities as well. Troutman said,

During my time in Makassar they [Zakheus and Karel, BG] often went to where the mission plane was kept to watch it during the night, and also sometimes during the day. I usually took them to the plane. I also know that they took part in school activities and sports, especially badminton (letter of Troutman, May 18, 1993).

According to Zakheus’ relatives (BE, July 13, 1992), while Zakheus was attending the theological School in Makassar, there was an American big man who came all the way from America just to see Zakheus. Upon meeting Zakheus the American wanted to invite Zakheus to come to America. But the missionaries who were stationed in Makassar did not permit Zakheus to go.

The missionaries objected because they wanted to send Zakheus back to the Wissel Lakes region to spread Christianity in the region. The American churchman wanted to give a large amount of money to the missionaries in his effort to take Zakheus to America. But since the missionaries insisted not to allow Zakheus to go with them, the American told Zakheus *akii ya dimi kouko ena koyoka epi gaa tai*—‘you have good mind or thoughts teachings, therefore hold on to it; do not to give it up’. This was taken as a statement from an American who supported Zakheus and his activities (BE, August 5, 1992).

Zakheus and Karel went through the theological training and participated in other school related activities in Makassar for four years starting August 1946. They returned to Enarotali in August 1950 (Grootenhuis 1960: 4).

4.4 Zakheus in the Wissel Lakes region

This section seeks to describe Zakheus’ first missionary work, and his missionary trip to the Moni tribe after his return from Makassar. In general this section will deal with Zakheus activities from August to December 1950 and the removal of the mission territorial barriers made some years earlier.

4.4.1 *Zakheus’ early missionary work and the removal of the mission territorial barriers (August-December 1950)*

In August 1950, Zakheus returned to the Wissel Lakes region from Makassar. Since then many things had taken place. Zakheus began preaching, and as result many received Zakheus’ teaching. Then Zakheus went to visit the Moni country on a missionary trip together with Mickelson. Upon his return he settled in Yibagouyoweta, Tigi district, after removal of a border division agreement made earlier between CAMA and the Catholics.

When Zakheus and Karel Gobay returned to Enarotali in August 1950, the pier was lined up with their relatives and friends and two Christian mothers who had waited long for their little boys to return (McIlrath n.d.: 4).

The same missionary, Miss. McIlrath—who later became Mrs. Catto—describes Zakheus’ first missionary experience and his language and communication problem after he returned to Enarotali: The day after they arrived, Zakheus spoke to my women’s meeting. The language came slow to him and frequently he inserted a word or two of Malay now. However, he got more fluent as he went along and more overjoyed to be able to tell the story of salvation to his own people (McIlrath n.d.: 4).

After his first experience of 'preaching' among the Women's group in Enarotali, Zakheus went to visit his family in Yibagouyoweta—Tigi district. There he related how God had protected him during his trip from Enarotali to Lake Hagers and from there to Australia. He also told his experiences during his stay in Australia and Makassar. Zakheus shared his Christian experience and later challenged them to take his teachings and follow him. Following this he challenged the people to burn their religious objects and trust God. Zakheus, said that God is going to visit us and deliver us from our troubles if we follow God's rules. The people who had heard him accepted his message and expressed their decision to follow him. According to Mickelson the number of people who accepted Zakheus' sermon and wanted to follow him at that initial meeting were 250 people (Mickelson 1968: 205).

Before the return of Zakheus, the missionaries were making all necessary preparations for Zakheus' future work. They were planning to send Zakheus to Christianize the Monis. However, when the missionaries' plan for Zakheus became known, the people from Tigi and its surroundings came to the mission station in Enarotali on August 5, 1950. On that occasion about 150 people came escorting Zakheus to the mission station while chanting and singing, with Zakheus in their midst. They then expressed their desire to have Zakheus sent back to Tigi to teach them. At that time they also presented gifts by giving vegetables and pigs to the missionaries (Mickelson 1968: 205). According to one of Zakheus' faithful followers these gifts consisted of seven pigs which were presented to the missionaries as *mune*—reimbursement for the expenses the mission had spent to train Zakheus (BP, October 6, 1992). Some of these men were village headmen who represented more than 28 village. They asked the missionary personnel in Enarotali that Zakheus would be sent to Tigi district to teach them.

The mission objected because this request would go against an agreement made earlier between their mission—CAMA—and the Catholic missions. This agreement had been made in April 1939 and was initiated by de Bruijn (De Bruijn 1978: 113). The agreement was made to avoid future possible friction between the heads and the gurus of the two religious bodies working in the same areas (Rhys 1947:55, De Bruijn 1978: 113). At the suggestion of De Bruijn the agreement was made by which the Roman Catholic mission which should operate in the Southern part of the administration subdivision, whereas the CAMA would work in the northern part of Paniai region. De Bruijn made a division from Beko through Enarotali to Kugapa; only at Enarotali where De Bruijn himself stayed and could keep an eye on things, was it allowed that two gurus, one of each mission would remain (Rhys 1947: 55, De Bruijn 1978: 113). This agreement worked very well. It was respected by both missions and that there never was any sign of trouble between them. But

conflicts between the two religious bodies began when Zakheus, who was trained by CAMA, returned to the Wissel Lakes region and his people from Tigi—southern part of the subdivision—asked Zakheus to return and to teach also in Tigi and its surrounding areas.

On August 6, 1950 after the people heard the objection raised by the CAMA mission, they went to meet with Meyer Ranneft—the head of the government post in Enarotali. In response to this request Ranneft called the representatives of the two missionary agencies stationed in Enarotali/Paniai to discuss the issue. When they arrived Zakheus and the village chiefs were allowed to say what they wanted to say. One of the village headmen acted as their spokesman. In his speech the big man briefly recounted their past life which was seen as 'bad' and therefore he and his people wanted to change and follow the new way as Zakheus had taught them. He also asked that Zakheus be sent to Tigi district to continue to teach the people.

In the past we have been hard hearted and the cause of much trouble. We have fought in a recent war known by the government official who had to help settle the same. Zakheus was far away. We thought our brother was dead. The last plane brought Zakheus back to us. He didn't have axes and shells. He didn't have wealth at all. He was a poor man. His family is poor. But, he has told us of a wonderful story that is written in the Book ... We want Zakheus to return with us to our village ... If he cannot return with us to our village, let him stay here at Enarotali and we will come to him ... (Mickelson 1968: 206).

The meeting between the two missionary bodies allowed this speech. During this meeting ... the Catholic priest with whom the agreement was made stated to the Government Controleur that he could recall no such arrangement in writing; and that further, he as a priest would have no authority to make any such contract (Smalley I 1977: 6). The meeting was closed with both CAMA and Catholics representatives agreeing to take up the matter with their superiors. Later the response from the superiors of both missions were received. Both were in favor of removing the territorial barriers. Troutman wrote, we were encouraged from our headquarters to take up the work in Tigi and the priest received word that the Catholic Church could not make no arrangements over territory because they were called to go everywhere (CAMA Annual Report for 1950).

Therefore according to CAMA representatives, both parties agreed in good spirits to remove all territorial barriers (Smalley I 1977: 11). Troutman wrote, the agreement was made in a good spirit without antagonism ... (Smalley 1977: 11). The reason for the change of attitude on the part of the Catholics

was due to lack of teachers to be assigned in the Tigi area. The Catholic teachers who were assigned previous years had left their teaching jobs because confusion had come into the ranks of the Catholics which also caused the removal of the leading priest (Smalley 1977: 11). What Troutman called 'confusion' were actually conflicts between the priest and teachers from the Kei Islands, which had occurred in Enarotali in July 1950. This clash between the priest and the teachers, who had come to teach in the Wissel Lakes region, started when the priest blamed the teachers for not working hard enough. This accusation irritated the teachers since they felt that they had worked hard, going beyond their capacities. This conflict could not be resolved. All of the teachers joined hands and said that they no longer wanted to work in the Wissel Lakes region. Efforts to reconcile the two parties were made again and again but failed. In August 1950, all teachers had left for Biak and promised not to return. There were eleven schools which were affected by this conflict. Three of the priests, one in Jaba (Tigi), one in Waghete, Tigi district and one in Enarotali, were forced to teach. Eight other schools were closed for lack of teachers (*Tifa Irian*, 28 Djanuari 1972).

According to CAMA missionary personnel this crisis of lack of teachers forced the Catholics to change their views and were willing to remove the territorial barriers. The Catholics however, disagreed with this. According to the Catholics, CAMA had violated the agreement by sending Zakheus to minister the people of Tigi who had followed Catholicism (*Tifa Irian*, 11 Februari, 1972). In short, they agreed in that meeting to disagree. This agreement—to disagree—enabled Zakheus to return to Tigi and thus he began to spread his teachings in Tigi and other areas. At the time when Zakheus began to preach and the people were beginning to respond, Zakheus was asked to accompany Mickelson who was making an exploratory trip to the country of the Moni with the view to establish the missionary work in the region.

4.4.2 *Zakheus' missionary trip to the country of the Moni tribe (between September-October 1950)*

As it will be shown in the following lines, Zakheus almost lost his life in the missionary trip to the country of the Monis. The people they encountered almost killed Zakheus on several points but they returned to Enarotali safely.

Zakheus and Mickelson and several carriers left Enarotali on September 12, 1950. Troutman joined them at Homeyo and accompanied them up to Bilogai. The people from Bilogai were friendly to them. But after leaving this valley, Zakheus and Mickelson were almost killed during the night. They were surrounded by the people as they were sleeping in the small tarpaulin in the yard. According to Mickelson, Zakheus and he had spent the night in

prayer and contemplation (Mickelson 1968: 200-201). The following day they were forced to return as the people of the land had intensified their attempts to kill them.

After leaving the village in their attempt to return to Enarotali, the people pursued them. Zakheus and Mickelson almost got killed when they were returning to the Wissel Lakes region. A sharpened tent stake was thrown and just missed Zakheus who was the last man in the line leaving the area (Mickelson 1968: 202). Further on as they came to a place known as Dusan-digi on October 2, Zakheus was once again almost killed. A Dani who previously had failed to fulfill his promise to help this missionary party became hostile toward Zakheus. The Dani made threatening motions with his bow and arrows as well and shouted at Zakheus. Zakheus faced the Dani with only a machete in his hand and slowly walked away from the warrior (Mickelson 1968: 203).

Next day, Mickelson and Zakheus encountered another threat. Mickelson wrote:

Zakheus and I had similar experiences at the same village. A local man had performed a white magic rite having built an archway over the trail leading to the village. I walked through the archway. For this breach a local natives insisted that I must pay two shells. I paid the 'fine' without laboring the matter with them. Zakheus followed. He went around the fetish rather than under it. He was asked to pay three shells for going through their village (Mickelson 1968: 204).

On October 10, they were able to get back to Enarotali in spite of all of the threats and hindrances. For Zakheus, it was 'God' who saved him from the people who planned to kill them. Surely it was because God had 'other plans'.

4.4.3 Zakheus' settlement in Tigi and the people's politico-religious agenda

After Zakheus returned from his missionary trip to the Monis he settled down in Yibagouyoweta and began to teach (*Tifa Irian*, 28 Djanuari 1972). Regarding to his settlement in Tigi and his work in Tigi, the Catholics who were working in this region had the following opinions which I question.

Firstly, the Catholics view that it was CAMA missionaries who sent Zakheus to Tigi, and therefore he was sponsored by the CAMA missionaries. They entertained the idea that the American missionaries had sent Zakheus as their evangelist to open the area for the CAMA mission work. It meant that CAMA intentionally sent Zakheus to build churches and therefore invaded the areas which were up to that time had belonged to the Catholics based on the

agreement made in 1939 as noted above. Secondly, Zakheus was seen as functioning as spokesperson of Evangelical Christianity. He shared the same 'Christian vision of the world' with other missionaries who had trained him in Makassar, some of whom had come to Wissel Lakes. In short, Zakheus went to Tigi to preach Protestant Christianity as the *ogai* understood it. The church to which I and my parents belong shared these two views.

However, I doubt these views, because it was either Zakheus himself or the people who wanted Zakheus to come to Tigi.

First of all, it has to be born in mind that it was the people who came to the mission station in Enarotali to ask the missionaries to send Zakheus to Tigi as noted above. In other words Zakheus' entry to areas belonging to the Catholics was planned by the people. They, not CAMA initiated Zakheus' settling in Tigi. CAMA was planning to send Zakheus to work among the Monis. Thus one can question, the notion that CAMA sent Zakheus to Tigi to open the work for Christianization. The same can be said about the idea that Zakheus went to preach Christianity as *ogai* understood it. The people had their own politico-religious agenda which motivated them to invite Zakheus to come and to work for them. At the time of Zakheus' return to Wissel Lakes, the people were in an uncertain situation due to drastic socio-economic changes and conflicts between the *ogai* and the local people as outlined in the previous Chapter. Many thought Zakheus could eliminate such conflict. Zakheus was welcomed as their spokesperson. He helped expressed the people's politico-theological aspirations. In this respect, when Zakheus came to Tigi the people already had a well-prepared hidden agenda. This is supported by the way the people responded to Zakheus' program. Because as soon as Zakheus began preaching the people began to come in by hundreds and asked for instruction.

Secondly, it is possible that Zakheus had his own agenda of preaching his own religion. Zakheus went to Tigi on his own and began preaching his own version of Christianity. I think this is one possible reason why Zakheus went to Tigi, his preaching which was later used by CAMA as their weapon for excommunicating Zakheus from the missionary agencies. This will become clear from the teachings of Zakheus in Chapter 5.

McIlrath describes the way the people responded to Zakheus in the early stages of his activities.

Zacheus was just bubbling over during those days as he went about preaching to his own people. Great crowds of people gathered around him and he preached and talked for hours to these hungry hearts. It was a wonderful experience (McIlrath n.d.: 4).

And again she goes on,

Zacheus went to a large area around the Tigi Lake. He had a great following and a great revival swept over the area where he was working. People repented of their sins, burned their fetishes and what they couldn't burn they dumped into the lake. They were taking a turn-about face and were willing to follow the Lord (McIlrath n.d: 4-5).

Those who wanted to follow Zakheus' teachings indicated their desire to reject their past religious objects. These religious objects were sorcery and witchcraft materials. The rejection of religious objects was seen as an indication of their willingness to follow new way as taught by Zakheus. Those who had religious objects and sorcery materials surrendered them to Zakheus to be burnt or destroyed (Smalley I 1977: 19-20).

4.5 Zakheus, the opposition and the birth of his communities in 1951

Although the people played their role in inviting Zakheus, already in 1951, he began to face opposition. Such opposition came from those who had adopted Catholicism and the headmen who felt their positions threatened. In the midst of this opposition Zakheus' communities were born, as hundreds of people responded to his program. This mass conversion can be seen as the date of the birth of Zakheus' communities. The Catholics and the Dutch government officer too began to oppose Zakheus following the mass conversion experience. Later, another opposition came from Weakebo, one of the local village chief.

The year 1951 saw wars taking place in several places in the Paniai region. One of these wars was fought in the Kebo area. Another one in Tigi. In the midst of this uncertainties Zakheus was drawing hundreds of people. Seeing such an openness of the people to accept the teaching of Zakheus, the missionaries decided to send Reverend Paksoal—an Indonesian from the Island of Ceram—to work with Zakheus in Tigi district. As will be noted below, Paksoal was one of the Indonesian workers who was accused by the *Wege Bage* of making false reports discrediting Zakheus' work. Such reports were used by the *ogai* to stop and oppose Zakheus and his communities. In spite of such opposition, Zakheus launched his own programs. This section attempts to show how this developed.

4.5.1 *The early opposition of Zakheus and his programs*

In January 1951, the missionaries sent Paksoal to work beside Zakheus (Report for Dutch New Guinea 1951). He was stationed in Bomou. With the coming of Paksoal, Zakheus concentrated his work in Yibaguoweta ministering other people. Zakheus from this time on began visiting some places and spreading his programs. Later the *Wege Bage* accused Paksoal as one of those who was opposed to Zakheus by making false reports to the missionaries at the mission station in Enarotali and to the government officer in Waghete. Such reports were later used as weapon against Zakheus. The reason was because a few weeks after the arrival of Paksoal, Zakheus was arrested by the government authorities in Waghete (Tigi). The following month (February 1951), the work of Zakheus was attacked. This reaction came mainly from the Catholics. Zakheus was treated badly. The people made all kind of threats and accusations against him and the people who had followed Zakheus (letter TK, Enarotali, February 26, 1951).

In March 1951, Zakheus was arrested again by the Police Officer in Waghete. After beating Zakheus, he ordered Zakheus to stop spreading his teachings. Again the opposition came from the people who had accepted Catholicism and others were anti-*Wege Bage* (letter TK, Enarotali, March 27, 1951). The reason for this arrest was that he was regarded as violating the territorial agreement made in 1939 as mentioned above. Although the missionaries' attitudes toward Zakheus changed some time later, they stood behind him when he was arrested at that stage. McIlrath who was stationed in Enarotali at the time of Zakheus' arrest wrote,

The Catholics circulated many false rumors about Zaccheus and some of their converts falsely corroborated these rumors until the police, believing them arrested Zaccheus (McIlrath n.d.: 5).

In April 1951, Troutman wrote, Zakheus had gone through a period of severe testing ... The Catholic priests, police and some of his own people were being used of the enemy to defeat the work in Tigi and the efforts of Zaccheus (letter TK, April 16, 1951). Many stories were circulating stating that Zakheus was forcing the people to follow him, to throw away their fetishes and to give him pigs. Some of the police stated that Zakheus was trying to influence and even force the people to follow him. The most severe blow on Zakheus' work came when a man who was badly hurt due to a tree falling on him, died. Immediately relatives of that man said that if Zakheus was from God, he would have to raise him from the dead. Since there was no such miracle, the relatives demanded a fine and made a repeated threats to kill Zakheus. The reason

Zakheus was threatened was that the man who died was from one of his communities. He got the tree bark for the roofing of their new houses in the new village of the *Wege Bage* (letter of TK, Enarotali, April 16, 1951).

4.5.2 *The birth of Zakheus' communities in the midst of opposition*

In the midst of the opposition, eight months after Zakheus launched his religious activities the people continued to come to Zakheus by groups. In April 1951, Walter Post, who was visiting the area witnessed a large groups of people coming to Zakheus to follow his teachings,

When still a good distance away we could hear the crowd of yodelling *Kapauku* [the Me, BG] coming and presently a group of them with Zaccheus at the head appeared at the clearing not far from the compound. They waited for the others to come up, and then they streamed into and overflowed the compound like an army of ants. Since the guru's house is new, the ground around it is a light yellow clay and it was soon covered by a mass of black humanity. Then Zaccheus, after greeting us, had one of the men put down a duffle bag full of *Kapauku* fetishes which his people wanted to discard. As soon as all the folks had gathered we began with a service and I had the privilege to address the gathering—of some 1000 *Kapauku*, and Zaccheus interpreted for me. After fully explaining the meaning of this decision on their part, opportunity was given to any who still were not fully convinced in their hearts of the power of the Lord Jesus to keep, to take back their fetishes since we were afraid that perhaps Zaccheus in his enthusiasm may have urged some who were not ready for this step. Then one of the chiefs got up and, with tears, told how that the *Kapauku* were afraid to die and this fear led them to believe in Jesus (letter of Post, April 7, 1951 in Smalley I 1977: 19-20).

In June 1951, two months later, Walter Post wrote again about this scene of group conversion in an article entitled 'The Awakening at Lake Tigi',

We had heard of the enthusiastic reception given to Zaccheus, but wondered about its reality and the motif behind it. We were now to see it with our own eyes. Around eight o'clock we heard a low hum in the distance and someone said, 'Zaccheus is coming'. As the sound became clearer we could distinguish the yodeling of *Kapaukus* [the Me, BG]. Another ten minutes and it was evident that quite a large crowd was approaching. Presently a number of them appeared at the clearing with Zaccheus at their head. There they waited for the others to catch up and

before long they began to fill the clearing. Then Zaccheus gave the signal and on they came—men, women and children, some through the gateway, many others climbing the fence, swarming and overflowing the compound like an army of ants. In a few moments the yellow clay soil around the teachers's house became inky black with *Kapaukus*. There must be at least a thousand of them.

After shaking hands Zaccheus introduced to us a nervous little *Kapauku* [Me, BG] wearing a dirty shirt and a pair of shorts who was one of the chiefs of this section. Looking down at him Zaccheus laughingly said, 'This chief is small in stature, but he is an important man, nevertheless'. Then some one came up with a small duffle bag and a net bag, putting them on the ground before us. These, Zaccheus explained were full of *Kapauku* fetishes and objects of magic which the people had surrender to him to be destroyed, since they no longer believed in such things.

Just then a group of young folk who had gathered in front called to him and he began to lead them in a *Kapauku* song to the tune of 'What a Friend we have in Jesus'. A *Kapauku* from a crowd handed me a few cooked sweet potatoes and immediately from all sides, the people began to pass to me more sweet potatoes (both cooked and raw), sugar cane, spinach, small potatoes. One man even handed me a dirty piece of old pork wrapped in a leaf, a delicacy to a *Kapauku*.

We were ready for the service and, when Zaccheus called out in stentorian tones to the multitude, they all sat down. A man then emptied the bag of fetishes on the ground. It looked like a pile of worthless junk—stones, small pieces of pyrite, pottery, glass, wood, bone, and rosin, an insulator for an aerial, some marbles, a piece from an oil filter, beads, shell, knives made of stone, some string, lining from a hornet's nest, feathers, pieces of old cloth and so on. These were supposed to protect them from danger and sickness, and help them in their interclan fights, as well as to give them good fortune in hunting. Fearing that Zaccheus in his enthusiasm might have urged the people to give up these things before they were ready, we further explained the meaning of the step they were taking and gave opportunity for any to do so to retrieve their fetishes before they were destroyed.

The little chief stood and made a short speech; he was so moved that he spoke with his eyes closed to keep back the tears. Zaccheus translating, told us what he said; the *Kapaukus* were afraid to die, but since they had believed the message that Zakheus has brought that in Jesus they could be cleansed of their sins and relief of their fears, they were willingly discarding these things, which had no value anyway. Just then three men in the rear of the crowd who had besmeared themselves from head to foot with

clay stood and asked to speak. Zaccheus told me that in this way they were indicating that although they were not ready to discard their fetishes, they did not want to incur any hard feelings by not being prepared to take this step.

Both brother Troutman and I then addressed the gathering, urging the people to trust fully and wholly in Christ and assuring them that only He can meet their need. All listened attentively, and we built a small fire, putting on it all inflammable articles. The rest we put into the duffle bag which was thrown into one of the deep spots in the lake. Afterward one of the chiefs came and thanked us for training Zaccheus in Makassar so he could return to his people with the gospel message. As far as we could see, the people have no ulterior motive, so that we view this movement very hopefully (*The Alliance Weekly*, June 27, 1951).

With this 'burning of their the past religious objects' the people expressed their wishes to follow the new way as taught by Zakheus. As indicated earlier this can be viewed as the beginning of the birth of his communities. These communities consisted of the people coming to live together by setting up new a settlement following the instructions given by Zakheus. In the village of Onago, when Zakheus' community was started, there were seven families who joined and came to set up their new settlements. The family heads were the leading figures. Two of them were big men. As will be shown later they were arrested and put in prison when they attempted to resist a Catholic teacher sent to this village. These headmen attempted to resist the Catholics in favor of Zakheus' program by attempting to destroy the house of this teacher.

4.5.3 Further opposition from the ogai following the birth of Zakheus' communities

From April to June 1951, Weakebo and other local village headmen launched their campaigns against Zakheus. Some sectors of the society who aligned themselves with the headmen apparently opposed Zakheus while others were spreading Zakheus' programs.

In July 1951 Zakheus was arrested again. Troutman was called to Waghete. Several charges were made against Zakheus. The first charge was that he failed to cooperate with the government and that he was stirring up the people throughout the region. On the basis of these charges Zakheus was jailed and chained for over twenty-four hours. As Zakheus was chained to a chair with his hands behind his back, he could not sleep so he sang and prayed all night long. The result of this was that no one in the building could sleep

and all heard him singing and chanting. The Police inspector was so angry that in the middle of the night he warned Zakheus and said that if he would not stay quiet he would shoot him (*The Alliance Weekly*, September 12, 1951).

Troutman compared this experience of Zakheus to that of the Apostle Paul and Silas—who sang in jail when they were arrested and imprisoned for preaching the gospel (Bible Acts 16: 16-25). According to Troutman, Zacheus was arrested on charges that were political. But Zakheus allowed himself to be taken without resistance. Zakheus even challenged the government official and said that if the inspector wanted to kill him he could, because God was watching over him. Later Zakheus was released by the Dutch government official. Troutman who went to see Zakheus wrote, On the investigation there was absolutely no grounds for the arrest and Zacheus was declared innocent before his people. The Tigi Police inspector is an ardent Catholic and has held Zacheus in hatred and suspicion for a long time (letter of TK, July 11, 1951).

Many local headmen cooperated with the local police to bring all the charges on Zakheus. The arrest of Zakheus as it was mentioned above was made by many local people. Troutman was right when he said,

Zakheus also has much opposition from some village chiefs who are jealous of him and from the police who, we feel still hold him in suspicion (letter TK, October 17, 1951).

At this time when Zakheus was facing opposition from various fronts, Jordan Pakage, Zakheus own brother's activities strengthened the position of Zakheus' opponents.

4.5.4 Jordan Pakage's activity and the opposition toward Zakheus

Jordan Pakage was Zakheus' older brother. Beginning September 1951 he went about destroying the Me's properties. This activities of Jordan deepened the *ogai's* view that Zakheus and his communities were indeed disturbers of peace and order. This section devotes a brief description of Jordan and his activities. This necessary because Jordan is important in the religious thoughts today.

In September 1951, rumors spread that Jordan, Zakheus' older brother had gone mad and as a result he was going around different villages and setting several houses on fire and killed his neighbors' pigs and destroyed their gardens.

Instead of taking Jordan, the government officer in Waghete let him go and had a man watching him. Another man was asked to get all the possible

evidences to arrest Zakheus out of suspicion that it was Zakheus who ordered Jordan to destroy the people's settlements and their properties. Eventually Zakheus was arrested again.

The government officer again charged Zakheus that it was Zakheus who instructed Jordan to burn houses and to kill pigs (Smalley 1977: 61).

The rumor over Jordan's activities sent the message to the government officials that indeed Zakheus' followers were *Wege Bage*: meaning disruptors of peace and order.

In connection with the activities of Zakheus and Jordan, in the early October 1951, the Police Commander from Hollandia—Jayapura today—visited the Paniai region in his attempt to review the case of Zakheus. While he was in this region new accusations against Zakheus were presented. The first case was related to two village chiefs of Onago village: Widiyaibiwode [my uncle and some of the information for this section came from him, BG] and Yamekabi Gay who destroyed a house built for a Catholic teacher in their village (letter of TK, October 17, 1951). The reason they destroyed the house was that they were already attending classes offered by Zakheus in his school. They wanted to follow Zakheus. These two village chiefs were arrested and were put in jail in Enarotali for three weeks. But what is important here is that this case was used against Zakheus, saying that it was Zakheus who instructed them to destroy the house, in spite of their argument that they had done it out of their conviction. The second case was that it had been Zakheus who had ordered his brother Jordan to burn houses and the gardens and to kill pigs wherever he went. And the third accusation was that Zakheus was forcing the people to burn and destroy their sacred religious objects (letter TK, October 17, 1951). On the bases of these charges, Zakheus was arrested again. The evidence presented could not be established therefore Zakheus was released again (letter TK, October 17, 1951).

The news of Jordan continued to be told until the beginning of January 1952 (letter of TK, January 8, 1952).

Jordan caused a reign of terror with burning houses and killing pigs ...

When Jordan was burning houses, killing pigs, destroying gardens he was helped by his brother Okeiyamoye (Smalley 1977: 617-621).

Therefore, in January 1952, Jordan was arrested again. Later he was declared as mentally ill (letter TK, January 8, 1952). The fact that Jordan had destroyed the people's properties weakened the position of Zakheus and his communities.

In June 1955, three years later Jordan was rearrested apparently with the charges of stealing cattle. As a result he was sent to jail for six months. Two years later he was released from prison and he went to the south of Tigi district. He never returned. Nobody knows what happened to him and where exactly he went.

Jordan's activity of burning people's houses at the time when Zakheus was facing a strong opposition only strengthen the argument of the *ogai* and the local people who attempted to stop Zakheus from carrying on his programs. One of the men who opposed Zakheus is Weakebo. He used Jordan's activity of destroying the people's property as legitimate basis to oppose Zakheus.

4.5.5 Weakebo and his opposition to Zakheus

Missionary reports show that Weakebo was one of the village headmen who bluntly opposed Zakheus' programs following the revival movement initiated by the latter. In this section, an attempt will be made to trace the history of Weakebo's activities to build a good relationship with Euroamericans which he used to suppress Zakheus and his program. Weakebo used the close ties he had established to advance his own personal socio-economic and political interests.

Weakebo and other headmen aggressively opposed Zakheus and his communities. Since the first contact with the first Europeans Weakebo had aligned himself with them and therefore cooperated with them or used them to suppress his competitors. Scores of publications and reports by the missionaries and the Dutch government's side mentioned Weakebo as 'their friend'.

4.5.5.1 Weakebo and the ogai

Who is this Weakebo? Cator, who visited the Paniai region in December 1937 mentioned that Weakebo gave his assistance to when needed. Doing so Weakebo established his friendship with the first European who visited Paniai in December 1937. This was confirmed several months later, when Jan van Eechoud was on his way to the Paniai region in order to establish a government post in Enarotali. On May 28, 1938 Van Eechoud had reached South Tigi. Weakebo, who might have heard that they were coming, went to meet Jan van Eechoud and his men. The following day he reached Jaba, his own village, and from there to Enarotali (Van Eechoud 1953: 103-107). Perhaps it was for this reason that Boelen, who wrote a brief biographical account of Weakebo, noted that, Weakebo welcomed the Dutch government personnel in his village when they came first time, walked on foot to reach the Wissel Lakes in 1937 (Boelen 1953: 182).

In the early period of Dutch government in the Paniai region, Weakebo was taken to Ambon by airplane. He was entertained there as the guest of honor of the Resident in Ambon. While he was in Ambon he was taken to the Ambon beach where he collected a large number of cowrie shells (Boelen 1955: 182). When he returned to the Paniai region in December 1941, he brought back a five gallon oil tin filled with cowrie shells. Mickelson who travelled back to this region with Weakebo from the south coast of New Guinea estimated Weakebo's *mege* around 8,000 (Mickelson 1968: 18). This treatment from the Dutch government enhanced Weakebo's existing socio-political position. Seeing this attitude of Weakebo, the Dutch had attempted to preserve the position of local leadership. At this stage Weakebo appeared as one the promising big man. A position which Weakebo enjoyed, at least until the return of Zakheus. But when the latter came back, the situation change.

During World War II Weakebo immediately chose to work for the Dutch government officer. He was a well-known orator and delivered a glowing speech before the people to join him in working for the Dutch during the war. When the Japanese forces were advancing to reach Enarotali to capture De Bruijn, and the missionary personnel, De Bruijn instructed the people not to cooperate with the Japanese. Weakebo was there to act as De Bruijn's mouthpiece. Weakebo related what he knew about the Japanese and their methods and told them some horror stories which were passed on, suitably embellished, to the people (Rhys 1947: 112). When the Japanese reached a nearby area of South Tigi, Weakebo selected some men and sent them out to the place where the Japanese were and later on, he collected pieces of information which he could get from them and passed them on to De Bruijn, who in turn radioed the information to his government in Australia (Rhys 1947: 114).

Later Weakebo did the intelligence work for the De Bruijn (Boelen 1955: 183) who by that time had moved toward further east, to the country of the Monis. Weakebo also invested his cowrie shells by sending some of his own to De Bruijn, perhaps to enable him to buy food from the Monis during the time when De Bruijn was hiding.

It occurred to him [Weakebo, BG] that Kontolulle [Controleur, BG] might be short of cowrie shells. Weakebo himself did not have many, but he gathered all he could spare, and more, and sent them to De Bruijn for his use in case of need. De Bruijn was very touched. 'Good Weakebo' he said. 'There is no one like "im"' (Rhys 1947: 214).

This was Weakebo's strategy, because he knew that de Bruijn would compensate or refund more than what he had given as the latter was holding all the cowrie shells brought in from coast by all of the *ogai* establishments rep-

resented in the Wissel Lakes area at that time. Because by the end of 1940s De Bruijn was holding all the cowrie shells from the outside world. De Bruijn made the policy to keep the cowrie shells brought in from the coast in his office with the intention to prevent the further devaluation of cowrie shell (as shown in previous chapter). All of the *ogai*, both missionaries and the government personnel, were required to come report to De Bruijn if they brought in or in need of cowrie shells to buy anything.

After the war, in October 1946 when Mickelson returned to the Paniai region to resume the missionary activity, Weakebo showed similar attitudes he had shown to De Bruijn. Weakebo was one among the few who changed the whole situation in the Wissel Lakes region, when he chose to welcome and establish friendship with Mickelson. At that time the people in general were resisting to cooperate with the returning *ogai*. The reason was that the people's conviction that the Japanese who came to destroy their gardens or kill their pigs would return and would do the same if the missionary were allowed to stay. One way of preventing the Japanese from coming back again was to resist the return of the new settlers. The people argued that the Japanese had come to capture the American and Europeans but since they had been gone by the time they had reached the Paniai region, the Me had become their target. Against this stream of resistance Weakebo and others welcomed Mickelson but went further by accepting Christianity (Mickelson 1968: 114). This time he changed his religion also, because before the war Weakebo was a Catholic. Later Weakebo asked Mickelson to baptize him and some of his relatives who had chosen to become Christian. Weakebo then sent all his children to go to the CAMA school in Enarotali and with five of his wives and relatives he started a church in his village. Every Sunday Weakebo gathered the people of Jaba and led them in prayer and service in his house (*Tifa Irian*, 21 Djanuari, 1972).

In 1948, when the government post in Enarotali was reopened, the government personnel invited Weakebo to join them in order to spread the news to Tigi area, where the Dutch had returned to rebuild what had been destroyed by the Japanese. The government's intention was to win the people's confidence. This is not clear whether by employing Weakebo their objective was achieved. It is possible that by employing Weakebo, the government made a mistake because the people were hesitant to welcome the *ogai* again. Simply because during this trip sponsored by the *ogai*, Weakebo raided the Debei, the Kamu and the Mapia on behalf of the Dutch.

In 1949, a war broke out between the Mote—Weakebo's clan—and the Pakage—Zakheus clan. Weakebo, assisted by Senin Mote, convinced the Dutch to help them fight the Pakage clan. The whole settlement of the Pakage

clan was raided and set on fire. Weakebo won the war with the support of the Dutch.

In 1950 when Fr. Tillemans came to Jaba—Weakebo's village—and expressed his intention to reestablish the Catholic church and a school, Weakebo consented and sent two of his wives out of seven (Boelen 1955: 57) to attend the Catholic church. Weakebo himself remained as a CAMA/Protestant church member. Weakebo went on saying that there were other places where the priest could open schools and churches. At that occasion Weakebo also said that for him the religion of the CAMA/Protestant and the Catholics were just the same. He had no objection if a Catholic priest would come to establish a school in an area already occupied by CAMA. In Jaba, Weakebo wanted a *dubbele zending* ("double mission")—where both the CAMA and the Catholics could stay and work in his village while bringing in their teachers together, as it was done in Enarotali (*Tifa Irian*, 30 Djanuari, 1971). Perhaps this was the reason why Troutman said Weakebo was not a strong believer. Weakebo of Jaba was a good friend of the missionary. Though himself not a strong believer, nearly all his children are preachers, school teachers or preachers' wives (Smalley I 1977: 1168).

Weakebo knew and used all Western institutions represented in the Wissel lakes region, religious as well as political institutions such as: CAMA, the Catholic Church and the Dutch government. This was necessary because Weakebo although apparently rich and influential, as a big man led an insecure life. First of all, he had many enemies and conflicts related to his gardens and pigs, which eventually led to war in which Weakebo assumed cooperation from the government and police (Boelen 1955: 185). Secondly and more importantly, the land upon which he raised his pigs and made his home belonged to the Pakage clan of which Zakheus was a member. The land had been disputed for such a long time even long before the advent of the *ogai*. When Zakheus returned to the Paniai region and began to draw many people Weakebo had ample reason to become fearsome and jealous.

As noted above Weakebo attempted to weaken Zakheus' position by providing wives for the indigenous pastor-teachers who later became local church leaders. After Weakebo established the first contact with the *ogai* he sent most of his children (mostly girls, while preventing the boys from doing so) to CAMA schools. Later when the graduates of the Bible School in Enarotali needed more educated wives, Weakebo offered his daughters for these early indigenous church leaders in the Wissel Lakes region (YP, June 12, 1992). Interestingly, almost all of the first Bible School graduates (in Enarotali) married girls whom Weakebo had sent. When the church leaders carried out the evangelistic activities they joined Weakebo and CAMA to eliminate the *Wege Bage's* programs and took over *Wege* communities as the nucleus of local congrega-

tions. Together with the church leaders they launched their programs to eliminate Zakheus out of their personal interest. For Weakebo, by doing so, he used a political strategy in the colonial context to advance his interest.

Weakebo not only obtained his support from the local indigenous church leaders. He also was supported by the local police agents. I think Grootenhuis was right when he said,

Weakebo Mote backed by Mote and Adi from Waghete, the village where Police and Mission were stationed. Mote from Jaba was like Mote from Waghete partly oriented on the mission. The great influence that Zakheus had, was obviously not much appreciated by the mission, nor by Pakage's adversaries, especially Weakebo (Grootenhuis 1960: 5).

Weakebo lived just to see hundreds of people expressing their desire to follow Zakheus: He died on March 24, 1952. He did not live to see the development and expansion of the *Wege* communities springing up in the 1960s. Yet he had seen Zakheus as a real threat to his interests. Senen Mote, one of his step sons, took up the banner to aggressively eliminate the *Wege* communities. In July 1960, Grootenhuis wrote,

Opposition during Zacheus' time has been revived by this [referring to activities of his brother Jordan of destroying gardens etc. as noted above, BG]. If the old Weakebo Mote was little pleased with Zakheus's influence, his step-son, Senin Mote, policeman 2nd class and one of the most important *Kapaukus* in Tigi, is the declared opponent of Okejamoje and the *Wege*-movement (Grootenhuis 1960: 10).

The Me police and village big men had well-established socio-economic and political positions in the Me social structure. All social-economic networks were built around them. They had invested a large number of *mege* and pigs, not to mention their influence which had penetrated the whole Me social and economic networks. Consequently, they were prepared to oppose any force that could shake their interests. They were the ones who stood behind the government personnel in Waghete who waged war against Zakheus and his communities.

4.5.5.2 *Weakebo's opposition: some possible explanations*

The question now is why did Weakebo opposed Zakheus and his communities. This section provides explicitly several possible considerations based on the presentation above.

a. The problem of jealousy

Missionary reports indicate that one of the reasons for Weakebo's hostile attitude toward Zakheus was jealousy. Post who was aware of the possible conflicts between Zakheus and Weakebo wrote,

Zakheus is a member of a clan, the Pakare [Pakage, BG], which for a period of many years has had a feud with the Mote clan of which Weakebo, another baptized Christian, is the head. Seeing the unusual popularity of Zakheus, who is just a young fellow Weakebo has been getting a bit jealous and unless the Lord undertakes, there is the possibility of a revival of the feud. Added to this is the fact that both at Tigi Lake and in the area where Weakebo lives, there are residents priests who will also use this opportunity to foment trouble if they can. Already they have used some of their people to circulate false stories about Zakheus in an attempt to blacken his reputation (letter of Walter Post, April 7, 1951 in Smalley I 1977: 20).

Later Post wrote again,

One feature of these events is that these *Kapaukus* are from Pakaray [Pakage, BG] or related clans of which Zaccheus himself is a member. For many years, even generations, the Pakaray [Pakage, BG] clan has had a feud with the Mote clan, of which Weyakebu [Weakebo, BG], another baptized Christian is the head. Wayakebu has for a long time asked for a teacher but we have not yet been able to give him any. Since the return of Zaccheus, Wayakebu [Weakebo, BG] has been looking at him with jealous eyes (Smalley I 1977: 74).

b. Weakebo's concern for socio-political and economic survival

It is also possible that Weakebo took Zakheus as a man who was dangerous to his position. Because of his ties and training, Weakebo believed that Zakheus would succeed to reclaim the land from him and his people by driving them out from the area. As it can be seen from the previous section that up until 1950, Weakebo was the only spoke person of the *ogai* in the Tigi area. The position which up until that time, Weakebo was using to advance his own socio-economic advantage. With the return of Zakheus, Weakebo saw Zakheus as his rival; especially as Zakheus was drawing many people to himself and building new communities. In addition to this Zakheus was preaching: do not steal, do not tell a lie, throw away your *mege*, *mege* is bad, etc.; many claim that Weakebo was doing these very things in the name of the *ogai*, and these teachings were taken by Weakebo as attacking him to discredit

him and draw the people away from him. These are some two possible reasons why Weakebo opposed Zakheus and his programs.

4.5.6 *Zakheus' programs after the birth of his communities*

In spite of the opposition from Weakebo, following the above 'the mass conversion' Zakheus is said to have had implemented two of his projects while continuing to spread his teachings.

The first program of his activity was a 'school project'. Zakheus implemented this school as a means to advance his teachings. Many came to learn from him. Much of what he taught was related to his own view of God he invented out of his own father's teaching and that of Christianity; some things on community development such as: how to keep the village clean, and the importance of working hard in cultivating the land. During these classes he distributed seeds of vegetables such as cabbage, beans, etc. After visiting these *Wege* communities Grootenhuis said that toward the end of 1951 the number of the people who attended this training program went up to 150 people (Grootenhuis 1960: 4). The 'alumni' of this 'school' became 'preachers' of the *Wege Mana* and the nucleus of various *Wege* villages established throughout the Panjai region.

Zakheus' second project was what I will call the 'Exodus' or the 'Zakheus' relocation program'. Essentially, by this program Zakheus challenged the people to make a complete break with the existing village community and establish a new village. This meant that many had to reorganize their village or leave their families and relatives and go to live with other people and form a new community of people. This enabled Zakheus to teach them separately during his visits. It also helped him to see the number of his followers. One can understand why many people objected to this. It was from this time on that the followers of Zakheus were called the *Wege Bage*—the disruptors of peace and order, the people who bring chaos, etc. This accusation was intensified later when as noted, Jordan Pakage, Zakheus' brother became more violent and went on to destroy people's gardens, burn houses, etc.

During October and November 1951, the news spread saying that God was going to destroy the world by sending a big fire from the sky. It was said that Zakheus had warned the people to get ready, because God was going to destroy the world and those who had rejected his teachings. Many people thought the fire would be a punishment from God and would soon materialize. Many were caught in panic (Smedts 1956: 118). Although the fire did not come, the talk about it persisted for years to come (for this issue, see the further discussion in Chapter 5: 5.3.7 'Salvation and now: Zakheus' teaching on hell and the end of the world').

4.6 Zakheus in 1952: conflict and illness

During 1952, Zakheus came into conflict with the missionary personnel and he was declared as mentally ill. But before he was sent to the mental clinic in Hollandia Binnen (Abepura today) he came to conflict with the *ogai* in Enarotali. Mickelson, who was more sympathetic to Zakheus, and believed that this mental illness was caused by the missionary policy. This section deals these issues.

4.6.1 *Zakheus' conflict with the ogai*

On the basis of theological assumptions mentioned in preceding chapter, the missionaries dismissed Zakheus as a man who was preaching a false religion. In reaction to this, Zakheus came in conflict with them. To me it is regrettable that the *ogai* bluntly rejected Zakheus' or the *Wege Bage's* religious views. As I see it now there were several things which was taking place which gave rise to this new theological views rejected by the *ogai*.

Firstly, as soon as Zakheus began preaching, the people made their decisions to follow him out of their own assumptions that his program would meet their theological or socio-economic agenda. The people's participation was motivated by their view that Zakheus' program would bring healing to their socio-psychological tensions. This means that they had their own theological agenda which they attempted to read into Zakheus' teachings. To me this is very human, meaning all human beings are subject to such customs.

Secondly, the advent of the Japanese and their treatment had drastically demolished their world and with the return of Zakheus, the people were attempting to rebuilding rebuild their world. Of course the raw material for this enterprise came from the new and the old elements of culture. This explains why theological views of Zakheus or his communities as consisted of elements of the old and Christians views.

Thirdly, there was a different starting point of theological argument adopted by the *ogai* and the Me people. The *ogai* (I am apart of this) start their theological views from the proposition that God had revealed himself in the Bible (and some other theological assumptions which was stated in previous chapter). Therefore all theological views had to be tested with the Bible. Furthermore, the *ogai* who came to this region preached their views in the language and religious symbols which was foreign to the people. While the Me started religious reflection from their life situation, here and now out of their search for salvation. It also meant that they were not prepared to follow all which the *ogai* were teaching. The sermons of the *ogai* fell into their minds and the people selected the ideas which conformed to their existing religious

expectations and ideas which they felt could fulfill their dreams. The people tried to make their 'religion' out of the sermons preached to them. The custom still takes place even after 50 or 60 years of Christianization.

Fourthly, it was impossible for Zakheus to control or straighten those teachings which went wild in the minds of the people. Simply because only six months after Zakheus began his work, he was arrested by the government personnel who were cooperating with the local headmen, the Indonesians and the local preachers.

After considering the above factors, I can understand if there was a different interpretation given by the Me to Christianity. But the *ogai* were determined to teach or to correct his teachings by discrediting him at the same time. I regret this approach considering the above factors which shape their religious arguments. The *ogai* adapted the strategy of blunt opposition toward Zakheus, with the help of local pastors and Indonesian pastor-teachers. The following section will deal with two of the preachers who tried to discredit Zakheus and his communities. These preachers were Paksoal and Thomas Adi.

4.6.1.1 Reverend Paksoal

Paksoal was an Ambonese pastor-teacher. He first came to the Paniai region in April 1939 to spread Christianity in the Wissel Lakes region. Before the war he started a school for children in Uwamani, about a two hour walk from Enarotali. While teaching in this school he was also in charge as the pastor of a local congregation in that place. His work was disrupted when World War Two broke out since all government and missionary personnel were evacuated as noted in the previous chapter. He was evacuated to Merauke, one of the towns on the south coast of New Guinea which was never occupied by the Japanese. He returned again to the Paniai region in July 1948. Upon his return he assumed the leadership of a school which later grew into the Bible School when Miss. McIlrath (now Mrs. Catto) was appointed as principal. Paksoal continued to teach in this Bible School. In January 1951 Paksoal was sent to Tigi district to pastor a local congregation which was the result of the missionary work of Zakheus which had resulted in revival movements as shown above. In Bomou Paksoal helped to organize a local church and opened a village school. The missionary report of the year 1951 said,

In January the Tigi Lake area was officially opened by the Christian and missionary Alliance and an outstation and Church center was established at the village of Jakago in the Bomou district. Two workers were appointed to work in this area, namely, Zakheus, a *Kapauku* who had attended the Bible School at Makassar and a native of Bomou, and Mr. Paksoal an ordained Indonesian worker. From the beginning the work advanced and

many came to the Lord (report for Dutch New Guinea, CAMA Annual Report 1951).

However, when Paksoal arrived in Bomou, Zakheus concentrated his work to minister the people of Yibagouyoweta and its surroundings (Yibagouyoweta is around a 20 minute walk from Bomou). Paksoal on the other hand continued to work in Bomou. But in Bomou the number of people attending church services began to decline, while Zakheus' influence among the people continued to increase. Many people, even from Bomou, did not want to attend the church services held by Paksoal. The people preferred to go to Zakheus and listen to his sermons. The reason was that there was a cultural, a language and even a theological barrier which existed between Paksoal and the people he came to minister.

Today, many people argue that Paksoal made false reports to the American missionaries and government personnel in Waghete against Zakheus, and therefore, a few weeks after Paksoal came to Bomou. Zakheus was arrested again and again. When asked why did Paksoal make false reports against Zakheus, the people mentioned several possible reasons. Firstly, Paksoal was new in the area and he was therefore suspicious toward the people. Paksoal thought that Zakheus was influencing the people to rise and revolt against the *ogai*. Secondly Paksoal was jealous. In order to draw the people away from Zakheus, Paksoal attempted to undermine Zakheus' work. Thirdly, if indeed Paksoal made such a report against Zakheus it was out of his theological conviction, just like the other *ogai*. Paksoal refused to be interviewed several times, so it is not clear what would be his opinion on this. At least in the eyes of the Me Paksoal was an *ogai* who discredited Zakheus' work out of jealousy and to draw the Me people away from Zakheus.

Later, according to Zakheus' followers, Paksoal succeeded in winning the Me pastors and teachers who had attended Bible School in Enarotali to justify themselves while accusing Zakheus of being a false teacher.

4.6.1.2 Reverend Thomas Adi

Another local pastor who cooperated with the government personnel and the *ogai* to eliminate Zakheus was the Reverend Thomas Adi. He came from Bomou, Tigi, about a ten minute walk from Yiwagouyoweta. Walter Post described Adi's work and background in the following words,

Thomas Ady [Adi, BG] was formerly a pupil in a Roman Catholic school. Endowed with a strong will, an eye for business, boldness and the ability to talk, Thomas was more or less a leader among the *Kapaukus* [Me, BG]. He is an energetic worker, and while manning one of the outstations on

Lake Tigi seemed to be doing well. However his business bent led at times to leave his flock for short periods to carry on business ... (*The Alliance Witness*, September 24, 1958).

Until January 1954 Mr. and Mrs. Adi worked in Onago. In 1954 as Adi was ministering in this place the real progress was recognized as over 40 men and women were baptized. Following this growth of a Christian community in this place, the plan was made to organize the church. Consequently, elders were appointed as Adi continued to work in this place. Adi later worked in a village which was allied with the Obano people during the Uprising in 1956 as noted in the earlier chapter. His work in that place made considerable progress. Both school and church which he was pastoring were well attended (*The Alliance Witness*, September 24, 1958). The success story of his work became a legitimate basis of his later activities in opposing Zakheus. He cooperated with Weakebo and Paksoal to achieve this goal. Adi was one the pastor evangelists who married one of Weakebo's daughters. With these family ties Weakebo and Thomas Adi cooperated to advance their own interests. It has to be borne in mind that both Adi and Weakebo has the same socio-political interest. Although Adi claimed to be pastor, many of his colleagues speak of him as a pastor with two hearts: for God and cowrie shells. Many speaks of Adi's frequent travels to Biak in search cowrie shells in the beach in this coral island.

When Adi was stationed in Kopo, near Enarotali the *Wege Mana* preachers came and asked him to join them. He turned against them saying that the majority of the people joining the *Wege* communities are typically lazy people (Smalley 1 1977: 619). Later Adi accompanied Troutman to go to Kiuto in their efforts to take over the local church which was under the leadership of the *Wege Bage*.

4.6.2 *Zakheus' mental illness*

Beginning in 1952, Jordan, Zakheus' brother was rearrested again on charges of destroying gardens, burning houses, killing pigs, etc. Following this incident Zakheus came into conflicts with the *ogai*. Previous to this however, Zakheus was declared as having psychiatric problem as it was manifested through some of Zakheus' 'strange' activities. Following this sickness, he was sent to the Mental Hospital in Abepura. The present section seeks to present: 1) Zakheus's mental illness, 2) his activities which the *ogai* used to prove that Zakheus illness and 3) the Me people's interpretation of such activities seen as a sign of Zakheus' illness.

In January 1952, Jordan, Zakheus' brother was arrested again on the basis of charges made previously of burning down houses, ruining gardens, and the killing of people's pigs (Grootenhuis 1960: 5, and letter of TK, January 8, 1952). As noted earlier this development in turn weakened the position of Zakheus and his communities. It strengthened the *ogai*'s claim that indeed Zakheus' followers were disruptors of peace and order. Jordan was also reported to have gone mad.

In February 1952, a missionary who was working in the Wissel Lakes area, reported that 'this year Zakheus seems to be having a battle with himself ...' (letter of TK, February 27, 1952). This might be related to the struggles which Zakheus was facing as he had different charges thrown against him and his brother. Later one day in February Zakheus came into a classroom and tried to eat chalk. The missionaries tried exorcism, believing that Zakheus was possessed by evil spirits (letter of MD, May 18, 1993). Following this Zakheus did many strange things: eating chalk as it was mentioned, attempt to raise the dead man and a visit to a cemetery. According to the *ogai* these strange actions of Zakheus indicated that Zakheus was mentally ill, and yet unfortunately, the people did not share this view. They have their own opinions on: 1) Zakheus' act of eating chalk; 2) Zakheus' attempt to raise the dead man; and 3) Zakheus' activities in the cemetery in Enarotali.

1. Zakheus' act of eating chalk

This act of eating chalk in Enarotali in the class room in front of the Bible School students as it was indicated was believed by the missionary and the government as clear signs that Zakheus was mentally ill. And yet, the people in the general view that Zakheus did this intentionally as an act of protest against the missionaries because they refused to carry out Zakheus' educational programs for people. The people argued that Zakheus submitted a proposal at that time to the missionaries to send more young people to be trained abroad or on the coast. Zakheus was convinced if the young people could be trained on the coast, in the future the indigenous church communities in the Paniai region would have better educated leaders. This was necessary according to Zakheus, because the young Me who were trained in the Paniai region, lacked exposure to the outside world and therefore would be bound by their tradition and unable to make change. In view of this objective, Zakheus was proposing to the missionary personnel that the young people would be sent to the outside world and be trained there rather than training them in the Paniai region. The missionary agreed to do this but the Indonesians pastor-teachers who were working in the Paniai region objected this plan out of jealousy. The mission followed the advice of the Indonesians who did not want to see the Me getting better education. After hearing the rejection of his

plan Zakheus ate the chalk as an act of protest (MT, June 12, 1988; ED December 17, 1985). This is the people's interpretation which justifies Zakheus' activities.

2. Zakheus' attempt to raise a dead man

Another thing which Zakheus did during February and March 1952 was his attempt to raise a dead man in Enarotali. Grootenhuis wrote, 'He [Zakheus, BG] ... tried to prevent the burial of his father's brother, because he wanted to raise him from the dead' (Grootenhuis 1960: 6). This also was, according to the *ogai*, a clear sign that Zakheus was mentally ill. His supporters attempted to justify Zakheus by reading the words of Mark the Evangelist, And these signs will accompany those who believe: In my name they will drive out demons; they will speak in new tongues; they will pick up snakes with their hands; and when they drink deadly poison, it will not hurt them at all, they will place their hands on sick people, and they will get well (Mark 16: 17-18). The *Wege Bage* argued that Zakheus was an man sent by God and based on this verse God could raise the dead man to life but the government and missionaries personnel mocked him (CP, August 12, 1992). Many of this people argue that the *ogai* distrust the very Bible they preached. Zakheus believed in the Bible—meaning the Biblical verse above—, while the *ogai* did not believe what they had come to preach.

3. Zakheus' activities in the cemetery in Enarotali

During February and March 1952, Zakheus also spent some time in the cemetery in Enarotali. Miss. McIlrath said that Zakheus sought the aid of the spirit forces to attack the CAMA missionary community in Enarotali.

He [Zakheus, BG] formed groups to wage an attack on the missionaries. This we learned later ... The presence of the enemy was keenly felt during those days. There was an oppression like a large, low-hanging cloud which seemed to engulf us. We'll never know what the Lord spared us from in those days as Zakheus encircled our houses at night and spent hours in the cemetery at night communing with an old man who died and who had said would rise from the dead at an appointed time (McIlrath n.d.: 7-8).

From the Me's point of view, Zakheus went to the cemetery in Enarotali out of his sense of the need of an encounter with God. They say that he wanted to be alone with God. The accusations, charges and pressures thrown upon him was such that he could not bear it alone. He wanted to be released by God. Therefore he went to the cemetery. Interestingly, according to his followers

he had a vision or dream when he entered the cemetery and prayed there. In that vision or dream he encountered evil forces which appeared to him in the form of a snake. This snake appeared in different colors and threatened to kill Zakheus. Zakheus remained calm and later seven other snakes appeared and started to bite Zakheus. But Zakheus was determined to meet God at that time in that place. Seven times all kind of living creatures appeared to him making all kind of threats to kill him. Their intention was to test whether Zakheus was genuinely seeking to have an encounter with God. But Zakheus remained there in spite of those threats. Finally in that vision a man whom he never met came and asked Zakheus: 'what do you want?' Zakheus said he wanted to meet God. The man asked the same question again. Zakheus gave the same answer. Then he allowed Zakheus to enter the first gate. Then another man appeared and asked the same question. Zakheus said he just wanted to meet with God. The man tried to offer him all kind of material wealth and said, 'you cannot find God. God is not here'. Take this wealth and bring them back for your people. Zakheus remained there; he had no idea of turning back and therefore repeated the same answer he had given before. This went on until the seventh man who was standing before the seventh gate. He was allowed to enter seventh gate to meet with God. He entered the gate. He found himself in a beautiful garden, full of flowers. The place was very quite. He felt he was free from the world. But after sometime he was wondering where God was. As he was roaming around he asked himself why God was not there. Then suddenly a voice broke the air, 'God is with you, you have known him. Go now' (ME, June 29, 1992). With these words he returned home. The *Wege Bage* who had known this experience knew that there was nothing wrong with Zakheus. He was a man whom God had appointed (EM, July 12, 1992).

Perhaps based on this religious experience and around this time that Zakheus began to claim to be a prophet sent by God. A missionary who was in the Wissel Lakes area at this time wrote,

Zaccheus [Zakheus, BG] insisted on mixing the local devil worship with the gospel, claiming that he has been a specially appointed prophet (letter of TK, April 8, 1952).

Later, around March 1952, in the midst of this controversy Zakheus was excommunicated from his missionary and the church communities. The reason for this break was his preaching, Zakheus, it was said, mixed the Gospel with deviating ideas, which according to Zakheus came from his father, Dodeiwode (Grootenhuis 1960: 4). From the missionary's point of view the action was deemed necessary, because of Zacheus' belief in a

special ANOINTING he and his two brothers received one day when they were very young in a very evil ceremony as their father had sprinkled them with pig's blood. Zacheus felt this anointing was, in their cultural pattern what the anointing of the Holy Spirit is in Bible and to us (McIlrath n.d.: 6).

Another missionary expressed similar reason why Zakheus was not welcomed in the church and missionary community,

He told me his father had given him his mantle, and he had to keep it, and carry out his father's task. This pertained to the former culture. He felt that he could preach the Gospel and also carry on with the old culture (letter MP, May 19, 1993).

Later this decision affected the missionary work. Most of the local pastors who were under mission supervision were willing to cooperate with Zakheus.

Following the break with the missionary establishment, Zakheus was declared as having a mental illness in April 1952. On 8 April 1952, the missionary personnel in Enarotali took Zakheus to the Police in Enarotali as he was mentally ill. A missionary wrote,

He [Zakheus, BG] has either gone crazy or surrender himself over to the devil. This morning he became so bad that we had to turn him over to the police ... (letter TK, April 8, 1952).

Following this the Government sent Zakheus to the Irene Mental Hospital in Hollandia (Abepura today) to be hospitalized. But already in May 1952 a report was received that Zakheus' condition was improving (letter TK, May 27, 1952). Yet Zakheus stayed in the hospital until 1956.

4.6.3 Mickelson and other missionaries' views regarding Zakheus' illness

Mickelson was more sympathetic to the struggles which Zakheus went through after his return to the Paniai region. Therefore he attempted to approach Zakheus' case in a more tolerant way. According to Mickelson, there were two possible reasons for the mental illness of Zakheus: 1) Zakheus' problem with readjustment to his own society, and 2) the issue of discrimination, 3) according to other *ogai*, Zakheus was in the possession of the evil spirit. To this I want to add 4) the problem of missionary strategies.

1. Zakheus' readjustment problem

According to Mickelson, Zakheus' mental illness which began after he got back from Makassar in August 1950 was caused by his difficulty of returning to the way of life of his people. Simply because of the long period of his stay in Makassar had enabled him to get integrated into the Western way of life.

At the Bible School Zacheus [Zakheus, BG] soon took on the way of life of the students living there [in Makassar, BG]. He learned to like the rice diet of the students. Zacheus also became accustomed to wearing clothes, including shoes. To all outward appearances he had integrated into the life of the school (Mickelson 1968: 204-205).

Mickelson wrote again,

The strain of reintegrating into a very low and moneyless culture from that to which he had been accustomed proved too great (Mickelson 1968: 208).

Thus, Zakheus' mental sickness was caused because he supposedly was not able to make readjustment to his people when he returned to the Paniai region.

2. Discrimination

Zakheus also felt that he was discriminated by the missionaries from other Indonesian workers. The other Indonesian evangelists who worked in the Paniai region for the mission received salaries from this mission, while Zakheus who attended the same school in Makassar just as others was deprived of this right. When he returned to the Paniai region the missionaries were concerned with establishing an indigenous church as soon as possible, and therefore the mission decided not to extend any financial support to Zakheus. He went to work among his people without any financial support. But it was a difficult thing for Zakheus to bear. Years later in March 1962, Mickelson said,

I believe he was alienated culturally from his people by the time he returned to them. Upon his return to the interior of New Guinea again, a great pressure was put upon him to live without mission subsidy. Money—as such—was not a common thing among the people of this tribe, and he was unable to purchase things it took money to buy though he did not lack food as his people were liberal in bestowing the same upon him.

Zakheus felt he was discriminated against because he was not an Ambonese or outsider (letter Mickelson, March 6, 1962).

Thus, Zakheus felt he was discriminated against the Indonesians who worked as pastor-teachers in those times in the Paniai region. These pastors were receiving subsidy from this mission. All the Indonesian pastor-teachers later began to receive a salary from the government. While Zakheus wanted to live on the same economic level as the non-local natives who also had attended the same Bible School at Makassar who were serving in the same tribal area (Mickelson 1968: 207), he received only food from his people.

Zakheus also felt discriminated against other local people who were associated with the *ogai*. Karel Gobay, who was his classmate at the Bible School and also returned to the Wissel Lakes area, received a subsidy from the *ogai* as he began to work among his own people. While Zakheus was sent to work among his people without any financial aid. Also other people who were associated with the Dutch government and who were trained by the government were receiving their monthly salary. The idea here is that Zakheus' case was unusual. He felt he was extremely marginalized and discriminated. In later development some local pastor evangelists who were sympathetic to Zakheus raised this issue (see section 4.7.3 'The return of Zakheus to the Wissel Lakes area in 1957 and its impact').

3. Evil spirits

Many other missionaries, however, thought he was possessed by evil spirits. They argued that Zakheus was not following the Lord as he should, therefore evil spirit came to tempt him to follow the way of darkness. And later he was completely used by the devil against the church and missionary community (see for example *Behind the Ranges*, May, 1970; *De Pionier*, Maart 1963; Smalley I 1977: 547). I guess this is very simplistic explanation which neglect wider issues: one of them is the missionary themselves who were not open theologically or missiologically to the needs or the signs of the times.

4. The missionary strategy

I think the fourth reason is the missionary strategy which was adopted with regards to: indigenous religious views, paying indigenous workers salary and respect for the indigenous leaders. With respect to the local religious views the *ogai* totally overlooked the fact that the Me people like other human beings who whether they like or not had to see reality (or to see Christianity in this case) through their own cultural framework. While on the issue of indigenous workers, the missionary in the field were of the opinion that the policy formulated in the West 'to establish an indigenous church in the interi-

or of New Guinea' as soon as possible (Mickelson 1968: 20), was seen as coming from God which needs no modification. This made Zakheus bear the consequences. The policy passed on and held as priority was more important than the need to help a man like Zakheus who had Christianized almost a whole area within a matter of six months. The indigenous church lost Zakheus— a religious leader who could have been instrumental in the process of the people's socio-religious development in the region. Perhaps Mickelson knew this and therefore was more sympathetic to Zakheus.

4.7 Zakheus from 1953 to 1958

At the beginning of 1953, the Me became restless and attempted to control the situation by revolting against the *ogai*. After this revolt Zakheus returned to the Wissel Lakes area, which was perceived by the *Wege Bage* as a sign of his victory. This section is devoted to deal with three issues: 1) the growing unrest in the region between 1952-1955 which led to 2) the Obano revolt and 3) the return of Zakheus to the Paniai region after his release from the mental clinic in Jayapura.

4.7.1 *The growing unrest in the Wissel Lakes region*

Throughout 1952-1953 the number of people joining the *Wege* communities continued to rise and many came to Zakheus: their persecuted leader. As pointed out earlier, *Wege* communities interpreted the opposition to Zakheus their own way. Zakheus according to the people was taken away because the *ogai* were afraid of Zakheus' power. The *ogai* were afraid simply because if they allowed Zakheus to continue his activities, he was going to be the leader of all of the people, including the *ogai* who did not want to acknowledge that Zakheus had God-given power. Therefore they wanted to expel him from the Paniai region. The *Wege Bage* argued that the foreigners removed Zakheus from this region because if they had allowed Zakheus to continue he would have drawn all of the people in the world to himself (MP, September 2, 1992). This perception contributed to the rapid expansion of Zakheus communities in the succeeding years after he was sent to the mental clinic in the coastal town of Abepura (Jayapura).

In 1954, the people of Agadide and in some other areas of the Paniai region revolted against the *ogai*. The people were determined to kill the local government official. The leaders of these uprisings were convinced that if the government officer was killed then, the *ogai* without a leader, would have to recognize the defeat and leave. The reasons for uprising were the Me's view at

that time that 1) the presence of the *ogai* in the region had brought too much rain affecting the production of sweet potatoes, 2) the *ogai* were the cause of a serious epidemic of measles which was spreading in the region and causing the death of many children. The Me people argued that the disease was given with some small pigs the government official had distributed (CAMA report on New Guinea for 1954, see also Van der Hoeven 1964: 9ff).

The following year, as early as March 1955, the people in the Paniai region began to plan to drive out all foreigners. The people were restless as whooping-cough spread the area. Many claimed that it was brought in along with white pigs distributed among the people by the Head of the Dutch government for the Paniai region. As a result, all these pigs were killed in a pig feast held in May 1955. The plans was drawn up to kill all of the foreigners. Karel Gobay—the old colleague of Zakheus—tried to convince the people to drop the idea. He addressed the people of Enarotali and its surroundings that if they wanted to kill all the foreigners, they should kill him first before carrying out their plans (*De Pionier*, May 1955). Many people were hesitant to send their children to school. In Okaitadi during May and June (1955) the school was empty. There were no children willing to go to school. The change in attitude on the part of the parents came much later, when Reverend Matius Tebay—who came from this village—and Troutman came and talked to the people to allow their children to go school. But the months following this development, the hostility against the *ogai* increased which culminated in the Obano Revolt the following year.

4.7.2 *The Obano Uprising and the Wege Bage in 1956-1957*

The establishment of indigenous church and their programs of Christianization of local communities in the early 1950s presented an additional tension with the existing social structure. The local people in general who simply wanted to have nothing to do with the religion of the *ogai*. As shown in the previous chapter the activities of evangelization was seen as threat to the local headmen. This tension became a contributing factor for the rise of Obano Uprising which in turn affected the activities of the *Wege Bage*.

On November 4, 1956 the Obano revolt broke out. The Reverend Ruland Lesnusa, an Ambonese pastor-teacher was the first one to be killed. Mrs. Lesnusa pleaded to save her life, but the people responded by killing her and two ten year old children who were staying with them: Martha Rumaseb and Robert Paksoal. One of the policemen from Biak, the island of Numfor was also killed during the attack, while another local policeman was able to escape. From the Catholics' side there were two families who were killed during the attack. All school buildings and other facilities were burnt to the

ground. The mission's cessna plane dedicated the previous day was chopped into pieces. After the Dutch had enough security personnel, they began to attack the local people. It took about two months for the Dutch government to suppress the revolt (see Van der Hoeven 1964: 95ff, Van Nunen 1957). When this uprising broke out, the Dutch government personnel strongly warned the *Wege Bage* to completely stop their activities. The *Wege Bage* obeyed this order willingly.

Following the suppression of the revolt, leaders of the *Wege Bage* resumed their activities. The Me's defeat in the Obano Revolt provided an opportunity for the religious renewal. In 1957 several men from Idakebo claimed to have received a revelation from God to start *Wege* communities in the area. As result, *Wege* communities spread rapidly in the Kamu Valley. The people began speaking in tongues and expressed their willingness to join the *Wege* communities—or Utou Mana a name which has been used to refer to this group by bringing in their cowrie shells to be burnt. Senen Mote, to whom we have referred to earlier, sent his men to suppress the spread of their teachings (MK, Idakebo, June 10, 1988).

4.7.3 *The return of Zakheus to the Wissel Lakes area in 1957 and its impact*

In Hollandia, in 1956, at the time when the Obano uprising broke out, Zakheus was released from the Hospital. Following his release, Zakheus worked for Mickelson for two years in Sentani—the town where the Jayapura airport is located. During this time Zakheus had the opportunity to preach among the Me who were living in Jayapura together with Mickelson. In 1957 Zakheus probably expressed his desire to return to the Wissel Lakes region. Mickelson in turn approached the Resident and discussed the matter with him. The Resident permitted Zakheus to return to the Paniai region. However, before sending Zakheus back to the Wissel Lakes area, Zakheus was informed that police would be quite possibly on hand when he arrived at the lakes and that he should not be annoyed should they accompany him everywhere (Smalley 1977: 422). The government planned to send Zakheus overland from Napan (Northcoast of New Guinea) with other local people who were returning to Paniai from Hollandia. But in March 1958 Mickelson sent his colleague back to Wissel Lakes in a small mission plane. In March and April 1958 Zakheus visited the Wissel Lakes region. Zakheus' return to his homeland was followed by a series of events which affected the *Wege Bage* which need to be noted.

1. The *Wege Bage*'s welcome of Zakheus as a victorious leader

In the eyes of his communities, the return of Zakheus was seen as sign of Zakheus' spiritual and political victory over his opponents. Zakheus was welcomed as victorious leader. Feasts were held in *Wege* communities to commemorate the victory. This kind of response came not only from his communities. Zakheus had strong influence on the local pastors who were connected with the mission. Local pastors who were connected with this mission and others who were attending the Bible School in Enarotali were divided into three groups. One group shared Zakheus' theological convictions and therefore were willing to cooperate with him, while the other group wanted to follow the way of salvation shown by the missionaries. The third group was sympathetic to Zakheus but did not want to support openly possible out of fear of being persecuted by *ogai* and other big man. Eventually, some of the young people who were studying in this Bible School in Enarotali quit their training in this school at this time and went to preach Zakheus' teachings. McIlrath wrote,

We lost seven Bible School students during this time. Zakheus not only made the wrong choice himself but he took seven others along with him (McIlrath n.d.: 8).

2. Zakheus' return and the issue of salary for evangelists

Zakheus' presence in Enarotali brought some anxiety among the *ogai* in Enarotali. While Zakheus was in Enarotali during this period, local pastors began to speak up against the missionaries 'why the missionaries are holding our salary'. They also asked why the missionary did not support Zakheus financially (Smalley 1 1977: 423). These pastors were comparing themselves with other local men employed by the Dutch government in Enarotali. These government employees who were trained for 3-6 months by government were receiving a salary every month. And the Me pastors were asking the same salary as the Me employees working for the Dutch (Mickelson 1968: 208). Troutman wrote,

He [Zakheus, BG] also had quite a bit of influence on our national workers and at the last conference the subject of wages was brought up for the first time in over a year (Smalley 1 1977: 423).

Troutman seemed to underestimate Zakheus' influence at this point by using this phrase 'quite a bit of influence'. I think Mickelson knew Zakheus better when he said,

He [Zakheus, BG] had a tremendous influence over his people and had no equal as an evangelist among his people ... (letter Mickelson, March 6, 1962).

The point here is that many of the pastors sympathized with Zakheus, admired and respected him as a key leader in the region. And they felt that he went through a very difficult times partly because the mission did not want to extend financial and moral support to Zakheus. And therefore they were demanding theirs. Further, the local evangelists had felt that Zakheus had 'the message of salvation and power of the Spirit was with him' (YP, July 23, 1992).

3. Zakheus' reaction to the *ogai* who disobeyed God's rule

While Zakheus was in Enarotali, he became involved in a fight against a government employee in a Sunday football game. As a result a certain government employee from the coast was admitted to the hospital in Enarotali (Smalley I 1977: 423) The reason why Zakheus was involved in the fight is not clear. It could be because Zakheus and his communities observed Sunday as a 'day of taboo', or the Lord's day. The people were forbidden to do anything but only rest. It is possible that Zakheus felt that the *ogai* by having a football game on Sunday, the *ogai* were teaching or setting a bad example for the Me by violating this rule, therefore he reacted the way he did to express his religious view.

As result of these events, Zakheus was sent back to Sentani in May 1958. Zakheus was seen as an enemy of the policy of the *ogai*. He seemed to have stayed in Sentani and worked for CAMA since May 1958 up until September 1960, the time when Grootenhuis interviewed him (Grootenhuis 1960: 1). Later in 1963, Zakheus went back to Paniai. During January through March 1963, Zakheus visited the region again. He was reported to have tried to take over the government post and the church leadership in the Wissel Lakes region, but failed. He was once again 'exiled', meaning sent back to the coast. Despite of this failure, Zakheus communities renewed their programs. Perhaps around this time Zakheus introduced his 'market program'. With this plan, Zakheus set aside one day a week where the people from his communities could come together to sell their garden products such as vegetables and sweet potatoes. Zakheus kept half of the money that was spent, and the people from his communities kept the rest. Nobody knew where this money went. This activity was also stopped, because he was taken back to the Hospital in Abepura.

4.8 The rapid growth of Zakheus' communities (1959-1964) the opposition of the *ogai*

The *Wege* communities grew rapidly through 1959-1964. The missionaries and the government personnel were taken by surprise. The missionaries and the church leaders were caught up in the panic situation to keep 'the Christians' under the control and to stop the preachers of the *Wege Mana* from spreading their views. The government personnel also were ordered to make further investigation. This section outlines this phenomenal growth of *Wege* communities. The last part of this section will look at the factors contributing this growth.

4.8.1 *Zakheus' communities in 1959-1960*

1959 was declared as a banner year for the *Wege* movement (Troutman 'Wege Mana' in Smalley I 1977: 622). This was simply the right expression. Indeed *Wege* communities sprang up everywhere in the Wissel Lakes region during this period.

In 1959, Pospisil wrote as follows about *Wege Bage*,

I visited a couple of their villages and was just amazed at the wonderful sight of the clean places, their flower beds, palms. Quite extraordinary among the *Kapauku* [the Me, BG]. No mud and filth, the houses are spotlessly clean ... The people have good latrines, pigs are kept outside the compounds which comprise fields as well as gardens and houses ... they preached non-violence and forgiveness to the sinners, which much resembles the teachings of early Christians as well as that of the American Quakers ... [Pospisil gave this information to the Dutch Government Official at Enarotali in 1959, BG]

Beginning in 1960 the missionary personnel and local pastors took a more aggressive step to attack the *Wege* communities. In March 1960, a team of pastors and a missionary went to Emaibo—the western shore of Lake Paniai—in an attempt to stop the activities initiated by the leadership of the *Wege Bage* in that place. This team also wanted to prevent the spread of the Zakheus' communities to other places throughout the Lake Paniai area. The step to direct confrontation with leaders of the *Wege Bage* was deemed necessary simply because it appeared that the local congregation in Emaibo was under a strong influence of the leadership of the *Wege Bage*. After their arrival in Emaibo a meeting was held between the pastors and the leadership of the *Wege* community in that place. The latter feeling that they were under theo-

logical and 'doctrinal' attack, and angrily responded: Is it wrong to pray in the morning and in the evening with all gathered in one place? Is it wrong to build toilets, to clean the villages and to work together? (Troutman 'Wege Mana' in Smalley I 1977: 622). With this counter attack the meeting was dismissed.

In April 1960, a missionary who had worked in region wrote the following,

In the work among the *Kapaukus*—Wissel Lakes area—a cult is doing a devastating work among the believers. It is a sort of cargo cult that promises great things in the future. It is messianic; they claim to have the actual cross on which Jesus was crucified. It promises to give them all the things they consider essential to a happy life. They have abolished most of their old ways and have taken on many of the ways from the Old Testament. They believe they are to kill pigs, offer the blood to the Lord and then burn part of the animal as an offering to the Lord. He will see it and be pleased. It has been a most subtle and difficult thing to discover. On the outside it looks very good, yet within it is devilish. They have cleaned their villages, cooperate fully with the government, will have nothing to do with war, refuse to partake in the pig feasts because they are evil, and do other things that are commendable (*The Alliance Witness*, April 6, 1960).

A word of caution is necessary in reading this type of report. The missionary who wrote such reports got their information either 1) from the Me who were anti-*Wege Bage* or 2) the *Wege Bage* themselves who used the occasion (if the missionary happened to interview the *Wege Bage*) to counter-attack; simply because the missionary were from the beginning too judgmental and adopted the confrontation strategy toward the *Wege Bage*.

In April 1960, Reverend Adi, one of local pastor referred to above, and a few others also went to Kiuto, mentioned earlier as a stronghold of *Wege* community. A similar meeting was held to question the leaders of *Wege Bage* in that place. The local church pastors tried to convince the leaders of *Wege* community in Kiuto that they were following the wrong road leading to hell. In response to this theological attack, the *Wege Bage* tried to justify their activities by arguing that what they were doing was in obedience of God's commandments, that they were participating in the *Wege* programs in the name of God, and that God had instructed them to do it. Both parties attempted to convince and convert each other. The missionary who accompanied local church leaders at that meeting, wrote some time later,

We got nowhere, but finally the Kiuto elder brought forth a key phrase. He produced two pieces of rattan and wove them together. He said they were *Wegee* and the Gospel, they went together (Troutman 'Wege Bage' in Smalley I 1977: 622).

Indeed he was right since it was Zakheus' view that living in a clean village, following the past religious rules, were all part of the gospel.

In the first week of May 1960, Samuel Tebay, one of the member of *Wege Bage* from Kiuto came to Enarotali. He expressed his desire to re-enter the Bible School. He had been to Bible School but, had left the school in order to follow Zakheus' teachings. This opportunity was used by the missionary personnel and local church leaders to get Samuel change his views. A missionary stationed in Enarotali and six other indigenous church leadership formed a committee to examine theological views of Samuel Tebay before he was admitted to the Bible School in Enarotali. Two of the conditions for his admission to the School was that 1) he had to make a complete break with the *Wege Mana*; and 2) be willing to make his public confession of his 'sins of following Zakheus' teachings' before the *Wege Bage* in Kiuto. The second condition meant that he had to be willing to go back to Kiuto with the missionary and the church leaders, to testify before the community. Samuel agreed to do this.

Several days later, in May 1960, some of the pastors who tried Samuel earlier went to Emaibo in their effort to discourage the people from following the *Wege Mana*. Samuel was asked to go with them. On May 7, 1960 Samuel made his confession to enter church and mission community. He said he was leaving the *Wege* community behind and he and his wife wanted to have nothing to do with the *Wege Mana*. The other *Wege* leaders who knew that Samuel Tebay was being used to weaken and discourage them, strongly objected to this confrontation by making many noises and interruptions. The missionary who was supporting the church' position at that meeting summarized the nature of Samuel's confession, He told them to take back cowrie shells, to pray together as families, and not as a collective group, to take up their own gardens again and not work as a collective farm, and to eat in their own homes instead of in the collective house (Smalley I 1977: 623).

Samuel's confession was preceded by a brief sermon by another local pastor: Markus Kayame. In that sermon Kayame judged the *Wege Bage* as followers of Satan who brought darkness to this world. He challenged the *Wege* people to test the spirits. But reaction of the *Wege Bage* community was one of blunt rejection of the church leaders and the missionary. This kind of treatment only inspired and deepened the convictions of the community of their faith in the teachings of Zakheus.

In June 1960 the mission Conference made the following report,

The teachings of *Wegee* or cargo cult at the Wissel Lakes in the *Kapauku* tribe disrupted several church groups and for a time threatened the progress of the work in the area but the national pastors are gradually and effectively bringing naught its evil teachings (Troutman 'Wege Mana' in Smalley I 1977: 547).

Still, in June 1960, the following places had established *Wege* communities (Troutman 'Wege Mana' in Smalley I 1977: 622),

Jogatadi	-	South of Tigi
Kokobaya	-	Wagi
Tadauto	-	Debei
Tenedagi	-	Tigi near Meiyepa
Odekotu	-	Tigi near Meiyepa
Amago	-	near Bomou
Abaimanida	-	on the ridge above Bomou in Tigi
Onageidapa	-	Wagi
Timokebo	-	beyond Edagotadi
Puweta	-	Kamu
Demago	-	Debei
Maabado	-	Kamu
Toputo	-	Bomou
Kiuto	-	Lake Paniai area
Uwodege	-	Lake Paniai area
Ipigaitadi	-	south of lake Tigi
Maatadi	-	lies between Tigi and Debei
Yotapuga	-	Kamu

These are places where *Wege Bage* were already in existence. There were other places where Zakheus' communities were springing up. Other places such as: Yakiutago (Debei area), Pona, Komauto which were embracing their *Wege Mana* are not mentioned in Troutman's report.

The report shows that the expansion of these communities was such that they were presenting a real threat to missionary work in the region. For that reason the report of the mission's Chairman of the same year (1960) stated,

The 'wege' cult is by no means defeated. It seemed to go underground for awhile, at least not too much was heard of it. But it is again coming out to make its appearance. The government has made several investigations into

the group but each time they have not been able to find anything out and have caused it to become more and more hidden (Smalley 1977: 634-635).

The Alliance Witness of June 29, 1960 reported the following which somehow underestimated the pervasiveness of the *Wege Mana*,

A new cult has come into being among the *Kapaukus* [the Me, BG] which has some earmarks of cargo cult ... This cult does not seem to be making as much progress now as at first: however it may have gone underground.

4.8.2 *Zakheus' communities in 1961-1964*

As the previous year, 1961 was again the year of *Wege* communities. *Wege* communities were increasingly established in various places throughout the region. One of the factors which contributed to this extension was Zakheus' visit to Wissel Lakes. His presence was a real support for the *Wege Bage*. With the political rumors mentioned above, Zakheus and his men wanted Zakheus to be the head of the government post in Waghete. The return of Zakheus was interpreted as a victory over his enemies. But this was the very reason for which he was sent back again to Sentani. In spite of Zakheus' exile, the number of *Wege* communities increased. The indigenous church leaders who were connected with the *ogat* were powerless to face this development.

In March 1961 Catto wrote again,

... the cult that was up there and seemed to die out has now taken its stand again and possibly at this time is not only a religious movement but is swinging into a political movement. This, I think, is an outcome of the preparations being made at the present time for this New Guinea Council which will be inaugurated on April 5. The spirit of nationalism at the moment is real strong although they still want the Dutch to remain and prepare for their independence ... (Smalley 1977: 646).

The fact that the *Wege* communities were gaining strength in the early 1960s can be seen from the government and missionary personnel who were moved to investigate the extent of the activities. In May 1961 it became clear that *Wege* communities were being introduced in the Mapia region. The government official in Moanemani went to investigate and later filed a brief report (Latenstein, May 24, 1961). Latenstein, who filed this report visited two places in Mapia area. Here two potential leaders of *Wege* communities were beginning to introduce their programs at the time of his visit. In Yakeida, the officer observed three houses and met with Petegiyawi Kegiye—the leader. This *Wege*

Mana preacher was according to Latenstein mentally ill, but at the time of his visit he had recovered. According to this report it is clear that this leader of the *Wege Bage* had built a special house. This was a two story house and nobody was allowed to enter except the leader himself. His followers consisted of two of his brothers. The leader cooperated with the government officer. On the basis of his observation during his trip to this place, Latenstein refuted the report made earlier by the Roman Catholic missionary personnel which says that he resist the policies of the Dutch government and the missions. In another place called Piya, Latenstein also met with Titaimata Pugiye—the preacher of *Wege Mana* in that place. Titaimana as the leader did not have any followers. He led a well-disciplined life, he ate on the right time, kept his houses clean and he washed himself. He also cooperated with Latenstein, thus once again this government officer doubted the Roman Catholic missions report that he did not welcome cloth-wearing people into his house; or the report that he would at first want to know whether the guests washed their bodies with soap before he entertained them.

Later, in June 1961, the *Wege Bage* were reported to have continued extending their sphere of influence by entertaining more sympathetic people who were coming to them. The mission Chairman wrote,

The *Wege* movement in the *Kapauku* country continues to advance. This movement is first nationalistic, communistic and religious, and continues to be a threat to the christian community of the tribe (Smalley I 1977: 724).

In September 1961, the number of *Wege* settlements continued to be built up. The missionary and the local pastors who had become religious leaders in various Christian communities intensified their effort to stop the spread of the *Wege* communities. A missionary who had worked in this region before Zakheus introduce his program wrote '... We are doing all we can to lead the people into the truth of the gospel, and pray that their hopes shall be in Christ Himself and not in the ushering in of a 'material millennium' (Smalley I 1977: 695).

In 1962-1963, the *Wege Bage* leaders continued to expand their communities. This was intensified when Zakheus returned to Paniai in 1963. As it was mentioned above, during February-March 1963, Zakheus returned to the Paniai region and he was reported as having made some attempts to be the government officer in the Paniai region. All the sources from the *ogai* argued that this time he tried to become the chief of government post in Waghete but he failed. The *Wege Bage* also wanted the Dutch government to appoint him as the government officer in the Paniai region to replace the *ogai*. Else String-

er wrote regarding some of the things which took place and Zakheus' activities during this visit,

Their leader, Zakheus has just returned from Hollandia and has caused disturbances. According to some missionaries he is possessed by the devil. Through government officials he was held in Hollandia, but due to the change of government, he is able to return. His followers bring him pigs and prepare a great welcome feast. What they actually expect from him, we don't know. He also has allowed to set houses in that area (Kamu) on fire, and that now they have to live together. Here in our neighborhood, Reverend Troutman heard Sunday, that Zakheus had asked f 15,- from each *Wege* community with the promise to be appointed as HPB--Hoofd Plaatselijk Bestuur/Head of the Local Government. And now, different kampongs became seriously angry against Zakheus, because he did not become HPB (my translation from Dutch see *De Pionier*, Maart 1963, No. 3).

Zakheus also attempted to take over church leadership at this time. The chairman of the mission wrote,

Wege cult continues to exist although not in the proportion of previous years. Zakheus has tried to get back into the Mission and the church by trying to vindicate himself. There have been no signs of true repentance and he still holds that *Kapauku* is as important as the gospel. Another area has been affected by a heathenistic movement which has made it very difficult to reach (Smalley I 1977: 864).

Following this attempt to take over the politico-religious institutions in the region, Zakheus was sent back to Sentani (Jayapura) again, never to return to Paniai.

4.8.3 *The factors contributing to the growth of Zakheus' communities during 1959-1964*

There are several factors which contributed to the rapid growth of the *Wege* communities. The leader of the *Wege Bage* in Kiuto, the western shore of Lake Paniai, said that in the 1950s the *Wege Bage* suffered through the policy of the Dutch. The Dutch up until that time had sought in vain to eradicate the *Wege Bage* and their programs (KT, Enarotali, October 23, 1992), however, the number of increased in the 1960s. This was due to five possible reasons.

First of all, most of the information which the government personnel used to determine their policy toward the *Wege Bage* came from the parties

who were against the *Wege Bage*. They were local police, local pastors and headmen or government employees or even those who had followed 'religion of the *ogai*' who were against Zakheus and his programs. The Dutch had no direct contact with the *Wege Bage*. Even if the Dutch government's personnel visited the *Wege* communities, those interpreting for them were local police or local government personnel or others who held grudge against the Zakheus' communities. Therefore, whenever the *Wege Bage* spoke up, they were misrepresented. This situation changed because by 1959 there were young men from *Wege* communities who were going to schools and could as a result speak Bahasa Indonesia or even Dutch in order to tell the Dutch government officials about their condition. Further, as indicated above, the Dutch government personnel made visits to the *Wege* communities and began to doubt the report filed by the missionaries who argued that the *Wege Bage* adopted the strategy of non-cooperation with the government or missionary forces. Latenstein had made a contrast report on the basis of his direct observation in the field. Thus, these changes informed the strategy of the Dutch toward the *Wege* communities (letter Latenstein, May 24, 1961).

In the second place, the Dutch government personnel saw the clean villages and the hardworking habits of the *Wege Bage*, for instance when they worked on the airstrips in Waghete, or on road construction projects; the people from the *Wege* communities excelled. They also initiated a market system wherein they set one day on certain place to bring their vegetables and rattan baskets etc. for sale. As a result the Dutch began to become more tolerant.

In the third place, there was a succession of leadership. Right after Zakheus was taken out of the area, Pigaidegamoye of Muyekebo (Kamu district) took over the leadership responsibility of the *Wege* communities. Pigaidegamoye was a man closely related to Zakheus who lived in Muyekebo. When he was leading the *Wege* community in Zakheus' absence, he claimed to have the power of healing all kind of sickness. Later he was accused of having sexual intercourse with many of the women who were his patients. After several women claimed to have been abused by Pigaidegamoye, he was chased away. The people from Tigi sent him back to his home village of Muyekebo. Okeiyamoye, the younger brother of Zakheus took over the leadership of *Wege* communities, which he carried out until the middle of July 1960 (Grootenhuis 1960). This succession of leadership helped maintaining the programs of the *Wege Bage*.

In the fourth place, Zakheus' school program inspired the spread of the *Wege* teachings. Zakheus had established a school to teach the people about his programs. This school program involved the whole community. The people were welcome to come and participate in his classes. In addition to

this, there was Zakheus's strategy of winning people. Zakheus offered a more holistic and inclusivistic program. In contrast to the missionaries who were out to win individual souls, Zakheus was out to win the whole community. Perhaps more importantly, his program was geared to meet the community's needs. Such program includes religious teaching rooted in their tradition but also their socio-economic needs. The work of Zakheus was to meet the needs of the whole community in all spheres of life.

A fifth factor which enhanced the growth of *Wege* communities was the visit of two men from coast who were member of the New Guinea Council—a political body established by the Dutch government to prepare the necessary matters for political independence of West Papua in the future. These men came and met with the people and school children and told them what was being done in the Council for future political independence of West New Guinea (WY, March 12, 1989). This inspired the *Wege* communities to intensify their programs as they argued that they would be free from the *ogai* who had become a stumbling block on their road to religious freedom.

In conclusion it can be said that from 1959 to 1964 there was a notable growth of Zakheus' communities. The reasons just cited contributed to this growth. The removal of the leader did not remove the communities' faith in him and his programs. In fact the rejection of Zakheus only deepened their faith in Zakheus and gave them the strength to carry out Zakheus' program.

4.9 Persistence of Zakheus' politico-religious ideas: *Wege* communities in the Indonesian era (1963-1990)

At the beginning of the Indonesian era, the *Wege Bage* who were living together in a particular geographical location, seemed to disappear. The first part of this section considers the suppression of people's political aspirations which brought about this decline. And yet this disappearance of the *Wege* communities did not mean that the people gave up their politico-religious aspirations. Although the *Wege Bage* went back to live together with their former families, ideological resistance continued up until today as is expressed in a number of new salvation movements. This religious resistance was expressed in the salvation movements which will be presented below.

The discussion on this section centers on the following sub-headings: 1) the suppression of local political aspirations: the disappearance of the *Wege Bage*. This section outlines the way the local aspirations for political aspirations—including that of the *Wege Bage*'s programs—was suppressed by the present government; 2) socio-economic condition: flood around the lakes Paniai and Tigi. The presentation of this subsection is broken into several head-

ings: economic condition in the Paniai region in the 1960s, annual floods in the Paniai region, and strange diseases which occurred in this region. This section describes the socio-economic crises which took place following the political suppression; 3) Zakheus' community in the Kamu Valley. This section is devoted to present the historical development of the *Wege* community since its birth up until now; 4) Zakheus community in Kiuto. In this section, the activities of three leaders of cargo cults which came from the *Wege* community in Kiuto will be dealt with.

It will be shown that despite the political suppression, the people in this region continued to resist such an attempt. The people continued to dream of a new era of freedom; wherein they will shape their own political and religious destiny, without being subject to foreign political powers. But first we will discuss the political conditions which brought about the disappearance of the *Wege Bage*.

4.9.1 *The suppression of local political aspirations: Continuity and change of Wege Mana*

Many people who had participated in the *Wege* communities began to withdraw from activities of the *Wege Bage* in 1964. One explanation for this setback of the *Wege* communities is the *ogai*'s policy to suppress the local political aspirations which took place in the Paniai region following the advent of the Indonesian authorities.

In 1958-1960 the question of political independence of New Guinea was widely discussed among the Me especially in Enarotali. Later, in 1961-1962, this issue reached the people at the village level. Soon this was confirmed when some coastal Papuan political leaders came to the Paniai region and explained what was being done in preparation for political independence of West Papua, such as the inauguration of the New Guinea Council in April 1961, official recognition of the West Papuan Flag later on, on November 18, 1961 and of the West Papuan National anthem: *Hai tanahku Papua*. The green light for political independence came when on December 1, 1961 all over the territory the flag of West Papua was officially raised beside the flag of the Dutch. And 'after the centuries-old of Netherlands hymn there solemnly sounded the tones of *Hai Tanahku Papua* sung by Papuans and Dutchman together' (De Bruijn 1961: 101). This political atmosphere created a climate which inspired spirit of political independence among the *Wege Bage*. I think Catto was right when he said, the *Wege* movement '... is swinging into political movement ...' (Smalley I 1977: 646). This even deepened the people's political aspirations, when New Guinea Council was inaugurated, and Karel Go-

bay—Zakheus' old friend—was appointed as member of the New Guinea Council representing Paniai region.

But the dream was never realized. Indonesian authorities began to arrive from May 1963 onwards and took immediate action to suppress all activities related to the local people's politico-religious aspirations.

The first step taken was to forbid the people from singing the West Papuan National anthem. The Me who sang the West Papuan National anthem were arrested and interrogated for hours. They were released after they were sanctioned by ordering them to stand facing the sun for hours. Following this, the people who possessed the West Papuan flag received the same treatment. One direct consequence of this change was that the *Wege Bage*, who were swinging into Nationalistic movement in 1960s, became one of the targets of this policy of political suppression.

Later the people were forbidden to carry arrows and bows when travelling in the region. This policy was introduced out of fear that the people might use arrows and bows against the personnel of the Indonesian government. The people were surprised because carrying arrows and bows were a symbol of being a man who is always prepared to strike back when he is attacked. Generally, this sudden change of political atmosphere came as shock, particularly because the people failed to follow what was going on in the outside world between the Dutch and Indonesians and their disputes over the future of the territory. The people who were accustomed to express their views by shouting or by the wainai, or mad dance, felt that they were deprived of their rights to determine their own political destiny; as the discussions about future political status of New Guinea were forbidden. Instead, the *Wege Bage* who were expressing their aspirations for political independence became a target of government suspicion and interrogation. The atmosphere of freedom which they began to experience in 1959 was passing away.

Furthermore, the government tried to stop the Me from using cowrie shells. Previously, the Dutch had been more lenient on this issue. The new government abolished the *mege*. This step was taken in their effort to make the people recognized the Indonesian authorities as the new political power, and their money (*Rupiah*) as a replacement of the Dutch guilder and the Me's *mege*. A number of times local police were sent out to different villages from Waghete to search for *mege*. It was said they took all the *mege* to the government's post in Waghete, they were going to be burnt. In many places the big men responded to this pressure by collecting all their *mege* in order to hide them in caves in their attempt to avoid the local police from taking their wealth away. When the police arrived in the village and instructed the people to bring in their *mege*, the Me were saying that they did not have any *mege*. Some brought in their *mege*, but only those which were of low value. The

people continued using *mege* in their economic transactions while denying that they had *mege* when they were ordered to bring their *mege*. Even after years of trying to get the people recognized their new currency (Rupiah), in January 1968 during a Pig Feast in Yinidoba (Debei Valley), I observed the people were using their own traditional money alongside the Indonesian currency.

Aside from prohibition of the use of cowrie shell, the people were deprived of making their own political decision through the Acts of Free Choice. The Act of Free Choice was held in 1969 at the initiative of the United Nations to give freedom to the people of West Papua to choose whether they wanted to form an independent state of West Papua or to become part of Indonesia. In the actual practice the people were forced to follow the wishes of Indonesian authorities. In the response to this denial of their right of self determination the Me people who were expressing their aspirations for West Papua's political independence, were detained and interrogated. The Indonesians also invited local big men from various tribes to come to Jakarta. While they were in Jakarta the local big men were promised that, Irian Jaya would be like Jakarta, if they were to follow Indonesians. Lectures were also organized to eradicate local political aspirations. The Indonesians argue that 'Indonesians had come to liberate Irian Jayans from the Dutch colonial power. Now we are Indonesians'. No mention was made about the political agenda when the people would be given the choice to chose whether they want to be part of Indonesia or to form an independent state. But the people were aware of the fact that they were being deprived of their rights to express their political aspirations. The people who were aware of such policies of political suppression, were arguing that Indonesians would return to their home after the Act of Free Choice. Many were preparing arrows and bows when the Indonesians said 'we had already achieved our independence in August 17, 1945'. This was taken as the Indonesian political propaganda and the people in and around Enarotali therefore expressed their determination to form an independent state by revolting against the present administration in April 1969 (see Osborne 1987: 42, May 1978: 163-199, Van der Kroef 1971: 125-155). This was followed by a similar revolt by the people around Tigi. Waghete became their target. Later they were stopped by the Indonesian Army, dropped from the air. In July 1969, the people from the Kamu Valley revolted again in their effort to get rid of the Indonesians.

Later, two of the men who represented the Me to express their views to form an independent state in the Act of Free Choice attended the meetings held in Nabire. They said, 'We want to be free from any foreign domination'. Another Me leader who was appointed by the Indonesian to represent the people from Fak Fak expressed similar view. 'we would like to separate our-

selves from Indonesians, and form an independent state'. He disappeared. Up until now, his whereabouts is not known. This struggle for political independence has been carried on up until now by a few young people led by Tadius Jogi. The reaction from the Army has been that of repression and brutal killings. Strong Indonesian army's reprisals have been carried out as a response to activities related to the *Organisasi Papua Merdeka* (OPM) have made some people to entertain the idea that to be free from socio-political domination one must follow God's commandments being preached by the religious leaders.

In conclusion, the advent of Indonesians authorities can be seen as a new era. This era brought in a additional socio-political problems to the Me people. With respect to Zakheus' communities, the present government's policy of suppression toward the people's politico-religious aspirations brought about the process of reintegration of *Wege* communities to the rest of the society. The *Wege Bage* no longer live in a separate community as it was the case during the Dutch time. This was due to policy of the present government toward all indigenous politico-religious orientations. However, this suppression of *Wege Bage* created an atmosphere which deepened their politico-religious resistance, which still continues. As noted earlier, this spirit of politico-religious resistance has been expressed in many salvation movements which has occurred in this region. Now, we will turn to socio-economic condition of this region in the Indonesian era within which the said religious movements broke out.

4.9.2 Socio-economic condition: flood around the lakes Paniai, Tigi and Kamu Valley

In spite of suppression of local politico-religious views during the Indonesian era, the people continued to preach what they claimed to have been taught by Zakheus. This can be seen from activities of several men from two of Zakheus' communities who emerged as 'religious leaders' from two different *Wege* communities: one in Kiuto and the other in the Kamu Valley. Their religious programs were made and propagated in the midst of an uncertain socio-economic situation. This section will review the socio-economic condition of Paniai region focussing only on: 1) the economic condition since the year 1960s; 2) the floods, and 3) unknown diseases which had come to the region.

4.9.2.1 Economic condition in the Paniai region since the 1960s

The change of political power coincided with the deterioration of economic life in the Paniai region. Many argue that the advent of Indonesian authorities

brought about an abrupt economic change. There is an element of truth in this argument. Since the early 1960s, Indonesia had experienced a rapid economic decline. In Jakarta in May 1963 efforts were made to rehabilitate the economy but they failed. The government lost control over the rate of inflation. In 1963 and 1964 the budget deficit alone exceeded revenues. Inflation was 119 percent in 1963, and 34 percent in 1964 was followed by a 50 percent rise between January and August 1965. While, as a consequence, prices continued to rise, exports fell and foreign governments became less willing to make new credits available (Crouch 1988: 95).

In Irian Jaya up until the time of transfer of government in 1963 the economy in the region was better off compared to that of other parts of Indonesia. The people argued that as soon as the Indonesian authorities arrived, they began to steal all the goods left behind by the Dutch and shipped them back to their homes. According to Koentjaraningrat the Indonesians who came to Irian Jaya at this time 'when the economy of Irian Jaya and the value of money was very high acted very "greedy", taking away all the consumption goods available in stores in Jayapura as well as others towns in Irian Jaya without sparing any of them for the local people' (*Kompas*, 26 Juli 1989).

This was also true in Waghete and Enarotali. The government's personnel who came to the Paniai region at this time, closed all the Dutch government subsidized stores which previously had made available all kinds of things to the people. Within months the goods in the stores were gone. The people were prevented from having access to Western goods. The local police and others who were working for the Dutch were eyewitness of this development and they were the ones who led the revolt against the government in April 1969. Going back to the subject of the economic situation in this region, after the Act of Free Choice and the suppression of the Paniai revolt in June 1969, Buginese and Makassarese traders began to arrive in the Paniai region. They put up their small stores in Waghete, Enarotali, Moanemani. They began to control the market. Today they sell all kinds of goods. The shell capitalism has become thing of the past as the new comers become new economic and political powers, accepting the rupiah as the new currency.

4.9.2.2 *Annual floods in the Paniai region*

Aside from a change of politico-economic power there was also ecological change which affected the people's economic life. Since the early 1960s as water surface of the three lakes in the region has been rising, thus bringing floods to this part of the Central Highlands. The inflow of water from Paniai, Tigi and Makamo Lakes is greater than the natural outflow capacity of the exit via the Jawei River—for Lake Paniai, Oneibo—for Tigi, and Edege—for Makamo. In the Kamu Valley the Catholics/Franciscans has succeeded in

draining most of the swampy areas since 1970s. Those areas has been used for cultivation. But for the areas around Lake Tigi and Lake Paniai, this has brought about an undesirable seasonal fluctuation in the surface level of the lake of approximately four meters (see White 1987). The outlet of Lake Tigi consists of one underground hole in Oneibo village which lies at the end of a narrow channel. This underground channel is quite easily clogged with trash, twigs and grass. Once the opening becomes clogged, excess water has no exit from the lake. The level rises and causes flooding. The present condition in Lake Paniai is similar to Lake Tigi. During the rainy period the level of the lake Paniai rises as much as four meters. There are no large drains around the towns of Waghete and Enarotali. The annual floods are a threat to the very existence of the people.

A brief review of reports made in the past about the flood, heavy rain and earthquakes which have occurred in the region, is presented here to show its deep impact on the people's economic life in the region.

In November 1975, when rain continued for months in the Paniai region, it caused almost all of the people's gardens in Tigi, Kamu, Mapia and East and West Paniai districts to be flooded. Most of the sweet potatoes rotted, because the people were unable to harvest all of them at once. Many feared that hunger would strike the following months (*The Alliance Witness*, November 19, 1975). In September 1977, it was reported that the people would go through a period of starvation as a result of rain fall which went on for months which later flooded more than 980 gardens around Tigi district. The people had more than enough sweet potatoes to eat during the first few weeks. After this period was over the people went through a long period of hunger (*Tifa Irian*, 23 September 1977). And in October of the same year it was said that hunger would strike the people again as their gardens were lying under the water. Those who had gardens on the hillside were no better of because in the hills, they found their gardens muddy, as a result of continued heavy rain fall. Reports received through church agencies said that the people around Tigi and Paniai lakes were in the state of panic for lack of food. In Enarotali the markets had no sweet potatoes for sale. People from Kamu who had never experienced starvation, were reported to have been going through hard times due to a lack of food. School teachers reported that many school children did not want to go to school, they preferred to go to the bush and get something to fill their empty stomachs. By October 1977, 50% of the local people's garden along Aga and Weja rivers were lying under the water (*Tifa Irian*, 21 October 1977).

The following year, 1978, heavy rain struck again for months. The people went through a period of starvation in the region as 25% of all gardens were under the water as a result of the rise of the water in the lakes. During Janu-

ary and February 1978, the people were still in the state of fear of undergoing starvation. In Kamu district the people were reported to have lost everything they had, but the people still showed 'love even in the midst of hunger, they still helped one another' (*The Alliance Witness*, January 11, 1978). In September 1978 there were landslides and floods that affected the some villages in Obano District: Beko, Epoo/Iikotu, Kotomoma, Okaitadi, Kiuto, Ukauwo and Muyetadi. According to a church report made a few weeks after this natural calamity many people lost their homes, 574 gardens, 374 pigs, a number of chickens and some rabbits (see Obano Church Report to Irian Jaya Synod September 1978). The people around this area underwent starvation until they were able to make new gardens. Still, towards the end of the year, in November 1978, the people were again reported as 'facing an uncertain situation as the water surface of the lakes rose again as result of continued rain for months'. All gardens near the lakes were lying under water. The people feared a famine because their sweet potatoes had rotted away (*The Alliance Witness*, November 1, 1978).

To make it worse, in the 1980s these annual floods were accompanied by series of earthquakes. To give an example from April until October 1985, heavy rain was accompanied occasionally by earthquakes. In October 1985 such earthquake brought substantial damage on a number of the Me's settlements centers. This was true particularly for the people particularly who were living in Yaguu, Kigoou, and Ugiya around Lake Tigi, lost their relatives, homes, gardens and pigs which were their only means of living. Later, when the Irian Jaya Governor visited this area after it had been struck by the earthquakes, the people were able to express their concern over the situation (*Kompas*, 30 October 1985). At that time, according to Sukiyo, the head of the Paniai Regency, there were four *kecamatan* (districts) which had been badly hit by the earthquakes: East Paniai, West Paniai, Kamu and Agaadide. As a result of these earthquakes eight people were killed and seventy six were seriously injured and thousands of pigs, chickens, ducks and goats were buried. Thousands of homes were destroyed. Apart from these gardens in the heavily populated areas at the foot of Mount Deyai which reaches up to 3,200 meters above sea level were destroyed (*Kompas*, October 30, 1985). In one village there was a lady who was giving birth when the earthquake took place. She went into shock and died with the baby (KdK, December 1985).

Since the 1960s floods have become yearly events, having a devastating impact on the people's livelihood. The above documentation is enough to show the socio-economic crisis and the setting in which the Me attempt to express their views regarding this crises and how to deal with it. It is important here to state that the ecological crises as shown above is seen by the people from politico-religious stand point of view. The Me in general argue that

it is the *ogai* who have brought these crises. To stop the crises the *ogai* must leave and vacate this area, the people say. And yet such argument automatically puts them into a difficult position. They chose to become enemy of the *ogai*. No wonder that they face opposition. While the leaders of new salvation movements in this region, see these natural crises, such as heavy rain, earthquakes and economic development in the region, from apocalyptic and eschatological view point (see Chapter 5, section 5.5 'Local eschatology'). According to the later, floods and earthquake are the sign a new era and a new world is coming.

4.9.2.3 *Strange diseases*

Apart from the threat of flood, there have been strange animal diseases which have been attacking the people of this region. These diseases which according to Me have been brought in by the *ogai* have been spreading in the Paniai region creating another threat to the people's life. The most dangerous one is tapeworm which became a serious disease after it began to kill many local people and large numbers of pigs from 1977 up to the early 1980s. Mitton wrote,

... I received the most accurate information on the tapeworm which is nothing short of disastrous. It has been brought in by the Indonesians and is now in the Baliem and has been reported from both Kiwi and Ok Sibil. In the Paniai area, 17 per cent of the population now have the cyst manifestation of the disease. The nurse is very worried and with good reason (Mitton 1984: 230).

In December 1975, 75% of the people of the Paniai region were infected by this pathological infection known as cysterious. This infection damage the brain. It was estimated that three out of four were infected by the disease. It was also said that unhealthy housing and environmental situation hindered efforts made to stop the spread of the disease. A large number of people had died and many pigs died due to the disease (*The Alliance Witness*, December 3, 1975).

Hyndman gives the following account.

In 1972 two Indonesian physicians examined faecal sample from 170 Ekari [Me, BG] people admitted to Enarotali hospital ... and discovered that 9% contained eggs of *Taenta Solium*. Between 1973 and 1976, 157 patients with severe burns were admitted to the same hospital. Three quarters of the patients were classified as having third and fourth degree burns and 17 underwent amputations. Epileptic seizures before or during hospitali-

zation were present in 64 males and 27 females. Almost half of the patients displayed palpable or visible cysterci under the skin frequently on the arms or legs; besides subcutaneous tissues and muscle, cysts most often lodge in the brain and autopsies confirmed that cysterci located in the cortical layer of the brain caused the epileptic fits. Of the 2000 Ekari [the Me, BG] people near the Enarotali hospital surveyed in 1973, 83 (4.2 per cent) had developed cysticercosis and 8% had developed intestinal taeniasis infection. Between 1975 and 1977, cysticercosis and taeniasis increased and spread with intestinal infection rates up to 20%. By 1978, serological tests confirmed that at least 24% of adults and children were infected with cysticercosis: undoubtedly, the majority of the Ekari people are now infected (Hyndman 1988: 32).

Indeed, many people, old and young, died. The Reverend Josia Tebay, one of the Church executives described the death of Inna in Okaitadi,

She was sick for some time till we discovered that her mind was gone. One day when nobody was around she stretched out her feet and placed on the fire place for hours. She had no idea of pulling her feet out of the fire. It was her niece who came to pull her feet away. She died two months later in June 1975 (YT, March 12, 1986).

Tape worm was the cause of death of many pigs too. The people, who are so fond of eating pork were forced to refrain from eating and selling pigs, because the disease was so rampant, even among the pigs. As a result the Me rich men—those who have pigs—became poor. Many pigs were burnt and thrown into Paniai, Tigi and Tage lakes. This was an extreme loss of their socio-economic assets.

Later, another disease called anthrax (*bacillus anthrax*) attacked the village of Timeepa, Paniai region for five months, from April through the end of August 1984. During these months, number people who had died due to this disease went up to as high as 45 people and 3,484 pigs. The following year a similar disease attacked the Paniai region. There were 11 people and 94 pigs reported to have been killed. Three villages were badly affected by this disease. Seven people and 52 pigs died in the village of Muye, two persons and 22 pigs, and another two persons and 20 pigs in the village of Obano. All of these villages were located in part in the West Paniai district. When this was reported, the officials of Health Department in Irian Jaya did not have any idea of what was the cause of these deaths. After Sebastian Tekege, a Me who was working for the Community Health Center in Obano, discovered a piece of pork contaminated by germs of this disease, he immediately sent the pork to

Enarotali to be inspected. In Enarotali, Irma Suwondo, a medical doctor who was assigned in the region, could not identify the kind of disease due to the lack of proper laboratory equipment in Enarotali. Later it was sent to Nabire and from there to Jayapura because there were no proper facilities available in the hospitals. For the same reason it was then sent on to Ujung Pandang but the results of the findings are not available (*Kompas*, 14 Juni 1984).

Later diarrhoea and measles attacked the Kamu region in December 1986. There were 2000 people who were affected. It was reported that up to the end of February 1987, 200 people died. Most of them were children. It was feared that the epidemic would spread to other districts of Tigi, Paniai and Siriwo. A medical team was sent to investigate the possible cause of the epidemic (*Tifa Irian*, 20 Maret 1987). Three months later the Community Health Center of Kamu District in Moanemani reported that in Moanemani the Center had treated 1647 patients, 298 of were dead. The epidemic was declining, but it spread to Agadide district and killed another 40 people in that area (*Tifa Irian*, 15 Juni 1987).

4.9.2.4 Conclusion

In the above section I have outlined the economic condition of this region since the beginning of the Indonesian era. I have sought briefly to document the reports regarding the floods which have occurred every year and their impact. Then I went on presenting strange diseases which were rampant in the 1970s and in the 1980s which also have brought deep economic problems in the region. In conclusion several remarks will be made in this section.

Firstly, the above socio-political and economic condition is the setting in which Zakheus' religious views, formulated during the Dutch colonial times, have become the source of inspiration for the people today. In other words when Zakheus' religious views persists and continues to prevail in such context of economic and political domination from the *ogai*. It is important to stress this 'issue of economic and political setting' because one cannot understand the activities of leaders of salvation movements to be discussed in the following section apart from this socio-historical setting.

Secondly, there is the question how the people perceived these diseases. Generally, the people see it from political stand point. Some argue that the strange diseases were intentionally brought in by the relatives of the military men who were killed during the Paniai revolt which took place in June 1969 (for a brief discussion of 1969 revolt, see previous section 4.9.1 'The suppression of the local political aspirations: continuity and change'). Those who hold this view say that after the revolt was over the wives and family members of the Indonesian killed during the revolt came and visited their cemetery in Enarotali. During this visit they brought along the disease and spread it

around the region. As a result this disease spread widely, and many people died. This is a counter attack on the people for their participation in the 1969 revolt against the *ogai*. Others argue that the disease was sent directly from Jakarta through the pigs which were given as gifts to the people of Central Highlands of Irian Jaya after the Acts of Free Choice was over in the early 1970. What was sent as gift was intentionally poisoned in order to kill the people. Again this kind of interpretation is not new. In 1953, when the Dutch brought in new pigs and distributed in the region the people had similar views. When the people got diarrhoea and many people died in the early 1950s, Pupubago—the local headmen of Aga valley—organized a revolt against the Dutch as shown in previous chapter. But today the headmen have lost their socio-political power to do this. It is the religious leaders from the two *Wege* communities who preached their programs of politico-religious freedom which channelled aspirations.

The following section will deal with the activities of the religious leaders from two *Wege* communities. Before going into it is essential to state that such religious leaders are members of the society who had suffered political and economic crises as shown above and also shared the view that it is the *ogai* who brought in such crises. Soon as the *ogai* go all would be fine. This sentiment is reflected in the activities of the religious activities of the religious leaders which will be dealt with in the following section.

4.9.3 Persistence of Zakheus' communities and their views

It was said earlier that two *Wege* communities continue to preach the religious views of the *Wege Bage*. These two communities are: Kiuto located in the eastern shore of Lake Paniai and Idakebo—north of Kamu Valley. The program of the religious leaders of these two communities will be presented in the following sections. Firstly, we will deal with the history and activities of the religious leaders of the Kamu Valley. As has been the case, the leaders of this community to face opposition. The second section will present activities three other religious leaders from the former *Wege* community in Kamu.

4.9.3.1 Wege community in Kamu Valley

Wege communities in Kamu district were established when three men claimed to have received awe, a ray of supernatural light or a revelation from Uga-tame—the creator—about at the same time. Zakheus paid several visits to these communities. One of the men who started these communities said that he had been taken up by God to the upperworld. There he was commissioned to reintroduce and revive the *tota mana*—the past religious teachings. This occurred several months after the Obano Uprising which took place in Novem-

ber 1956. For this reason, the date of the beginning of the *Wege* community can be placed somewhere in 1957. The people from Modou, and Eiya—the hamlets where the leaders lived, were the first groups who accepted their programs. The people discarded their traditional material wealth, such as cowrie shells, which according to this religious elite prevents God from restoring salvation. The leader in Eiya collected all the cowrie shells brought in by those who became members of the new communities in string bags and threw them into the Edege River.

Senen Mote—whom we have mentioned earlier, who by that time was stationed in Moanemani, Kamu district dispatched a few local police men in their effort to stop the spread of these communities. These local police came to Eiya, Modou and other villages where activities related to the *Wege Bage* were carried out. The village chief from Eiya was jailed in Waghete for resisting arrest and wanting to continue to follow their programs (MK, Idakebo June 10, 1988). According to this village chief the suppression was motivated by the local policemen's own political and economic interest. Because while receiving the support from the *ogai*, the local police were inventing their influence, money and pigs to exert the socio-political influence on the local community by extracting local peoples' pigs or *mege* whenever they are dispatched by the administration to stop fighting or conflict occurring among the village people.

In spite of suppression the *Wege Mana* spread throughout the Paniai region. Since the 1970s many of the local police, and government agents became preachers of the *Wege Bage's* programs. In 1978-1979, another religious leader became a prominent preacher of Zakheus' religious views in Wakeidide. This leader's activity is interesting because he seemed to challenge the government programs by establishing a *Wege* community in Waghete which is a government post. He tried to maintain a close link with the *Wege* community leaders in Kamu. At that time he announced that Zakheus was going to return to judge and rule the world. The era of peace and prosperity will begin with the return of Zakheus, he said. This leader said that he was prepared to entertain any one who wanted to learn about salvation and his teachings. For the purpose of entertaining the people who wanted to come and learn from him he built three houses. The first house which was located very near to the road was intended to teach and entertain any guest who came to him. The second house was for teaching. The third house was set aside for those who had joined him or accepted his teachings. He was only able to convert four families.

At the beginning of 1979, the said leader from Wakeidide and *Wege Bage* leaders from Kamu, began to train several young people from Onago, western shore of Lake Tigi. These young people then began to establish their own

Wege community. Since many of these young people were familiar with the Bible, their religious teachings were shaped by the Bible, especially the Old Testament. Their programs created a lot of tension in the village. They criticized their parents, for being lenient in following the Ten Commandments of God. Similarly, the pastor and the leaders of local congregation were criticized for disobeying the Bible's teaching such as: making contact with the people who are still living in sin. They considered themselves to be holy and making contact with other people would make their life sinful. This is based on their interpretation on Psalm 1: 1:

Blessed is the man who does not walk in the counsel of the wicked or stand in the way of sinners or sit in the seat of mockers ...

Aside from this they also prophesied that West Papua would be an independent state. The anti-Christ was according to them the President of the state of West Papua. This leader of West Papua would attempt to eliminate them. Then Jesus Christ would return soon, to justify them and they would be given their new position in the new kingdom. The leader of the *Wege* community, Soleman, was being expected to be like King Soleman in Old testament. In December 1982, the whole community was arrested by the Police in Waghete, and their houses were burnt to the ground. Some of them escaped, others spent three months term in jail (some activities of this *Wege* community are discussed in Chapter 5, see 'Local Eschatology').

In 1985 the government officer of Kamu and the Protestant Church district superintendent, all of whom were residing in Moanemani, Kamu district, came to Eiya and Mogou in their effort to suppress the spread of the *Wege Mana*. This was done following the present government's policy of demanding various ethnic and tribal groups in Indonesia to follow one of the five state-recognized religions. To be the citizen of Indonesia one has to follow one of five religions recognized by the state such as: Islam, Protestantism, Catholicism, Hinduism and Buddhism. In June 1988 when I visited the leaders of the *Wege Bage* in Kamu, they expressed their disappointment over the policy. The people were not happy. They complained that the state does not give them the freedom to express their own religious beliefs. Although their custom of living together in one hamlet is beginning to be discarded, they now seem to take another strategy; to be part of the rest of the society and penetrate it with their teaching.

In June 1988, the entire *Wege* community in Potigo was raided by the Indonesian authorities stationed in Enarotali. The houses were burnt to the ground. The whole village community was taken to Enarotali, into custody. They were detained there for three months. A large amount of money which

they had saved was taken away. The reason they were raided was that they were accused of providing shelter for Tadius Yogi—the OPM leader in the region. It was said that after three months of custody, they were expected to be sent to different villages throughout the Paniai region. This step was taken by the government to prevent them from reviving their teachings. It was based on the assumption that by dispersing the people over different villages they would be able to stop their programs. But as the people say it was another way of spreading the very teaching the government was trying to stop. One *Wege Mana* man said in Enarotali 'this teaching is not made up by man, it is given by God, therefore no man can stop us from following it wherever we go' (CK, December 14, 1992).

Still, in the same month, June 1988, in Tigi district alone there were at least four local congregations that were reported to have been affected by the teachings of the *Wege Bage*. The strongest influence of the teachings of the *Wege Bage* was felt in a local church, located near the mission station in Gakokebo (MP, Waghete, June 20, 1988). The following year in June 1989-July 1990 the Church leaders of Tigi District said that this congregation near Gakokebo was divided into two factions: there were some who had introduced the *Wege Mana* into the church. It was apparent that the leadership of this local church had fallen into the hands of several men who were strong preachers of the *Wege Mana*. This became clear when in March and April 1990, the Church District leadership assigned two pastors to this congregation, but they were refused. They also did not meet their obligations to District such as giving 10% of the church income to the District. In short, they did not want to recognize the district church leadership and its related programs. After some time the church leadership in cooperation with police in Waghete and the Village chief took the men who had resisted their programs to Waghete. They were detained in Waghete for one month and sent back to their village with a warning not to follow the same teachings they had embraced. While in Kamu another Church District leader expressed his concern for lack of commitment to church-related programs. According to him they had *dimu wrya* (two minds or half-hearted). Most of the young people in two of the local congregations participated in Sunday services and other church related activities while at the same time propagating the *Wege Mana*.

By way of conclusion, it is important to stress that the leaders of the *Wege Bage* in Kamu continued to face opposition from both the church and government personnel in this region. Although in the 1960s, they called themselves 'Utou Mana group' instead of the *Wege Bage*, to avoid opposition from government and church leadership, they continue today to receive similar opposition as Zakheus received when he was still in the Paniai region. Their presence is indeed seen as a hindrance to the church and to the government policy

of politico-religious integration. But again, this opposition informed their religious argument to be dealt with in the following chapter.

4.9.3.2 *Zakheus' community in Kiuto*

This section deals with the activities of three of the men from Kiuto, western shore of Lake Paniai. In contrast to the *Wege* community in Kamu who chose to live together and to make big gardens together, the three religious leaders of Kiuto preached politico-religious independence of Irian Jayan/West Papuans by God's intervention. The discussion centered on the activities of three men: Paulus, Benyamin and Decky. Paulus, the first religious leader, emerged from within the community of Zakheus in Kiuto in 1964. By the time Paulus appeared, the *Wege* community in Kiuto was actively promoting its program. When in 1964, the leader announced his program to bring in a new era of prosperity and freedom, the people hailed him, but years later when many of his close relatives had died, the people began to withdraw, possibly out of fear. The first part of this section deals with activities of Paulus. Benyamin and Decky were two other men who followed Paulus and continued his teaching after Paulus died in 1970. Benyamin came to the fore in 1982 and his influence dwindled in 1988. Decky then took up Paulus' program in 1989 and continued until 1991. All three of these men came from the same area, but from different clans. The immediate relatives of Paulus accused the two leaders who had followed Paulus, as having stolen the 'key' that was lost by Paulus. Their religious activities will be presented as a continuation of what Paulus had introduced.

Paulus and his pabrik

Around 1964 rumors spread in the Paniai region about Paulus, one of the men from the *Wege* community in Kiuto, western shore of Lake Paniai. He was one of the most Westernized men in those days. He attended the village school in Okaitadi in the early 1950s. After finishing his education, he went to the Continuation School for three years in Gakokebo (Tigi district) operated by the mission with a grant from the Dutch Government. Upon graduation he went to the coast to enter the Teacher's Training College in Serui on Japen Island. After completion of his College training in June 1961 (*Serikat*, 1 September 1961, No. 11), he was assigned by the missionaries to establish an elementary school in Wamena. He taught a year and later he was assigned as a teacher in the Paniai region in several places. While he was teaching in one of the elementary school in the Paniai region he told the people that he had discovered the *pabrik*. The *pabrik* is the Me's belief related to a material object or spirit being which is able to produce Western goods without a human being involved in the manufacturing process.

Initial religious experience

Paulus claimed that he had received the key of the *pabrik* as fulfillment of a promise made by his father before his death. It was said that a female spirit appeared before him and offered him a key to unlock the Western goods which were believed to be stored under a small hill in Kiuto. This encounter with the spirit being occurred through vision occurred several times. Paulus then said that he was led to go into the hill which was indicated by the female spirit being. When he went to the place, where he was to enter, something happened. There was an earthquake and the gate to the underworld lay open before him. Then he was allowed to enter the underworld to see the guns and other Western goods stored in the underworld. This underworld is the dwelling place of the female deity which will be discussed in the following chapter. What did the underworld look like? It was the land where the dead had come to life. The old people who had died years earlier had risen and now had become young men and women. They were now living in this new world. It was a new world, where all material goods were abundant. All the streets were asphalted and its sidewalks cemented. Everything was lighted by electricity. He went around the streets and found himself talking to his relatives who had died years before. There was neither garbage nor fleas nor flies. It was a clean, beautiful and perfect place. It was as if he was standing besides Jesus when Satan took Jesus to a high mountain and showed him all the glory of the world and said: 'All this I will give you, if you will fall down and worship me' (Matthew 4: 8-9). Paulus was tempted when he saw the new world and its glory.

The people's response

After he had visited the dwelling place of the female deity, Paulus tried to convince the people to participate in his program. 'I have seen the guns and other Western materials under Kiuto Hill, when I was invited by the female spirit deity to go into the land of prosperity. This new world will begin by the intervention of the female deity if we make sacrifices and offerings to her. We need pigs and chickens to be sacrificed', Paulus said (KG, May 10, 1986). The first ones to respond to his call were his immediate relatives. Some cooperated with Paulus by giving him pigs or chickens to be sacrificed to the spirit being. Others expressed their support by giving money to buy pigs to be offered to the female deity behind this program. A few of the local church leaders and pastors expressed their support for Paulus by praying that God would bless his program. Later the news about the *pabrik* in Kiuto spread. This *pabrik* matter became the topic of discussion in 1964-1965. When I was going to elementary school in 1964-1967, the talk about the *pabrik* was prevalent not only in areas around Lake Paniai but throughout Debei, Tigi and

Kamu districts. Rumors about this *pabrik* were accompanied many miraculous stories told to support the *pabrik*. Some of the miraculous stories mentioned were that if Paulus wanted to cross the lake, he did not need a boat like other people. He walked on the lake just like Jesus Christ. He would also show the people some tinned food such as corned beef and told the people 'we can have access to these kind of food but we cannot have them now, because we have not yet fulfilled the wishes of the female spirit deity, who is behind this *pabrik*'.

Great feast in Emaibo

To fulfill his promises, Paulus planned to hold an area-wide sacrificial feast in Emaibo, the western shore of Lake Paniai. This great feast was necessary to speed up the delivery of the goods and his program for bringing a world of prosperity. According to Paulus the spirit being would bring the new world on the occasion of that feast. In preparation for this feast he went to Enarotali and invited the government officer. The government personnel said that 'when Paulus came and ask for my contribution I gave him one sack of rice, sugar and salt to be used at the feast' (KG, May 10, 1986). The officer was also invited to attend the feast and witness the great event in which the spirit being would deliver the goods and usher in the new world. The people came from various directions of the Paniai region to witness the event. A few days later, the said government personnel went to attend the feast. But after the feast was over, Paulus expressed his regret that the spirit being could not deliver the goods and inaugurate the new world order on that day. 'Pigs and chickens sacrificed today are not enough. She asked for a human sacrifice and therefore induced me to agree to her wish to take many lives before she could fulfill her promise', Paulus said.

The death of many of Paulus' relatives

The people were scared because Paulus put forward a list of names of the people the female spirit deity wanted to be killed. The people began to withdraw, including the district officer and other village school teachers who were present at the feast, fearing that they might be among those who were targeted. Unfortunately, in 1966, around 60 people were reported to have died instantly, within a year or so, most of them were Paulus' immediate relatives. This made the people fear the *pabrik* and thus, they withdraw. But another consequence of the death of many people was that it confirmed their basic idea that indeed the *pabrik* did exist. Paulus failed to materialize his program 'not because it is impossible' but because Paulus failed to observe the rules set by the female spiritual deity. Paulus died in 1970 without fulfilling his promi-

ses. But the program was taken up by Benyamin, another religious leader from the same area to which I turn now.

The pabrik of Benyamin

In May 1982, a young man by the name of Benyamin, took up the challenge to continue preaching about the 'pabrik' of Paulus. This plan was opposed by the immediate relatives of Paulus. The latter accused Benyamin of stealing their key of the *pabrik*. This was the case since almost all people knew about Paulus and his activities. Benyamin came from the same place where Paulus was born and raised. Benyamin attended the Obano Elementary School up until May 1982. Around May and June 1982 Benyamin began to talk about his *pabrik* after he discovered the key of the *pabrik*. He said he found this key when he went to fish in Lake Paniai and caught a shrimp. It changed and became a sparkling stone.

Contact with the missionary

Then Benyamin contacted the Reverend Worsley—a Canadian missionary connected to the CAMA mission of Irian Jaya. The latter asked Benyamin to join him in prayer to find out whether it was from God or not. After praying, Worsley said that the stone was from God. Then Worsley, who was taking a two month vacation took the stone with him to Canada, his home country. According to Benyamin it was necessary for Worsley to bring that stone to Canada because, if not, the spirit being who was behind the stone would require human sacrifice as it had been seen in Paulus' *pabrik*. Canada and the other Western countries knew how to cultivate the favor of the spirits. Before leaving Enarotali, however Worsley, told Benyamin to go to Wamena, or some other place. This was necessary because according to the Me, there were people who were jealous and might be tempted to kill him. The relatives of Paulus for instance were accusing Benyamin of stealing their *pabrik*. Therefore Benyamin went to Wamena.

Benyamin's activities in Wamena

Because there were people in the Paniai region who were against Benyamin, he went to Wamena and entered the SMP Yapis—Junior High School—run by the Islamic Education Foundation in August 1982. He finished his schooling in May 1985. Two months later (August 1985) Benyamin entered the SMA Negeri—Senior High School—in Wamena, but he did not finish his schooling. While he was studying in Wamena he told the people that by 1988 Irian Jaya/ West Papua would become an independent state. In view of this a meeting was held to select the people who would be the leaders of the new state. Later on Simon was sent to go to Jayapura and to buy Dutch currency (gulden) of f

5 and f 25. Simon indeed went to Jayapura in March 1985 and purchased the money in Jayapura. That money would be multiplied by the spirit being and be used in the new state to come. Benyamin, 'said he was going to use special water which he received through dreams to drive out the Indonesia authorities. If they would not want to leave this area, they would become cripple'.

Christian independent state of Irian Jaya/West Papua

In March 1986, Benyamin made a short visit to Obano. In Obano he met Peter, the Obano Church District Secretary and explained his plans to establish a 'Christian state' of Irian Jaya/West Papua based on Christian doctrines. He also asked the church's participation in this process by allowing him to preach in the local churches. 'Because Christians in the local churches have traditional religious objects which can hinder the plan to establish a Christian state', Benyamin said. Peter and other church leadership agreed to his plan.

In June 1986 Benyamin met with Peter and Gerson who was another church leader who supported Benyamin's program. The meeting took place in Nabire. During the meeting two things were discussed: 1) construction of houses and 2) the burning of the religious objects in anticipation of inauguration of the Christian state of Irian Jaya/West Papua. Gerson led the prayer meeting. They planned to call two groups of people to accomplish the two goals above mentioned. The first group were church leaders, pastors, religious teachers, etc., who would be involved in abolishing religious objects. According to Benyamin this was necessary because 'political freedom was possible only when the people are freed from sorcery and witchcraft and other religious objects'. The second group was the young people, and students who were said to be involved in building houses in Enarotali which was going to be the capital city of the new independent state. This group was to cooperate with some foreign companies. These new houses were necessary in view of their plan to make Enarotali as the capital city of the new Christian state.

Abolition of sacred objects

Toward the end of 1986, Benyamin returned to the Paniai region again. When he arrived in Enarotali he was hailed as an Evangelist, a leader who will be able to bring freedom in the land and a faith healer who has the power to dispel sickness invoked by evil spirits. He was a man who could deliver the people who were supposedly possessed by the demons. From Enarotali he went to Mogoya. In this place he drew a big crowd which assembled. They met in the church. At first the Obano Church District leadership was not happy about it. But there was nothing they could do, because he said he was doing what Worsley had asked him to do. From Mogoya he went to Obano to talk to the Church District leadership. He was able to convince the leaders

of the church that he was doing all this in cooperation with missionary Worsley in the name of Jesus. He said that he came to deliver the people from practicing sorcery and witchcraft in the church. They allowed him to do this. He rightly said that 'many of these Christians or church members are filled with fear of being killed by sorcery and witchcraft. Because many people are still practicing sorcery'. The first step to political liberation was liberation from sorcery and witchcraft, Benyamin said.

In the early 1987, Benyamin travelled extensively throughout West the Paniai district, visiting local churches that are part of the Obano District, such as: Muye, Amopa, Mogoya, Beko, Tipakotu, Uwodege, Okaago, Waipa, Oka-itadi, Emaibo and Ukauwo. He was not alone on these trips. Peter and two other ordained ministers accompanied him on such trips to eradicate sorcery and witchcraft practices from the region. The three of them were the speakers at these meetings held in those local churches Benyamin engaged in treating to the sick and the sorcerers and witches. He dared people to burn their religious objects and sorcery materials. In his speeches, Benyamin threatened the people 'if you do not burn and throw away your sacred objects you will die. The female spirit being who lives in the underworld will kill you'. The people responded out of fear. Many thought if they didn't follow this words the spirit deity cooperating with him would kill them. They brought in their traditional religious objects to be burned. Furthermore, in his effort to get people to burn their religious objects he closed some church building on Sundays. In one place the people did not hold the Sunday service. He said 'burn your traditional religious objects before coming to church'. Many were upset.

In November 1987, Benyamin and Gerson went to Nabire, after the church meetings in Kebo and Enarotali. Before he left Obano, Benyamin said 'I am ready to announce the establishment of the independent state of West Papua, but I do not have the *tongkat Musa* (Moses' staff) yet. Worsley still holds the staff of Moses'. This idea of Moses' staff was taken from the Christian Biblical idea. As God used Moses' staff to perform many wonders to liberate the Jews from slavery and political oppression from the Egyptians (Exodus 3ff) so God would use Benyamin to liberate Irian Jayans from present political domination by the Indonesians. But Benyamin said that Moses' staff was still with Worsley in Jayapura. I will go to Jayapura to take it from him. If I get the *tongkat Musa*, we Irian Jayans will be free from all forms of oppression. The Indonesians will go, he said.

Benyamin's activity as healer and seer in Nabire

Benyamin left Enarotali in December 1987 for Jayapura. When he arrived in Nabire he was welcomed as a seer and a healer. Instead of going to Jayapura as

he had promised, he decided to stay there. In Nabire many sick people were waiting for him. Rumors spread that he did heal some people. But many withdrew simply because he demanded a high pay for healing services. The people could not afford to pay the price. Later he became a seer; the people whose relatives had died, came to him and asked him to 'see' or to identify the killers of their relatives. The people who came were those who were living in the fear of sorcery and witchcraft, which had attributed the death of their relatives to sorcerers. It was also reported that he was able to reveal the names of sorcerers who admitted that they were responsible for some of the people who had died. But not all agreed with him. To some he was just a troublemaker. He, according to the latter, accused them of being sorcerers when in fact they were not. The latter wanted to kill him for the accusations made against them.

In January 1988, Benyamin tried to get the local leaders in Nabire to retrieve the stone from Worsley. As early as January 1988, Benyamin tried to convince the leaders by appealing to what he had accomplished in the past as faith healer. In a meeting he said:

I will do more than what I have done. I was able to dispel the evil spirit and healed the sick and revealed the sorcerers because I have the stone. But this stone I have now is not the real one. Reverend Worsley took the original one a few years ago when he went to Canada. When he returned he gave the stone back to me, but that was not the one I gave to him. He stole my real stone and gave a duplicate of it. Now, what are we going to do? If we can have the stone back to us, we will use it to liberate this land from the present political power (JG, Nabire, 17 December 1992).

The people who were there and heard this were upset. Why did Worsley steal our stone? There was a lot of talk as how to get the stone back. Some of them decided to write Worsley asking to give the stone back to Benyamin or give them Rp. 5,000,000.- (five million rupiahs) which is be about US\$ 3000,-. 'If not', they said; 'we will ask the government to deport him from Irian Jaya'. They wrote the letter to Worsley, but the latter just ignored it (PW Jayapura, September 18, 1989).

Following this Benyamin's fame as faith healer or charismatic leader who had many potential followers declined when he went to court a girl and planned to marry her as his second wife. The people accused him of using his programs to attract young girls. But at the beginning of 1991 up until 1992 he was informally 'employed' by a Me elite who was one of the candidates for the Head of the Paniai regency in 1989. Benyamin was asked to work as 'his personal security guard' in protecting him from sorcerers by means of spirit

beings or others who might want to hinder his campaign to become 'the big man' of Paniai regency. Benyamin was offered a job in the government office but Benyamin declined. Whether he will rise again or be replaced by another one, is a question which will remain to be seen in the years to come, as Benyamin is young (about 26 years old).

Freeport Yawudi Nota (1989)

As Benyamin's fame began to decline Decky, another young man began to take up the struggle of Benyamin to deliver the people from political oppression and poverty. In April 1989, Decky, who introduced the Freeport Yawudi Nota arrived in Jayapura. The name is no doubt related to the Freeport Indonesia Inc. is multinational company consists of 20 nations which has been exploiting gold mines in Timika or the South Range of Puncak Jaya (former Wilhelmina) Top during the last 30 years. The Irian Jayans argue today that they have been treated as spectators who had no right or access to the job opportunities offered by those foreigners. Decky's intention is essentially a program to counter the activity of Freeport. The additional name '*Yawudi Nota*' means to distribute 'sweet potato' or food and wealth to the local Irian Jayans free of charge. Decky and his men planned to open and exploit gold mines in the Paniai region themselves meaning foreigners would not be involved. In May 1989, he said that he wanted to open a mining company.

The initial activities

Decky went to Junior High School in Enarotali. He then went to Merauke and finished his Senior High School there. After he finish his schooling there he went to Jayapura in April 1989. In May 12, Decky and his men organized a special meeting in Abepura (Jayapura). The meeting was not well-organized. But Decky told Gerson—the men who had been also involved in Benyamin program that he had the *batu delima* (an Indonesian term) which is a special or magical stone which can be used to exploit the gold mining industry in the Paniai region. Decky said that the function of this stone was to bring in money to accelerate the development of the people in the Central Highlands. To carry out this development program they had to form an organization called the Free Port Indonesia Yawudi Nota. Gerson was unanimously appointed as its chief. Bernard, a student, was elected as their Secretary. Decky and his men made a large number of T-shirts. This was necessary they said to raise some money and to inform the public or the people of their activities. On those T-shirts, there was printed 'Freeport Yawudi Nota Inc.' with capital letters. Under this there was Matthew 6: 33. The reason this verse is written in the T-shirt was that Decky received the *pabrik* after he had meditated on this Bibli-

cal verse. Besides this verse there were two persons: one man and woman wearing their traditional dress.

Another activity carried out during this early stage was the registration. A young man was assigned to go from Sentani to Abepura and then on to Jayapura to list the names of the young people who had no jobs and those who were living in Jayapura and surroundings and wanted to be employed by the Freeport Yawudi Nota Inc.

God and Decky's *pabrik*

The assets they had collected for this company was according to Decky a batu delima, a special stone which was given by God in Kiuto, four years earlier. Decky discovered this stone after spending three days and three nights in prayer and fasting. Gerson explained:

One day, Decky was disappointed because he and the people of this region had been Christians for along time, and had followed the Lord faithfully, but economically they were living in the poverty and were forced to live under political domination. Then he read (Matthew 6: 33), But seek first his kingdom and his righteousness and all these things will be added unto you. And (Matthew 7: 7-8), Ask and it will be given to you, seek and you will find, knock and the door will be opened to you. For every one who asks receives: he who seeks find, and to him who knocks, the door will be opened. Upon reading these verses he prayed and fasted. On the third night he had a vision or rather a revelation from God. He was told to go to a certain place. The following day, he went to that place as he was told in the previous night. But according to some this place is Kiuto, the place where Paulus discovered the *pabrik*. After he arrived there he discovered the batu delima, the stone that can bring socio-political freedom in the region (Gerson, February 12, 1990).

This occurred in 1984. This was the year he graduated from Junior High School in Enarotali. After he found the stone, he contacted a Catholic priest in Enarotali.

Decky in Merauke and his trip to Australia

Once again when the relatives of Paulus heard of Decky's activities they were upset about it. 'Why did Decky steal our stone/*pabrik*', they said. To prevent further conflicts with the relatives of Paulus, Decky went to Merauke. While he was in the second year at the Senior High School in Merauke, he met some Australians who knew how to make it works. When and how did the Australians help him? Some time after he arrived in Merauke, the Catholic priest

arranged meetings with some Australians who happened to be visiting Merauke. Decky showed the stone to them. After seeing the stone, the Australians invited Decky to go with them to Australia. Decky agreed to go to Australia. The priest came to accompany Decky during his visit to Australia. Some said that Decky and Australians went to Tembagapura and from there they flew to Australia. But according to others they took a boat going to Australia. While in Australia Decky was able to visit some mining companies. It was there that the Australian helped Decky to make the spirit deity behind the deity willing to cooperate with the Decky in accomplishing his programs and the *batu delima* could be used not only to bring material goods to the Me people but also to protect him. It will not require human sacrifice or other forms of sacrifice such as pigs or chickens as it had happened in Paulus' time. The assistance of the Australians was also beneficial because the relatives of Paulus would not accuse or harm him. Decky then said that with the help of this batu delima and funds and experts from five countries: America, Australia, France, Great Britain and The Netherlands. The leaders of the Freeport Yawudi Nota would explore the gold mining in the mount Kenebego behind Kebo (northern shore of Lake Paniai). Thus, the Indonesians would not be involved in this project. The Irian Jaya Governor at that time, Izaak Hindom had already issued the letter of recommendation to carry out the exploration by the Me leaders themselves (excluding non Irianese). This letter was later supported by similar letter from the Minister of Industry from Jakarta (Decky's letter September 22, 1988).

Why Freeport Yawudi Nota?

As noted above, the Freeport Yawudi Nota was formed to carry out their mission to distribute goods and foods among the needy Irianese throughout Irian Jaya free of charge. The name itself suggests that it was formed as an ideological counter-attack upon the Freeport Indonesia Inc. which has been exploiting mining in Tembagapura by chasing the Amungme or Damals out from their homeland. According to Decky Freeport Indonesia in Tembagapura had been taking all the wealth away from the local people while the Damals were being chased out of their territory. He said that Indonesians and Westerners take all the material wealth for themselves, while the local people were suffering and starving. Therefore non-Irianese would be excluded from the Freeport Yawudi Nota Inc.

Another leader also said that the Freeport Yawudi Nota was formed because of two reasons: 1) There are gold deposits under Kenebago/Mount Kene lying behind Kebo and 2) and because the Me leaders fear that the rights of the Me in the Paniai Region would not be respected, as had been the case of the Amungme (Damals) in Tembagapura. This was formed in the anticipation

of an Indonesian-French mining company which started carrying out exploratory activities in 1985 in Enarotali. They said it was the local people themselves who wanted to exploit the gold mines under the umbrella of the Freeport Yawudi Nota which would do everything. Foreigners would not be involved. Decky said that after the Australians had seen the batu delima, they were willing to support the Yawudi Nota financially. The money was deposited in a bank in Jayapura. With that amount of money the leaders planned to purchase thirty hectares of land in Kehiran in Sentani and one in Wamena. After purchasing the land they planned to put up a branch office of their company in Jayapura and another in Wamena. Decky said that his plan was to help the people to raise the living standard by exploring the gold mines in the Paniai region. After Decky presented his program, they unanimously elected Gerson as the Chief of the company. At first they planned to put up a large number of houses in Udaugida, Yawei river bank in July of 1989. These houses would be used for office and residential homes for the employees. There would be sixty personnel who would undertake this project, but according to Decky he needed 30 additional people.

A meeting was organized on June 5, 1990 in Polimak (Jayapura), to raise more capital to finance their plans to obtain papers for recognition by the government. Some people who were in the Committee raised the objection 'why should we raise more funds, when you told us that you had such and such amount of money in the bank'. Then many of them asked Decky to show the permit from the Irian Jaya Governor and other letters from the ministry of mining in Jakarta. When he showed the fake letter many of them withdrew. He was dismissed. He left for Obano in August 1990. In Obano he started to introduce a new program of driving out the Indonesian authorities from the area. When the army heard of his anti-Indonesian program he was beaten and taken into custody for two weeks. The Freeport Yawudi Nota was not heard of again, perhaps out of fear of being arrested again.

By way of conclusion, the above section presented the development of *Wege* communities in the Indonesian era. It was argued that political transition and suppression brought about disappearance of the *Wege* communities and at the same deepened the people's politico-religious resistance in the midst of change and political instability. Such an attitude of resistance took place in the midst of socio-economic crises as result of the floods and of strange disease which had been ravaging the region. The Me interpreted such crises as brought about by the *ogai*. The religious elite originated from two of the former Zakheus communities. They promised the people better conditions of life by preaching politico-religious independence from foreign powers. It was assumed that as soon as the *ogai* were gone a new era will be begin. The *Wege Bage* of the Kamu valley and its leaders have continued to become the subject

of opposition from the government personnel. While in Kiuto the religious elites adopted a more escapist approach by relying on the guns to be delivered by the female deity to bring about politico-religious liberation. Their struggle and program remain the same as that of Zakheus: the message of 'politico-religious independence' of the Irian Jayans/West Papuans.

As can be noted from the above presentation, there is an important development in the relations between the local church leadership and other local people associated with the *ogai*. In 1950s, the local church leaders and local people associated with the *ogai* opposed the *Wege Mana*. In the last two decades there is a slight change in their attitude toward the religious leaders who preached the *Wege Mana* from two of *Wege* communities. As shown above, the local police and other government men began to be more tolerant toward the *Wege Bage* in the Kamu Valley from the 1970s. In June 1992, I was also told by the *Wege Mana* leader in Kamu that he had been entertaining the local police who were coming to consult him regarding their future. This is perhaps due to the dominance of police personnel in the Paniai region who come from other Indonesian islands. The Me police who were dominant in the 1950s are now powerless, as Zakheus had predicted in the 1950s (see the next chapter). The local church leaders on the other hand find themselves in a more ambiguous situation. The church in general still maintains its anti-*Wege Mana* policy, and yet sometimes it has been forced to give in. As shown above, the church leaders cooperated with the Benyamin who preached a different gospel than that of the church. In that case the last stumbling block for the realization of the programs of the leaders of the *Wege Mana* is the government.

4.10 Concluding remarks

The first part of this chapter (section 4.1 up section 4.7) presented the work and life of Zakheus. The biographical notes was given on the basis of missionary reports and letters. This was followed by a review of the birth of *Wege* communities and opposition which came from various directions. Some of the groups who had fought against Zakheus and his people were mentioned. It is important to note that this chapter has shown that Zakheus and his communities formed a few persecuted community. They became subject of opposition from the mission, the church and government and local headmen. The mission/the church viewed him as a false prophet or as a man possessed by evil spirits. The Dutch government official and local headmen saw him as a man who brought conflicts and created tension in various communities.

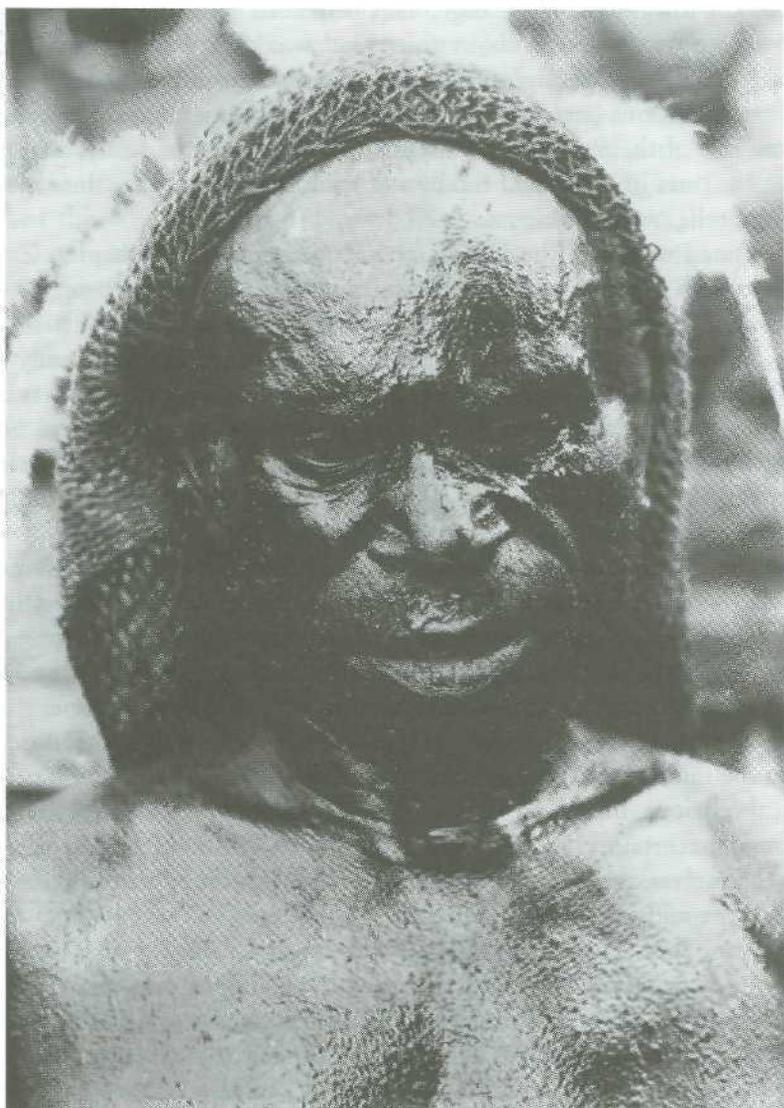
Zakheus and his communities were called the *Wege Bage*-the people who caused disturbances; disturbers of colonial peace and order.

By the early 1960s the Dutch government, which opposed Zakheus in the early 1950s, began to change its policy toward Zakheus. The Dutch began to be tolerant toward the *Wege Bage*. This helped to speed up the extension of Zakheus' communities. And yet this trend was short-lived. The *Wege Bage* disappeared almost overnight. Indonesian government began to crash the local political aspirations (section 4.8). The *Wege* communities and their aspirations became one of their targets. As a result the *Wege Bage* gradually disappeared except the ones in Kiuto and Kamu who continued to express their views by means of religious movements.

As stated earlier in the introductory statement to this chapter, Zakheus had his vision and program for transforming the society and bring in a new world. This chapter attempted to show how Zakheus sought to share his views and vision of a new world freedom and peace. And yet only a few responded to him, willing to carry out his programs. This chapter has shown how they attempted to carry out this program with the intention to achieve their goals. And yet they were opposed by various parties who had their own vision and also sought to impose or share theirs by means of force and other means.

At the beginning of the Indonesian era, new religious leaders emerged. The rise of these leaders took place in the context of socio-economic and political crises in the Paniai region, and in Irian Jaya in general, a similar historical context in which Zakheus began his work in 1950. No wonder, the leaders of these religious movements continued to dream of a new era, an era where they would be free from foreign socio-economic and political domination in the midst of socio-economic crises. These religious elites who preaches political-religious liberation accused the *ogai* for bringing in political and economic uncertainty in the region. This very politico-religious discourse place themselves as an enemy of the state. They continue to resist the *ogai*'s vision in the midst opposition.

In short, this chapter is an attempt to reconstruct history of *Wege* people, and the local religious elites who had been struggling to state and try to deal with human problems and at the same challenging the *ogai* and their ways. They preach new era of socio-political independent of Irian Jayans in the face of opposition. At the same time this chapter can be seen as history of the *ogai* who had been trying to change the indigenous politico-religious views by means of force. The opposition by the use of force by the *ogai* contributed and colored the religious views of Zakheus and his communities to be presented in the following chapter.



A headman from Kamu Valley

CHAPTER 5

Zakheus' activities and his communities: The birth of indigenous religious discourse

5.1 Introduction

In Chapter 3, it was pointed out that Zakheus returned to the Paniai region and introduced his program at the time when the Me were facing a drastic socio-economic change and conflicts with the *ogai*. In Chapter 4 it was pointed out that Zakheus and his communities preached their programs in the context of opposition. This chapter considers the religious beliefs of Zakheus and his communities which they had formulated in the context of change and opposition. This religious discourse served as a legitimation of their activities and inspired the Me participation in the activities of Zakheus and his communities.

The discussion of this chapter centers on the people's views of: 1) God, 2) The Bible, 3) Salvation, 4) Christology, and 5) the local eschatology: the belief in a coming radical transformation of the world. As indicated in the introductory chapter, the choice of these religious motifs had been made on the basis of the *Wege Bage's* argument that such beliefs already existed in the indigenous religious concepts, although in elementary forms. At the time of the contact with the *ogai* and Christianization, these religious motifs served as the 'indigenous models' through which the Me developed their own theology. As an indigenous theology it was developed in interaction with their corresponding Christian concepts. This chapter attempts to show the dynamic process of interaction and interpretation of Christianity from the point of view of the existing religious ideas. This process of religious inter-penetration between two systems resulted in a new religious discourse.

Before presenting the *Wege Bage's* religious views, it is important to make a brief remarks about the issue of pre-contact religious motifs used by the leaders of the *Wege Bage* to defend their views. The only reason why the *Wege Bage* claim that they possess the pre-contact religion lies in the assumption that such religious motifs had already been known to their ancestors. This means that the Me of the present generation (including myself) assume (without questioning) that indeed the Me ancestors had some basic idea about God

or a male creator deity, a Bible or salvation, etc. Finding themselves in the midst of opposition and conflicts with the *ogai*, the leaders of the *Wege Bage* christianized and exploited the Me religious assumptions on the perceived pre-Christian religious ideas which they claimed to have access to through visions, revelations from the male deity creator (or God) or the female deity. Thus, the interpretation of the Me migration story of Yupi, the ancestor of Zakheus is a clear example. Another attempt to Christianize the local religious beliefs in order to legitimate their views is the *Wege Bage's* view that Koyeidaba healed many sick people. Healing the sick was never mentioned in the account given when I was a child. This element may have been added perhaps after the *Wege Bage* came to know about the Jesus Christ Ministry of Healing. Realizing that they were under theological attack, the *Wege Bage* invented new religious ideas and drew their religious ideas from various sources such as: their perceived history of the clans or settlements, the existing folktales, rumors or current events. For this reason the religious views which will be presented below contained these elements: rumors, folktales, history of the clan etc. Furthermore, in spite of the persistence of the *Wege Bage's* thought, their views on God, or salvation, etc. will be shown as a dynamic one. Their views have changed from time to time. One can understand that such is the case because the Me people's socio-political condition and aspirations changes. New ideas are incorporated to the existing ones as new rumors go around, or new events take place; while replacing some and retaining other the existing views. This means the religious discourse presented below reflect religious moods of the *Wege Bage* and the Me at the time of investigation. Returning to the issue of 'pre-Christian idea' it can be said that there is no true knowledge as to 'pre-contact religious belief'. What the *Wege Bage* have is the assumption that the Me ancestors had known God being preached by the *ogai* at least its rudimentary forms. The Me share this assumption. The methodological problem with these syncretism—a word not used in any pejorative sense of the term—is that the pre-contact beliefs can never be known.

In line with these remarks it is important to note that the subject of 'God' to be presented is an important concept. It is charged with deep-rooted politico-religious meanings. The same is true with the other four topics of consideration of this chapter. This is not surprising because it is clear from the presentation in the previous chapters, that these religious views has been developed and expressed in two, related socio-cultural and historical contexts: change and opposition. In other words, the people's theological views related to themes which we will deal with in this chapter, cannot be understood without considering the context of drastic socio-religious change and opposition from the *ogai*. The socio-historical atmosphere in which the Me lived, gave birth to the indigenous theological discourse to be considered in this chapter.

5.2 God: the Me's idea

In the face of religious opposition from the *ogai*, the people argue that, the God preached by the *ogai* is a male deity who had existed in the Paniai region and was already known as the male creator deity addressed as Ugatamee by their ancestors. The notion that 'God was already known to the ancestors in pre-contact times and had chosen the Paniai region as his dwelling place before the advent of the *ogai*' is a crucial political and religious statement. Based on the view that 'God was already the object of worship by their ancestors', the Me in general argue the Western missionaries 'came not to preach God but to search for God' a God who had chosen the Paniai region as his dwelling place long before the advent of the *ogai*. This point is stressed since the whole system of religious beliefs which will be presented in this chapter is built on this conviction.

The first part of this section will deal with the Me people's conception of a male creator deity. This section will be followed by a brief discussion of God as addressed in prayers made to him. Following this, the *Wege Bage's* concepts of God will be reviewed. The discussion of female deity believed to be the agent of the male creator deity will follow. Then the discussion will focus on God and the religious objects which are believed to have been given by God, which are seen as symbolic representations of God himself. Such objects are used as a means to obtain salvation.

The Me's religious views presuppose the belief in the existence of a male supreme deity and creator who was also believed to be the author of salvation (see 5.4. 'The Me people's conception of salvation below'). Aside from this supreme deity, there is also a female deity who acts as agent or mediator to carry out the saving work of this male creator deity among the Me community groups. In the last four decades she has appeared in the Paniai region through dreams and vision as a female deity who had come 'to prepare the people and the Paniai region for the return of Koyeidaba—who is a mythical messianic hero which will be discussed below—or Zakheus or Jesus Christ'. In many cases, these two supreme deities effect the work of salvation by supplying men and or women with the material objects such as special stones, special water, tree leaves, keys, etc. mentioned in the preceding chapter. The religious objects given by these two deities through visions or revaluations are seen as symbols of the deities, not as deities themselves.

5.2.1 *The male creator deity*

Following the contact with the *ogai*, the Me realized that they had come under theological attack. Therefore in response to this, they attempted to

reformulate their own religious beliefs. The present discussion will focus on the people's perception of God. Who is this male creator deity? How do the people see God and how does he relate to the people and their world today in the midst of change? The names used in the past and today to address this male creator deity answer some of these questions. Therefore a brief discussion of these names is necessary.

a. *Wado mee*—the one who lives in the upperworld

According to the Me the world consists of an upperworld, the earth and an underworld. The upperworld is believed to be the dwelling place of a male deity known as Ugatamee. The earth is the home of human beings and of various spirit beings. These spirit beings had their own personal names and their dwelling places. Beneath the earth there is an under world which is believed to be the world or the country of a female supreme deity. Since the male deity creator lives in the upperworld, he is also referred to as *Wado mee*—he who lives in the upperworld.

b. Ugatamee

Ugatamee, is one of the names of this male deity. It simply means 'male-deity creator'. Implicit in this term is the idea that he made everything. It also implies that he existed in the Paniai region before all other things came into existence; even before the people came to this region. On the basis of this conviction, both Christians and 'non Christians' criticize one another by using the same Biblical text of Gospel of John 1: 1-4 (see below).

c. The male creator who never sleeps

The male deity is also referred to as *wane na anigo touto, agapi na anigou touto me* which means 'the male deity he who is always awake, during the day and during the night'. He never sleeps. It implies that he knows everything about the people, about their socio-spiritual world and about their history. For this reason the prayers addressed to him in this culture is always brief. He does not need an exposition of the people's needs. Because he knows the crises the people are facing when his intervention is sought; simply because he knows who the people are. He is a supreme being who knows everything, who never falls asleep.

d. The deity who had existed/ the original being

God is also addressed as *tika na tota ito na topi wado na toutagi-mee*—He who already existed in the Paniai region before all other things came into existence, he who is with us today, and he who will continue to exist in the future. According to the Me, God is the male deity who was in the beginning—before

the ancestors settled in this region; who is here in the Paniai region today and but also who also will continue to be in the region, communicating with the people. Based on this notion both Christians and non-Christians make use of the Bible verses of John 1: 1-4.

In the beginning was the Word and the word was with God, and the Word was God. He was with God in the beginning. Through him all things were made, without him nothing was made that has been made. In him was life, and that life was the life of man. The light shines in the darkness but the darkness has not understood it.

The *Wege Bage* in Kamu have persistently interpreted 'in the beginning was the Word ...' from the above Christian Biblical verse as the Me teaching or religious rules which have existed in the Paniai region and which they had known from their forefathers long before Christianity came to this region. They are vocal on this as they take the Christian Biblical verses to interpret their own history. The *Wege Bage* use the idea that God had existed in the past, to defend their view that God knows the Me people's past, their experience today and that he will work out salvation for them in the future. Since he had existed in this region, it means that he had followed and recorded the people's experience. Nothing was hidden in his eyes.

e. The great one

Ibo kidi—the great one or the big one, is another name used to address the creator. Zakheus used it more often in his sermons. This is true also in the Protestant churches today in the Paniai region.

f. Ayii Naka

Ugatamee was also addressed as Ayii Naka. It means a male deity creator who is the source of all good things which are essential for a happy life such as: having many children, prosperous gardens, and no sickness or death. It also means the source or the giver of life in harmony without suffering and war or other conflicts. One of the prayers made by the people who need more children added to their community runs like this:

*Ayii Naka ye, ini me beu no me nimiye,
Kokau miyo nabai ye, inya yokaido kou amawwo mutawwo niyameniye*
You, Ayii Naka, we are few in number, give us more children, You female deity, who lives in the underworld, feed our children.

This type of prayer was made in the midst of crises such as facing war: the time when more people were needed to fight. This prayer is addressed to the male and female deities at the same time. Both can intervene in response to the people's pleas. For this reason the Me forefathers had known the male creator as a powerful deity from the beginning. Had he not been powerful he would have not created the world. And because he had power he was known to be able to intervene in the people's lives when they were going through critical times. This he did when he brought forth rain when they were going through *awu uwa*—dry periods which were usually followed by a long period of starvation. It was because he had power that the shamans consulted him when supernatural aid was needed.

Thus, the Me people's God is believed to be a male creator deity, who had existed in the region. He is seen by the Me as creator of all things. He is in control from his dwelling place in the upperworld in the Paniai region. He is powerful unless he would not bring rain when his intervention was sought as the people went through a long period of dry season. He is also Ayu Naka—the source of all good things which are essential for a happy life here and now. He knows everything as he is always awake day and night. More importantly he is God who had been working in their history in pre-contact times and has special interest in the people's socio-religious and historical development in the past. This religious discourse can not be seen a part from Christian doctrine of God. Because Christian ideas are adopted to reaffirm their theological views in a historical context of competition with the *ogai*, while at the same time such religious arguments function as apologetical tools to defend their religious views which was being attacked by various parties.

5.2.2 *God as addressed in prayers*

In affirming their views, the people argue that God had been communicating with their ancestors in the past. Whenever they made sacrifices or prayers to this male deity creator they argue, that Ugatamee was there to meet them, whenever the Me people sought his intervention.

The Me prayers and petitions in the traditional religious practices were addressed to both supreme deities: the male deity known the female deity. The role of the female deity is mainly as a mediator, an agent or a herald. In spite of this distinction, prayers were always addressed to both deities. One could not do without the other. This is reflected in a prayer made while making a ritual sacrifice before launching a pig feast. The following prayer is made when the sponsor of the pig feast, fell an *omagee* tree (*Sapindaceae, dodonaea viscosa*) in the forest.

Koke wado mee ye, Aki peka nidou ye
Kokau miyo ye, Ekina mege niya di ye, Mee niyadi ye
You, male deity who is up there (who lives in the upperworld), Turn
your face to us, you, female deity who lives in the underworld, give us
cowrie shells and pigs, Bring more and more people to this feast.

After felling the tree, its top branches are left on the trunk. The tree is then taken to the village where a dance house for the feast is to be built. The bringing of the tree is followed by another religious ceremony. The sponsor of the pig feast starts to cut off the *pepeya* leaves (*Cyathea* sp.), while making the following petition to both of the deities,

Egee duba mogoo duba tota utoma mei, Akiiya yakii utee pakii utee kakigiiba
kumeeгаа, Woungaa kita piyaa miyougaakai, wakou gaakita piya wadou
gaakai
All goods that are stored in the mountain (I entreat you to) come, I tear
down the string bags used to store or keep the valuable goods such as the
cowrie shell, You, trees that turn back to us, turn around and smile at us
(help us).

The first part of this prayer is made to the male creator deity to bring as many people as possible to attend the feast while bringing along their cowrie shells which are stored in the mountain caves (in those days the Me stored their cowrie shells in the mountain caves). The second part of this prayer is addressed to the male creator deity that he will intervene in bringing all people: old and young, men and women, children and adult alike, along with their cowrie shells to the feast. This prayer and other form of appeal and religious rites are intended to assure the supernatural's participation in the feast.

What is important here is the Me claim that even in pre-contact times there was a male creator deity who was there to deal with their socio-economic needs at the time when his care and aid was badly needed. This notion was explicitly stated by Zakheus and his communities when their religious views were attacked. 'You came to this region to search for God who had been worshipped by our ancestors', they said. What they meant by this statement was that you just follow us and we will lead the way (DK, June 16, 1989).

5.2.3 God of the Wege Bage

The belief that God had been known by their past generations is also reflected in the religious views held by the *Wege Bage*. On the basis of this assumption that God was making himself known to them in their history in the past in

pre-contact times, the *Wege Bage* too defended their views in the midst of theological attack, and struggled to paint a picture of God who was actively involved in their own local history. God is said to have chosen Ekata, the founder of Pakage—Zakheus' clan—clan to be the instrument to fulfill the work of God in the world. This election occurred when God entrusted his religious teachings to Ekata prior to his migration to the Paniai region. According to *Wege Bage*, this God is the one who brought their ancestor to the Paniai region and gave *touye mana* or the book or the law or religious rules—which the people call the 'Bible'—to their ancestor to regulate their socio-religious life. Salvation here and now was only possible when this commandment are followed. Apart from obedience to the *touye mana* there is no salvation. But how did God give the 'Bible' or the *touye mana* to their ancestors.

5.2.3.1 *God as the giver of the touye mana—the religious rules*

Ekata, the ancestor of Pakage clan which we have noted above is seen as the recipient of *touye mana*—the book or religious rules from God. God revealed himself to Ekata in Dadi, a place in the eastern Central Highlands, Irian Jaya, perhaps in the Puncak Jaya area. How God gave the *touye mana*—religious rules or the book—to Ekata is told in a story about 12 brothers who lived in a certain place in the world. One day the male creator deity lowered his hand from the upperworld and offered that book to them. The eldest son rose up to take the book, but God withheld it. Some time later God returned again to deliver the book but he again took the book back when the second son stood up to take the book from him. The same scene was repeated again as the third son went forward to pick up the book from God as God withdrew along with the book. This went on until the youngest son's turn. When God appeared again for the twelfth time, the youngest (who was Ekata) succeeded in taking hold of the book and eventually possessing it. One day his brothers who were jealous stole the book and took it away from him and hid it. The younger brother who was supposed to keep the book or the law was upset and therefore went away. Later according to the *Wege Bage* of Yibagouyoweta, he was found in the Central Highlands of Irian Jaya and became known as Ekata or Yupi (KP, October 6, 1992). In the context of theological conflicts with the church which uses the Christian Bible to undermine the local religious aspirations, the *Wege Bage* argued that the Christian Bible is the stolen book which God had given to Ekata but was stolen by the ancestors of the *ogai*—the eleven brothers.

5.2.3.2 *God and the founder of Pakage clan*

Not only did God choose Ekata to entrust the 'Bible' or religious commandments but God also gave him the land which he and his descendants were to

occupy. After giving the religious commandments to Ekata, all other Me people groups migrated to the Paniai region from the east. The east is believed to be the area around Puncak Jaya. Today Puncak Jaya is equated with Babel (Genesis 11: 1-8) from where the people of the Central Highlands Irian Jaya originated and dispersed. According to one of the accounts of the migration story, God appeared to Yupi or Ekata in the form of awe-divine light. This happened in a place known as Dadi. From Dadi, this light (or God) brought Ekata who wandered around the Central Highlands of Irian Jaya led by God to move along in a western direction to the Paniai region. During this time of wandering, Ekata who was carrying a *yibago* tree (*pandanus* sp.) tried to plant this tree in several places. Every time he came to a place he tried to plant the *yibago* tree, believing that the place was the land God had chosen for him and his descendants. And yet, the tree did not grow well which meant that it was not the right place for him. Therefore he had to discard many places because the land was not good enough for the tree. However, before entering the Tigi area, God ordered Ekata to leave bad things behind. Thereupon he left: 1) his string bag, full of *mege*—cowrie shells; 2) *mege ude* (*cordyline terminalis*) a kind of plant believed to be powerful in multiplying cowrie shells; and 3) his arrows and bows which incite the people to go to war or to kill others. Ekata willingly left all these items in a place called Megeimogo, which means 'mege changed to stone'. These items were abandoned because the land to which they came to occupy was 'holy', therefore all that were considered to be bad and 'sinful' was ordered to be left behind in Megeimogo. Finally God brought Ekata to Yibagouyoweta (Tigi). When Ekata arrived in Yibagouyoweta, he once again tried to plant the *yibago* tree, and this time it grew well signifying that it was God's chosen place for him. He settled in this place. That was the reason why this place was called Yibagouyoweta, which means the place where he planted the *yibago* tree. And yet, it is here that Zakheus started his activities. Thus, to Zakheus and his communities, God is the male deity who is fundamentally associated with their history. He is the one who gave the founder of their clan the religious rules or the 'Bible' but also the one who brought him to the Paniai region from their original place in Puncak Jaya.

Thus from above description it is clear that the *Wege Bage* had entertained the idea that 1) God is the one who chose this land for the Me to occupy. This means that he had intentionally identified himself with their history and traditions. It also means that their history is God's story; 2) God also had been in contact with the Me in the past. He is not a silent God. He had given the people his religious commandments to make his wishes known to them. This religious commandments are now taken as 'the Bible' (see section 5.3). Based on this conviction the *Wege Bage* tried to convince the local pastor/evangelists who were connected with the missionaries who later became indigenous

church leaders to quit working for missionaries 'because Western missionaries did not know *ayii mana* which can be translated as teachings about salvation or good and prosperous life. The *ogai* came here to learn about God who had been always worshipped by the Me people' (DK, June 12, 1992).

5.2.4 *The female guardian deity*

In previous section it was noted in passing, that although God is a male creator deity, in prayers a female deity was addressed along with the male creator deity. This presupposes the belief in a female deity who acts as agent of the male deity. This section will deal with this belief centered around the female deity. Based on their belief in this female deity, who undertake socio-economic concerns, the *Wege Bage* argue that the Western missionaries and the government personnel—who had become the symbol of religious and political threat to their religious convictions—also had a female deity who supplied them with all kinds of Western goods.

The female spirit deity was known by two names: a) *Nabai*, meaning my grandmother or my great-grandmother. In a religious context it refers to a female guardian spirit who lives in the underworld and who is believed to be in control over the land of the underworld and all that are in it; b) Another name used to address this female deity is *Noukai* which literally means my mother. This word is also used to address the guardian spirit. This female deity functioned as agent of the male creator deity. This is deity in the sense that she carries out the instruction from the male creator from the upper-world. In the capacity of agent according to the Me, since pre-contact times, she was known as: a) the goddess of fertility—who made gardens prosperous; b) or the guardians of certain clans—who undertook economic and political interest of the clans; or c) the sponsor of the leaders of religious movements in the last three decades.

5.2.4.1 *The female deity as deity of fertility*

Female deities who act as deities of fertility are abundant in the people's legends. In the people's local history it is believed that certain clans in pre-contact times had enjoyed the support and cooperation from this female deity. According to the *Wege Bage* in Tigi, there was a female deity who was in contact with the ancestors of the Pakage clan. This female deity was working for the welfare of the ancestors of Zakheus.

Ekata and his immediate descendants received the cooperation of the female deity, as long as they kept the laws and worked hard in the garden. This deity made their garden prosperous. This is true of some of the descendants of Ekata who lived in Yaba, Tigi district. Later when the Mote clan

came and migrated to Yaba, they gradually pushed the Pakage clan out of Yaba. This development made the descendants of Ekata angry and they began to threaten the new comers. Wars with the Mote were inevitable to reclaim their lost land. Since that time Ekata's descendants took up bows and arrows and became involved in war—thus doing something that was forbidden by Ekata and by God. As a result the female deity who had helped made their gardens prosperous disappeared. This is expressed in the following story.

Long time ago, at a time when the people were few, an early settler of Yaba—believed to be the ancestor of Pakage clan—was living in Yaba, which is today occupied by the Mote clan. One day this man started to make a garden. The first day he started to fell some trees and prepared fence out of these trees to protect his garden from wild pigs. The following night there was a tall woman—*mee yagamo*—who came during the night and felled the rest of the trees. This female deity came to work for him. She made fence for the garden, tilled the ground and later went out to find the right sweet potatoes vines and others seeds to be grown in the garden. She protected the garden and made the garden prosperous. This went on for some time. Every time he wanted to make gardens the *mee yagamo* above was there to help finish the work. He became a man with special skills for making gardens. However, there was another man who came much later to this area (believed to be the ancestor of the Mote clan) who was getting jealous of him. One day this later comer went to kill that women who had worked for the earlier settler. The night when he killed this female spirit, he decided to go and watch in the garden which the earlier settler had just started. Around middle of the night the female guardian spirit appeared. She wanted to make sure the garden was in good shape. When he saw the female spirit, he shot her. The spirit deity however fled and escaped. That man went after her and pursued her until he came to a big tree from where he could not trace her footsteps. He thought the lady had turned into tree. He was right because as he felled the tree, the blood started to flow out of the tree. Since that time the ancestors of the Pakage clan have had to work as hard as the others. According to the *Wege Bage* in Kokobaya this female deity or the spirit deity was with Zakheus during his work (MP, October 3, 1992 and KP, October 6, 1992).

5.2.4.2 *The female deity as a guardian of the clan*

The *Wege Bage* in Kokobaya and Kiuto believe that the female deity had taken initiatives to intervene in the history of their clan. According to this *Wege* community this female deity had chosen one of their clan from each genera-

tion in the past to lighten their political and economic loads. She was willing to help the clan as long as they worked hard and kept the religious rules conveyed, every time she made contact with the person. This female deity is known as the guardian of their clans. The *Wege* community in Kiuto identify this female deity as the spirit being who in the past brought *megebeto* to the founder of one of the clans in Kiuto. *Megebeto* is a tortoise-like being which is believed to be symbol of spirit being. It can deliver cowrie shells. One time this spirit deity revealed herself as a *megebeto* a man who was returning to Kiuto from a pig feast held in Wotai—on the bank of the Jawi River—with a boat with his wives. As the boat came to Potigoo, a place facing Enarotali, they saw a big boat coming toward them. As they approach the boat, its size was getting smaller and smaller. Then when their boat reached the middle of Lake Paniai, the other boat changed its form and became a very large cowrie shell. Then they saw a small cowrie shell laying on the top of the big cowrie shell. The man spoke, 'are you two—referring to the two cowrie shells—the spirit beings who have been killing members of my clan in the past or the female deity who had been supplying our forefathers with cowrie shells? If you are the enemy of our clan, I want you to disappear right now, from this place'. (This kind of communication between human beings and spirit deities embodied in certain objects such as this moving boat is prevalent in Me folk tales.) The *megebeto* did not disappear, therefore it was believed it was the female who was interested in helping the man to provide him with cowrie shells. The man took the cowrie shells and went home. Upon reaching home they performed a religious ritual by burning some pork which they had bought at the feast. The intention of ritual was to induce the spirit behind the *megebeto* to bear some cowrie shells. The following day, the man indeed found that his cowrie shells had doubled, from 60 to 120. Later he asked two of his brothers to try; which they did. The two brothers and the man performed the same ritual with the portions of pork from the pig feast. The following day they too found that their cowrie shells had doubled. This practice continued until two young man died instantly, and the relatives of the two young men accused the man, saying it was the female deity behind the *megebeto* who had killed them. Unless the man would throw the *megebeto* away, they would kill him, they said. The man indeed threw the cowrie shells into Lake Paniai. The one who offered the two cowrie shells in the lake is believed to be a female deity who acted as agent of the male deity creator or God to bring some cowrie shells to this man from Kiuto (PP, September 22, 1992).

This is supposed to have taken place took place in the pre-contact period, but later the female returned as a sponsor of the cargoistic programs of Paulus of which was discussed in the previous chapter and which will be elaborated further in the next section.

5.2.4.3 *The female deity as a cargo deity*

In the past three decades all cult leaders claimed that they had been called by a female deity who was willing to offer them the key to unlock the goods stored in underworld. Speaking of this topic of female deity, it is important to note that when Christianity was introduced, the term Ugatamee—male creator deity—was used to refer to the Biblical idea of God. With this and with the suppression of the Me traditional religious practices, the female deity seemed to have disappeared from the people's official religious vocabulary. The idea of God as creator and male deity became more dominant and for his female counter-part there was no place in the religious ideas in the Christian idea. But during the last four decades, this female deity has returned and became dominant as female deity who could supply Western goods.

In 1964, when rumors spread about Paulus and his cargoistic programs it was said that an *ogai yagamo*—an Euroamerican lady—had appeared to Paulus and offered him a key to enter the underworld. As noted in previous the chapter, Paulus was said to have had visited the underworld accompanied by the female deity. In the underworld Paulus met all relatives and other people who died; they were alive and working and enjoying a happy life. The old people who had died in the past generations (of whom Paulus only knew by stories from his parents) had become young people who were living in peace and prosperity. The female deity who lived in that world of prosperity then brought Paulus back to his village and said 'if you and your people want to live as your relatives what you have seen, you have to pay the price by making sacrifices'. And yet Paulus failed to fulfill his promises to bring Western goods and guns. The people blamed Paulus for this failure as he did not strictly observed the rules attached to the offer of a *pabrik* by this female deity. Thus, the belief in a female deity—who lives in the underworld and who can help the people to come out of socio-political chaos, is reaffirmed, while the blame for failure was thrown on Paulus. Here, it is important to note that the relatives of Paulus and the former *Wege* communities believe that this female deity who had promised Western goods to Paulus is the one who had given *megebeto* to the old man as indicated in the previous section.

Another cult leader from Kamu began to introduce his activities beginning May 1984 after he received a call from a female deity. She appeared to him through a series of visions which he had. During these visits this female deity made her programs known to him and asked his cooperation. She said,

We (the female deity was speaking on behalf of other spirit beings) need your cooperation to make this region prosperous, peaceful and clean before the return of Jesus or God. We want to make West Papua free from Indonesian domination before Jesus Christ returns to this region. Because

Jesus will not be happy if he returns and find this region still in the state of being undeveloped and backward. We will be punished by him, the female deity said. Furthermore, she said you have to built five houses and bring sacrifices and all will be well (ZW, July 7, 1990).

With this message he began his activities in building houses to be used as an 'office' by the spirit deities. In this case the female deity plays the role of herald to prepare the way for a new era to come.

In the above section I have attempted to describe the Me belief about the female deity and the Me beliefs about the activities of this deity. It can be stated that the female deity has played an important role in the people's religious beliefs. It is assumed that there are certain clans that have female guardian spirits; which in the pre-contact times looked after the well-being of the clan. Furthermore, if the beliefs in the female deity is prevalent, it is surprising because the female deity figure, who shows her favoritism to certain people in providing protection in an extra-ordinary way, is a common theme in the people's folktales. Thus, it is not difficult to see why the people accepted Zakheus as a religious leader who was said to be cooperating with such spiritual beings.

5.2.4.4 Missionaries' goods and the female deity

In the light of their religious beliefs regarding the female deity and in the context of changing their religious convictions and fear of politico-religious domination by the *ogai*, the people then argued that both the Catholic priests and the Protestant missionaries were not only cooperating with a female deity but also were being supported by a female deity. The missionaries, according to Me, never admitted to the local people into their houses for fear that the people might discover their secret room which they had set aside inside their houses for this female spirit deity. This female deity supplied the *ogai* with western goods. Some people argued that there is a door which they kept hidden from the local people inside their house to the underworld from where the missionaries obtained their goods. In January 1985, when the rumor about cargo cult activities in Mapia became prevalent, two men who live around 10 meters away from the house of the Catholic priest in the village related the following account. One night they heard a sound of a man doing something at the hill side beside the house of the Catholic priest. At first they thought it was a thief who was going to steal from the house of the priest; so they hid under a tree to see what the man was going to do. They saw a man with a flashlight and it dawned upon them that it was the priest himself. They noticed as he stood up and look around to make sure that no one was around. After this he went into the underground (he disappeared and entered the

underworld). Not long after this he appeared again, carrying a heavy load on his shoulders and filled his house with goods. Some time later when the house was full of goods, he locked the gate to the underworld and went to sleep.

This account is made with the view to show that the people interpret the *ogai* in terms of their beliefs in a female deity. The people argue that there was a female deity who supplied the missionaries with those goods. And the knowledge of which the *ogai* never reveal to the local people. Again, it is important to note the context in which such views were expressed. Firstly, the people related this account after the rumors became prevalent that a female deity had been offering a large supply of guns in Mapia area since December 1984. The account simply endorsed the existing beliefs that it is impossible to have access to power and prosperity without the help of a female spirit being. Secondly, the people's argument that 'the female deity in supplying their goods for the missionaries' can be seen as religious discourse to weaken the *ogai*' position simply because the Me can have access to power through the aids of the female deity.

5.2.5 *God and religious objects*

God or the male deity creator described in the previous section is also capable of offering the Me special religious objects such as special stones, keys, special knowledge or special water, a Moses' staff, etc. Such religious objects can be used to effect salvation to the community such as: healing, making gardens fertile, multiplying pigs or protection in a war. In the context of encounter with the *ogai* the Me argue that the *ogai* are not honest to the people, as they never tell Me about their religious objects which they used to protect themselves or to multiply goods. This section reviews the people's beliefs about such religious knowledge.

The position of religious leadership in this society is not a matter of choice. To be a shaman, for example, one has to receive the religious call seven times through dreams and or visions. The only person who is willing to take up the office of shamanism, is someone who has received special instructions when he was taken away and saw the religious objects to be used in the healing ceremony during the time when he was taken away through visions. These sacred objects consist of: certain grass and tree leaves and prayer formula which he uses at the instruction from God, the male deity creator who lives in the upperworld or from certain spirit beings who act as his agents. During the time when the shaman experiences these visions he is taken up to a high mountain such as Deyai, and led to explore deep valleys where there are powerful sacred objects. The tree leaves or certain plants known as *kamu bouyo* which he was to use during religious ceremonies are said to be found

only in those high mountains and in deep valleys which the leader had visited, supervised by the spirit beings. It is also during this time 'when he is taken away' that he is taught the right prayer formula which he has to recite during the ceremony. Instructions at this period when the religious leader taken away also involves rules or taboos which he has to observe to be an effective healer. The point here is that a religious leader in this culture cannot perform his religious duty without the aid of religious objects, believed to be given by God or by spirits representing him. Such sacred objects are essential for the position of religious leaders to have access to 'the power from spirit world'; but also to be accepted as legitimate religious leaders.

Zakheus was not exempted from this practice. Therefore Zakheus was said to have had possessed *duta*. It was this belief in *duta* which was used by the missionaries as a weapon to expel Zakheus from the mission or from other indigenous church leaders. Zakheus came into conflict with CAMA missionaries out of Zakheus conviction on the myths which he claimed to have received from his father. He signifies these with the word *duta* (Grootenhuis 1960: 6). But those who had dealt with Zakheus on this issue of *duta* did not provide a clear idea of what *duta* was all about. Troutman wrote,

Dodeiwode passed his revelations on his sons. Zacheus was the one to receive what is called 'Duta' even though he was not the oldest son (Troutman 'Wegee Mana' in Smalley I 1977: 617).

Mary McIlrath similarly was aware of Zakheus' belief in *duta* but did not give an idea of what *duta* was.

It appears his father took his three boys to the jungle and to be baptized with pig blood. Zakheus spent hours with the old man of his village who reported this to Zakheus as a special 'Duta' (McIlrath, Karel and Zacheus n.d., also Catto 1993).

Grootenhuis however gives a clue as to what *duta* was all about.

Duta is not so much an instituted conveyance of knowledge or possession, but a more or less unconscious inheritance of ability and qualities (Grootenhuis 1960: 6, footnotes).

Zakheus, many argue today, was able to perform miraculous works and did many other things including his works of Christianization of various districts in this region because he possessed *duta*.

Other religious leaders referred to in the preceding chapter also claimed to have had received such religious objects with which they can change the course of their tribe's history and their world. Paulus who emerged from among the *Wege* community in Kiuto, for example, claimed to have received the key to unlock the Western goods which were believed to be stored under Kiuto Hill. This key was a special religious object which was given by the female deity indicated in the previous section who appeared in the form of a tall Euroamerican lady. It was said that Paulus indeed had discovered the key and the western goods were or are still there in the underworld. Paulus failed to bring in the goods simply because he did not follow the rules attached to the key when it was first revealed to him by the female deity.

Decky, who succeeded Paulus, similarly claimed that God had shown him where he could find a special stone after he went to challenge God to fulfill the promise in Matthew 3: 6:

But seek first his kingdom and his righteousness and all these things will be given to you as well.

Upon reading this verse, Decky asked God to do His part in giving all things simply because, the Me had already become part of Kingdom of God, and that they knew already the righteousness. Decky believed it was God's time to offer other material blessings and political independence for the West Papuans. He, therefore spent three days and nights in prayer and fasting. On the fourth night of the fasting God appeared to him in a vision and Decky was instructed to go to a small creek not far from the place where he lived. Later he indeed claimed that he discovered the special stone and began to preach his programs.

Benyamin, a cult leader also indicated in the previous chapter, who emerged from area where Paulus introduced his programs, and who succeeded Paulus, said that he was going to help drive out the Indonesians and to establish the independent state of West Papua by means of a special stone. Benyamin said he discovered this stone when he went fishing in Lake Paniai. While he was fishing he saw a small sparkling stone which he was able to catch. Later he brought the stone to the Worsley—a Canadian CAMA missionary who had worked since the 1970s in the Paniai region to help the Churches in this region. According to Benyamin and his men this stone was given by the male deity creator to Benyamin. The idea that the stone was given by God was confirmed according to Benyamin when he was asked by Worsley to pray to find out whether it was from God or any other evil spirit. After they finished their prayer, Worsley told Benyamin that it was indeed from God.

Later in November 1986, Benyamin told his men in the Paniai region that he was now going to Jayapura to see Worsley and take Moses' staff or the staff

of God. According to Benjamin the stone which he had given to Worsley had been transformed into a staff of God or Moses' staff—which was used by Moses to deliver the Jews from Egyptian oppressors (Exodus 3ff). Benjamin said that if he had the staff of God in his hand he would perform many wonders and change the world. One of the things he would do with staff of Moses was to drive out the Indonesians and then establish the West Papuan State. But when he came to Nabire the people who had heard his activities in the Paniai region asked him to stay in Nabire and minister them as 'seer', a person who can help them 'see' who killed their relatives with sorcery objects.

I have attempted to show the Me people's belief in the religious objects. The Me and these religious leaders share the view that the male creator God had been dealing with their ancestors by providing them religious objects. Such objects were or are intended to be used as a means to bring in prosperity or to drive out evil spirits or to bring victory to the community when it has faced uncertain situations. In the last three decades it has been assumed that the male creator deity or God has been showing his concern toward the people's socio-economic and political situation. The male creator deity has shown this sympathy toward the Me by granting religious objects as special stone or Staff of Moses to Benjamin for example to deliver the people out of socio-economic and politico-religious chaos.

5.2.6 Conclusion: God of the Me people and the foreigners

In this section, I have attempted to show the people's view of God which is explicitly expressed in the course of change and conflict with the *ogai*.

God is according to the Me and the *Wege Bage* a male creator deity who lives in the upperworld and who has existed in the Paniai region and had been actively involved in making his wishes known to the people long before the *ogai* had came to the region. Based on this conviction the people argue that the Paniai region was a special place in the eyes of this deity God. God had chosen this place as his dwelling place and used it as the theater of his activities. Not only the land which he had chosen, also the people to whom he had made known his commandments (see previous section: 5.2.3.1 'God as the giver of the book/the law', and the following section 5.3 'The Me people's perception of the Bible') had a special place in his eyes.

It was out of this conviction that after the first contact with the Europeans in December 1935 the people were arguing that the new era was breaking in. God was returning to the Paniai region to take up his dwelling among the people of the land. The advent of the *ogai* was seen as a sign of the fulfillment of this religious expectation. The Europeans were seen as spirit of the dead who were returning to await the coming of a new era in the Paniai region.

The time has come for the dead and the living to fellowship again as new world was about to arrive, they argued. It was believed that when the deity arrive he would choose one certain location in the Paniai region and get all of the people together. For this reason Demia, my father who was visiting his grandmother in Bokaibutu—Kamu district—was asked to stay there, so that when the new era would commence, they as a family could go together to the place that was expected to be announced in those days. It was believed in those days before the new era would arrive all of the people will gather together according to their family lines in one certain place. The new world was expected to come following the contact. Some people thought that Koyeidaba (see below 5.5 ‘The Me idea of Jesus: Zakheus and Koyeidaba as messianic figures’) was going to return and judge the world. The *ogai* were seen not as preachers who had the gospel but ‘co-waiters’ of new era expected to come to the Paniai region as prescribed by the people’s perceived pre-contact religious beliefs.

Still some others argue from the above mentioned view point that *ogai*—who came with their material goods and later maintain a regular supply of goods and cowrie shell—were cooperating with their ‘female guardian spirit who was appointed by God’ who would supply them such goods. In the context of encounter with *ogai*, the Me people argue that they also were receiving similar messages from God through the female deity who was going to supply them with western goods. In fact, it was pointed out in the previous chapter, Troutman was said to have visited Kiuto and had seen the material wealth which was being stored under Kiuto Hill. He was said to have admired the *pabrik* of Paulus of Kiuto. What is important in this argument is the people’s idea that this missionary who was a strong opponent of the local theological views was now changing his views and supporting the people’s politico-religious views by admiring the *pabrik* of Paulus.

Others argue from the same view point that the *ogai* were descendants of their forefathers who had departed and now coming back to the Paniai region to await the advent of a new era. It was said ‘although the *ogai* became materially prosperous and rich, they were dissatisfied simply because they did not know where God can be found; and who God was. After they consulted seers from their country in their search for the knowledge of God’s whereabouts, they were told by God himself to go to the Paniai region’. The *Wege Bage* argued that the *ogai* came in search for God who had been already known by their forefathers. This idea is expressed in the story of The separation of three brothers which will be dealt with later (see 5.6.1 ‘Local Eschatology: the Me belief in an immediate transformation of the world’). The theological arguments cited are built on the people’s deep-rooted conviction that God preached by the *ogai* has been relating to them in their history long before the

ogai came to this region. Thus, a theological discourse which was formulated by the *Wege Bage* in the context of opposition from the *ogai*.

5.3 The Me's perception of the Bible

The idea that God already existed in the Paniai region long before Christianity came to the Paniai region is not the only theological view of the Me. Because the Me also entertain the idea that their ancestors had the *touye mana*—the real Bible which was lost. The teachings of Zakheus and other religious leaders are seen as an exposition of the lost indigenous Bible or the Bible itself.

This argument is based on religious idea known by the Me as *Touye Mana*. *Touye* comes from two words *tou* and *ie*. *Tou* means to stay behind or to exist. While the word *ie*, means leaves of any tree, tradition or customs. *Mana* means teachings, news, voice etc. Thus *touye mana* means the religious rules or taboos which could bring prosperous life—which had been in existence in this region which was lost. *Touye mana* is a set of religious rules/ taboos required in making garden prosperous, or taboos to make house strong, taboos relating to food to keep the body healthy, etc. Other name for this *touye mana* is *touye kapogeie* which can be translated as the book that had existed, but some how was lost. I guess, this *kapogeie*—which means paper—is a recent invention. According to one version of the Koyeidaba mythology which will be discussed below (see section 5.5 'The Me idea of Jesus: Zakheus and Koyeidaba as messianic figures') Nooku, Koyeidaba' sister took the *touye mana* along and went south, after Koyeidaba was killed. Many *Wege Bage* argue that Christian Bible is the printed version of original *Touye Mana* which was taken away by Noku.

The second reason is that the Me people's conviction that their existing religious commandments are the same or the summary of the whole content of the Christian Bible. The *Wege Bage* who entertain this idea used the 10 commandments of the Old Testament to defend this view.

Thirdly, since God had taken up residence in the Paniai region, the country of the Me people, he also had been communicating with them religiously by giving them religious commandments to follow. This was indicated by the *Wege Bage* who regarded Ekata, the founder of Pakage as the recipient of the religious rules or law, in short their Moses.

The present section outlines those religious commandments which had been believed to have already existed in the region. This is followed by religious teachings of Zakheus and other leaders of *Wege* communities which are seen as an exposition of the above religious commandments. More attention will be paid to the teachings of Zakheus, his predictions and his actions which

are seen as predicting their destiny. Before considering the teachings of Zakheus and other leaders of *Wege Bage* taken as 'the lost indigenous Bible' it is important to note the fact that the content of this Bible to be outlined below is not the same: there is variation even within Zakheus' communities. Each community 'heard' different message from the same man: Zakheus. Different people groups tried to develop their view of what Zakheus had taught them in the light of their own needs and the history and ideals of their group. Furthermore, the leaders who initiated various *Wege* communities invented their own views when beginning to establish new communities in the light of their needs. In such case, when Zakheus visited the communities, he could only embrace and confirm their views. His visits were not to impose his views, but to give directions, taking into consideration the people's freedom of expression and religion, provided that they were willing to incorporate his own views.

5.3.1 *Zakheus, indigenous Bible and the religious teachings*

The people in general agree that the content of Zakheus' teaching was not foreign to them. Zakheus' role was that of restating the existing religious commandments.

Those who wanted to follow him and join the *Wege* communities were required to observe the past religious commandments:

Yape daa
Oma temoti
Puya daa
Mogai daa
Mee tewagi
Akukai akaitai ibo eyaikai
Meeka mude yakagumai daa
Mee ka agiyo kibigi daa
Peu mana, emoge mana da
Mee ka mudeida bokemainai daa, koma wegii daa
Kego mana da
Waka oya to
Ipa dimi epa-uto awii
 Do not go to war
 Do not steal
 Do not tell a lie
 Do not commit adultery
 Respect the parents and elderly

Respect the land boundaries
Do not desire other people's material goods
Avoid teachings or news which are bad or evil
Do not hunt or make dugout canoes in other people's lands or property
Stay away from sorcery
Abolish the bride price practice
Be compassionate to the needy

More can be added to this list of rules. What is important here is that these religious commandments are thought to be the essential content of the *Touye Mana* taken as the indigenous Bible by the *Wege Bage*. Zakheus' function was to dig up and recover those religious rules and reintroduce the content of the lost religious teachings to the people of his contemporaries.

5.3.2 *Zakheus and his other teachings*

Aside from reintroducing the past religious teachings, Zakheus also gave new instructions.

a. *Mege da*, 'Throw away all your *mege*'. *mege* is evil. Never sell anything to earn *mege*. Give to those who are in need; the same way if you are in need, others will help you.

1. This instruction is based on the *Wege Bage*'s interpretation of the origin story, as Ekata—the progenitor of the Pakage clan—left behind the *mege* in Megeimogo before entering the Tigi area as it was shown above.
2. It is also based on the *Wege Bage*'s view that search for cowrie shells always prevents the Me people from carrying out their religious duties.
3. Some gave their reason for the rejection of the cowrie shell as motivated by the Bible verse that says no servant can serve two masters. Either he will hate the one and love the other or he will be devoted to the one and despise the other. You cannot serve both God and Mamon (Luke 9: 11-13). The cowrie shell was believed as produced by Megebeto—which was interpreted by the *Wege Bage* as Mamon. While still others reason for the rejection of *mege* out of their conviction that the cowrie shell is produced by a *megebeto* or *yina* which is the symbolic representation of supernatural agent, every time the owner of the *yina* make burnt offering of pigs or chicken to the *yina*. Many believe that *mege* usually are her excrements, and therefore not good for man to use in the economic transactions.

Many of Zakheus' communities threw away their *mege* since they wanted to use the Dutch money (see further in section 5.4.5 'Salvation and *mege*').

b. *Owa ena tapa to tai*, 'Make your houses in one place'. Zakheus instructed those who wanted to obey his word had to start a new life, by establishing a new and clean village with flower beds and toilets. Zakheus also instructed his followers to build pigs stalls separate from their settlements and keep the village clean. He also taught the people to take a bath every day.

c. *Ekowai enaimo to*, 'All people must work together for common good'. Zakheus, according to the *Wege Bage*, taught them that it was necessary for them to work together this extended to all socio-economic activities such as: making dugout canoes, garden, or making fence or bridge or road construction—because this was a good exercise or training to prepare the people to work together to meet their needs, because there would difficult times in the future. If the people could live and work together now they would survive in the future when the difficult times would come.

d. *Bodiya ibo nako meita peu bagee enaine, koyoka ayu mana kou teyaikai*—'A big fire will come and destroy the world and those who disobey religious rules therefore follow the religious rules'. This is drawn from Biblical teaching that those who refused to acknowledge Jesus Christ as Son of God would be sent to hell (see further on section 5.4.7 'Salvation here and now: Zakheus' teachings on hell and the end of the world'). It is possible that this instruction is related to the traditional religious beliefs about the immediate destruction of the world through natural crises prevalent in the local folk tales or legends (see further 5.6 'The local eschatology').

e. *Ana ukai kou epei*, 'Observe *ana ukai* ceremony'. *Ana ukai* means to untie or to unchain. *Ana ukai* is a religious rite intended to deliver the people from the chains of sins or bad habits or deadly spells imposed on them. One of the assumptions behind this rite is that all people are inclined to do bad or evil things because of wrong-doings committed by their ancestors or even their parents who are dead. Those who wanted to join the *Wege* communities were required to participate in these rites (see further section 5.4.8 'Salvation as deliverance from bondage of evil: *babeyai ana ukai*').

f. *Ibo mege, ibo ekina, ibo bugi, ibo owa kouko enya ka dota ka dimi tegai*. 'Have nothing to do with big cowrie shells, big gardens, pigs or big houses'. This teaching is based on the idea that if any one has a big pig, many cowrie shells, or a big garden, he could be killed by means of sorcery by the people

who are jealous. Alternatively, it might cause the owner to be boastful which is against the word of God which teaches the people to be humble.

Aside from these teachings Zakheus also made many prophetic sayings which shaped the Me religious orientation today. From the way the *Wege Bage* see it, Zakheus prophetic teachings can be divided into two: 1) verbal statements and 2) instructions which Zakheus acted out or dramatized in his daily activities.

5.3.3 *Zakheus prophetic teachings: verbal statements*

The following section is devoted to a collection of the prophetic statements which Zakheus made over the years. It is likely that Zakheus made many more statements which are still stored in the people's mind, ready to be used as a point of reference when the situation allows. These prophetic instructions have been serving as guidelines for the interpretation of their history and for the changes that have been taking place in the region.

a. *Maki kou yinine bage nake meitai ka, itoga koda maki kadiya bidakai, eda wagii, me okakai ekina okakai tiyawii*, 'Strangers will come and take your land away, therefore work hard from now on, make fences for the pigs and set apart special locations for the pigs'. This was Zakheus attempt to teach the people to work hard in cultivating their land, to build a clean village, separate the pigs from the people's settlements by bringing all the pigs to certain place surrounded by fences to prevent them from destroying their villages and gardens. The people argue today that this instruction was based on Zakheus' knowledge about the future situation and he gave this instruction with the anticipation to prepare the people for the future.

b. *Ibo oto ita nako waditai, yakai Sentani (Jayapura) make Nabire to daana Nabire make Enarotali ga wokato kou kodo Wamena make yakai Sentani (Jayapura) to, kou ita kuduga makiga uwitage ka koya weda tegayake nitou, emino ga peu pagi tipa ko*, 'In the future the road linking the following cities will be constructed. Jayapura-Nabire—from Nabire to Enarotali. Then Enarotali to Wamena and from Wamena to Jayapura. When some bad things happen in the future, we will take that road, we will not go by airplane or ship but walk from here (Sentani) to Enarotali'. This prediction was made in Sentani in the 1960s.

The construction of a road linking Nabire to Enarotali, from there to Wamena was started by the government in April 1974. At that time people were asked to participate in the project with the promise that they would be paid. The people complained, because the *ogai* who were in charge of the

construction spent the money for themselves, and failed to pay the people. The project was abandoned (*Kompas*, 26 April 1974). In June 1990 this road construction project linking Nabire-Enarotali-Wamena was taken up again. In December 1992, it was reported that the road had reached Mapia district, only an one day walk from Moanemani—the government post in Kamu district. When I asked an Indonesian, a member of the DPR (Regional House of Representatives) in Nabire, he doubted whether it would be completed on the targeted time, because ‘those who were involved’ in the construction are spending all the money to go shopping in Jakarta once a month’. While the road linking Wamena to Jayapura which was started in April 1990, is still under construction. What is important here for us is the *Wege Bage*’s view of these projects. Many today take this as fulfillment of Zakheus’ prophetic words which he had stated years ago. One of the men who heard this prediction from Zakheus said ‘at that time, I thought Zakheus was sick, he was saying all these things, but now after almost twenty years later when I see the government building the road from Jayapura to Wamena I had to change my view about the words of Zakheus’ (EE, July 16, 1992).

c. *Aniki nagipai maiya, bokapa maiya, anigoyake (iya kiyake) kou maki kouko anii-kida doutouta*, ‘Even if I am shot or killed and die, I will rise again from the dead in the future and I will rule this land myself’.

Zakheus made this statement several times. At one time he told the people while planting a tree in his village in Yibagouyoweta: *tumaa-na agiyo ewa kipi ko ki piya ki yake yakeidaiga, enaa-ko enaa peu-ko peu or ena ma peu ma*—which means that ‘if something happens to this tree, something will good or bad will occur’. The people generally interpret this statement as saying: if some thing happened to this tree, Zakheus will soon return to the Paniai region. Many said on June, 26, 1990, the tree which he had planted disappeared. An earthquake occurred in the Paniai region in the morning of that day. I was in Epouto, at the Catholic Mission station on the shore of Lake Tage on that day and planned to spend the night in Bomou which I did. In Bomou I was told that the people were talking about the earthquake which had occurred and more importantly the tree which Zakheus had planted which disappeared. I did not check it, although I had planned to go and see this tree myself and what happened to it. But I was hesitant to go, because according to my relatives who live there, my presence in that place would give rise to different views about Zakheus. They were right because this rumor inspired the son of Okeiyamoye, the youngest brother of Zakheus, to organize a feast in a recognition of Zakheus’ work and in the anticipation of his return. This created a conflict between the people who had participated and the local church leadership as noted in the introductory chapter.

d. *Paniai doko kouko ibo kota peku kaita, okai kouya ito koda uwo oni, sayur wei, noya agiyoudo kou wedo tai, kou koda uang-uang tiyake umitou tete*, 'The Paniai region will not remain as it is today (1950s), in the future it will change because it will grow to become a big city; therefore learn to take a bath everyday, cultivate your land and start growing vegetables which can bring cash money'.

While theologically Zakheus wanted to introduce an indigenous version of Christianity, he was also intending to prepare the people for the socio-economic integration into the rest of the world. This he did by encouraging the people to plant vegetables which they could sell to the *ogai*. Religious leaders from this region, who preach politico-religious liberation today through the intervention of God also make known the same message 'The Paniai region will become a big city before the return of God or Koyeidaba' (see section 5.6.2.4 'The world turns into a mega city').

e. *Igapu urwa nako yawita ka nota kou peu no tetai, ata tikidi kou muni*, 'A long starvation period will come therefore start to plant or conserve *ata deno* (*Cyathea* sp. a large tree fern) and *tikidi* (*Dennstaedtia*, small ferns) and all kinds of edible plants or do not cut them down but let them grow and learn to eat as little as possible'.

Many claim that starvation which has been taking place in the region as a result of continued rain fall every year (see section 4.9.2.2 'Annual floods in the Paniai region') has to be seen as fulfillment of this prophecy.

f. *Ibo yape nako pagi tipa ko ini wadou bage to kiida konda bage ka nigido taitai*, 'In the future, there will be a long period of war against the Me and against the Highland people of Irian Jaya in general'.

The people argue that they will go to war against the rest of the world before the era of freedom and peace began. This war according to the *Wege Bage* will be fought because the enemy do not want to see the Me and the people of the Central Highlands of Irian Jaya liberated (see also section 5.6.2.3 'The war against all people of the world').

g. *Uang ito wudete keike igaita/akapaka taitage ini keda mege ma*, 'The money—referring to Indonesian money since this prediction was made in 1968-1969—we are using now will disappear, it will be replaced by our own (Irian Jayan) currency when a new era will begin in the future'. This has been interpreted as saying that Irian Jaya will be liberated from foreign political powers and then the Irian Jayans will use their own money as a means of exchange.

h. *Toko putu muta yago bage ubaine bage nake meitai, me wagine tiyake*, 'There would be strangers who will come and search for and kill men and women who are strong and well-built'. Zakheus told the people that Widiyai-biwode—my uncle—was going to be one of their targets. After May 1963, when the Indonesian government took control over New Guinea and named it Irian Jaya the people have been thrown into the sea of fear of moving around for fear of being killed by the agents of the present government as the rumor of the construction sacrifice became prevalent (see section 5.6.2.3 'The war against all people of the world and rumors of head hunting'). Rumors that the government was hiring several people to go out and cut the head of whomever they can find to be used sacrifice by burying it at a construction site such as an airport or an office building has been prevalent during the last three decades. This was seen as the fulfillment of this prophecy.

i. *Polisi do ka egege kou na igaita, uka kou yatuwai tai*, 'The local police, who are against us will become powerless like us, their guns will be taken away'.

This was indeed fulfilled because after the Me revolted against the Indonesian government in 1969, all of the guns were taken away from the local police. Today they have no guns. Eventually the local police personnel were transferred to the coastal town of Nabire and were replaced by the police personnel who come from other Islands such as Java, Ambon, Sumatra or Celebes. Perhaps this move was taken out of the conviction that it was the local police personnel who led the Enarotali Uprising in June, 1969 which will be described to later.

What people understand as Zakheus' words of instructions concerning the future course of the world are not just Zakheus' verbal statements as has been outlined above. There are also his actions which are still buried in the people's minds. Some of these will be presented in the next section.

5.3.4 *Zakheus prophetic teachings: Zakheus actions*

Today, the Me view Zakheus' movements and actions as a form of a religious message for them 'now and here' as well as for the years to come. Such actions by Zakheus are said to be portraying their destiny. The people argue that he adopted a different approach of teaching: by acting out or dramatizing what was going to take place in the future.

a. *Zakheus ate pieces of raw fish*

At one time, Zakheus took two pieces of fish from two of women and ate them. The two women were returning home from the market. After they had

reached home, Zakheus came and took the raw fish from them. This act has been interpreted as saying that in the last days there would be a food crisis and the Irian Jayans would die everywhere from hunger.

b. Zakheus robbed sweet potatoes from two women

On another occasion he robbed two bags of sweet potatoes from two other Dani women who were returning home from their garden in Sentani, Jayapura. This act of robbery too has been interpreted in similar terms as shown above. They say that by eating raw fish or robbing the two women, Zakheus was prophesying that in the future the people will be concerned with their own self-interests. The powerful and the rich will rob and deprive the weak and the powerless Irian Jayans. The people say that these acts are Zakheus' way of warning the people that in the days ahead Irian Jayans will be deprived of their access to land and their natural resources. Their land will be taken over by the *ogai*; stealing and corruption will be prevalent.

c. Zakheus stood naked in the market and outside his house

In another occasion Zakheus went outside the house and took off his clothes. He was standing naked for sometime and then he muttered some words. He went around the town then he was again escorted back to his home. This too has been interpreted as having something to do with his way of communication with the people regarding the future course of their history. Some believe that legalization or institutionalization of prostitution by the present administration (by putting up houses for prostitutes in certain localities) which has been carried out in Jayapura and other towns in Irian Jaya is the fulfillment of this. Others have interpreted this politically by saying that Zakheus was showing the things we are experiencing now. By standing naked in the midst of a town Zakheus was teaching that strangers will come to Irian Jaya and take everything away from us. This is taking place now, they say. When our land is taken away and everything we have will be gone and the last thing the Irian Jayans will do is to sell everything they have left including their clothes or koteka and they will die naked in their own land. 'Let us start crying', says one of them (BE, August 12, 1992).

d. Zakheus cleaned a creek beside his house and washed his body

Sometime before his death Zakheus went into the creek beside his home and washed his body and removed the stones and pieces of wood which hinder the flow of water during the rainy season. He picked up those stones and threw them up to the left and right side of the creek. I was told that this was Zakheus way of saying that he was innocent, and there were other people who had become a great hindrance to him in accomplishing his goals: the *ogai*

and the local enemies. This act also says something about the people who had 'killed' him. By doing this some argue that he turned the death spells addressed to him back to the sorcerers themselves. When many members of the sorcerers family have been dying and this has been seen as realization of what Zakheus had acted out symbolically in the creek. Zakheus had turned the death spells to those who invoked such as sorcery objects on Zakheus. In October 1992, Okeiyamoye's son said a certain man from Kamu—who supplied sorcery materials to kill Zakheus—asked him to come to pray for people for his clan in order to stop the death threat that has come to his family and his community. This man admitted that there were three man who died instantly without any sign of sickness. This is seen as fulfillment of Zakheus activity in cleaning the creek.

Others interpret it as portraying the present Irian Jaya' situation in which the present government exploits the natural resources for the benefit of Jakarta, without considering the socio-economic needs of the people of the land.

e. Zakheus' mouth remained open for sometime after his death

At least once Zakheus went out to Sentani and preached in the town market. The people dismissed him as *orang gila*, mentally ill. In spite of this resistance, Zakheus said he still had a lot of things to teach to the people, but the people do not want to listen to what he wanted to teach. For this reason, when he died the people say his mouth remained open for some time; which means that he had a lot of teachings or programs which he wanted to teach but the people opposed him. Today the people argue that he is not responsible if the day of judgment comes because he had wanted to tell everything. However, the people refused to listen. Therefore the people today argue that Zakheus came up with different methods to teach things which he thought essential with regards to the future of the Irian Jayans. No wonder that many consider Zakheus to be a man with a new religion which can bring salvation which until now has not yet been experienced.

f. Zakheus' request: Zakheus as a man with a new religion

A few days before his death Zakheus seemed to know when he was going to die. He therefore made two requests. The first request was specially addressed to one of the man who was around, 'I am dying, therefore go and buy twelve notebooks in the shop in Sentani and when you return I will tell you (while you write down) things that will take place in the future. I have a lot of things to let the people know but they don't want to listen. Therefore go and buy the twelve notebooks in the market in town so you can write them down'. But this man only ignored Zakheus' request, thinking this was not an important thing because Zakheus was sick (BE, July 13, 1992). But the fact that

Zakheus died with his mouth wide open as shown above, and 'his request to buy the notebooks to write down what he wanted to say caused the people to view him as an embodiment of a new religion, a new way of life, or a man who had access to a different world, and who had the secret of another world'.

5.3.5 *The teachings of other leaders: Wege community in Kamu*

The *Wege* community in Kamu had its own 'Bible'. When establishing the community, the leaders introduced the following set of religious rules:

a. *Eda kou yamo te-ekagumai*, 'Do not go beyond the limit of the fence'. To keep themselves holy the *Wege Bage* made a fence surrounding their settlement, and therefore the *Wege Bage* were required to stay inside their hamlets which were surrounded by a fence and had carry out their activities in the vicinity of their hamlets. This rule was introduced out of conviction that other people (non-*Wege Bage*) and the places beyond the limit of their hamlets were contaminated by *pen* which means bad, evil or sinful.

b. *Owa eda kodo yukune eda koda ebobai*, 'Build fence surrounding house with *yukune* tree'. *Yukune* tree (cordyline) was used most of the time in the religious ceremonies to drive out evil spirits or to invite benevolent spirits in case of healing ritual.

The *Wege* hamlets were surrounded by fence; only *yukune* was used as fence material to protect hamlets from temptation or attack from evil spirits.

c. *Ogaika agiyo kou teya moti teyadai*, 'Do not take or buy the goods from the *ogai*'. The leaders of *Wege Bage* encouraged the people not to buy food or eating utensils from the *ogai*. Therefore they encouraged the *Wege* community to make spoons or plates out of wood.

d. *Naiya agiyo kou wane duba naiko daa*, 'Eat the evening meals before the day gets dark'. This instruction was given out of fear that 'if we wait until it gets dark, the evil spirits can come and join the *Wege* community in the meal'. This theme also prevalent in Me folk tales. Another reason for this instruction is that the *Wege Bage* might eat dirty food because if it were dark they could not see it.

e. *Kadaka nota kou doki-madagai tai*, 'Grow and eat *kadaka nota* (kadaka sweet potato)'. There are various kinds of sweet potatoes grown in the Paniai region. All of them have their own name. They can easily be identified by

their tastes, leave, color and the size of the tuber. Out of this only *kadaka*—which can be called sweet potato of life—is considered by the Me to be indige- nous (for further discussion on this sweet potato of life see 5.4.11 ‘Salvation as restoration of a lost garden and *kadaka nota*—sweet potato of life’). The old people say, *kadaka nota* was originated in the region. According to Yewo, *kadaka nota* was given by God; therefore it has to be taken care of because it has something to do with God.

f. *Ekina okakai, me okakai*, ‘All the pigs have to be kept inside the stalls’. This instruction was made out of the conviction that everything has its proper place. It was chaos which brought sickness, hunger, death, and other mis- fortunes. Therefore, the *Wege Bage* attempted to separate themselves from non-*Wege Bage*, and to separate pigs from human settlements, washing their body every day to keep the dirt away. The people assumed that the *ogai* led a happy life, because they maintained such a separation. Some of the religious rules below are made with this view disorderliness bringing misfortune in mind.

g. *Uwo kigi wido oni*, ‘Take a bath every day’. All *Wege Bage* were instructed to take a bath at least once a day or three times a day. This instruction intro- duced to imitate the *ogai* who keep themselves clean. It is likely this teaching was given out of the *Wege Bage*’s idea that those who are living in dirty ham- lets symbolizes in the state of uncleanness. Thus, they are subjected to mis- fortunes.

h. *Yuwo pa teuwi, peu dimi, mogai dimi yuwo duba kouya topa koyoka*, ‘Do not participate in the pig feast, the desire for adultery, bad things is there in the feast’. This was to avoid the temptation of the sinful desires such as mate- rial riches (as in the feast there are pigs and cowrie shells being sold) or temp- tation to adultery (as there many women who are present in the feast), and because the feasts were occasions for illicit sexual intercourse, etc.

i. *Naiya agiyo naine ga gane witogai*, ‘Wash your hands before eating’.

j. *Mege kou peu umina koyoka emigai*, ‘There is too much evil in the cowrie shell. Throw it away’. As noted above, this instruction was introduced out of the conviction that the *mege* always creates a spirit of competition and con- flicts. It was sin and prevented the people from carrying out religious duties.

k. *Naiya agiyo kou eeno teno tetai*, ‘Do not eat all kinds of food, there is cer- tain food which is forbidden such as: food that has hair plant, for example

yatu, *teno* (*setaria palmaefolia*) which is a local edible plant; *teto* (*saccharum officinarum*) a kind of sugar cane and *bi* (*Pandanaceae, pandanus sp*) from which the people take its juice'. Why they were forbidden? The answer given is these food's color is red. They argue that red symbolizes blood, therefore they cannot be eaten. This is still another food taboo which is restated by the leaders of the *Wege Mana*.

These are some of the religious rules which the *Wege Bage* in Kamu attempted to follow. The following section deals with similar religious instructions given by another leader from Tigi.

5.3.6 *The teachings of other leaders: Wege community in Wakeidide*

The leader of this community, located near the government post in Waghete, instructed men and women who decided to join his community to obey the following rules:

- a. *Ayu taine bagee kodo owa enatapatai beukai peu*, 'Those who want to experience salvation have to live together'. To be saved from this evil world, the people should form a new community. This community according to its leader had to be united, and live and work together.
- b. *Mege daa*, 'The use of the *mege* is forbidden'. Stay away from the *mege* and from using, or eating or wearing anything purchased by *mege*. (For the reasons of the rejection of the *mege*, see section 5.3.2a 'Zakheus and his other teachings').
- c. *Kadaka nota kou madagai*, 'Respect or eat only *kadaka nota*' (further explanation on the sweet potato of life see section 5.4.11 'Salvation as restoration of a lost garden and *kadaka nota*—sweet potato of life'.)
- d. *Yepo yago narya agiyo tenai*, 'Do not eat all kinds of food which have plant hair such as *yatu* (*Gramineae setaria palmifolia*)'. This teaching is based on the people's assumption that plant hair from these food can damage the intestines.
- e. *Gaaga duba ga kodo wado ibo kidi dana miyo nabai kodoopa edimai*, 'In times of need, we can turn to the male deity creator in upper and to female deity in under world'. Prayer has to be addressed to *kokau miyo ye*, you (female deity) who inhabit the underworld and *koke wado me ye*, you (male deity) who live high up there.

During the pre-contact days, in times of crises or needs they appeal to the female deity who lives in the underworld and the male deity who lives high up in the sky. The male deity was often addressed *ayii naka*, one who can give *ayii*, happiness, abundant life or who give immortality (see discussion in section 5.2.2 ‘God as addressed in prayers’). By explicitly teaching people with such an instruction, the leader of this community is challenging the church leaders in the area who teach the people to address only to God when they pray according to the Christian Biblical teachings. This leader also encourages the people not to go to church.

f. *Ogrika mana teyayuwii*, ‘Do not listen to the word or instruction of the *ogai*’. Never go to church nor participate in its activities. Do not follow what the *ogai* are teaching.

The idea behind this instruction to attack the *ogai*’s theological position. Because the *Wege Bage* had the view that the missionaries both the Catholics and the Protestants had not revealed their true motives of their coming to the region. According to the *Wege Bage* ‘the missionaries say they came here to preach the gospel when in reality they came to search for the gospel’. Aside from this, the instruction not to cooperate with the *ogai* is also a counter-teaching as this leader responded to the church leadership who had branded him as a false prophet who taught the way of Satan.

g. *Yuwo tedegii*, ‘Do not attend or participate in the pig feast’. The reason is that because the feast arouse sexual and material wealth desires and other worldly things (for explanation see section 5.3.5 ‘Teachings of other leaders: *Wege* community in Kamu’).

h. *Uwo oni agape gakita*, ‘Take a bath every day’ (see above for explanation).

i. *Mege emigai*, ‘Throw away the *mege*. The *mege* is bad’. According to the leaders, pigs and cowrie shells are the sources of all conflicts, fighting and disputes in the Me community. The cowrie shells, buying and selling the property prevent the Me from obeying the words of the creator God. For that reason they must go. Those who want to be part of the new community of the talk were required to bring in their *mege*. Later those cowrie shells were thrown in a river or lake. Many responded to it by bringing in their cowrie shells and the cowrie shell making magic to be burnt or to be thrown away. The idea of giving away and sharing whatever material property available to those who are in need was introduced—instead of selling to earn or to buy with *mege*. If anyone needs something from you, give it to him or share whatever you have with your neighbor who is in need, was one of regulation that

has to be followed by those who want to participate in the activities of the *Wege Bage* (see also 5.3.2 'Zakheus and his other teachings').

j. *Zakheus ya mana kouto makodo kouko, okai mepiko makikou ena kaita. Okai kidaa makikou doutou tagiida, koyoka okai kopu mana kouto doutou*, 'Zakheus' teaching is true, if he returns this land will be alright. And if he returns and he will be the leader of this land. Therefore stick to his teachings'. The leader of the *Wege Bage* in Wakeidide is Zakheus' ardent follower and he preached that the end of the world will come when Zakheus and his brother Jordan Pakage return. The Irian Jayans will determine their own political destiny. The Indonesians will go. Then the people from every corner of the earth will be gathered in Paniai. Zakheus then will judge all people and later he will rule the world in peace and justice.

k. *Binei ikan tenai*, 'Do not eat fish and *binei*'. *Binei* was the only small fish available before the goldfish was introduced. This instruction has something to do which the *Wege Bage* belief that the lakes or ocean where *binei* lives, will turn to lakes or ocean of fire when the end times comes. It is believed that when the end times comes God will punish the wrong doers by sending them to hell. The lakes, rivers and the ocean will turn to sea of fire. As noted above this has something to do with Zakheus' teaching of the big fire from God.

These teachings of the leader of *Wege* community in Wakeidide which can be seen as restatements of the existing religious beliefs which can be seen as counter-attack against the religious views against the *ogai*.

5.3.7 Conclusion

These are teachings of some of the *Wege* communities. It will be noted that the rules are basically similar. The differences are due to the fact that the leaders of various *Wege* communities develop their own theological views in the light of needs and aspirations of the various communities. Another observation which can be made is that these religious rules are the restatements of the past religious taboos. They are not new. But the fact that they are reintroduced in the context of change and conflict is important. Because when confronting the *ogai* the existing religious views become source of inspiration to defend their tradition and identity. The Me people argue that the Christian Bible used by the *ogai* today is only a copy of the real Bible which is the Me people's *touye mana* which was lost. Still, the old rules are reformulated also with the Bible in mind and therefore syncretistic.

The Me take the above religious commandments and the instructions of the leaders of the *Wege Bage* as an exposition of *touye mana* which the Me people's takes as its own indigenous Bible. This belief is based on two considerations.

The Me idea of *touye mana* as noted above which has some thing to do with the Me religious rules and taboos which is observed strictly can ensure material and spiritual prosperity. Such taboos are related to all aspects of human life: taboos relating to economic activities such making dug out canoes to make the dug out canoes more durable, or hunting to enable them to catch more games; taboos relating to war to avoid being killed during the war, etc. Or taboos related to places considered to be sacred, or religious rules rituals and spirit deities. In the light of this *touye mana* the Christian Bible according to the *Wege Bage* is written version of these religious rules and taboos. Some even went as far as saying that *ogai* took such taboos and make the book out of the Me *touye mana*.

For this reason some of people of Kamu claim that one of the leaders of the *Wege* community received an *ano*—a specially wrapped packet—from a female spirit deity before he began to teach the *Wege Mana*. After he received the packet his mind was enlightened to preach the *Wege Mana*. This group argue that the packet contains the *touye mana*. And the female deity who delivered the *touye mana* was Nooku who is the older sister of Koyeidaba (see section 5.4.1.1 'Koyeidaba myth'). According to one version of the Koyeidaba mythology, after Koyeidaba was killed, Nooku took along *touye mana* and went south. Therefore, when the religious leader in Kamu claimed that he received the packet many thought it was the lost *touye mana*. His and the teachings of the religious leaders were thought to be the exposition of the *touye mana*. Thus, the teachings of the *Wege Bage* leaders was seen as the reintroduction of the religious ideas lost in the past; taken from the *touye mana*.

Secondly, there is the view that the Me religious commandments are part of the content of *touye mana*. The Me argue that their existing religious commandments similar to the Ten Commandments of the Christian Bible—which was mentioned above—is part of the content of *touye mana*. Therefore, when the *ogai* began to preach the Ten Commandments the people argued that they had known them long before the *ogai* came. Furthermore, the people argued that the only problem the people had, was that such religious commandments which had been in existence was neglected by the Me of that generation. 'The Me had turned to cowrie shell or pigs and totally ignored the existing the religious rules' (MK, June 14, 1988). The Me argue that God had deposited the Bible in the form of *touye mana* in the tradition of their ancestors. The com-

ing of the *ogai* pressed the people to revive their old religious rules under the new name of 'the local Bible'.

Many who hold this view argue that God gave the *touye mana* to Yupi, Zakheus' progenitor, but the ancestors of the *ogai* stole it from Yupi (see section 5.1.3 'God as the giver of the *touye mana*-religious rules') make the Christian Bible out of it. For this reason at one time Zakheus went to Enarotali and challenged Troutman, saying: you have your own Bible but we also have our 'Bible'. He then went on citing these religious rules mentioned above. 'Zakheus and his men knew God better than the *ogai*', it was said (ES, January 7, 1993).

On the basis of the same conviction, Benjamin—the leader of the cargo cult which we have discussed in the previous chapter—said that '*ogai* came not to bring the gospel; because the gospel was already here in the Paniai region before they came. The gospel originated in the Paniai region; no one can claim that he brought the gospel to the Paniai region' (BP, December 17, 1992). According to Benjamin, Deibler, the first missionary who visited the Paniai region in January, 1939 (see section 3.1.2.1 'Missionary work before the World War Two') discovered the gospel in the Paniai region in the form of a book. After a stay of seven days in Enarotali, he took the book back to his country, America. When he got to America he printed and published the book which in the west now known as the Christian Bible (BP, December 17, 1992). Benjamin said, before coming to the Paniai region and discovering the book, Deibler was living in America, just like any other American. But one day, according to Benjamin, a divine ray of light appeared in the house where Deibler was living. Later, the ray of light began to move toward Asia. Deibler took a ship following the light and eventually came to Jakarta. But the light did not stop there, it kept moving toward the east, passing through the Moluccan Islands and proceeding to Uta, the southern coast of Irian Jaya/New Guinea. And from Uta he saw the light moving toward the Central Mountains above Lake Paniai, where he discovered the book (BP, December 16, 1992).

Benjamin argued that long before the *ogai* came to this region, God and the 'Bible' had been present in the Paniai region and the *ogai* came and took the book away to make the Christian Bible in the West. The rejection of this view—that the *ogai* stole *touye mana* and made the Christian Bible—by the church and the missionary personnel only deepened the Me and the *Wege Bage*'s beliefs and made room for the leaders to state their views explicitly.

5.4 The Me people's view of salvation

The previous sections presented topics which are central to the religious views of the *Wege* communities. It was shown that God is identified as the male supreme deity who had been known by their ancestors in the Paniai region. This male deity God is seen as God who had been in communication with their ancestors. This God had given them the touye mana which they had lost. The teachings of Zakheus and others are seen as the reintroduction of the touye mana. The implication is that there is no need to go to church and follow the programs of the missionary and the church. The *Wege Bage* said that following the instructions of Zakheus is enough to bring about salvation from God. The following section deals with the Me people's view of salvation. It will be seen that salvation can also be viewed from their existing religious aspirations.

Some view salvation in terms of miraculous events which occurred during the time when Zakheus propagated his programs, multification of food, or healing which took place. Others interpret salvation as political independence, the presence of female deity, or deliverance from sorcery and witchcraft, etc.

5.4.1 *Abundance of food*

Salvation is taken as an abundance of food or a multification of food, etc. The *Wege Bage* argue that Zakheus was like his father Dodeiwode. Whenever he spent the night with whoever it was, there was always an abundant supply of food. Zakheus himself never went hungry because whenever he wanted to eat something there were always food around. This claim is supported by the people's testimonies of how Zakheus supplied abundant food in times of need. Two families with whom Zakheus had stayed in Sentani after he left the Mental Clinic in Jayapura testified this. One informant who stayed in Sentani months before Zakheus died said, 'During the time when Zakheus stayed here, we did not worry about what to eat because we always had rice, fish and but also had so many gardens here. If Zakheus went hunting it did not take much time for him to catch game. There was so much food that we could not consume them all' (PD/EE, Sentani July 16, 1992). Another informant said, 'Zakheus can multiply or turn one single sweet potato into a heap of sweet potatoes' (BE, July 28, 1992). Another said, 'if he went hunting in the bush it was like he was going straight to where the game was. He picked what he needed and came home with wild pigs. Also if he put up a trap he always caught animals' (ME, July 28, 1992).

This took place not only on the coast. Even before he was taken to the coast, when Zakheus was living in Yibagouyoweta, he encountered no difficulty when he wanted to eat pork or to hold a feast. Actually there were no wild pigs around his place but if he went hunting he always comes home bringing one or two wild pigs, so that he could have a feast with the people. 'It was as if the wild pigs or games came to Zakheus by themselves when he needed them' (KP, October 6, 1992).

Zakheus' ability to multiply food supply or to provide food in times of need is similar to Koyeidaba's work. Koyeidaba also performed miraculous works before he was killed. The account of Koyeidaba story speaks of how Koyeidaba was able to provide food when the people of the region were going through a severe period of hunger. He brought forth food only by rubbing his body. The stories of ability of Zakheus and Koyeidaba in supplying food in times of need convince the people that makes the people to think that both Zakheus and Koyeidaba are 'Jesus who fed the hungry crowds of 5000' (Matthew 14: 13-21). For the people this work of Zakheus or Koyeidaba is the work of bringing salvation to the people.

5.4.2 *Healing and other extra-ordinary works*

Healing the sick is also seen as the work of salvation. Aside from being able to multiply food, Zakheus was also able to heal many from their sickness. The healing took place after Zakheus prayed for the sick while laying his hands on them. This was in the people's view the work of God through the activities of Zakheus.

Thus, Zakheus was seen as bringing salvation to the people who were suffering. Mickelson wrote,

The sick were brought to him and after prayer they were healed. Even here at the station we frequently could hear Zacheus' voice raised in prayer for the healing of some sick one (Mickelson 1968: 205-206).

Later Mrs. Catto wrote,

Every day people came to Zacheus to have him pray for their sickness and were miraculously healed as he in faith believing claimed deliverance for them in the name of Jesus (Mrs. Catto, 1993).

This practice of prayer for healing for the sick was carried on, even after Zakheus was removed from the Paniai region and hospitalized in the Mental Clinic in Jayapura. One of the leaders of the *Wege* community who was in-

volved in this ministry of healing was Pigaidegamoye of Muyekebo, Kamu district. Pigaidegamoye is the man who succeeded Zakheus when he was taken to the coast. A large number of people were healed. Indeed many claimed to have been healed by a special healing power as they prayed for the healing. But in the early 1960s, rumors spread saying that Pigaydegamoye was having sex with the patients who were coming to him. As result Pigaydegamoye was chased away from Yibagouyoweta, Tigi district to his home village in Muyekebo, Kamu district. But many *Wege Bage* rejected this accusation and said that the people who opposed them used the women to stop their activities. One or two church leaders in Kamu Valley still maintain this view that *Wege Bage* (particularly the *Wege Bage* practiced in Kamu Valley) free sexual intercourse as part of their religious activity which I doubt.

But going back to subject of the discussion of this section healing of the sick is seen an essential aspect of salvation. This is true because in the Paniai region, sickness is generally seen as caused by the patient's failure to fulfill his socio-religious obligations. Healing then is seen as restoration of broken relationships between human communities or with the communities of the spirits. For this reason when the Me began to see the healing ministry of Zakheus they thought that he was an instrument of healing who was going to restore the broken ties with the spirit world. Others thought Zakheus knew the methods or the key to reconcile the relations with the spirit beings who shaped the people's destiny.

Other extra ordinary works of Zakheus

Zakheus also performed several other miracles. On one occasion Zakheus made a broken radio work. First he broke the radio to pieces. Then he opened the radio and took parts of the radio out including its battery. And then he replaced them with pieces of bamboo, pieces of old pandanus leaves, a comb, etc. Then he told the people to listen to the radio as he turned it on; the radio worked well as if battery and other parts were in good shape (KP, October 6, 1992). On another occasion Zakheus made a dead pig speak. This occurred when he killed a pig. Then he split the pig into two halves. But he left the head and back bones of the pigs intact. Having done this he held the pig's head up and began to use it as a telephone, and immediately there was a response from someone. The people said they heard the voice (KP, October 6, 1992). The stories over religious figures performing extra-ordinary works such as the ones performed by Zakheus as this, is not a foreign thing for the Me. These type of stories can also be found in the Me's folktales.

Zakheus disappearance in the midst of opposition

On several occasions when he was facing opposition Zakheus disappeared from their midst. In Bomou when a man who was irritated by Zakheus' teaching came to shoot Zakheus with his arrows Zakheus disappeared. Zakheus at that time was making ditch for the garden he was working on. Upon confronting Zakheus the man dropped the idea of killing Zakheus, instead he picked up a piece of wood which Zakheus was using to make his garden and then hit Zakheus on his back and then on his head. Another man—who was Zakheus' ardent follower—came in to help or defend Zakheus. Zakheus did not try to vindicate himself or defend himself and said 'you can kill me, if you want'. At that time Zakheus disappeared from the scene as many were coming to see what was going on. Zakheus' disciple who came to defend his teacher thought he was hiding somewhere, therefore he tried to look for Zakheus. He and others felt that Zakheus might have fallen unconscious in the grass around that place. Therefore the people looked for Zakheus. At that time, a young man came and said 'he is up on the hill preparing meal'. The people were surprised because it took some time to come to the hill.

A similar story is reported when the police came to Yibagouyoweta from the government post in Waghete to arrest Zakheus. The local police tied Zakheus' hands with a string and took him to Waghete. On the way to Waghete Zakheus suddenly disappeared. They looked for him but could not find him. The local people community joined the police to find Zakheus but he was gone. No one knew where he went, therefore the police men went back to Waghete. But when they came to Waghete, Zakheus was waiting them in Waghete (YG, September 6, 1992). They thought he had fled, and yet Zakheus, according to *Wege* communities, was more than willing to cooperate with the government. According to them he was innocent and yet the *ogai* created a lot of problems for him. Again it had to be stressed here that this view are expressed in the *Wege Bage's* attempt to uphold Zakheus as a man who brought salvation: because he healed many sick and he performed many miraculous works as noted above.

5.4.3 Reconciliation of the relationship between the human community and the community of spirit beings

As the Me came into contact with Christianity the people viewed Christianity from the existing religious frame work. This can be seen from another definition which the people had given to the Christian view of salvation. Salvation is seen by the Me as the restoration of the relationship with the spirit beings. This is in contrast to the *ogai* who defined salvation in terms of the

restoration of personal relationship with God through the work of Jesus Christ.

Many people who participated in the activities of the *Wege Bage* claimed that spirit beings—who were up to that indifferent to the people's crises—were now changing their steps. The spirit beings who did so were willing to come and see what the *Wege Bage* were doing. One time, a group of people from one *Wege* community went to Okomotadi, Tigi district. They wanted to obtain the bark of a certain tree for roofing for their new houses in their newly built *Wege* village. Early in the morning they fell several trees. Around 10 o'clock in the morning, when some of them began to take away the bark, a man they have never met or known appeared in their midst. He wore a *kote-ka*, a penis gourd and had a string bag made of *ikiya*, (*Xyris capensis* Thunb. var. *schoenoides* Nilsson—a kind of reed growing near a lake/river or in swampy areas). This man was seen as physical representation of *madou*, the spirit being believed to be living in water in the pools near the place where they fell the trees (BP, October 6, 1992). The appearance of this man in the midst of people who were working in obedience of Zakheus' teaching was interpreted as a meeting with spirit beings who were now cooperating with Zakheus. The spirits who were up to that time malevolent were now changing their attitudes. They had become friendly and willing to come and observe the activity of the *Wege* community.

In their excitement, some of the *Wege Bage* who had seen and heard these happenings went to swim in the pool, the dwelling place of the water spirit. When they went swimming nothing happened to them. According to the Me traditional beliefs, this action would have meant death for the whole clan, unless a *madou kamu*, religious ceremony to stop this spirit being from killing the people, would have been held. The people were expecting that the whole clan would be killed by *madou* after they went swimming, but nothing happened (see also Mote 1967: 32). The event strengthened Zakheus' position. Many argued that the time for fellowship between men and spirit beings was near; salvation in fact was here and now. A new era was already present. Naturally, this kind of religious rumors strengthened the position of Zakheus and encouraged the *Wege Bage* who were constantly experiencing opposition from their surroundings. It also challenged the position of the *ogai* who constantly tried to undermine Zakheus and his programs.

5.4.4 *Zakheus' 'holy house' and the presence of 'spirit of God'*

Many joined Zakheus' communities because salvation preached by Zakheus was materialized in the midst of the human setting as God came and took up his residence among them in a 'holy house' built in Yibagouyoweta. This house was built in the 1950s by about 30 to 40 people of Kiuto, who had

accepted Zakheus' teaching. While carrying the construction material, the *Wege* community of Kiuto went to Tigi following the Jawei River up to Uda-teida and from there to Yibagouyoweta. They helped built this special house for Zakheus.

Zakheus used this house during the time he carried out his programs. The house is special. It was modelled after the CAMA mission house in Enarotali having four ridge-poles. Just like the house of the CAMA missionary in Enarotali that had many rooms, it had 24 rooms. One of these rooms was used for prayer. Another one was designated for storing bags of cowrie shells brought in by the people who had decided to join the *Wege* communities. Still another room was used for monthly prayer fellowship where sacrifice of pigs and chickens were made to cleanse their sins. The rest of the rooms were used for different purposes. In the past three decades the people who had viewed Zakheus as 'their Jesus' had made plans again and again to rebuild this house. According to them, after his return in future, Zakheus will use this house to judge, rule and rebuild a new world.

Among the leaders of the *Wege* communities the issue of holy house was an essential aspect of their belief and practice. For that reason, Troutman reported in 1959,

that the *Wege* people are gathering in groups and centers in most places they are building long houses with many rooms. In Emaibo, western shore of Lake Paniai they have a guard house on the approach to their village and have a guard all through the night (Troutman 1959).

Many people who joined the *Wege Bage* claimed that there was a powerful spirit who came and dwelled among the people. She dwelt among the human community and in the house which the *Wege Bage* of Kiuto had built. In the past ten years there have been people who claimed to 'have been instructed by Zakheus to collect building materials because he wanted to return and put up a house in the very place where his former house stood'. This program of house construction caused many to turn to them. Simply because for the people, it means 'the approval of the leader's programs by the spirit world and the presence of the spirit beings who are now returning to take their residence in the Me village community to help materialize the Me religious expectations'. This conviction and other information I received from my contact with the leaders, suggests that the house relating religious movements in the Paniai region in general and 'the holy house' of Zakheus in particular, has something to do with the people's view of salvation.

Firstly, for the *Wege* community the presence of the holy house in the village community means real presence of God, the source of all good things, or his agent: the female spirit being among the suffering human community. This of course justifies their claim that the new world of prosperity is already here, because the spirit beings or God, who was indifferent in the past, are now willing to come and live with the people and work with the cults leaders to prepare for the return of God/Zakheus or Koyeidaba: the Me's messiah.

Secondly, from the leader's tactical point of view 'the holy house' means a power base for cult leaders to attract more people. Indeed many people were moved and joined because the spirit being in the house was said to be working during the nights. They said 'we often heard some unusual sounds during the night because the female spirit deity is working in that house' (DG, September 5, 1992). Only the leader himself can enter such house or the room where the spirit lives. In Mogou, Kamu district the leader of *Wege* community has built special house, a little away from the rest of the hamlet. I was told to stay away from it. The house such as that of Zakheus, can also be seen as a strategy of the religious leaders to challenge the position of Western missionaries and of the church. The cult leader who has a house attempts to draw the people away from the church and even more so from Western missionaries working or living in the region. The *Wege Bage* argue that both Catholic and Protestant missionaries never admit the local people to enter their houses for fear that they might discover their secret room which they set aside inside their house. This room is for the female spirit being who supplies them with Western goods. The Me also believe that there is a door which the *ogai* kept hidden from the local people inside their house to the underworld from where they get their goods.

The construction of a 'holy house' can also be seen as their strategy to seek converts among the Me who had become part of the local church or government agents. Interestingly, some government employees today join the cult' leaders because the government only gives them 'kopu, the peel or the scale' of development but keep the fruit or pulp for themselves. The idea is that the people do not to participate and do not benefit from the development programs was initiated by the administration. The religious leaders want the people turn to them and follow the *Wege Mana* to experience salvation. The holy house of religious leaders is seen as part of their program of bringing salvation to the community and inviting God, the source of salvation, to live in the midst of the suffering community.

5.4.5 *Salvation and mege*

Some sectors of the *Wege* communities view salvation as a state of life where the *mege* is absent. The people live together and work together, and live together in one place without the *mege*. The *mege* was seen as all source of conflicts and quarrels; in short all sorts of sins such as: lying, stealing, wars, jealousy, etc. By the time became established the *Wege* movement, the cowrie shell was functioning like money in Western culture. It was being used in all forms of transactions. The cowrie shell had become foundation of the people's economy besides pigs (see Chapter 2, section 1.1 'Shell Capitalism'). But the *Wege Bage* in those days viewed cowrie shells as the source of all conflict, fighting, disputes, forced marriage, polygamy and disrespect for the traditional religious values, etc. They wanted to get rid of it. They argued that salvation and all its blessings as pointed out above cannot be experienced unless the people get rid of the *mege*. Therefore the leaders preached that the people following the rules/teachings which I have mentioned above and were prepared to abandon the *mege*.

The *Wege Bage* preached the abolition of the *mege* by citing the following Biblical text.

Do not store up riches for yourselves here on earth, where moths and rust destroy, and robbers break in and steal. Instead, store up for yourselves treasure in heaven, where moths and rust cannot destroy, and where robbers cannot break in steal ... No one can be a slave of two masters; he will hate one and love another; he will be loyal to one and despise the other. You cannot serve both God and money (Matthew 6: 19-21, 24).

The *Wege Bage* translated 'mamon' in this text as *eniya*, (evil) spirit whose presence in the Me culture is known as *megebeto*, a symbol of the supernatural reality, believed to be capable of producing *mege* every time the owner made a ritual sacrifice of pigs, chicken or rats. On the basis of this conviction, *megebeto* or the spirit believed to be producing *mege* was interpreted by the *Wege Bage* as evil spirit who was in the form of snake seduced Eve in the garden of Eden to eat the forbidden fruit which made the first man mortal (Genesis 3: 1-24). Thus, for the *Wege Bage* giving up the ambition to have something to do with the cowrie shell was the only way to bring God and his salvation in their midst.

As noted above, such a religious view, was a real threat not only to local traditional leaders but also to the missionary and government in the Paniai region. For the headmen, the *Wege Bage's* teaching on this point was something they were not prepared to accept. For them Zakheus' presence and his

religious mission on this respect presented a serious threat to their established interests. This idea was one of the reasons why the big men rose up against Zakheus and his communities, in cooperation with the government and the missionary personnel.

It can be said that this religious view was also intended to counter-attack on the *ogai* who regularly brought a large amount of *mege* to the region. The government and the missionary reacted to this by trying to stop Zakheus and his activities (see Chapter 4).

Interestingly, in the 1960s the missionary attempted to discourage the people to use the cowrie shell as Zakheus had done years earlier, because most of the people were unresponsive to Christianity. Church attendance was not increasing, as many were out looking for more *mege*. *Mege* became everything for this people. All time was spent to earn more *mege*. The people had no time for government and the church. Of course this was also the concern of Zakheus which drove him to introduce 'the idea of abolition of the *mege*'. The missionary and the local church leaders thus attempted to stop the people from using the *mege*. The government personnel did the same thing. The present government too tried to send out local police to get the people throw away their cowrie shells and start using the Indonesian money instead (see previous chapter). The reason was that the people were engaged in their own programs of earning cowrie shells, paying no attention to what the government was doing in the area. At least in Tigi district, the local police were sent out several times to collect cowrie shells from the people. The Me's reaction was that of indifference. Why mind our business, some of them argued.

Going back to issue of rejection of *mege* by the *Wege Bage*, Zakheus felt that unless the people abandon their ambition to keep searching for *mege*, they would never experience salvation. Perhaps this was also the missionary's idea that later motivated them to follow in discouraging the people using *mege* in their business transactions. Of course the missionary and government's attempt to stop the people from using *mege*, as Zakheus had done earlier, helped to strengthen the people's faith in Zakheus. The people argued that 'now the *ogai* are doing what Zakheus did years ago. Zakheus is the true teacher but the *ogai* did not want to admit it publicly and recognized Zakheus and the true leader' (PD, June 12, 1989).

5.4.6 *Entering the Wege community: participation in salvation*

But salvation cannot be experienced apart from community. Salvation according to the Me is a family and community affair. God is according to the people not interested in an individual or personal salvation. For this reason, Zakheus attempted to establish new settlements where the people who had

accepted his program would come to live together in one place. In the context of opposition this program of building new Christian communities can be seen as Zakheus attempt to establish 'his empire' to challenge the *ogai*.

Those who wanted to enter Zakheus' community had to leave their former homes and hamlets. They had to be willing to form a new tribe or renew their tribal ties within the context of Zakheus' program. In case of resistance in some section of the community or village, Zakheus and the leaders instructed those who wanted to obey and follow them to move out of their former hamlets and to live in new villages. This has been referred to as Zakheus' 'exodus program'. The people who wanted to follow Zakheus had to build their own villages throughout the Paniai region. However, if the whole village indicated its willingness to accept the *Wege Mana*, Zakheus made no changes in the existing social settlements. He rather reappointed the local headmen to head the newly converted *Wege* community. One condition that was required to be recognized as a *Wege* community by Zakheus, was that they had to pay one big pig. It was costly in a way.

These *Wege* villages had to be kept clean and surrounded by a fence. Toilets had to be set up. There had to be flowers everywhere. Chickens and pigs were not allowed to enter the village or to roam around the village. For pigs special stalls outside the enclosure had to be made, in contrast to the Me's custom in general to keep their pigs under the floor of their houses. The people of the community had to bathe every day and those who had clothes had to wear them.

Those who lived in these new villages had to work together to meet their daily needs in making things like dugout canoes, garden, making a street or building a house. The housing style adopted was called *bodiya ben owaj* 'a house without a fire place', or Western style housing, following the *ogai*. The street linking different hamlets had to be kept clean. A small craft industry program was introduced in one or two of the villages. The *Wege Bage* were taught and required to be industrious. They made string bags, rattan baskets and rattan chairs of different sizes and form, but also hats, etc. For their need of cash they planted coffee, and different types of fruits and other cash crops which enabled them to earn some cash from the *ogai*.

The purpose of these activities inside the religious community was both theological and political. According to Zakheus these communities were his local congregations which would constitute the nucleus of a new people of God. As seeds of the new community, Zakheus foresaw that these communities would expand until in the end they would embrace the whole tribe even the world. When this would happen salvation was going to prevail, and God would return to justify the *Wege* communities. The Me would be free from politico-religious and economic domination. For this reason efforts were

made to speed up the expansion of Zakheus' program. Perhaps this might explain his attempt to get the people converted by preaching of a big fire that would descend from the sky (see 5.4.7 'Salvation here and now: Zakheus' teaching on hell and the end of the world').

Zakheus wanted the people to live under one roof with the intention of 'making them one heart', meaning to unite and to enable them to follow the religious rules mentioned above. Zakheus said that those who want to follow the way of God had to unite themselves and be a part of one community to serve the interest of the whole community (BP, October 6, 1992). If they had remained scattered here and there and living according to their own interest and they would be tempted by their idleness and disobedience to God's religious rules, which in turn would bring conflict with others. More importantly, by resettling them in one place he could mobilize them under his leadership to carry out his programs in the midst of conflicts and persecutions.

Salvation therefore was according to Zakheus and his people a community of people who lived together without being subject to foreign powers; improving their life condition while following their traditional religious rules which in turn would invite spirit beings to participate in their community's programs.

5.4.7 Salvation here and now: Zakheus teaching on hell and the end of the world

The Me believe that salvation is also related to life here and now. It contradicts the *ogai's* view of salvation which, is future and other world-oriented. For this reason Zakheus entertained the idea that as soon as people accepted his teachings, salvation will prevail here and now, and there was an urgency in his message. This world would soon be destroyed by a big fire, Zakheus said. This section deals with his activities related to his views of big fire that will come to destroy the world. An attempt will be made to see where did this idea come from and how it relates to the Me culture.

Around October and November 1951, Zakheus began preaching that 'a big fire is coming to destroy this world and those who reject the teachings of the *Wege Bage*'. This he had done previously. His sermon when he arrived in 1950 was 'listen to the word of the creator and be saved; follow the word of the great one, lest you'll go to hell ...' But in September-November 1951, this sermon on fire from the sky became a subject of discussion. According to one of his close relatives who stayed at his side when Zakheus died, the sermon on hell became the source of panic as Zakheus went around to teach the people about hell by acting out or showing how the fire will come. Zakheus is said to have called five young people, and prepared them to carry out his instruc-

tions. First Zakheus gave each of them one bundle of a locally made torch out of bamboo. Then he instructed them to go to five different locations. While handing over bundles of dried bamboo to be used as a torch Zakheus told them at what time and date or day they were to light the torch because that was the time when the fire was going to come from the sky. Three days before that, Zakheus visited Tigi, Kamu and Debei districts, telling the people that God was going to send fire to destroy the world within three days time. But Zakheus did not reveal that it was he who was planning it. He only told the people that those who rejected his teaching would be consumed by fire. Those who had cooperated with him and accepted his programs and those who paid pigs will escape this fire Zakheus said (BE, July 13, 1992). On the appointed day, the five young people lighted the torch light during the night, and Zakheus who had planned it, awakened the people pointing to the fire 'which was coming from God'.

Mote (1976) provided more information on this as to how Zakheus organized this program to teach the people about hell, there are some slight difference, but the version is basically the same.

Zakheus announced in the church on one Sunday that the Creator would send fire from heaven to destroy the Me people for their rejection of his teachings. But then Zakheus offered quotation of religious verses or texts to the people from an unknown source. These texts were written in a piece of paper and the people were told to memorize. Those who accepted this offer would obtain salvation from the fire threat which would be sent from heaven. The news about the coming fire spread not only throughout the villages in Tigi area, but was heard in Kamu, Paniai and Mapia districts. The people in Tigi were caught up in a state of panic. Those who believed in Zakheus' sermons were afraid and made every efforts to find solutions by way of traditional religious ceremony to prevent the coming calamity known as *kamu tai*. Later some people claimed to have seen the fire in the night on the appointed time but it was not from heaven.

According to this source, Zakheus had gathered nine young men who had received a text which he had offered. For several days they carried out with all of the necessary preparations. They collected dried fire wood which was inflammable which would be used as a torch. When all of the preparations were done, Zakheus announced the day and the date when the big fire was coming. On the day when the fire was coming, Zakheus sent the nine young people to several places which he had decided upon before. The distance of this place from one to the other was about two kilometers. On that night Zakheus shouted to awaken the people who were already asleep to witness the event.

The people who live in Yibagouyoweta, Bomou, Waghete, Onaago, Tenedagi, and others villages in Tigi saw the fire first near the house of Zakheus himself, then followed by nine others that has been assigned by Zakheus. After this many did not trust Zakheus any longer (Mote 1976: 20-21). But many others took this as a warning for the coming final destruction of the world.

Several years later, the Dutch journalist Smedts who visited the Paniai region in 1955, overheard the rumor relating to this sermon of Zakheus. Smedts had this to say about the 'big fire',

When he [Zakheus, BG] returned to New Guinea, the people were expecting him. He returned to his birth place in Tigi. He knew the Me people's stories about the lost paradise, which will return as the present world is destroyed by fire. Zakheus and his brother wanted to make a deep impression or conviction on the people about this story of the end of the world. They made used of this story. The fire will destroy the earth within a few months. Only those who have a letter from Zakheus will survive. The Me people bought this document at a great amount of cowrie shell. And to those who resisted the brother of Zakheus were threatened by them to set their houses on fire. Many neglected their gardens and did not want to work any more, because they had a passport to obtain eternal life. The two terrorized the villages and if someone asked, why Zakheus did take such shells if the world was going to be destroyed, he kept his mouth shut (Smedts 1956: 118).

Later *Tifa Irian* made similar comments regarding the people's stories on Zakheus' teaching about the big fire from God,

He [Zakheus, BG] often visit the people in the surrounding villages and spread his teachings. His teachings created confusion and panic among the people. He said that soon big fire will come from the sky or heaven. This fire will consume all people except those who have a piece of paper which Zakheus himself has distributed (*Tifa Irian*, 11 February 1972).

The question now is where did Zakheus obtain this idea of a big fire and how did it relate to the people's views. The answer to the first part of the question is clear as it come from two sources: missionary theology which was prevalent in those days and the existing religious thought. As to missionary source, one can trace his educational background which was presented in the earlier chapter. It is possible that Zakheus drew his ideas related to 'the big fire and imminent return of Jesus' from Christianity. It is interesting to note Pospisil's

view that Zakheus was influenced by the Seventh Day Adventists, which I cannot confirm,

After his [Zakheus, BG] release he was influenced by Seventh Day Adventists (SDA) and became a convinced pacifist. Zakheus began to preach the end of the world, love thy neighbor, tolerance for enemy and aversion to violence. Even if somebody comes intending to kill people, one should take it with resignations was one of the major commandments of the movements (Pospisil 1978: 111).

I guess that Zakheus' training contributed to his thought on this issue of the 'big fire'. In other words, Zakheus idea of the 'big fire' from above partly came from the theological views which he obtained through his training in Makassar. The *ogai* who trained Zakheus held pre-millennialism which says that Jesus Christ will visibly return to earth in order to establish a kingdom over which he will personally rule for a thousand years. This theological view was prevalent during the closing decades of 19th century in England and in the United States. While waiting for the imminent return of Jesus Christ, the church is to be involved in the work of evangelization.

And this gospel of the Kingdom will be preached into the whole world as testimony to all nations and then the end will come (Matthew 24: 14).

This verse of the Scripture was interpreted as saying 'Jesus will return to the earth after the whole world is evangelized'. Preaching the gospel to the world was taken as the first priority of the Church to accelerate the return of Jesus Christ. Based on this idea the Highlands people of Irian Jaya were seen as the last tribes who had not heard the gospel. Zakheus who had shared this view returned to the Paniai region with the urgency to preach the gospel in order to accelerate the return of Jesus Christ and the coming of a new world order. 'The fire will come down from heaven and devour ...' (Revelation 20: 9) those who resisted the gospel.

And yet Christianity was not the only religious source from which Zakheus and the *Wege Bage* drew their religious ideas on the subject. The idea that the existing world order would undergo an abrupt change in the future is also rooted in Me tradition, namely in eschatological expectations and many of the folktales. The *Wege Bage* claimed that one of the millenarian predictions had been made during the pre-contact times. The *Wege Bage* referred to an account of a man from Diyoutouda, Onageidapa Tigi district, after having in contact with certain spirit beings instructed the people to prepare sweet potatoes and fire wood because the world was to undergo a radical transfor-

mation. The people followed his words and prepared firewood and sweet potatoes to be used and eaten during that period of darkness. But after waiting for some time the darkness did not come and the people dispersed (see for details section 5.6 'The local eschatology: the Me belief in an immediate transformation of the world').

That is to say that Zakheus' idea of the imminent advent of salvation or destruction of the present world order is not something new. Religious ideas such as destruction of the world and salvation of the faithful were already in existing in the Me tradition and coincided with Zakheus' own religious orientations which were mainly concerned with salvation to be experienced here and now in our eyes. This idea of salvation here and now which was couched in local terms became source of inspiration to support the *Wege Bage's* view against the *ogai*.

5.4.8 *Salvation as deliverance from the bondage of evil spirits: babeyai and ana ukai*

Leaders of some *Wege* community of Zakheus particularly in Kamu saw salvation as the deliverance from bondage of evil spirits or sins which they believed to be the cause of all misfortunes. This view also ran against the *ogai's* view which saw salvation only as forgiveness of sin through the work of Jesus Christ. Two of the men who introduced *Wege Mana* in Kamu claimed that when they were taken up by God to the upperworld, their eyes were opened and they saw the earth below them as home of men and women and young and old who were all in the chains of evil spirits. They said that men and women were not free to do what they wanted to do or to be what they wanted to be. All men and women living in this world cannot escape from this bondage. Their mission of leaders the *Wege Bage*, which was given by God at this time when they were in his dwelling place, was to perform *babeyai*—which was a religious ceremony to deliver the people from this bondage.

The leaders instructed the people who indicated their desire to join *Wege* community to participate in a ritual for admission known in the tradition as *babeyai*. Literally *babeyai* means to remove urine. In pre-contact times this ritual was performed when a baby was born with the umbilical cord around his neck. Such a baby might die young or could expect misfortune in the future. If this happened to be case, the parents were held responsible. They had knowingly or unknowingly had acted against socio-religious norms which caused the child to bear the consequences.

Before carrying out the ritual tree leaves to be used in the ceremony were collected: *ude*, *dapaa*, *mai*, *dedege*. These tree leaves were used together with other tree leaves such as *Otikai* (*Ramnaceae alphonsea*, sp., *Fagaceae Quercus*,

sp.), *ude* (*Liliaceae cordyline terminalis*), etc. by the shaman during the healing ceremony to drive away the spirit beings who caused the sickness. Aside from these materials a small living rat is made available. During the actual ceremony these materials are divided into three piles. Then the leader of the ceremony killed the rat and took out its intestines. The intestines symbolized the sins committed by the parents, participating in the ceremony. While removing the intestines of the rat the leader said *peu eniya pau eniya akiya ba kabo ba koto ki yoka ki maida makegape kou itokou kaduwakoumega*, 'Evil spirit, I want to remove or cut off your *baakabu*, *baakoto*, the bridge and the foundation which you have had built to come to disturb the future and destiny of this child'. The idea is that a child thus born was chained by evil spirits which would bring calamity. The intention of the ritual was to prevent the baby's possible future misfortune or bad luck.

In the same manner, the leaders of the *Wege Mana* claim that in the light of their teaching all men and women are born in the bondage of sin or bad spirits. Therefore, anyone who accepts *Wege Mana*, and decides to join the *Wege* community, has to go through this ritual. The ceremony starts by assigning certain adult males to prepare meals for the ceremony by steaming the food (see Agapa 1979; I have never witnessed this ceremony, and therefore data presented in this section is based on what I heard in the 1960s and later in June 1988, July 1989). Those who want to participate in the ceremony and others remain silent. While waiting for the meal those participating are told to stand in a line. The leader takes the pig's liver and its intestines that have been placed on the leaves of some *mai* tree (*Euph. glochidin*) leaves—which is another type of tree leaf used in the healing ceremony by shaman—and is given to the first man standing in the line in front of him. The man who receives the leaves and the pig's liver then holds them up and turns them around his head, and his neck, his breast, his stomach and his knees and then passes it on to the next one standing behind him. The man who received it repeats what the previous man did and then passes it on to the next one on the line, until all of them have done it. While the liver and the intestines are thus passed on from one to the other the man leading the ritual says a prayer. When this is done it is believed that the participants are cleansed from their sins. After they are declared to be clean from their sins, they are allowed to enter a newly opened garden. Before entering the garden each of them receives different types of tuber seeds and all of them are instructed to plant them in the garden. The seeds are: *kadaka*, and *mogou* (two kinds of sweet potato, *Ipomoea batatas*), *pogiye*, and *muuti* (two kinds of sugar cane, *Saccharum officinarum*), and *momai*, and *dee* two other kinds of yams (*Discorea* sp.). Some people view that the tubers originated in the region. They are believed to have been given by God; therefore the act of planting these yams is seen as a religious act (see

section 5.4.11.1 'Garden: dwelling place of the creator deity'). After entering the garden they begin to plant the seed while facing the eastern or northern direction. The last part of rite is eating the meal together. A wooden plate and spoon are used. Each of them take part of the food and rub their forehead and their stomach after a prayer is made to God.

In some of the *Wege* communities, a religious ceremony called the *ana ukai* was held twice a week. *Ana ukai* was basically same as *babeyai*. It had the same intention of cleansing the people participating from sins they or their dead relatives had committed in the past. *Ana ukai* was simpler. *Ana ukai* means literally to untie pigs which are in the state of being chained. *Ana ukai* begins with the participants tying part of their bodies with a string. First they tie their heads, and then neck and breast, waists, knees and their feet. This act of tying themselves symbolizes the idea that they are chained by spirit beings. Therefore, as the leaders began to place the pig on fire and singe its bristles to remove bristles, they began to untie themselves while saying a short prayer

peu ana pau ana ekega doketi—you (addressing to the spirit deity who might have had bad intentions such as calamity or deaths or sickness on them), chains of bad lucks, curse or sin have nothing to do with me, or you, who has chained me I cut you off from me. The pig's bristles are singed with the assumption that as soon the deity smells the burning bristles it will release the participants of this ritual from their grips (HW, September 19, 1988).

This religious ritual is meant to free the people from their chains of sin. This was done on the assumption that a man was not free from doing the religious rules because they were chained by evil spirit to do their bidings. Once this ceremony was held those who had participated were believed to have been delivered from this bondage and were free to do the will of the male deity creator or God.

In the 1960s such monthly blood sacrifices were still being practiced. Pigs were killed and the blood of pigs or chickens were poured to please God. In June 1960, Troutman wrote,

Animal and blood sacrifice are necessary to please 'Ugatame', the creator. They say this is done as originally by Cain and Abel, the sons of Adam and Eve. A portion of the blood is sprinkled on the grounds and the rest is burned with the smoke rising as a pleasing sight to 'Ugatame' ... Daud Makai, our teacher at Emaibo, testifies that he has not seen the sacrifices but last Christmas at of the annual feast, the people told him they would

kill their pigs and offer the blood sacrifices at home (Troutman 'Wege Mana' in Smalley I 1977: 619).

The *Wege* communities performed such rituals of *babeyai* and *ana ukai* to free themselves from the bondage of sins or curse which made them vulnerable to the threat to their life or the misfortunes which would come on their way. For the *Wege Bage* and the Me in general *Babeyai* and *ana ukai* has something to do with salvation.

5.4.9 *Salvation, ecstatic experience and a new language*

Two other features of the activity of the *Wege Bage* are their ecstatic experiences and their claims to be able to speak a new language which they call the Bunani Mana. Bunani Mana means language or religious teaching given to the black people. Such religious experiences are seen as a sign of salvation. Those who followed the *Wege Mana* began to speak in tongues and began to have mass-ecstatic experiences. One of the leaders said that 'it was this experience which caused many to join the *Wege* community in the Kamu Valley'. It is also this experience which confirm their efforts to defend and search for the *Wege Mana*. One of the leaders said,

We were filled with the Spirit, and sometime ago we were forced to compromise, by the local police who cooperated with the local headmen. They discourage us to follow religious rules given by God. As a result the spirit was irritated and she was gone. We don't experience it nowadays. Today she will only come once a while (MK, June 18, 1988).

After the leaders began to speak the new language, they introduced a new language. The leaders claim that this language was taught at the inspiration of the female spirit being. The leaders were the first to experience this ecstasy. Later this language was being learned in anticipation to be used in new and better world to come. They claim that 'this language is the language which will be used when the new world is restored'. The following example is their counting system. The first column is the Western numerical system, the second is the Me and the last column is that of the *Wege Mana* as it was taught by the spirit deity.

Western	Me	Bunani Mana
1	<i>ena</i>	<i>tekele</i>
2	<i>wiya</i>	<i>tekala</i>
3	<i>wido</i>	<i>tekili</i>
4	<i>wii</i>	<i>tepele</i>
5	<i>idibi</i>	<i>el</i>
6	<i>benumi</i>	<i>bel</i>
7	<i>pituwo</i>	<i>pit</i>
8	<i>waguwo</i>	<i>wal</i>
9	<i>iyē</i>	<i>el (?)</i>
10	<i>gaati</i>	<i>lapan</i>
11	<i>ena ma gati</i>	<i>lapan tekele</i>
12	<i>wiya ma gati</i>	<i>lapan tekala</i>

This new language is not used in daily. But it was being hoped that they will master the language with the aid of the spirit deity. It is believed that when new era begins this language of the *Wege Bage* will be used as the official language. All people will be forced to master this language. The leaders argue that to be able to speak in tongues and speak this language one has to undergo *babeyai*. While in the meantime, the *Wege Bage* challenge the church and missionary for not having this charismatic experience such as speaking in tongues or the talent of healing just like them. The experience of speaking in new tongues become the religious basis to challenge the *ogai* which deepened their own conviction that they are signs of salvation experience.

5.4.10 *Salvation as deliverance from sorcery and witchcraft*

Salvation is also conceived of as being free from fear of sorcery and witchcraft. Perhaps this might have been the reason why Zakheus tried to emphasize this aspect. One of his sermons when Zakheus began to teach the people dealt with 'sorcerers and witches who will go to hell'. As response many brought in their sorcery materials or objects to be burned. Mary McIlrath wrote, People repented of their sins, burned their fetishes, and what they could not burn, they dumped into the lake (McIlrath n.d.: 5). Later, when Zakheus began to build the *Wege* communities he set the rejection of sorcery practices as one of the conditions to join his communities.

Similarly, Benjamin, who had been preaching new world of prosperity as indicated in the previous chapter—carried out his program to eliminate sorcerers from the area. From January to April 1987, he cooperated with the church in this program. When he arrived in the Paniai region, in December

1986, Benyamin was hailed as a Christian evangelist, a man who would be able to bring freedom from sorcery and witches and socio-political crises in the land. Some felt that, he was a faith healer who has the charisma to dispel evil spirits and who could deliver the people who were supposedly possessed by the demons. From Enarotali he went to Mogoya. In this village he drew a big crowd. They met in the Church. At first the local church leadership was not happy about it. But there was nothing they could do. According to Benyamin, he was doing what Worsley—a CAMA missionary who had worked in the Paniai region in the 1970s—had asked him to do. If they did not allow him, Worsley would be offended. And therefore they allowed Benyamin to carry out his program to eliminate sorcery and witchcraft.

Hundreds of people came to the meetings to see how he helped people to burn their religious objects and how he helped healing the sick. From Mogoya village he went to Obano to talk to the church leaders and his staffs. He met the church leaders. In that meeting he convinced them that he was a faith healer and that he was doing all this in the name of Jesus of Christianity. He said he could help deliver the people who were possessed by the fear of sorcery and witchcraft. They again allowed him to do this.

In early 1987, Benyamin visited several local church communities such as: Muye, Mogoya, Amopa, Beko, Tipakotu, Uwodege, Okaago, Waipa, Okaitadi, Emaibo and Ukauwo. He was not alone on these trips. The Obano church leadership met with Benyamin. Three of these church leaders were also speakers at these evangelistic meetings. In these villages Benyamin was engaged in ministering the sick, and the sorcerers and witch who wanted to give up their 'office', and those who had become victims of such practices. He charged people to bring and burn their religious objects and sorcery materials. In his speeches he threatened people that if they didn't burn and throw away their sacred objects and sorcery materials the earth would open its mouth and would swallow them and kill them. People understood him as saying 'if you don't give up your magical and occult practices the female deity behind the *pabrik*, or the evil spirit who inhabits the earth will kill you'.

People responded out of fear. They brought in their traditional religious objects to be burned. Furthermore in his effort to get people to burn their religious objects he closed some church building on Sundays for worship. He said 'burn your traditional ritual objects before coming to the church'. Many were upset, but the message which he conveyed during those meetings was that 'salvation' was impossible unless the people stopped their sorcery practices. At this juncture, the church leadership succumbed the politics of the religious leaders who had become the target of the church's policy of integration. This was a victory on the part the leaders of religious movements who

had been preaching a different gospel than the one that the *ogai* had been preaching in the past.

5.4.11 *Salvation as restoration of a lost prosperous garden and the kadaka nota—the sweet potato of life*

Salvation is also viewed as restoration of a lost prosperous garden and the *kadaka nota*—the sweet potato of life. This garden was the dwelling place of God, the male creator deity. It was the garden in which the sweet potato of life was as source of life. The garden motif in the people's folk tales and religious thought served as model in their attempt to understand the Biblical teaching on Garden of Eden. It served as a religious source to develop this conception of salvation. The discussion of this subsection will be made under two sub-headings:

5.4.11.1 *The garden: the dwelling place of the creator deity*

The garden motif is an important element in the people's legends. Most of the legends speak of a prosperous garden which means an abundance of food through the aid of the spirit deities. No wonder that salvation which the *ogai* preach in this region is also understood as a prosperous garden. The following section devotes the views of the *Wege Bage* in the Kamu Valley (Idakebo) which I had gathered through interviews in June, 1988 and June, 1990.

According to religious leaders of the Kamu valley, in the beginning God had created a prosperous garden to be his dwelling place. He lived in that garden with a man called: Daime and his wife: Bedame. They all lived in the garden which was a world in itself. This world garden is believed to be located in Idakebo. It is also referred to as *koogu woguu makiida*—the world in which all kinds of garden plants, fruits, food, sweet potatoes, taro, banana, etc. are abundant and know no limit. This state of the world is also described as: *pii poga makiida*—the land where all kinds of garden plants/food are abundant and remained abundant forever; or *dudu piipi makiyo*—the land full of all kinds of flowers. The garden was also filled with *awe*—the divine ray of light

But this garden or world disappeared. Why did this happen? There are two answers. Some say, Bedame—Daime's wife—who lived in the garden ate the local *wau* fruit (*Myrtaceae, syzygium* sp. aff. *pachyclada* Lant. and *K. chun*) that was forbidden by God. Others say it was *tege*—evil spirit who is responsible for all evil or morally bad actions—came and saw Bedame who was beautiful and therefore had sexual intercourse with the woman. There are some consequences of this sexual act of Tege and Bedame. Firstly, *awe*—divine light—disappeared and was replaced by darkness, death, sickness, poverty and worldly vices such as: desire for cowrie shells or wealth, fighting, stealing,

adultery and other vices. The second consequence of that event is that even today the women undergo monthly menstruation. And thirdly, the prosperous world with its sweet potato of life disappeared.

Today the leaders of the *Wege Mana* who claimed to have had received the revelation, argue that God had reappointed them to cooperate with him to accomplish his mission to restore the lost garden. They were commissioned to make a new garden in their settlements in Mogoupuga, Idakebo and the Kamu Valley. After they received this call they started to make very large gardens. They still have this garden today. According to a church leader who is stationed in Idakebo, the *Wege Bage's* program of making a large communal garden was taken over from the Dani people's custom. Because only the Dani make a large gardens (Rev. DD, September 1992). But I think the motivation behind this garden making activity is a politico-religious program in nature.

The *Wege Bage* claim that, the large garden which they make today was started after they were taken to the upperworld by God and there this garden will be transformed into a new garden in a new form of existence when God or Koyeidaba return to this garden. The garden will be filled with fresh surrounding and new plants, birds and games will be abundant. It will be a new world in which men and women, beasts and spirit deities will live together. The ray of light that God had revealed to these leaders is the same light that was shining on the garden in their perceived pre-contact religious beliefs. The same light will shine again on the new garden. The leaders of this religious community are convinced that their mission is to bring back the lost garden through Bedame's conduct in the past. In the context of this argument they say that the Jewish people's history as recorded in the Bible, gives a picture of the history of mankind in their struggle to bring the 'lost garden' into this world. They say: 'from the Christian Bible it is clear that every time the people obey the rules God has given, he is always prepared to bring salvation, or *awe-ray* of spiritual light back'. But mankind always fails to strictly obey the religious rules.

As noted above, the communal garden which the *Wege Bage* have today was started after the leaders of the community claimed to have 'visited upper world'. While they were in upper world, they were instructed to grow the same plants referred to above such as *mogou*, *kadaka nota*, two types of sweet potatoes (*Ipomoea batatas*), *pogiye*, *muuti*, two types of sugar cane (*Saccharum officinarum*) and *dee, apu, momai* (*dioscorea* sp.). All of these are believed to be origin to the region; thus they are indigenous; just like God who had existed in the region. In their effort to restore the lost garden and bring God to their garden the following rules are observed:

a. *Awe motiine bagee babeyai kou dou gai peu*, 'Those who want to receive the light had to undergo babeyai'. All the people who want to join the *Wege* community are required to undergo what they call *babeyai*, because without undergoing *babeyai*, they will not understand the true meaning of all activities of making the garden as a religious activity. Babeyai became obligatory and therefore, the people who have not followed the *babeyai* ritual are not allowed to participate in other activities related to the garden.

b. *Bugi goomoti beuyato kamutai*, 'Before making the garden a religious ceremony had to be held'. Before cutting down trees and clearing the *mude*-piece of ground for garden—a prayer which is usually accompanied by sacrificial ritual has to be made to God. This prayer is intended to drive away evil spirits which are believed to have penetrated the land to be cultivated. Similar petitions were made to protect other trees left to grow in the garden to protect such trees from evil spirits. Such spirit beings are always trying to take up their dwelling place on these trees. The only way to protect the garden from such spirits is by making ritual sacrifice; i.e. by sprinkling the blood of pigs of chickens sacrificed.

c. *Mee ka kadaka nota kou ekina meni daa*, 'Do not give the sweet potato of life to pigs'. It is forbidden to feed pigs with the sweet potato of life because they are given by God as a means for man's salvation.

d. *Iya koteka iya moge makii iya bugiida notaiyo weine titouyogo ko*, 'Wear new a penis gourd and a new skirt when beginning to plant the new seeds in the new garden'. When planting the sweet potato of life it is required that all those involved wear traditional dress and decoration materials be put on such as: *kagane*—armband, *iya koteka*—new gourd, *iya moge*—new skirt, *amapa kagamapa*—breast net bag, *deta agiia* pig tusk shoulder net bag. This is meant to show respect for God and the sweet potato of life God has given for the salvation of man as the Protestant and Catholics wear good and clean clothes when they go to church on Sunday.

e. *Yagamo enai daa touda nota iyo nomo iyo weete gaa*, 'Avoid sexual contact during the time of planting the garden'. No sexual intercourse is admitted during the period of clearing the ground for the garden or the time of weeding garden or harvesting the sweet potato. One has to abstain from the sexual intercourse if he or she intend to enter the new garden. Because this very act will make the garden 'cool' and hinder God from returning to and restoring the garden.

Today, according to one of the leader, after they began to make the garden and follow these and other religious rules related to garden making activity as noted above, 'the sweet potato of life' is growing well as well as multiplying. People came from all parts of the region to ask for the seed. They stated at the time of the investigation (June 1990) that during the recent years this sweet potato began to change the color of its leaves or *betokai*. *Betokai* means changing of the color of the sweet potato, both its leaves and its stems, often takes place in this region. But according to the *Wege Bage* of the Kamu Valley the change of *kadaka nota* in this case means that God is pleased with their activities of the *Wege Bage*. The change of the color of its leaves was regarded as a signal to the *Wege Bage* that they are doing the right thing and that God is pleased with what is being done. The *Wege Bage* argue that as they continue to reexamine their way of life in the light of the demands of God, the sweet potato will not only produce sweet potatoes out of its stems but also bear sweet potato fruit out of its vines. If that happens according to the *Wege Bage*, 'salvation' as it was experienced when God was living in the garden as noted above, is about to come. And therefore they work hard while bearing all struggles. This very garden which they had made will be transformed into a new garden. The earth will be filled with all kinds of game which will never be diminish. The earth will a fertile garden which will grow fresh fruits and other edible and uneatable trees as God takes his residence in this garden to transform it into a new one.

The leaders of the *Wege Bage* believe their task to bring about this garden back is to make the Me of the Paniai region aware of this belief and convince them to join this community in maintaining the garden already started. Because if all people of the region become one heart and one mind, this will accelerate the process of restoration of the garden and bring God back to dwell in this garden. This idea that the presence of a spirit being in the garden which makes the garden prosperous is a familiar religious beliefs of the people in pre-contact times (RP, June 14, 1992, see also section 5.2 'The deity as guardian of fertility'). Now we turn to the question of what is the sweet potato of life, which has been mentioned above.

5.4.11.2 *The Garden and the Kadaka Nota—the sweet potato of life*

In previous section *kadaka nota*—or sweet potato of life as I call it—was mentioned only in passing. This section is intended to present the *Wege Bage*'s view of this sweet potato of life. Salvation in terms of a prosperous garden cannot be seen apart from the sweet potato of life.

There are various types of sweet potatoes which are cultivated in this region. Based on their origins the Me differentiate them into: 1) *tota nota*—the ones originated in the region and 2) and *meta nota*—the ones which came

later. The sweet potato of life is indigenous to the Paniai region. Put it in the politico-religious context this sweet potato of life is indigenous and has existed with God from the beginning. The two had been there before all other things came into being. In fact, the sweet potato of life had existed together with God, therefore they cannot be separated one from the other. This sweet potato was already present in the garden in which God lived in this region. This sweet potato brought about light which shone through the garden. For this reason it is also known as *awe nota*—the sweet potato of light. It was the light which came from this sweet potato which was shining in the garden but which today also can also illuminate our eyes to see things which God want to show us or reveal to us (DK, June 10, 1988). But as the story of Adam and Eve in the Bible, after Bedame had sexual intercourse with the Tege-evil spirit being, the sweet potato was neglected along with God and the garden. It ceased to be what it was meant to be by God.

It is claimed that when the leaders of this *Wege* community in Kamu were taken up to the upperworld, they were instructed to plant and take good care of this sweet potato of life so that it would not disappear. One of these leaders said

Ugatame-ya ya ganeida ko kou nota kou ma, ayii mana kou ma, iniya dimi mana kouma to, yokoka agiiyoudo kouko iniya etawaate too, God's main concern is how we take care of our bodies, this sweet potato; and how we follow his rules, the rest of the things we care about in this world are our own making. Therefore we should share God's interest and deny what we consider to be essential in this life. Because they are not important before God.

It is based on this instruction and encounter that they began to teach the people to make large communal gardens and to plant this sweet potato of life.

They also argued that in pre-contact times the people who had taken care of the sweet potato of life were rewarded. One example of this is an account of a man who lived in the Debei Valley. This man was again and again rewarded by God for preserving the sweet potato from dying. The account said that several days after this man made a garden, he discovered that the sweet potato of life was growing by itself without anyone planting it. When he saw it, he started to weed and remove other grass and plants which were growing alongside this sweet potato. Some months later when it was ready for harvest, it yielded many big-sized sweet potatoes yet he did not harvest them. But one day he discovered that rats had entered the garden and had eaten a large portion of that sweet potato. He was upset and made a fence to protect it from the rats. Then he put up some traps surrounding the garden to catch the rats.

The following day, the man went to inspect the traps and the garden; from afar he saw the signs of the rat being caught by traps, but as he came closer there was nothing in his trap. Then he entered the garden to inspect the sweet potato. Not long after he went into the garden, he heard a sound, then he saw someone who was pulling his arrows to shoot him. The man shot at him three times but miraculously he escaped.

The story goes on saying, that he took care of the sweet potato, to the point of getting killed, therefore he was rewarded. At one time he wanted to eat shrimp, and expressed his wish for shrimp and not long after that a woman who had been to Lake Tigi the previous night fishing, came and brought him a large bag full of shrimp. At another time he wanted to hold a marsupial feast and told the people who were around that they would be having a marsupial feast. The people reacted saying it is impossible, they had to go hunting before such feast could be held. But as they were reacting to him this way, two men whom they had never met before came and delivered three bags full of marsupials and disappeared from their midst. The people were surprised because they did not know those two men. Nobody knew where they went and where they came from. The feast was held. At another time the same man went to Boudimi for hunting. After three weeks of hunting he ran out of food. He was hungry but he could not go home. He wished to return to his home village but he was too weak to walk. He was laying in the temporary hut he had built, but all of a sudden, he felt there was a strong man who was carrying him away and brought him to his village. He found himself in his village again.

This is story of a man who was strictly observing the people's religious views and took a good care of life giving sweet potato given by God. He was in turn protected by God the Me say. It is this expectation and belief in the reward from God that drove a leader of a small *Wege* community near Waghete, Tigi district to make a ritual sacrifice every time he planned to plant or cultivate this sweet potato of life.

It is this type of religious conviction which dominated the thought of Dodeiwode—Zakheus' father—who provided Zakheus with a firm traditional religious background. Dodeiwode is referred to as a successful gardener who was also a religious man. The quality of his religious life was manifested by the success he achieved in having grown all kinds of garden food in his garden. In some occasions he experienced extra-ordinary events surrounding banana trees planted in his garden. It was this view of salvation as prosperous garden which drew many to sympathize with Zakheus and his programs, simply because such beliefs and expectation are rooted in the Me tradition.

In the context of encounter with the *ogai*, the *Wege Bage* argue that the *ogai* came to Paniai to witness how this garden will be restored and the event

of the advent of God or Koyeidaba to this garden in Idakebo. As the time of the restoration of the garden approaches, the *ogai* will begin to put up their own houses in Idakebo—the holy place where Koyeidaba appeared and where the garden of Eden and the sweet potato of life will be restored. Then the *ogai* will make a public confession that indeed they have been wrong in drawing the people away from the *Wege Bage* and the people's traditional religious beliefs, as God/Zakheus or Koyeidaba will return to restore the lost garden.

5.4.12 *Political freedom*

Political freedom is one dimension of salvation being propagated by the religious leaders in the Paniai region today. In fact many join and participate in the activities of local religious leaders of this region because their activities are charged with the message of political liberation.

5.4.12.1 *Zakheus and his empire*

Zakheus' program to establish *Wege* communities can be interpreted as his attempt to establish his 'empire', to protect the people from being dominated by foreign powers. It is interesting that in the early stages of his work, when he visited various places in Tigi, Debei, Kamu and East Paniai districts, he ordered the people not to accept other religious teachers who would be sent by the *ogai*. He said that he was going to send teachers to teach the way of salvation; and therefore they were to wait for the teachers who would come to them in his name. While instructing the people not to cooperate with the *ogai* during these visits, Zakheus planted a hand made wooden cross in all the places where he had visited. This was to symbolize that these places from that time on were to become part of Zakheus' empire. Indeed the people—from these places which Zakheus had occupied—followed Zakheus' words and joined or even began to send someone from their community to attend his school. In some places the people just waited the teacher promised by Zakheus. But since he was arrested and Zakheus was not able to send the teacher he had promised they later all joined the CAMA church. This activity of planting the wooden cross can be seen as Zakheus attempt to establish indigenous religious communities completely free from foreign religious and political domination.

Following this, Zakheus established a school to train the people who had wanted to follow his programs. While sending them away with the instruction to preach the *Wege Mana*, those who had attended his school—my parents also attended this school—were given new seeds of cabbage, onions, etc. to enable them to sell these crops to the *ogai* which would eventually help them earn some Western money. As mentioned earlier and elsewhere while

distributing such seeds he instructed the people not to be lazy but to be hard working families. His intention for this agricultural program is to prevent socio-economic domination by the *ogai*. He said that men and women, husbands and wives to be of 'one mind and one heart'. He said they had to follow this way of life. It would help them go through difficult times in the future. Based on their reflection of Zakheus instructions related to his program, today the Me argue that indeed Zakheus' teaching is true because his teachings were intended to prevent the people from the socio-political and economic domination by the Indonesians.

Going back to the early 1950s, the people who had acted as hosts and indicated their desire to join Zakheus' communities, indeed resisted to cooperate with the *ogai*: the local evangelists and police agents. The people did not want to cooperate with local men who were associated with the *ogai* such as: local village chiefs appointed by the government, or local police and local evangelists. Upon the reports of these men associated with the *ogai*, the Dutch government officer stationed in Waghete responded to this by ordering the local police to arrest Zakheus for bringing disturbance and disorder to the area. Zakheus was seen as a stumbling block to the government plan to establish the Pax Neerlandica in the region.

As was noted earlier Zakheus was arrested and punished several times. There is some truth in the charge because the people who had accepted Catholicism came in conflict with those who had decided to cooperate with Zakheus. But according to the local people there are several reasons why Zakheus was arrested and eventually 'killed'. The people argue that Zakheus was arrested mainly for political reasons. Zakheus was seen as the political rival of the *ogai*. While the *ogai* failed to win the people to follow them, Zakheus was succeeding in gaining followers. This was intensified because those who had decided to follow Zakheus became resistant to the efforts of change from the *ogai*. Zakheus was in this respect seen as the pillar of the local people's resistance. The *ogai* thought that if they removed Zakheus, they could do all that they wanted to do in the region: to impose their socio-religious views on the people. Others argued that Zakheus was removed from the Paniai region and eventually 'killed' by the *ogai* because they were worried that by establishing his communities, Zakheus was preparing the people to revolt against the *ogai*. Those who hold this view argue that while Zakheus was attending the theological school in Makassar, he learned about the Indonesians struggle for political independence. As a result, he became a strong Nationalist with an anti-Euroamerican attitude while he was staying in Makassar. The Dutch were afraid that he was going to lead the people to rebel against the *ogai*. Therefore he was arrested and imprisoned, and in the end he

was killed. Thus, the people viewed Zakheus' program as a program to liberate the Me from the *ogai*'s political and economic domination.

5.4.12.2 *The activities of two Wege communities and political development since the 1960s*

As shown in the previous chapter, in the early 1960s the *Wege Bage*'s political aspirations was intensified as the news about the establishment of the New Guinea Council reached the region. This was possible as some men from this Council visited the Paniai region in the 1960s, explaining to the Me about the future of a West Papuan state. As it was noted in previous chapter this visit inspired the *Wege Bage* to preach their own religion. New *Wege* communities were established everywhere in the region. However, this stage came to an end shortly after the Indonesians came and the *Wege Bage* disappeared from the area. This was due to political suppression from the present government. But it did not mean that the people gave up their political aspirations. As mentioned in the previous chapter, a religious leader from the *Wege* community in Kiuto appeared and preached that a female deity was going to supply the people with an abundant supply of Western goods and guns which would enable them to drive out the Indonesians from the region. Benyamin, who succeeded Paulus in 1985, came with the same message of politico-religious liberation. Benyamin told the people that by 1988, West Papua would become an independent state. He told the people that God had appointed him to expel the Indonesians out of Irian Jaya and formed a Christian Independent state of West Papua. Enarotali was chosen as the capital city of West Papua. In April 1989, Decky, a young man who succeeded Benyamin spread his program to challenge the present government policy to suppress local political and religious aspirations.

Similarly, a religious leader, who had established a *Wege* community in Tigi—referred to earlier—and who preached the *Wege Mana* argued that the world will be a better place to live only when Zakheus returns and rules the world. His return and his rule will be preceded by the departure of the Indonesian army. The Indonesian army will go, because they are not needed (DG, June, 1985). In the same way, the *Wege* community in Kamu district continues to preach the return of Koyeidaba. His return will be preceded by the coming of all foreigners to witness the day of Koyeidaba's return and the judgement of all those who have killed him and have persecuted the *Wege* communities. From these arguments it is clear that political independence is seen also as part of salvation aside from deliverance from domination of evil spirits or poverty and death. And this political agenda of the religious leaders who preached salvation encouraged the people's participation in their programs.

5.4.13 Conclusion

In this section a brief survey of the people's view of salvation was made. Some view it as an abundance of food, or healing of the sick, and restoration of a broken relationship with the spirit beings. Others take salvation as political independence, or deliverance from the chains of bondage, or an absence of sorcery and witchcraft, etc. Still some others define it as restoration of the lost garden and the sweet potato of life and of an ecstatic religious experience. Thus the people had developed their own understanding of salvation from their own cultural stand points. Based on such view the local religious elites established themselves as religious experts who provide inspiration and a source of religious knowledge which became an ideological basis for their programs in the midst of change and opposition.

5.5 The Me idea of Jesus: Zakheus and Koyeidaba as messianic figures

One of the underlying motifs behind the Me participation in the activities of the leaders of the *Wege Bage* is their Christology. The present section deals with this local Christology. The discussion is divided into two subsections. The first subsection presents the account of Koyeidaba mythology based on the Me pre-contact messianic myth. This is followed by the way the people who know Koyeidaba myth, have been interpreting the life and the work of Jesus Christ when Christianity was presented to them. The second subsection deals with the way the Me promoted Zakheus as messiah in the past three decades. Since the life and the work of Zakheus has been presented in previous chapters, this part only describes the emergence of Zakheus as messiah in the people's religious orientations. This will be followed by the Me's perception of Zakheus' activities before his death which are used today to argue about Zakheus' messianic position.

5.5.1 Koyeidaba as Jesus Christ

In the early stages of the missionary work in the Paniai region when the *ogai* spoke of Jesus of Christianity, the Me argued that 'it was Koyeidaba which was being preached by the *ogai*'. Today, in spite of decades of evangelization, the leaders of the *Wege Bage* who had established the *Wege* communities in the Kamu Valley and the Me in the Paniai region in general view Koyeidaba who had once lived and performed many extraordinary deeds in the Paniai region as the Me messiah. This view is prevalent not only in the *Wege* communities but reaches beyond the *Wege Bage*. Although Zakheus is also seen as the Jesus

of the Me, the number of the people who hold this view is limited to the former *Wege Bage* in Kokobaya, Tigi district and to some people from few number of places. Koyeidaba myth on the other hand is embraced by the Me as a whole. The discussion on Koyeidaba is divided into two headings.

5.5.1.1 *Koyeidaba myth*

Koyeidaba appeared and carried out his activities mainly in Idakebo and in the Kamu Valley. He was an extraordinary man. He provided food for the hungry by rubbing his body. He was killed but many say that when Koyeidaba returns, the new era will begin. But who is this Koyeidaba?

a. The socio-economic background of Koyeidaba

The name 'Koyeidaba' explains his physical and social and economic background from which he came. *Koyei* might be his personal name. But *daba* means economically poor, an outcast who has nothing and is rejected by society. He came from a group unaccepted by society. He was despised even by his own parents. The word also means that because he was poor, he was not fed well. His physical condition was the same as his socio-economic status: Koyeidaba had a stunted body and was unattractive.

b. Koyeidaba's place of origin

Most of the stories about Koyeidaba said that he came from Pogomoma, south east of Enarotali. It is believed that in Pugomoma, there is special sweet potato, which is still there up until now. Today it is said that when the leaves of that sweet potato are drying and dying, it means the Me will go through a long period of hunger and starvation. If the leaves of this plants are growing well it sends the message that there will be a surplus of food, sweet potato in particular, in the region.

c. Koyeidaba's migration to Idakebo, Kamu Valley

From Pugomoma, Koyeidaba went to the South in search of a suitable place to put up his home. On his way he tried to make his home in difference places: Keniapa (Yawei Riverbank), Duwamo Tigi District, and eventually he settled in Idakebo or Makewapa, Kamu Valley.

d. Koyeidaba's settlement in Idakebo

After choosing Idakebo as his dwelling place Koyeidaba started his activities. Idakebo or Makewapa is also the place where the leaders of the *Wege Mana* of the Kamu Valley grew up and live today. Idakebo is a holy place because it is the place which Koyeidaba chose to live and carried out his activities. It is generally believed that Koyeidaba will return to this place to judge the world.

e. Miraculous work of Koyeidaba

He performed many extraordinary things such as: creating food just by rubbing his hand and other parts of his body when the people were in critical times of hunger. He fed the people who came in search of food. The people from the whole region flocked to Idakebo and followed him to wherever he went. Others say Koyeidaba also healed the sick.

f. The killing of Koyeidaba in Odiyaidimi

Not all people admired Koyeidaba. There were people who were jealous, seeing him having no difficulty in obtaining food and having many followers. Those who were jealous formed a plot and finally killed him.

g. The people who participated in the killing

Some of the Me clan names today were given after the role they played in the killing of Koyeidaba.

- Agapa - from *aagai* which means to split; the one split up his body.
- Goo - from *gou* which means to drag; he who dragged him (Koyeidaba) out the house to the place where he was killed.
- Dou - from *dou* to see; the one who saw where Koyeidaba was before he was killed.
- Pigai - from *pigai* to slice; the one who participated in the killing by cutting up his fingers.
- Tebay - from *teba* which means palm; the one who cut Koyeidaba's hand and feet into pieces.
- Mote - from *motii* which means to take, the one who betrayed Koyeidaba by taking a bribe and hand over Koyeidaba to the plotters who was after Koyeidaba.

h. Koyeidaba's last words before his death

Before breathing his last breath Koyeidaba said his last words:

Pituwo ko pituwounda waguwo ko waguwanda wado akado taitage, We will meet each other/or I will return after seven or eight generations.

These last words of Koyeidaba are viewed as a revelation of an event which will take place in the *near* future; and therefore Koyeidaba is expected to return to Idakebo or the Paniai region. The people argue that when he returns he will punish those who had prevented him from carrying on his activities by killing them. Furthermore, he will judge all mankind regardless of their cultural or religious background and inaugurate a new era. The last words of

Koyeidaba are believed to be taking place in the near future. This is based on the assumption that the words of dying men and women is a revelation of the spirit regarding the destiny of those who are present when such words are pronounced. Dying men's words such as these are believed to be unfolding future events for those who are present. Koyeidaba's words before his death are taken as a prediction of the future, not only for one single individual or clan or tribe, but for the destiny of the whole of mankind.

i. Koyeidaba's sisters

Koyeidaba had two sisters: Nooku and Jegaku. They were not at home when Koyeidaba was dragged away to the place where he was killed. Shortly after Koyeidaba's killing Nooku and Jegaku returned home. When they arrived in Odiyaidimi, a hill behind Idakebo, the two sisters heard the commotion and learned that their brother had been killed. As they began to wail, the people started to pursue them to kill them too. Nooku and Jegaku fled. Jegaku went to the eastern or northern direction (Siriwo). While her sister Nooku went to the southern direction. Nooku took along the *Touye Mana*, the lost word or teaching, the lost knowledge about secret of prosperous life.

j. Some parts of Koyeidaba's body changed and became food which the Me cultivate in their garden today

- Koyeidaba's eyes - became *ugubo*, an edible green (*Rungia klossii*)
- his ribs - turned to *kugou*, bananas (*Musa paradisiaca*)
- his shin - *muuti*, a special of sugar cane
- his lips - *bemu*, a special edible mushroom
- his brains - *nomo*, taro

k. Koyeidaba' blood

The blood of Koyeidaba became a pool known as *emo peku*—pool of blood. This pool was still there in Idakebo, but there is no more water in the pool since a big canal was made by the Catholics in the early 1970s to provide more land for the people of the Kamu Valley for cultivation.

l. Koyeidaba's curse

Koyeidaba cursed the people and the land *gaapa kabu, didi kabu, boka kabu kouma umi tou tai*—which means 'you will live in sorrow and trouble, sickness and death'.

m. Koyeidaba took away the real food

Some say that after Koyeidaba's killing, he took away the real food; he also changed the true *nomo*, taro (*Coloscasia esculenta*), to *nomo kebaya*, wild taro—today grown in the swampy areas—and true *eto*, sugar cane (*Saccharum officinarium*) became *pagimo* (a wild grass that looks like sugar cane), etc. When Koyeidaba died all kinds of food disappeared. Some say he took food with him, while others claim that the food the Me cultivate today in the Paniai region are not the real food, because the real food disappeared after Koyeidaba was killed.

n. The return of Koyeidaba and starvation

Some people argue that before Koyeidaba returns he will again take away certain types of food. The people will go through starvation as a result. Only those who can go through starvation will enter the new earth. Starvation that has been taking place the last several years as result of the ecological crises shown in Chapter 4 has been seen as the fulfillment of this belief. But many other people argue that this will soon be over if the people unite their hearts and follow the rules set by God; God will intervene and bring in a new era of prosperity.

o. The eye witness of the killing of Koyeidaba

There is a prevalent view that one or two of the men from certain clans who had witnessed the 'event of killing of Koyeidaba' are still alive. Therefore if Koyeidaba returns to the Paniai region to punish those who prevented him from carrying on his work by killing him, he will produce these witness to stand by his side and give witness before the punishment.

p. The clan to which Koyeidaba belong

There have been attempts to identify Koyeidaba's clan with one of the clans in the Paniai region. Some say Koyeidaba was Dumapa, Keiya, etc. Others, however, argue that he will reveal his clan name when he returns.

There are different versions of this myth, but what I have presented above is a general account of the Koyeidaba myth. This is an important messianic myth in the Paniai region which provide a religious basis to develop a Me Christology. In the context of their encounter with Christianity the Me argue that Jesus Christ of the Bible is Koyeidaba which has been given a new name by the *ogai* either to obtain more information about Koyeidaba or to draw the people away from their true religious belief in Koyeidaba. The following subsection will deal with the way the people of this region reacted when Jesus Christ of Christianity was presented to them.

5.5.1.2 *Koyeidaba and Jesus Christ: the Me perception*

The people in the Paniai region have been formulating their own Christology in various ways when confronted with Christianity.

a. The *ogai* did not know the true Koyeidaba

The people from the Lake Tigi area thought that the *ogai* were telling about Jesus Christ because they only knew little about Koyeidaba and wanted to know more about him. After listening to one of the men who shared what he heard about the fall of Adam and Eve and about the work of Jesus Christ for the world with the people around, they told him not to continue to tell others about it (*Demia*, August 19, 1989). They argued that the *ogai* were making up the Biblical story, particularly that of Jesus Christ, in their desperate attempt to induce the Me to reveal the true teachings about Koyeidaba which the Me already knew, but the *ogai* apparently not.

Others from the Kamu Valley expressed a rather similar view. They said that the Bible which contained account of Jesus Christ was written by the *ogai* to get the Me people involved in their activities of the missionary work and to get the people tell them about Koyeidaba. They accused the *ogai* of stealing the story of Koyeidaba and gave him a new name and wrote a Bible out of their religious history. For this reason, in the Kamu Valley the children were advised by their parents not to reveal the name of Koyeidaba because if the children did it, the Catholic priest would make every attempt to find out more information about Koyeidaba (Agapa 1979: 28). Based on this assumption the people even today argue that both the Catholic and the CAMA missionaries in the end will reveal their true motives of coming to the Paniai region by putting up their houses and offices in Idakebo in the place where Koyeidaba was killed; and where he will return. If they build their house in Idakebo, it means that indeed the Me knew the true messiah: who is Koyeidaba, and that the *ogai* came in search of gospel, and not to preach it (*Demia*, September 6, 1989).

b. Keeping both: Jesus Christ and Koyeidaba

The first group of Christians from Idakebo who formed the early members of the local congregation in the 1960s were willing to listen but did not want commit themselves to the claims of Jesus Christ. After listening to the local preacher who was coming every Sunday to preach in this place, the older members of this group of new Christian community called the young pastor and told him about Koyeidaba. They said that they also have a similar belief like Jesus of Christianity whom they call Koyeidaba; so they asked him what he thought about it; Is Jesus Christ of the Bible Koyeidaba? The young preacher said that he did not know himself. He said, it is better not to reject

Jesus Christ, just to listen to what the Bible said and see what would happen in the days ahead (YT, September 22, 1992). This was the position of the elders in that group. The people adopted a wait and see attitude, at least for the time being, by attempting to keep both Jesus and Koyeidaba in their religious imaginations. Keeping both Jesus Christ and Koyeidaba was necessary because the people were sure about the true intention of the *ogai* to come to the Paniai region. This position was taken with the view to choose one of them later: the one who will prove himself to be the true messiah. The people did not give up their past beliefs about Koyeidaba when Jesus Christ of Christianity was presented to them.

c. Koyeidaba as the true messiah

In contradistinction to the people mentioned above, who did not want to take sides with either Jesus Christ of the Christian faith or their traditional religion, the leader of the *Wege* community in Idakebo, who established this community following the revelation from God, argued that Koyeidaba is the true messiah who will be triumphant over Jesus Christ of Christianity and other messiahs. When asked why he held this view he gave the following reasons. Firstly, he said that Koyeidaba had existed before the advent of the *ogai*. There was no idea in his thought as to where Jesus was killed except in Idakebo, Kamu valley. So the coming of the *ogai* according to this religious leader, was in the search of Koyeidaba. That was the reason he said, when Zakheus returned to Paniai from abroad he preached the Me religious rules. God or the male creator deity and his religious rules had been known in the Paniai region long before the *ogai* had come. The leader challenged me to join Zakheus, while accusing other Me church leaders who had gone—to America to attend Church meetings—for not following Zakheus (GK, September 9, 1992). Because according to him, Zakheus knew that the true messiah and God had chosen the Paniai region as their dwelling place. Secondly, he said, that Jesus Christ as preached by the *ogai* who eats the white man's sweet potatoes—meaning bread—cannot be the messiah because when he was taken up to the domain of God in the upperworld, God had instructed him to do two things only: 1) to obey the Me's religious and ethical rules, and 2) to plant and grow *kadaka nota*, the sweet potato of life. According to leader of this community Jesus of the Bible cannot be true messiah simply because he does not know what the *kadaka nota* is and never eats it as well. What this religious experience taught this religious leader and his community in the Kamu Valley is that Jesus Christ found in the Bible is Koyeidaba who was killed in Idakebo. The *ogai* changed this name from Koyeidaba to Jesus Christ out of their politico-religious intentions. The *ogai* changed Koyeidaba's name to Jesus Christ to draw the people away from our true belief and make doubt about

our Koyeidaba. In response to this, the religious leader from the *Wege* community in Kamu tried to hide Koyeidaba myth from the *ogai* (Agapa 1979: 29).

d. Koyeidaba as a cargo deity

While seeing Koyeidaba as the Jesus of the Me today, he is also seen by some as cargo deity. Those who hold this view argue that while Koyeidaba was alive in Idakebo he produced money, food, and other Western goods out of his mouth. It is said that when he spat on the ground, out his spittle came all kinds of Western goods. Before Koyeidaba was killed, their ancestors enjoyed such goods. But when the people killed him he said 'you have rejected me and killed me, therefore I will offer these goods to the *ogai*'. Having said this he closed the gate—which is a hole in the ground in Idakebo—through which he obtained the Western goods. Then he planted a tree on that spot. This tree is still there. Upon planting the tree he said his last words 'I will return after the seventh or eighth generation'. From the time of his death until now Koyeidaba has been supplying goods to the *ogai* (CK, September 5, 1992). But this state of life is going to change as Koyeidaba is returning soon. The people argue that in anticipation of the return of Koyeidaba, the tree which was planted to block the way of the cargo has to be removed. A member of a clan from Kamu is said to be responsible to uproot the tree. It was said that the members of this clan are preparing pigs and chicken to hold a ritual feast before rooting up the tree. It is said that they have been preparing an axe to be used to cut the tree and to cut its roots. After this Koyeidaba will appear and the Western goods will be made available again. Some argue that Koyeidaba has returned already to the Paniai region in 1987 or 1978—based on his promise that he would return in the 7th or the 8th generation. According to this group he is in hiding in this region, waiting to appear at the right time (CK, September 10, 1992). The *ogai* who had come to Enarotali in 1986—and who have been making exploratory trips around the Paniai region with their helicopter to investigate the possibilities of mining in the Paniai region are seen as a sign that Koyeidaba is returning soon (CK, September 12, 1992 and OP, September 16, 1992). The conclusion which can be drawn from this survey is that Jesus Christ of Christianity is seen as Koyeidaba: the local messianic figure based on Koyeidaba mythology. In the context of change the people reaffirm their own tradition by arguing the *ogai* either knew little about Koyeidaba or try to divert the people's thought from their belief in Koyeidaba.

5.5.2 *Zakheus as Jesus Christ*

In the people's view Zakheus, who preached Jesus Christ, was to some extent also accepted as Jesus himself. The first part of the following sub-section deals with the way in which the people had turned Zakheus into a messiah. This is followed by a discussion of the people's interpretation of Zakheus's activities before his death.

5.5.2.1 *The emergence of Zakheus as messiah*

The opposition to Zakheus and later his elimination from the Paniai region and from his communities, failed to eradicate the religious sentiment towards Zakheus from the people's mind. In fact, the rejection only strengthened the *Wege Bage's* faith in him as the Me people's Jesus: and the suppression of Zakheus and his activities made him more like Jesus Christ who also was opposed and killed by the enemies of his transforming mission. The people began to view Zakheus as messiah after he had started to launch his program. The conviction was partly based on the *Wege Bage's* beliefs in the history of the clan. They believed that Dodeiwode had passed on his religious views to his son Zakheus. Zakheus was believed to have possessed *duta* (see 5.2.5 'God and sacred religious objects', also Smalley 1977 I: 617). This belief in *duta* was related to their belief in Zakheus as *messiah*, who was the physical representation of messianic revelation. Troutman wrote,

Dodeiwode was the eighth in line in the family, Zakheus was the ninth and the son of Zakheus is to be the tenth or the promised one, the Messiah or King (Troutman, 'Wege Mana' in Smalley 1977: 617).

It was believed that since Zakheus possessed the *duta* he was the messiah who was bringing a new era to the region.

At one time Zakheus told the missionary Troutman that a messianic expectation was tied in to the *duta* of his father. In this variant, Dodeiwode would not be the tenth, but the eighth in the descent from Jupi. Zakheus' son, the 10th, would then be the messiah of the Kapauku [Me, BG] (Grootenhuis 1960: 8).

However, some of the men who followed him, and participated in the activities of his communities, simply did so after hearing the rumors about extraordinary feats which he had performed (see section 5.4.2 'Healing and other extra-ordinary works') When he was taken away from area, the *Wege Bage* argued that Zakheus was removed because the *ogai* were hard-hearted people

who were not willing to recognize the fact that Zakheus was indeed the God appointed man to transform the world. This was according to the *Wege Bage* confirmed by miraculous events which Zakheus performed as indicated above. Smedts, a Dutch journalist, said that even after Zakheus had been imprisoned (in the year 1955) the people still feared him.

Zakheus is gone, the world stand still as it was, but the people are still always in fear of him and reminded themselves that many were hungry when nothing has happened and the fire did not come (Smedts 1956: 118).

In 1964-1965 rumors which confirmed God's election of Zakheus became prevalent. The following is a rumor which I heard twice: first in my village in 1966 and later when I was in High School in 1968. The rumor basically said that the Holy Spirit had visited Zakheus in the form of a dove. It was said that at the time of the visit, Zakheus was around with two other men from the Paniai region in Yibagouyoweta, the place where Zakheus began his work. When Zakheus felt that the time of the visit was very near he asked the two men who were with him to get ready by taking a bath and putting on their new clothes. Zakheus said, *ibo kidi meine ka*, God or the male creator deity is coming, get ready. The two men did what they were asked to do. Zakheus too put on his new clothes with a neck tie. Then he asked the two companions to sit down and he began to pray. After a short prayer Zakheus opened his Bible and suddenly the spirit of God in the form of a dove—came and filled the room where they were staying. After a while the spirit departed from the room. This type of rumor only strengthen the *Wege Bage's* belief in Zakheus as messiah.

In the middle of the 1970s, when Philipus—one of the two men who had provided accommodation for Zakheus after he left the hospital in Sentani, went to the Paniai region the people asked where Zakheus was, and how he was doing. He was surprised that the people still were not convinced that Zakheus was dead. He said Zakheus is dead. 'We buried him in Sentani because we did not have money to send his body to be buried here'. Still, the people thought he was alive and was living somewhere. Having heard this, he responded by lifting his two hands and said 'I have buried Zakheus with these two hands' (PD and EE, Sentani, July 12, 1992). Following this, rumors spread about several closed relatives of Zakheus who claimed to have had received messages from Zakheus to rebuild his house. It was said that the people in Bomou and Yibagouyoweta were collecting planks and roofing in order to rebuild Zakheus' house that had collapsed some years earlier. It was argued that the house of Zakheus needed to be built because, Zakheus was going to use it as a throne on which he will sit and judge the wrong-doers. Zakheus' sister,

however objected to the plan. Following her dream—the dream which she had during her first menstruation experience—she said that if they built the house, she would instantly die or it would be the end of the world. This objection was based on a vision she had on the eve of her first menstruation. Simply because the Me strongly believe that the dream which a woman has during the night when she undergoes her first menstruation, is very important as it is taken as a revelation from the spirit being about her future—or the future of her family—which will surely be fulfilled.

Toward the end of the 1970s and in the early 1980s one of the leaders of the *Wege* community in Wakeidide was preaching that West Papua would be liberated by the return of Zakheus and of Jordan, his brother. This man claimed that after Zakheus' return he would judge all people and rule West Papua in peace and prosperity.

Five years later, in June 1985, rumor spread again among young people and students in Jayapura, that a man from Bomou—an official name which cover places including Zakheus' home village of Yibagouyoweta—had seen Zakheus twice in Jayapura. While back in the Paniai region there were some people who spread the news that 'Zakheus had visited them and had told them that he was about to return'. Some people in Yibagouyoweta even went further in their claims by again gathering planks and wood to rebuild Zakheus' house. Zakheus was going to use the house to introduce his program (see section 5.4.4 'Zakheus "holy house" and the presence of the "spirit of God"' importance of Zakheus' house as it was discussed above). They said that Zakheus had told them through a vision: 'I am returning soon, prepare planks and wood to rebuild my house'. This time, too, Zakheus' younger sister, objected to the people's plan.

In June 1988 a retired local police man who had been preaching the *Wege Mana* said, that before the new era of prosperity comes with the intervention of God, Zakheus will rise again from the dead and he will judge all mankind with the authority vested on him by God. He said that Indonesia would leave. We will form our own independent state of West Papua, and then Zakheus will judge the people.

In January 1990, rumors began to spread again among students in Jayapura saying that Zakheus and Jordan, his brother had been seen as travelling in and around Jayapura. When further inquiries were made, two men confirmed the rumors, but were unwilling to tell who were the men who claimed to have seen Zakheus and his brother.

Later, on June 25, 1990, a tree which Zakheus planted had before he was taken to the coast disappeared during the night. According to Zakheus' relatives, before Zakheus was arrested and sent back to Sentani in 1963, Zakheus planted the tree in Yibagouyoweta. 'While planting the tree', he said

'kou piyakou enaki-enaki tipa ko enaa ko enaa peu ko peu koyoka koya umi-tou ta, if something happens to this tree, it means that the time of liberation or suffering is near' (JP and LU, July 29, 1990).

And yet this tree disappeared on June 26, 1990 following the earthquake which took place the previous day. I think Zakheus had indeed planted the tree, or if not, at least the rumor about it was prevalent in 1963, because by that year this rumor had reached the Debei Valley. I heard this rumor in the Debei Valley from my grandmother who apparently heard it from men and women who were returning from selling their garden products in Waghete. According to my grandmother the Dutch HPB—Hoofd Plaatselijk Bestuur—in Waghete planted a long wooden pole in front of his office in Waghete while stating 'if new branches and leaves starts to grow out of this pole it means that a new era of the world is about to come'. I was going to Elementary School at that time. It is possible that it was Zakheus which she (her informants) thought the Dutch government officer. Because Zakheus was visiting the Paniai region at this time and he—as shown in Chapter 4—was attempting to become the Head of Government post in the Paniai region. Anyhow, the people claimed that Zakheus planted a tree before he left and that tree disappeared following the earthquake which took place on June 25, 1990 (MP, October 3, 1992). This meant that the return of Zakheus is imminent.

In August-September 1991, rumors said that Zakheus, Jordan and Okeiyamoye came and visited the village chief of Bomou and some of their close relatives in Yibagouyoweta and its surroundings. They came during the night and told them to keep their visit secret. During these visits they told their relatives that they were about to return. When they came they knocked the their doors several times and the people heard the voice and yet they were invisible. Following this visit it was said that Zakheus and his brother had returned and were now in the Paniai region but were in hiding and waiting to come out. When Zakheus would appear again, he would reintroduce his program, it was said (LU and JP, September 3, 1992).

On September 5, 1992 another *obai* tree—a tree which is used in traditional religious ceremonies—which Zakheus had planted in Kokobaya before his departure, was said to have had disappeared too. According to one of the men who claimed to be one of the witness when the tree was planted, Zakheus planted the tree as a token of remembrance to the *Wege Bage* before he was arrested for the last time to be sent to back to Sentani, Jayapura. At the time he planted the tree, he instructed the people to be faithful and to continue to follow his teachings, to be of one heart and to be watchful. He said 'this tree is going to be a living witness between you and me. If something happens to it, it means that I am about to return'. Following the disappearance of this

tree, Mesakh, the son of Okeiyamoye, Zakheus' younger brother—organized a feast and prayer meeting to commemorate this event by killing several pigs. He explained in few words Zakheus and his programs. A large number of people participated. Then a special prayer was said. As already mentioned elsewhere, a conflict between local church leadership and the organizer of this gathering followed. The later was accused by the church of drawing the people away from Christianity. He responded furiously, and said that the church leadership today acted if as only they knew God, after having learned to read and to write. The church leadership of the local congregation in Kokobaya and in Bomou took a strong stand against the members of the church who participated in that day of prayer and feast. The members of the church were prohibited to partake in the Holy communion for several months. Others who carried out church related activities such as teaching Sunday School or leadership of the young People's fellowship in the church were suspended.

The incident of the tree which disappeared in September 1992 confirmed the people's faith in Zakheus as messiah who was about to return and in order to reintroduce his program at the beginning of the new era (MP, October 3, 1992). The conviction over the past three decade that Zakheus is the messiah of the Me persists even unshaken today. He was not ordinary men. How do the people today support this claim? The next subsection addresses this question.

5.5.2.2 Zakheus' activities before his death (1964-1970)

Zakheus is, as many argue the messiah of the Me. The Me support this claim by comparing the life and work of Zakheus with that of Jesus Christ. They claim that the work of Jesus of the Bible is not different from that of Zakheus. For this reason, they attempt to interpret the teaching of Zakheus as well as his activities before his death in a messianic perspective. This is clear from the previous chapter. Another contributing factor is cultural one. The people in this culture assume that the activities, words and incidents which occurs during the life and days after the death of an important men like Zakheus says something about the destiny of the people to whom he belongs, or those who are associated with him. The data in the following section are presented from this view point.

Zakheus' stay in Sentani before his death

Zakheus escaped from the hospital in 1964, because he wanted to be with his family. For around six months he stayed in Dok 5, Jayapura, with one of his relatives who worked in a Government office in Jayapura. Then he moved to Sentani. In Sentani he stayed with one of the two Me couples who were working as carpenters for the *ogai*. During this time, these couples helped Zakheus

to make a garden, and then provided Zakheus' with other things necessities he needed, when he came to Sentani and later when he was chased out of their house by the missionary and also during the time he was sick until he died'. His activities after he escape from the hospital are seen as expressing his views.

1. Zakheus destroyed the mission's house

While staying with this family in the house constructed by the mission for the mission workers, Zakheus went to the mission house and twice broke its windows. Many said that Zakheus did it to express his attitude of anti-*ogai*. He regarded them as his enemies who blocked the road for his program and who fought against him and his communities (EB, July 13, 1992). In response to his, the *ogai* chased Zakheus out of the house where he was staying. The Me couples who were working there for the missionary referred to earlier bought some aluminum for roofing and helped Zakheus to build a house near the missionary compounds (EE, July 12, 1992). I want to stress the fact that this idea is somehow important because in the light today's experience, the people see the *ogai* and the development activity as a means to exploit and suppress their aspirations. Zakheus' activity of destroying the missionary's house is used to express their anti-government feelings.

2. Zakheus' assurance about his place in the upperworld/heaven

The last years of his life, Zakheus was often sick, lying on bed most of the time. A few days before his death some of the men came to pray for Zakheus to be healed by God, Zakheus said 'Don't pray brother, I am gone. I am already in heaven. I am dying. My heart and mind are now in the upperworld already'. He died on a Sunday, in January 1970. There were three things which are reported to have taken place immediately following his death.

3. Zakheus' sickness and his enemies

Before his death Zakheus told the people that he was dying because there were enemies who took his life. Who were these enemies? They were the *ogai* and the local people/evangelists who used sorcerers to kill him. When his body was covered by boils before his death, Zakheus said that his illness was invoked by sorcery objects which were used by the enemies to take his life and to prevent him from carrying out his activities. Zakheus claimed that he knew his local enemies who were prepared to be used to bring this sickness and eventually death. Zakheus even revealed the names and the methods they used to kill him. He related the following account of how he was killed. Zakheus said there were two persons from his own family members who went to buy their sorcery objects from a certain man who lived in Jaba. Upon purchasing the sorcery materials on their way back home, they bought a pig

and killed it. They then set aside a piece of meat for Zakheus and rubbed it with their newly-bought religious objects in order to poison and to kill Zakheus. Later, when the two men approached the house where Zakheus was staying, they parted. Only one of them came to Zakheus to deliver the meat. When this man delivered the meat there was another man in the house. Zakheus being aware of the fact that the meat was rubbed with sorcery objects ate the meat himself, instead of sharing the meat with the others who were present. The following night he could not sleep. He had a stomach ache, and vomited for hours. From this time onwards he said he would die young (EE, July 12, 1992). His death had been planned by his enemies, just like the death of Jesus Christ of the Bible and of Koyeidaba.

I have already presented some of Zakheus' activities which the people today recount today in their attempt to support their view that he is a messiah, such as the multiplication of food, the claim that whenever he was there were always plenty of food, and the people's claim that he disappeared from their midst on several occasions (see section 5.4.1 'Abundance of food' and 5.4.2 'Healing and extra ordinary work')

Aside from the miraculous works cited, Zakheus is also seen as an extraordinary man today because of his predictions which he made twenty years ago which are being fulfilled today, and his action which are seen as portraying the present and future course of the Irian Jayans. One of those prediction which Zakheus made twenty years ago which is being fulfilled (mentioned earlier) today is the road linking Jayapura, Wamena, Enarotali and Nabire. Zakheus told the people that if something bad happened (he meant the war breaking out, BG) they were not to worry because they could walk away; they would not need to take a plane or a taxi. They would just travel to their home country by foot. Apart from this, the people argued that Zakheus dramatized twenty years ago what is taking place today.

Now, what are the incidents which took place after his death? There are several incidents which took place after Zakheus' death which are repeatedly narrated by the people today in their argument.

1. Zakheus' protest

In January 1970, one day after Zakheus had died, a small procession of two cars left his house to bury the coffin and a few relatives to the cemetery where Zakheus was to be buried. When they came to the Sentani River, the river was swollen, the bridge had been carried away the previous night, and therefore the cars had to ford the river. When they reached the middle of the river, the four wheels of the car with the coffin got stuck in the mud in the river. The people tried to pull the car out but they could not, therefore the coffin

was transferred to the other car and only few people went to cemetery. (These types of events which take place after/during the burial of important religious figures are also prevalent in Me folk tales.) The rest of the people who had planned to go were forced to return home and prepared for the mourning feast to be held that night. This incident of the car getting buried in the river has been interpreted as a protest by Zakheus, for burying him on the coast against his wish. Before he died, Zakheus requested the people to bury him in the Paniai region. Zakheus is reputed to have said 'If I die I want you to bury me in Yibagouyoweta'. Yibagouyoweta is the place where he started his activities in October 1950. This meant that the people had to raise a large amount of money to send his remains to Paniai. But this was impossible because the number of Me in Jayapura who could be asked to make a donation for this purpose was very small and it was very expensive to send Zakheus' body to the Paniai region to be buried there. He was buried in Netar, Sentani instead.

2. The cats in the mourning feast

Another incident that is remembered by the people is presence of a large number of cats during the mourning feast. After the burial service, the mourning feast was held the following night. Most of the Me living in Jayapura came and participated in the feast. Close to nine in the evening one or two cats started to roam inside the house. Later the number of cats increased until the people saw cats every where. One man said 'the house where they were having feast was flooded with cats'. This idea of cats or rats which filled the house during mourning feast is also found in many Me folk tales. The people said that the cats were sent by a female deity who used to provide Zakheus game and food when he was in need. This again confirmed the Me beliefs that Zakheus was not alone in his life journey in this world. He lived and worked in this world with aid and the company of the female deity who was always around to help him when he needed help. The Me attempt view the success of Zakheus in securing food or games, with their custom of relating a dead person with a spirit deity when they see dogs or cats following his death.

3. Zakheus rebuked his wife

During the same night when the mourning feast was going on a man by the name of Sefanya was seriously engaged in a talk with Zakheus' widow. Sefanya said that he was going to marry her. Everyone at the feast knew what they were talking about; none was willing to distract them. (According to Me custom, a widow should wait at least some weeks or months before she could think of finding a new husband.) But suddenly, the people heard Zakheus voice rebuking them: 'why are you doing this now?' His widow indeed mar-

ried Sefanya, but died soon afterwards. Her death was seen as Zakheus' disapproval of her decision to get married right away after his death.

The people recount these events and incidents in the context of their claim that Zakheus was not an ordinary man. He was a great man. The account of events which took place as presented above came not only from men and women who had accepted Zakheus as their messiah. Some of the people who tried to stop his activities in the 1950s today join the rest of the people in acknowledging Zakheus' accomplishments.

The attempt to rebury his remains in the Paniai region

It is no wonder that since the 1970s the people talk about the possibility of digging up Zakheus' grave and if his bones are still there, to take them back to Yibagoutoweta, Paniai region and bury them in the Paniai region, as Zakheus had requested. Some people in the local church leadership tend to agree to do this for several reasons.

Firstly, it was Zakheus who introduced Christianity to many districts such as Tigi, Debei, Kamu and the western part of Lake Paniai. They rightly argue that before Zakheus returned to the Paniai region, the Catholics occupied these areas, however, after Zakheus had returned to this region this changed. It is with this in mind that Zakheus is regarded as an apostle to the Me people. This implies their idea that he was a true pioneer and founder of the indigenous church in this region. They argue that the spread of Protestant church communities throughout the Paniai region today can be attributed to the work of Zakheus. When he returned to Paniai region he risked his life to establish the *Wege* communities which later became the nucleus of local church communities. The CAMA missionaries came later and sent local preachers who were trained in Enarotali to turn the *Wege* communities into local church communities.

Secondly, Zakheus' way presenting the Christianity make the gospel intelligible to the people. Before Zakheus came and introduced his program Christianity was understood as the *ogai's* religion. In the people's eyes, Christianity was kept inside the mission station; nobody could break into the mission station to get to know their religion. The *ogai* seemed to have kept the gospel within the limit of their experience as they share Western concept of Christianity when it was presented. But Zakheus came and changed this trend. Furthermore, it was propagated by the *ogai* using their own categories of thought which were foreign to the local people. Zakheus was the one who took the gospel from the mission station and went to spread it among his people in their language.

Thirdly, Zakheus adopted a more accommodative viewpoint when relating to the past religious heritage. His attitudes towards the indigenous reli-

gious beliefs was more or less tolerant. Zakheus' program was more down to earth-oriented and comprehensive. He did not exclude socio-economic aspects. He considered the socio-economic ministry as part of Christian ministry to prevent the people from being the subject of socio-economic domination. These are the reasons why the leadership in the Paniai region took Zakheus, as a founder or pioneer of the church.

The people in the grass roots level believed that the effort to rebury Zakheus is necessary because based on their religious convictions. Firstly, the Me believe that Zakheus is still alive; he is in hiding waiting the right time to return as the messiah. This is supported by the claims of Zakheus' relatives as noted above which say that Zakheus and his two brother has visited them and told them that they are about to return (JP and LU September 5, 1992). This is also supported by Pakagamoye's decision—Pakagamoye is Zakheus' uncle—to move from the Kamu Valley back to Yibaguyoweta in September 1990. Pakagamoye was told by Zakheus before his departure to the coast in the 1960s that if something happened to the tree which he had planted as it was mentioned above, he had to return to his home village. It is expected that Zakheus could appear in the Paniai region at any moment. When Zakheus returns, all of the *ogat* will go and he will rule the world. To many, Zakheus is Me people's messiah.

Zakheus has become a messiah who gave his life for the sake of many. As the Me are forced to contemplate on their present politico-religious challenges they turn to their past, and their collective memories centered around the rumors regarding Zakheus and his activities become alive. Present political-religious aspirations plays an important role in making Zakheus as the messiah who will soon return to rule the world. How do the *Wege Bage* and the Me in general view Jesus Christ of Christianity? The *Wege Bage* do not take Jesus Christ of Christianity seriously. Partly this is due to their theological aspirations which seek salvation here and now from political power which has been attempting to eliminate them from their existence. While the church' preaching concentrates on spiritual dimension of salvation undermining the socio-political and economic aspect.

This section has outlined the people's Christology on two messianic figures, Koyeidaba and Zakheus, which has been exploited by the people in the face of their changing socio-economic and political views and in the context of interaction with the *ogat*. In the process of interaction and conflict with the *ogat* which brought about change and uncertain future course of their history, messianic beliefs became a frame of reference through which the people interpreted their experiences in their historical context. One important development in the people's new religious awareness was the emergence of Zakheus as new historical and religious symbol and as the local messiah. Zakheus and

Koyeidaba become the people symbolic hero of resistance, protest and hope for future liberation from all form oppression in the region. How do the *Wege Bage* or the Me see the relationship between Koyeidaba/Zakheus and Jesus Christ? The possible answer which can be drawn from the above presentation in the previous chapters is that to the *Wege Bage* Jesus Christ is threat to their aspirations. Jesus Christ supports and inspires the *ogai* who suppress the *Wege Bage's* politico-religious aspirations (which I regret that we, from the church, have given this impression). In countering this the *Wege Bage* has used their perceived past historical and mythological symbols such as Koyeidaba and or Zakheus to defend their views and develop their religious views to meet their changing needs.

5.6 Local eschatology: the Me belief in an immediate transformation of the world

Another essential motif which has been driving the Me to participate in religious activities—either in the church related programs or outside the church's walls—is the belief in an immediate transformation of the present order of existence by the supernatural intervention. The present section explores this motif. The subject is presented under three subheadings. The first sub-section looks at the way this idea of radical change has been expressed in this culture. The Me perceived pre-contact predictions, and two brief account of myths which convey this idea of radical change will be presented in this sub-section. This will be followed by a discussion regarding the events which according to the Me will occur prior to the radical change. The discussion in this second sub-section will consider the way the people interpret the changing socio-historical events from this point of view. The third sub-section explores how this conviction had motivated the people to be responsive toward Christianity and other religious ideas. This last sub-section will mainly deal with church growth, political and natural crises in the region.

5.6.1 *The idea of radical change of the world*

a. God and the termination of the present world

The basic idea behind a total transformation of society and the world is the assumption that the world in which we live came into existence in the beginning by the act of the male creator deity or God and it will be continually replaced by this creator deity. This God is not a God who has withdrawn from this world; he remained in control and supervises all that goes on in the world. The people argue that if the present world is unproductive—or too old

as the people equate it with the human body—God is going to replace it with a new one. This change according to people will take place after a series of episodes of crises which will culminate in a complete transformation of this universe. The local term used to refer to this idea of total change is *wiwitiida*—which can be translated as time of termination or completion of this era. To put it briefly, the world came into being at a specific point in time by God's initiative and it will be terminated again by the same deity at particular point in time, which in turn become old again which will be replaced by a new again. This view is built on their perceived pre-contact prophecies regarding this drastic change of the world and history.

b. Pre-contact predictions

The idea of immediate transformation can be found the predictions which according to the *Wege Bage*, made in pre-contact times. The *Wege Bage* for example, argue that in pre-contact days, predictions that the world will come to an end were repeatedly made by *mana duwada to bagee, douya dou epibage* which can be translated as seers. Term seers refers to men and women who had insights based on special experience such as trance, or visions or dreams during seven consecutive nights. The number seven being symbol of completeness. Many of their statements were taken seriously as their words were taken as words from the Spirit beings. The people who were facing crucial problems turned to them for advice. For example, when people lost their pigs, they consulted these seers who helped to locate the where about of their lost pigs. Young people who were uncertain about their future consulted them who are believed to be able to 'see' through dreams or visions and reveal what they have 'seen' to their clients. The people from Debei for example cite one of these seers who come from the Debei valley, who made the following prediction regarding the future course of the world which according them made in pre-contact times:

Kugou kou aga gaati kai ko daa
Mee kou kabu/kakade gaati kai ko daa
Iye-ko iye-ida, waguwo ko waguwo-uda
wado aka do taitage (PP, July 4, 1990).

The banana tree can never bear ten bunches
Man's generation will not go beyond the tenth generation,
We will see each other in the ninth or in the eighth generation.

The message is that as the banana never has ten bunches, so the present era will not go beyond the 10th generation, the advent of the era will be in the eighth or in the ninth generation.

The people in my village, also say that long before the contact with the *ogai* occurred, Yaiyaw, an old man who was dying, while pointing to a small child who was sitting by his side and said,

yoka yagamo gabo tou, ibo ka wado maki-maki mana kiiwegaine kaa, I want women and children and everybody to be silent and listen because I want to tell 'the message' which has been passed on by the past generations.

And then he said,

Ki yoka kiya yoka ko iyee ko iyee-ida yuwa gaati ko gaatiida yuwa ko; enaako enaa ma, peu ko peu, ka koya umitou tai (*Demia*, September 29, 1992).

Things which will make you happy or sorrowful will come in the 10th or 9th generation of this kid's descendants, therefore be wise and watchful.

While the people of the Debei valley, report another seer who made the following prediction again before contact with the *ogai* took place,

Dege doka waato wookato

Buna doka yamaato yamokato taitai,

Ibo ekina yoka ekina tai

Ibo mege yoka mege taitai

Me gako, mege gako taitai nako weda,

enaa ko enaa peu ko peu ma kapauto koyoka (PP, July 4, 1990).

There will be red *doka*¹ passing by—from east to west—and black *doka* will be passing by this region—from south to north; Young and old will possess or will be engaged in the search for the cowrie shell. The Me population will increase and the cowrie shell will flourish like sand. If you see these things happening, be fearful, the time of happiness or sorrow is very near.

Today according to the Me from the Debei Valley, this prediction has inspired their parents to start their *Wege Bage* in Debey in the 1950s. According to them the prediction was made when clothes was unknown. The population was small and only few who had cowrie shells. But by the 1950s, when Zakheus began preaching his program, this had already changed. The population was increasing. The people were already getting used to wear clothes. Every one could earn cowrie shell through the sale of their products and work for the *ogai* and the local economy had developed into what was called individualistic capitalism. This prediction influenced the people's decision to

¹ The meaning of this word is not clear, but many agree that it has something to do with Western clothes.

follow Zakheus and participate in the activities of the *Wege* communities. Thus the Me from Debey and the religious leaders appealed to their 'perceived pre-contact predictions' to justify their decision to start the *Wege Bage* on their existing views about an immediate change in the world history.

The *Wege Bage* also refer to the activities of these seers who according to them in the pre-contact times preached destruction of the world. These seers were calling for an immediate action as they revealed the message of drastic end of the world. One notable instance took place in a place called Diyoutaida Apogo, southeast of Enarotali. The people say, long before the contact with the *ogai*, a man after having been in contact with the spirit world, stood up and told the people that a new era was coming soon within 40 days. He told the people to be ready by preparing sweet potatoes, vegetables and fire wood, etc. He said food and fire wood that would be their provision, because the world would be in total darkness during the forty days. He also said that no one would be able to leave the house during those days. In response to this warning, the people prepared piles of firewood inside their houses and in their yards. Bags of sweet potatoes were buried in and under the ground to keep them from rotting. Following this prediction the people set up a high watchtower to see the direction from where the darkness would come. It was said that the darkness would come from the east or from the north. But the people dispersed after the prophecy failed to be fulfilled within the 40 days that had been announced (WY, May 1989, June 12, 1992).

This account has been cited to show the *Wege Bage* and the Me people's view of the immediate transformation of the world.

c. Mythology and the radical change of the world

The *Wege Bage* and the Me's view of drastic of the world is also inspired by and based on two of the myths: the separation of three brothers and Koyeida-ba mythology.

The myth of the separation of three brothers which was mentioned in passing (see section 5.2.6, see also appendixes) too underlines the belief in an abrupt change in the present social and cultural system. The account of the separation story (which is also prevalent in the Me legends) speaks of a Me forefather, who had three sons. The eldest son was named *Yamagapi*, which means the one who had departed to the southern direction. The second son was *Wagapi*, which means the one who had gone to the north or east and the third or the youngest son was *Totagapi* the one who remained in the Paniai region, or the one who stayed behind. The father was pleased with *Yamagapi* and *Wagapi*, because they were industrious, hardworking and obedient to him. Totagapi was a hard-hearted young man. The father was not happy with Totagapi. One day Yamagapi decided to go to the south direction and Wagapi

to the north or east. But before they left the father gave them instructions about how to acquire material wealth. This explains why Euroamericans are rich and have a lot of goods. Wagapi became progenitor of Asians—including the Indonesians²—while Yamagapi is said to be the progenitor of the Euroamericans. On the other hand, to Totagapi who became the progenitor of the Me, the father said *touye kugo kou moti*—take the religious task or load.³ The story says that before the two brothers parted their ways, Totagapi said farewell to them but added: in the future I will call both of you to return. Descendants of both Wagapi and Totagapi are rich and can read and write because their father had given them instructions. But even if they are materially rich, they have no peace and happiness, because they had not found God, the creator. In their desperation they have looked for God. Then they performed *bagapi*—a religious ceremony performed to know the true teaching about God and to identify the location where God had chosen as his dwelling place known. *Bagapi*, is a ceremony performed to identify or to prove someone who is accused of stealing or killing or any other misconduct. It was performed by inviting the suspected parties to participate in the ceremony. In the ceremony each suspects are required to place a bundle of vegetables and a piece of pork and hot stones inside cooking pit especially prepared for that occasion. After an hour or less the man who performed the ritual began to open the cooking pit and inspect the bundles of vegetables and pieces of pork to see if any one of them are still raw. If that happens the one who place it is responsible for killing or stealing. And so when the *ogai* attempted to identify the region where God was linked to, they placed similar bundles of food with tags of different locations in the world thought to be the dwelling place of God and then they placed them in the cooking pit. After *bagapi* the *ogai* knew that to know and to find the creator deity, one has to travel to the Paniai region, the country of the descendants of Totagapi. The descendants of Yamagapi—the Euroamericans came from south and descendants of Wagapi—the Indonesians came from north or east, thus the *ogai* came to the Paniai region to search for God. As Totatapi had predicted it before the departure of Yamagapi and Wagapi, so their descendants came to the Paniai region. They include employees of a French company which has been doing mining exploration in the Paniai region since 1986.

² In the 1960s when I was in the elementary school, Wagapi was referred to only as the progenitor of the Me neighboring tribes such as the Monis, the Danis, or the Damals and the Ndugas. Only Yamagapi received tips for worldly prosperity, the other two were not. Twenty years later (June 1988) after seeing the Indonesians dominating socio-political and economic institutions, the people introduced later this version.

³ *Touye kugo* is related to *touye kapogetye* or the lost book. See section 5.2 'The people's perception of "the Bible"'.

The belief in an abrupt change of history acquires an additional meaning in combination with the belief of the return of Koyeidaba. As noted above, in Koyeidaba mythology, Koyeidaba's last words before his death are believed to have been fulfilled and his return will be the beginning of a new era and new world. The Me believe that when Koyeidaba, actually returns, the world will undergo an immediate transformation and they will go on living in a different world in a new form of existence. Leaders like Zakheus and others held this view of the world and made use of this idea to recruit their supporters.

Both of these myths, the story of separation and Koyeidaba mythology, and also the predictions outlined above, expresses the people's deep-rooted religious expectation which speaks of a total transformation of culture and history. This transformation which will involve a complete reorganization of socio-cultural systems which will take place by the act of God. Such predictions regarding drastic change of the world have played a decisive role in shaping the people's religious orientations and behavior in the past several decades. How has this view of the world shaped the people's perception of the world and themselves? The following two sections attempt to answer this question.

5.6.2 *The events during the transition period before the complete transformation of the world*

The people assume that the total transformation of the existing socio-cultural structures, will be preceded by a series of crises which can be seen as a transitional period. The following section outlines seven episodic events which are believed to be taking place before the actual dawning of the new world. It will be noted that historical changes which has been taking place have been interpreted from this stand point which in one way or another heightens the people's participation in the church and other religious programs.

5.6.2.1 *Seven episodes of crises*

It is believed that the radical change of this world will take place after an epochs of crises or darkness. The first series of this crises is *wane kabu pituwo*—seven critical episodes of a total darkness. Seven is an important number. It speaks of completeness in the Me culture. It is said that during this period the total darkness will prevail. The people will not go out to fetch water, firewood or sweet potatoes. In the 1960s, the people at least in my village tried to make sure that filled their homes with piles of firewood out of this conviction. This period of darkness is to be followed by *igapu kabu pituwo*—seven episodes of hunger. During this period starvation will be prevalent in the land. Only those who have learned to eat little will survive. Zakheus has

warned the *Wege Bage* 'you have to learn to eat little because there will be a period of hunger in the future'. Others say that, this period of hunger will take place after Koyeidaba withdraws all kinds of food cultivated in the Paniai region, because, after all, the food came out of his body (see section 5.4.1.1). Some say only those who have strong faith will be able to survive this period of hunger (WD, June 22, 1988). In the 1970s and the 1980s many people went through a long period of hunger and starvation and the people viewed their experience from this perspective. Another episodic period is crises of war. There will be a *yape kabu pituwo*—seven episodes of war—which will precede the event of transformation. I think this is related to the war which will be fought against the rest of the world (see below).

5.6.2.2 *The return of all people to their place of origin*

Aside from the episodes of crises, it is also believed that before the destruction of the present world *utoma bagee utoma akiya makiida tat tai*—all people will return to their places of their origin. The Me gives two reasons why 'the return to one's place of origin' is necessary.

1. Ritual of cleansing and judgment

The return of all people to their country of origin means that outsiders who live and work in the Paniai region will leave the region and return to their countries or places of origin. Similarly, the Me who are living in diaspora will return to the Paniai region. The Me who live in the Paniai region will return to their own village where they were born and raised. Upon their arrival they will be united with the rest of the members of their clans or sub-clans and put up their homes on the very place where the founder of the clan had come to settle. After each clan get together, the dead relatives will return to the Paniai region from the land of the dead. The people claim that this home coming is necessary to simplify the process of judgement by Jesus Christ or Koyeidaba or Zakheus as to who was involved in the killing of Koyeidaba or Zakheus, and to locate the place where each members of the clan were when the killing took place. Aside from this the gathering of the people from diaspora is necessary to find what kind of wrong doings each member of clan or family had committed, where and how. This will be followed by the blood sacrifice to remove those sins. This sacrifice is a ritual to wash off their wrong doings committed during the life time of the members of the clan. Then society and history will undergo a drastic change.

2. The issue of identity

The ritual of washing off the sins disobedience of religious rules above (see 5.3 'The Me's perception of the Bible') of the clan or tribe and the judgment is

not the only explanation. Others say the return of all people of the world to their country of origin has something to do with the issue of identity. The *Wege Bage* see this event of homegoing of new settlers in the light of their traditional politico-religious orientation. The Me say that the *ogai* have to return to their countries of origin because God and the female guardian deity worshipped by their ancestors did not recognize the identity of these new comers as to who they are, who sent them here, why they are living in this region, what their purpose is and how they came to live here. They are not welcome to stay in this part of the world by the Me local guardian female deity, who cooperates with the local religious leaders to usher in the new world order. This female deity does not recognize the foreigners, simply because it is assumed that God has ordained each nation or tribe with its own female guardian spirit who is in charge of serving the well-being and socio-economic and political interest of that nation or tribe.

We have noted above the notion that God has ordained a female guardian deity for each nations or tribes. Thus, the ancestors of the Me has been addressing to this female deity and male deity in the religious rituals in the Paniai region. One of the cult leader said the name of this guardian deity—who had been serving as the Me tribe's guardian—is Mary, the mother of Jesus Christ. She is interested in getting the people of Central Highlands of Irian Jaya or Irian Jayans liberated from socio-political and economic domination. Mary, the sister of Jesus Christ has several sisters who have been serving as female guardian spirits for the American, the European, the Australian, the Asian and the African states. As the *ogai* who live in the Paniai region are all members of different tribes or clans to which they belong, they must return to their own place and be part of their own clans or tribal groups.

This means that the *ogai* who came to take up residence in this land had entered the region which is entitled for the Me who are under the jurisdiction of a different female guardian deity. The foreigners are *persona non grata* in this land. The female guardian deity of this region does not recognize their identity. The *Wege Bage* argue that as the outsiders return to their place of origin, so the Me who had been living 'abroad' will be coming home. When this happens, the new era of man's history will begin.

5.6.2.3 *The war against all people of the world*

Another event which is believed to be taking place preceding the radical change of the world history is that all people of the world will be warring against the people of the Central Highlands of Irian Jaya. Discussing this topic the people argue that they will experience seven episodes wars as they will fight against the rest of the people of the world before a new era commences.

1. Zakheus' teaching and the opposition against him as expression the *ogai*'s war against the Me

The view that there would be war against the *ogai* was stated by Zakheus in his teachings. Today some people referred to Zakheus' experience of rejection by the *ogai* as the basis of their belief in this respect. The opposition against Zakheus and his communities as shown in previous chapter has been viewed by some as an expression of this war against the indigenous peoples. The people argue that in the 1950s, when Zakheus came to preach his programs, God was with him and the *ogai* and the local headmen—who represented the world community—opposed Zakheus and his communities. The people argue that it was God's program which Zakheus introduced in this region. Instead of obeying and participating in that program, the *ogai* who had taken up their residence in the Paniai region at that time united their effort to stop Zakheus from carrying out his program. The people argue that this scene will be repeated in the future. The people of the world will declare war against the local communities before the new era commences; i.e. if they learn again that God has once again shown his intention to use the Zakheus' program, and the Paniai region as his pulpit to bring forth his great plan of salvation of mankind. The people will fight and this will last a seven episodes.

2. Cargoism in the Paniai region and the war against the people of the world
The idea of an episodes of war was also stressed by the Me in the 1960s as rumors about a cargo cult spread. Many people were saying that God had revealed his plan for salvation of all mankind by delivering Western goods stored under Kiuto Hill on the eastern shore of Lake Paniai. It was said that Troutman and another Catholic missionaries who were stationed in Enarotali, had visited Kiuto, as well as the place under which the goods were stored by the female guardian spirit. Many people say that in those days when these missionaries came to Kiuto to see the Western goods, Paulus—the leader of cargo cult noted in previous chapter—took them to the underworld and showed all the goods to them. When they saw the Western goods kept under Kiuto hill, Troutman was reported to have said 'Indeed, God has appointed you Paulus to channel this blessing to the rest of the world instead of we, the Americans'. At this point it is important to bear in mind that Troutman indeed visited this place twice, but it was in 1959. The purpose for his visits were to gather more information about the *Wege Mana* which according to him had penetrated the area (Troutman 1959); his visit was intended to combat the spread of the *Wege Mana*. The *Wege Mana* used his visits to justify their news which he and the church were attempt to eradicate.

Based on this rumor, it was said, that when it will become known to the rest of the world that God had chosen the Paniai region and the Me to carry

out his program of salvation to the world, the rest of the world will not accept it. Therefore, the people from other parts of the world will declare war on the Me, because God had shown favoritism by choosing the people of Irian Jaya to share and channel the fruit of salvation in the form of goods (cargo). Again, the people will win and Koyeidaba (or Zakheus/God) will return to this earth; which will be the beginning of a new era of man's history.

3. Rumors of headhunting

Rumors of headhunting and human sacrifice have been prevalent since the 1960s in this region. These rumors have been seen as another form of war against the Me before the imminent destruction of this world. Basically, the rumor about headhunters speak of the *ogai* who work for the present government by going to the village communities to cut off the people's heads. Such rumors are also familiar to the rest of people from Irian Jaya: particularly in Sentani (MW, 18 September 1992) but also among the Dani in Wamena. In Wamena after the government finished the airstrip extension project in 1992; rumors spread that the manager of the project had buried a human head at the end of the airstrip. The people in Wamena became hostile towards the men who were involved in the project. This forced the men who were responsible for the project to convince the people that what he sacrificed was cow's head; he tried to prove it by ordering his men to dig up the grave and take a photograph and have it sent to churches and other institutions. The very response of this man who was directly involved in the project of course affirm the basic idea of this headhunting rumor although it was cow's head (PD, 13 September 1992). Going back to the Paniai region, it was said that such human heads were to be planted in the middle of the airport to keep the airstrip strong. These rumors are based on the claims of several men who testify that they had escaped from the headhunters' attack. These men who served the government in search for the people's heads are known as *ogo durwai bagee*—men who go out to cut people's head. Their job is to go to the bush or jungle during the day and stay in hiding to see if there is any one who is working in a garden or collecting firewood alone. If a man or woman is found alone in the jungle, the headhunters will attack and cut his or her head off. When night is approaching these headhunters were said to begin to move to the people's settlements or villages and attack anyone who happens to roam alone in the village in the night. After they cut his/her head, they present the head to the government officer in Waghete or Enarotali. The government officer in turn will bury the heads in the middle of the airstrip or under the house or bridge or at the end of the road to keep the airstrip or bridge strong for years.

At times when this rumor of headhunters becomes prevalent, everyone is expected to be home early and, not to stay in the garden till late in the afternoon. The people are told that if they are going to the bush, it has to be in a group. The fear of being killed by the headhunters is always prevalent. The people are afraid to leave the house. This directly affects the people's socio-economic activities which have been restricted. Even today, many deaths of people who died young are attributed to the activities of these headhunters. One example is the death of a man in his 40s who was found dead in the Jawei River bank in August 1992. It was said that the headhunters attacked the man and took his head to the government officer in Waghete to be buried in the airstrip which was being enlarged and extended (AP, 14 December 1992). When I was in this region doing my research in August-December 1992, the airstrip in Waghete was being extended. And the people who died during the 1991 and 1992 were seen as the victim of the government airstrip project, as rumors over the head hunting sacrifice became prevalent again. The people try to explain this issue of headhunting sacrifice as a war directed against them which proceeds the radical transformation of the world.

4. The government development program

Even the government development programs in the region are seen as a strategy of war against the Me. For this reason, many argue that the government in Nabire has a well-prepared program to eliminate the Me from the region. In fact, the people I have talked to, see the regional government of the Paniai region as representing the rest of the people of the world to kill the people of the Paniai region. In the past there have been several ways the government has used to eliminate the local people. Firstly, it was said that the Head of the Paniai region recruited men to join the OPM with his promise to support them to fight against the Army. Later he arranged them to go hiding in certain place to attack the Army; when the Me came to this place their enemy was there, ready to shoot them. One of them was shot at the airport in Nabire. Secondly, this head of the regional government of the Paniai region, is said to have trained hundreds of youth to go to various village communities to introduce government development programs. Instead of carrying out development activities, these young people carried out a different program: a headhunting program which was noted above. The third method used by the government is through medical work. Medical workers are used to kill the Me by giving wrong prescriptions. For this reason many Me in Nabire who get sick do not trust the Indonesian medical servicemen and preferred to die or turn to indigenous medicine men to obtain healing. Others who can afford to pay the ticket, preferred to go to the Mission Hospital in Mulia, located further east from Enarotali (HG, December 9, 1992). Lastly, the people argue

that all government policies in the region in the end are seen as one program, intended to attack the Me and kill off all people from the region. All this shows how seriously the Me consider the radical change to be imminent.

5.6.2.4 The world as a mega city

Many Me both Christians and non-Christians alike agree that before the return of the Lord, the world or the Paniai region will become a big city. One cult leader from the Kamu Valley said that God had sent a female deity to reveal to him her program to build a mega city in this region. The female guardian deity revealed this plan to him in June 1984 through a series of visions (seven times). During nightly encounters with the deity, she told him that Jesus or Koyeidaba was returning soon and therefore he must cooperate with her to build a mega city in this region. During those encounters, the deity kept on reminding him not to spare anything but bring all that he has such as: pigs, chicken, rabbits etc. and offer them as sacrifice to her. She said, we—referring to other spirit beings who are to cooperate with her in executing this program—are afraid to see Jesus if we have not accomplished our task before his return to this world. According to this cult leader the deity was afraid to see Jesus Christ if the region was still in the state of undevelopment and backwardness; therefore she asked him to do what she was instructed to do by the male creator deity. This female deity instructed the cult leader to do what she had asked him, as soon as possible by turning to her, making sacrifices, and following all the rules and her wishes. If he complied, she would cooperate with him in making the Paniai region a great mega city. Why transform this region to a big mega city? Because Jesus Christ is not an ordinary man, he is great and therefore according to this religious leader, he cannot put his feet on muddy, dirty land and among backward people. He will not be happy if he returns and find that the region is still backward.

Christians share this view that the return of the Lord to this world will be preceded by emergence of great city of this region. The city is seen as symbol of prosperity and wealth. When this life style is achieved, Jesus Christ will return to this world and new way of life will begin. This is based on the Me reading of 'The son of man will come in glory and power ...' and, 'The glory and honor of the nations will be brought into it (city of God) ...' Revelation 21: 26. These two Biblical verses are used to support the Me view that the Paniai region will become a big mega city before part of a radical transformation of the world.

5.6.2.5 *The gathering of all people in the Paniai region to await the restoration of the new world*

It is also believed that before the present world undergoes a radical change, people representing all nations will come to the Paniai region to witness the new world appears. This idea seems to contradict the previous idea that all people will return to their place of origin. I guess the emphasis here is that the coming of the *ogai* here is only to witness the drastic event of radical transformation which will take place in the Paniai region.

1. The advent of the first Europeans

When the first European came to Paniai in 1935, the Me thought that the advent of the Europeans was the fulfillment of their expectations. It was said that the *ogai* were coming because Koyeidaba was about return. In my village, the *ogai* were viewed as spirits of the dead relatives who were returning to the Paniai region to be together with their living relatives or members of their clans to await the dawning of a new world order (DEMIA, October 6, 1992). The people began to kill their pigs to rub their bodies to keep them protected from the attack of evil eye of the ghosts who might be tempted to kill them before the drastic change of the world take place. The *ogai* who came to this region were seen as fulfillment of predictions made in pre-contact times (see section 5.6.1 'The idea of the radical change of the world').

2. Rumor about the encounter with the Euroamericans in the bush in the 1970s up until the 1980s

The idea that the people from throughout the world will come to the Central Highlands of Irian Jaya before the change of the present world was again and again reaffirmed in the 1970s and the 1980s. As noted in the preceding chapter, this period was the decade in which the Me were thrown into a sea of socio-economic and political uncertainty. In this context of changing socio-economic life many Me in the region claimed to have seen the Dutch who were making a survey. Two of the men who claimed to have met them said:

We were up there in the bush to hunt. After two days of making traps, we left our hut early to inspect the traps. When we were on our way hiking a small hill we heard *sepatu tugu paki*—the sound of the people wearing shoes coming toward us from the other side of the hill. As we reached the top of that hill we met two white men wearing yellow hats, short pants and boots. Having greeted us they asked what we were doing, where we live; then they said *kou maki kou doona teete*—they were doing land survey in this region. And then we went our way. The Dutch left following the path leading to the village where we live. We thought they

were coming to our village; but when we asked the villagers later they said no white men had visited our village (EG and MG, September 12, 1992).

It was said that when Europeans travel through the bush or the jungles in this region, they usually set up their tents anywhere if they want to spend the night, cook their food just as a camping party and leave the place after spending one or two days. The people said that if they travel anywhere in the region: the rivers, mountains or deep forest are no hindrance to them. In the eyes of these Europeans there is always a big road open before them through which they can travel anywhere in the Central Highlands of Irian Jaya. In some instances these Europeans who meet the Me in the jungle assured them that they support the Me political struggle to be free from the foreign political powers. In some way the local OPM leader, made use of these sort of rumors to get the people's support for his mission to drive out the Indonesians from the region. The leader and the OPM sympathizers were saying these Europeans were the good Dutch men who were returning to help the people of Irian Jaya to drive out the Indonesians. Setting aside the issue of OPM and their tactics, the rumors about the Dutch in the bush has been cited here to show the Me interpretation that these Europeans were coming because a radical transformation of the world is going to take place in the Paniai region.

3. The advent of the French connected with the gold mining company
In June 1988, many French and Indonesians began to arrive in Enarotali. They intended to make an intensive survey of gold deposits in the region. The Me explained that these Indo-Europeans came to await or to witness the breaking of a new era which would take place in the Paniai region. In 1985, as soon as they arrived, these Indo-Europeans began to hire the Mission houses available in Enarotali and began to construct temporary shelters near the Enarotali airstrip. With this the survey was launched. During June and July 1988, when I was visiting the region, helicopters flew almost every hour to every direction from Enarotali. At that time their survey were directed to the area north of Lake Paniai. Later they left the region to get a permit and obtain other papers from Jakarta (RI, June 20, 1990). According to another government officer in Nabire, the early survey indicated that there were gold deposits in this region which was soon to be exploited. It will draw a large number of workers from the outside (SM, December 4, 1992). In December 1992, the French were back in Enarotali. The helicopters, Western goods, and equipments of that company brought a great sensation and many rumors. Basically, what all these activities mean to the Me is that the *ogai* are coming to the Paniai region to be the eyewitnesses of the advent of a new era. It has to be

born in mind that this explanation is made in the midst of the claims of Zakh-
eus's relatives indicated above that Zakheus had visited them and told them
that he was returning. Interestingly, to deepen the Me religious views, on the
second week of December 1992, one of these helicopters landed in the sacred
garden we have indicated above. Bad weather had forced the pilot to land in
that big communal garden. The leader of the community who supervised this
garden was upset and charged the pilot with a fine; which he did by giving an
amount of Rp 10.000,- to the leader. Previous to this incident I visited this
garden and interviewed this leader. Knowing many Frenchmen were in Ena-
rotali, the leader told me to inform the *ogai* not to land in this garden and there-
fore when the pilot landed in the garden, he was upset. He asked them if
they had seen me (GG, Enarotali, December 16, 1992),

This incident of the helicopter landing in the sacred garden strongly sup-
ported the *Wege Bage* view that indeed the Europeans are coming to the Paniai
region to witness the way in which God will change these man-made garden
to the 'Garden of Eden' in which God will dwell with his people.

This sub-section has outlined events which are believed to be taking place
before the radical change of the world history. From the above discussion it
can be concluded that during the past three decades the Me have been at-
tempting to reaffirm their religious orientations. The Me interpret the recent
events and experiences, rumors and changes from the view point of their
assumption regarding the instant transformation of the existing socio-cultural
and religious system. The following section outlines the way this assumption
has contributed to the Me cooperation with religious leaders.

5.6.3 The church growth, political conflicts, natural disasters and Imminent return of the Lord

From the presentation above, it will be clear that the expectation of the immi-
nent transformation of society is not only prevalent but that it helped shape
the Me understanding of the changing issues. The following sub-section is
intended to show how this expectation has driven the Me to be responsive to
the church's activity and these new religious ideas. Firstly, it will briefly
present the church growth which is partly motivated by this belief in radical
transformation. This will be followed by a discussion of Hutchinson's gospel
tract which appeared in 1978 on the return of Jesus Christ which also encour-
aged the Me's existing belief in the immediate transformation of the world.
The discussion then will turn to a *Wege* community born in this context,
with apocalyptic themes within the church of this region.

5.6.3.1 *The church growth in the Paniai region*

The existing belief in the radical change and immediate change of the world has been one contributing factor to the growth of the church in this region. The Me assumed that the Biblical doctrine of the second coming of the Lord had already existed in this culture at least in a rudimentary form. This existing religious motif had encouraged the Me to enter the church as they faced uncertain socio-political and economic condition. But this positive cooperation from the people took place in an unstable socio-political problems.

In the last three decades the number of the people who attended church's activities has increased. The church membership has gone up. The people are open to participate in church-related programs. As early as May 1969, Troutman wrote:

God is moving among the Ekaris [the Me, BG] and the people are hungry for the gospel. Existing church buildings are crowded and new congregations are springing up in many places (*The Alliance Witness*, May, 1969).

The old churches were too small to accommodate all those who were coming to church on Sundays or Wednesdays for prayer meetings. The local congregations have been forced to plant daughter churches; by allowing the members who were coming from distant places to start new congregations. The church in my village which was established by Zakheus in 1950s, for example, has sponsored five outstations which now have their own daughter churches. Bomou, the home church, or the first church which Zakheus established has started four other churches during the last two decades. Enarotali, the oldest church in this region has sent its members to start four other new churches.

This growth of the church also was made possible by the willingness of the Me people to face opposition and make sacrifices wherever they had to bring Christianity to the people who had never heard of it.

In one place four burdened believers entered an unevangelized district. They found much opposition, and when the two families tried to erect a shelter for a meeting place those who opposed it tore it down. After several attempts to stop the work, however, the enemy yielded, and in one year's time over one hundred were listening to the Word and a goodly number had been baptized (*The Alliance Witness*, May 14, 1969).

One of underlying motif of these four men who were willing to endure the opposition is their strong belief in the imminent return of the Lord which will enable them to live together again in a new form of existence if their non-Christian families and relatives accept the gospel. And the reward promised to

those who labor for the spread of the gospel that their labor in the Lord is not in vain. Troutman rightly reported that the area which resisted the missionaries and Christianity were now open to receive the gospel. The Bible was sold out and weekly prayer meetings were well-attended (*The Alliance Witness*, May 1965). But this church growth was partly inspired by indigenous religious expectation and took place within the socio-economic and political context which contributed to this openness of Christianity. In fact the revival took place in the midst of revolts and war against the Indonesian government in August, 1969.

5.6.3.2 Political conflict

The Me openness toward Christianity since the 1960s also has been influenced by the political struggle that has been going on in this period, particularly from 1968, through the early 1970s and in the 1980s until today. As shown in an earlier chapter, in 1967, when the time for 'the act of free choice' (see Glossary) was approaching the Indonesian government officials were saying that 'the act of free choice' was not necessary, as Irian Jaya had become part of Indonesia already in August 1945. The Me reacted to this *ogai's* political propaganda by preparing bows and arrows to drive the *ogai* out. In 1968 the Me were abandoning their gardens, and their settlements by going to the bush in preparation to fight the *ogai* who were out to deny their rights to determine their own political destiny. The Me took off their clothes—which was seen as symbol of *ogai's* oppression—and men wore penis gourds and women tree bark skirts. On April 27, 1969, the rebellion broke out at Enarotali. It rapidly spread to Tigi and to the Kamu Valley. The Me dug holes in the airstrips in Enarotali and four other places to prevent troops from landing to reinforce the garrison. In addition to this the people brought in big stones and spread them in the middle of several airstrips. Later in the operations, the Me wiped out the entire *ogai's* patrol of fifteen men near Kebo and eleven in a motor boat on the Aga-river which flows into Lake Paniai.

On April 29, the local Police fired at a Sarwo Edhie's plane, wounding a police inspector who accompanied him, when it flew over Enarotali. According to the Me, the plane was forced to return to Nabire and from there to Biak. The *ogai* dropped paratroopers on April 30 and May 4 (Sharp 1977: 21, May 1978: 173ff). The revolt was suppressed and by October 1969, the feast of peace was held. Many were frustrated that the Dutch did not come to help them in their struggle. This political defeat was followed by a long period of hunger as the people returned to their homes which they had deserted one or two years earlier.

Several years later, from 1979 to 1984 the Me again attempted to drive out the Indonesians officials from the region. In several places the people attacked

the *ogai* but failed. In other places the people burnt down school buildings built by the government out of conviction that such schools were used as instruments to depoliticize the young people of the region. The *ogai* adopted a 'clean-sweep strategy'.

Reports from several sources suggests that presumably as part of the 'sweep clean' strategy 13,000 were killed during the operations in the Central Highlands in the late 1981. The killing occurred in the Wissel Lakes region; which was visited by a Dutch Television crew in September 1981 to make a documentary shown in Holland in February 1982. The most sensational shots taken were of a large group of 3000 or thousands armed Papuans, men and women, training somewhere near the Lakes, bearing anti Indonesian tattoos on their bodies and shouting the slogan 'Indonesians go back to Jakarta!' The TV team had come across the group by accident. The commentary states that a month after the visit, in October 1981, the village of Madi was bombed flat by the planes of the Indonesian Air Force, and villagers were killed. The commentator, Aad van Heuvel, stated that he had concrete proof that two other villages were almost bombed around the same time. Meanwhile reports came from others sources of mass killings in the same area on a larger scale than had been suggested by van den Heuvel. The first report, received early in 1982 from OPM sources, claimed 2,500 villagers were killed during military operations in the district of Paniai, not far from the Wissel Lakes. A later report, which was less specific about the timing of the events, spoke of a death toll in the Central Highlands of as many as 13,000 people as result of aerial bombardment using napalm and chemical weapons ... (Tapol 1983: 76).

This suppression had silently forced the people to withdraw their ongoing effort to free themselves from foreign socio-economic and political domination. The point here is that the growth of the churches which was referred to above cannot be seen apart from this political struggle. The Me are more open to spiritual things than before. The Me literally flooded into to the church. Hundreds of Bibles were sold out in the midst of this political chaos. It is possible that many cooperated with the church out of the view that the church can be a new source of inspiration of resistance or out of fear that Jesus Christ was returning soon. We will now turn to another issue which has contributed to the cooperation of the Me with the religious leaders.

5.6.3.3 *The church growth and natural disasters in the region*

As noted in Chapter 4, in the 1970s following political suppression, the belief that Jesus Christ was returning soon became very prevalent; as several churches faced floods and earthquakes which left many homeless. One of those areas which underwent this catastrophic destruction was Obano. In 1978, a landslide and flood had occurred, which affected Obano district in general. The places which experienced serious damage were: Beko, Epo/Iikotu, Kotomoma, Muyetadi Ukauwo and Muyetadi. According to a church report made after this flood, most of the people lost their homes. 574 gardens were reported to have been destroyed. 374 pigs were buried due to the landslides as well a large number of chicken and rabbits (Obano Church District Report, 1978). Everybody in the church was expecting that this period of earthquakes and floods was going to be followed by the total destruction of the world. This belief in the second coming of the Lord was intensified by a paper of a certain American Reverend Hutchinson which helped to encourage the development of such religious views. This paper by Hutchinson will be discussed later in detail because it helped to inspire the Me to take immediate action to join the church and to form a new eschatological community with apocalyptic expectations.

In 1979-1984, the earthquakes were striking the area again and again. An apocalyptic belief became very prevalent again at this time. The earthquake which had struck several areas since September 15, 1985 left many people homeless. Several settlements were buried. The earthquakes were accompanied by heavy rain which had started earlier in April 1985. These heavy rains and earthquakes brought substantial damage on a large number of the people's settlements and their gardens. The people of the Lake Tigi area, particularly those who were living in Yaguu, Kigoou, and Ugiya, lost their relatives, homes and gardens and pigs, their only means of living. Later, when the Governor of Irian Jaya, visited the people, they were able to express their concern over the situation (*Kompas*, 30 October 1985).

According to Sukiyo, the head of the Paniai Regency this earthquake and heavy rainfall has destroyed the homes and their gardens of the people of four districts: East Paniai, West Paniai, Kamu and Agaadide. As a result of these earthquakes eight people were killed and seventy six others were seriously injured and thousands of pigs, chickens, ducks and goats were buried. Hundreds of homes were demolished. Aside from this, the gardens in the heavily populated areas at the foot of Mount Deyai which reaches up to 3,200 meters above sea level were destroyed (*Kompas*, 30 October 1985).

In one village there was a lady who was giving birth when the earthquake took place. She was shocked and died with the baby (*KdK*, December 1985). These earthquakes and the heavy rains again were interpreted as part of a larger scheme in the Me people's view of world. Such natural disasters helped to affirm the existing views and strengthened the position of local religious leaders who had been calling for people to return past religious traditions. Secondly, this catastrophic events also made the people open to evangelistic activities of the Church. Indeed, this last decade church membership has increased, but also within the churches in this region, there is a growing tendency to introduce a new form of Christianity which is more apocalyptic type of Christianity, with the strong emphasis on the second coming of the Lord here and now.

The political defeat and natural disasters were seen from the view point of the local eschatology. The people take refuge in the church which has contributed to the growth of the church in the region. The Hutchinson's paper, which was circulating around this time, became another source of inspiration for the people's belief in the imminent transformation of history and culture.

5.6.4 Reverend Hutchinson's gospel tract on the second coming of the Lord and its impact

Beginning in 1978 the belief in the second coming of the Lord and the destruction of this world gained momentum once again in this region. This was largely inspired by a free translation of a paper written by a certain American Reverend Cyril Hutchinson regarding the possibility of the return of Jesus Christ in 1982. In this section I want to present a brief summary of this gospel tract which inspired the strong belief in the immediate return of the Lord among the young people.

The paper of Hutchinson which predicted the second return of Jesus Christ in 1982 reached Indonesia and a free translation of this tract was made available in Indonesian by an organization called Team for the Spread of the Gospel 'Witness'. This was an organization based in Bandung, West Java and established to spread the gospel in Indonesia. In this tract, Hutchinson ruled out the possibility of the return of the Jesus Christ in 1982. He said:

Day and time of the return of Jesus Christ is still secret/unknown, only known to God the Father. And in 1982, our Lord Jesus Christ, it is possible He will return (Hutchinson, 1982).

This is based on Hutchinson's interpretation of two American scientists who predict that by 1982 the position of the nine planets will have changed and

will have formed a straight line. If this were to happen according to Hutchinson, it would:

- a. affect the magnetic activity of the sun which in turn will bring about explosions in the sun and fire storms
- b. change the earth's ionosphere
- c. disrupt TV and Radio networks
- d. change rain fall and temperature
- e. change earth rotation and duration of the day
- f. radically change of the wind direction
- g. cause earthquakes to take place everywhere.

Having listed the eight possible effect, Hutchinson related them to Biblical prophecies (biblical references are from TEV, Today's English Version).

The sun

- * man will be burnt by fierce heat (Revelation 16: 9)
- * the sun will be seven times brighter than usual (Isaiah 30: 26)
- * the sun will be darkened (Joel 2: 31)
- * the sun will grow dark (Matthew 24: 29)

The moon

- * the moon will be as bright as the sun (Isaiah 30: 26)
- * the moon will turn red as blood (Joel 2: 31)
- * the moon will no longer shine (Matthew 24: 29)
- * the moon completely turn red like blood (Revelation 6: 12)

The earthquakes

- * there will be a terrible earthquake which has never occurred since the creation (Revelation 16: 18)
- * All the islands disappeared, all the mountains vanished (Revelation 16: 20).

These are some of the Biblical sources which Hutchinson listed to support his view that Jesus Christ would possibly return to the earth in 1982. Reading this tract, it demanded an immediate response, which probably was the intention of the author for writing this tract. But he said:

the most important of all is that good news of salvation is available before us. The Bible is the word of God and all prophecies recorded in it will be fulfilled word per word ... In 1982, the earth will experience God's curse

with hardships which will be prevalent. Warnings and good news of salvation had been revealed and preached to us clearly and honestly individually or in the group. Be prepared to face the coming days of hardship (Hutchinson 1982).

This prediction only deepened the Me belief that indeed the Lord would return in the year 1982 as in 1978. The young people the who could read this tract were instrumental in spreading the idea. The fact that they were experiencing earthquakes, floods and land slides helped to deepen the Me's religious views in this subject. In short, the natural disasters the people were experiencing coincided with Hutchinson's ideas outlined in his paper and it affirmed the Me conviction that Jesus Christ was returning soon. This paper too brought about church growth and apocalyptic experiences within the existing local churches.

5.6.5 New Wege communities in the Tigi district

Inspired by Hutchinson's paper that Jesus Christ was returning soon, the young people from several places started to establish their own religious communities in 1979. In this section I will only discuss the experience of the group in my village. Before the birth of this community early in 1979, when I went to visit this village. The people were wondering why I was going to university and studying, when Jesus Christ would soon destroy the world.

Later, in 1979, Soleman the man who established this *Wege* community, began to contact the leader of the *Wege* community in Wakeidide who was by this time preaching that Zakheus was returning to rule and to judge the world. Later, Soleman also got his training from the leaders of the *Wege* community in Kamu. While making contact with the leaders of these few remaining *Wege* communities; Soleman was also recruiting young people from the village. Later, these young people, who were attending Elementary School decided to follow Soleman by saying why go to school when Jesus Christ is returning soon.

After the young people accepted the new way as taught by Soleman, they followed his exodus program. They were critical of their parents, their village and local church leadership. They wanted to introduce the *Wege Mana* but they were rejected by the leader of the village congregation. They set up their own 'Christian empire', consisting of ten houses with a bigger house for a chapel in the center of their settlement. The religious motif behind their participation in the program of Soleman was the belief that God was going to return to establish his kingdom here and now.

Since most of these young people were familiar with the Christian Bible and Christianity, they Christianized the views of other *Wege* leaders who had taught them. They based their views on Christian Biblical teachings, especially those of the Old Testament.

In the first place, they had a strong conviction that God was going to destroy this world and all political powers and he would establish his Kingdom and appoint Soleman—the leader of this community—to sit on the throne of King Soleman of the Old Testament. In reacting to other young people who were joining the OPM in the village, the young people of this community argued that the OPM would succeed in obtaining political freedom and the formation of the state of West Papua. However, the head of this new state—West Papua—would be the anti-Christ who would attempt to eradicate them. Still, they believed they were going to win.

Secondly, Hutchinson's ideas also served as a source of religious inspiration. Having compared the list of Biblical prophecies provided by Hutchinson with what was going on in the region at that time—such as: earthquakes, land slides, heavy rain fall etc.—they concluded that indeed God's time to destroy the world was imminent. Motivated by this conviction they constructed a big house which functioned as a chapel and used for their nightly prayer meetings. The 'chapel' has four doors: one facing north, the other facing south; and two other doors each facing west and east. The four doors were intended to help them escape from the coming calamity which would accompany the return of the Lord. It was also said that when such calamity would come they were going to sit together in the chapel. Furthermore, it was said that as time of destruction of this world approached they planned to assign four men to keep watch on those four doors to see where or at which place Jesus Christ was going to step down to judge the world. In the anticipation of the second coming of the Lord, they killed all the pigs, chickens and other livestock. The history of this group was disrupted when the police stationed in Waghete was dispatched to arrest them in 1983. Almost two thirds of the followers were arrested and taken to Waghete. Their hamlet were totally burnt to the ground. They were imprisoned for three months. A few of them escaped.

By way of conclusion, in this sub-section an attempt has been made to show how the Me's view of the radical transformation of the world was expressed in their culture. This was done by briefly referring to two of the myths and predictions; and how this view has helped them explain the changing-socio-political situation confronting them. It was also shown how this view has motivated the Me to be open to the church and the programs of religious leaders. The eschatological motif which has driven the people's participation in this religious community is crucial. From the above discus-

sion, it should be pointed out that the Me's view of imminent change of history has remained unchanged, in spite of five decades of exposure to the outside world. The fact that this idea found its Christian counterpart has encouraged the Me's belief in this respect. In the past their view of this drastic change of history has served as a framework through which they see themselves as they are confronted with change. It is likely that this deeply rooted expectation will continue to shape their life and the way they see the historical and cultural changes in the future.

5.7 Conclusion

This chapter has surveyed exposition of five religious motifs which has provided the deep structure of the *Wege Bage's* activities and religious views the Me in general. Such religious discourse presented above drove the people to participate in the *Wege Bage* or in Zakheus' program.

Before going into concluding chapter, several observations can be made. Firstly, according to the *Wege Bage* these religious motifs had existed even in pre-contact times in this culture at least in their basic forms. The leaders of *Wege Bage* claim to have had access to such pre-contact religious beliefs. They claim that they had obtained such knowledge through training (in the case of Zakheus through his father or special training in Makassar) or revelation in the case of religious leaders of the *Wege Bage* of the Kamu Valley who claimed to have been taken up to the upperworld and got their instruction from God or the male creator deity).

As noted in the introductory part of this chapter, those indigenous religious motifs become models through which the people developed their own version of Christianity in the course of their encounter with and opposition from the *ogai*. As can be noted, the Me heard the Gospel in terms of their own needs, aspirations and cultural framework. This gave birth to an indigenous theology and a new religious awareness to express their view in search for meaning and power. The religious elite such as Zakheus and local communities appeared and acted as co-theologians in the process. The dynamic process has been going along with de-Christianization of Christianity and at the same Christianization of the local religious beliefs and aspirations. Thus, Christianity takes on the local cultural colors (Tennekes & Vroom 1989: 7).

Thirdly, the *Wege Bage's* argument is clear they have known the religious views preached by the *ogai* long before the *ogai* came. The *ogai's* rejection of the *Wege Bage's* religious views only is seen as an attempt to eliminate this conviction. The above discussion expressed this concern. For this reason we can understand why the people argue that: 1) God had been dealing with

them in their history through their ancestors and has been communicating with them through their tradition; 2) that long before Christianity came God has chosen this region as a podium to reveal his plan by giving them religious commandments which today they take as their Bible and 3) that they had been experiencing God's saving hand in their midst as he healed the sick or brought forth rain when they sought his intervention as they went through a prolonged dry weather; 4) Koyeidaba and Zakheus are the Me people's Jesus who once had demonstrated their commitment to die for other's sake which can also be seen in the historical and religious symbols of another Jesus—Jesus Christ of Christianity; and 5) the new world will dawn as radical transformation of history and world order takes place in the Paniai region.

The indigenous theology such as shown above was born in a particular historical context of encounter between two cultures, in which the dominant culture attempted to overrun and engulf the indigenous one; while the latter attempted to resist such a policy of transformation by the former. This historical and socio-political atmosphere informed the Me and the *Wege Bage's* religious arguments.

Lastly the religious views of *Wege Bage* or the Me as presented above is dynamic and drew their thoughts from various sources: their perceived pre-contact religious thought but also local folk tales tumors and new ideas including Christianity. For this reason the discussion should be seen as local theology in the process of change, attempting to find a formula. They are not a fixed theological statement. They reflect the Me's socio-religious discourse in search for meaning and power, which will be the subject of discussion in the following chapter.

CHAPTER 6

Conclusion

Zakheus Pakage and his communities: indigenous religious discourse, socio-political protest and ethnohistory

This concluding chapter addresses questions raised in the introductory chapter. An eclectic approach is adopted to address these questions. The first part of this chapter attempts to show how such questions can be handled from three inter-related perspectives: a combined cultural, socio-political and ethno-historical approach. The second section proposes areas of concerns which I regard as agenda for future research. And in the section a proposal for a more tolerant and respect from the agencies of transformation toward politico-religious views of various tribal communities today will be presented.

As already stated in the introductory chapter, this study has dealt with the life and work of Zakheus and his communities. The main focus of the discussion is the birth of indigenous religious views of the *Wege Bage* and of the Me in general. The question of 'what triggered the birth of this indigenous theology? or what did Zakheus want to achieve through his program?' cannot be answered without considering another question raised in the introductory chapter: under what condition did Zakheus and his communities live? The question is essential and Chapters 3 and 4 have attempted to answer this. From the presentation of these two chapters it was said that the people whose views we have discussed, lived and expressed their views in two inter-related socio-historical context which shaped their religious argument:

1. Zakheus began his work at the time when drastic socio-economic and religious changes and conflicts were taking place following the contact with the Western world. Finding themselves in the midst of change and conflicts, the Me viewed Zakheus' program as a reaffirmation of their belief system which helped them come to terms with such tensions and changes in socio-economic, political and religious domains.
2. Zakheus and his communities lived and carried out their program in the midst of conflict and opposition from the local headmen and the *ogai*. This was the second issue. It can be seen that such opposition initiated by the *ogai*

—as noted in Chapter Three and Four—to suppress and eradicate the religious beliefs of Zakheus and his communities set the tone and shaped the religious arguments of the *Wege Bage* as shown in Chapter 5. This made the *Wege Bage*'s religious views: apologetic and religious bullets aimed at the *ogai*.

And to these, it should be added the third issue. The *Wege Bage* lived in the age of competition. The missionaries, both the Catholics, CAMA and the government were competing in occupying new areas and at the same time spreading their religious and secular ideologies in the region. When these establishments crusaded in their desperate attempts to impose their views on Zakheus and his communities, it only encouraged the *Wege Bage*'s participation to sell their own religious products as well.

Based on these considerations it is impossible to address the questions raised in this study—What motivated the Me to join Zakheus and his communities? What did Zakheus want to achieve through his activities?—only from one particular stand point: either socio-cultural or historical one. For this reason, the answer to the above questions is not an exclusive one. This study sees the programs of Zakheus and his communities from a broader perspective: a new set of religious beliefs, socio-political and ethno-historical aspirations.

6.1 Zakheus' program as a new set of religious beliefs, collective socio-political and ethno-historical aspirations

6.1.1 *Zakheus' religious views: redefinition of indigenous religious belief*

It is suggested here that to the Me who had been living and were caught up in the midst of drastic change and opposition, Zakheus' religious views has something to do with redefinition of their perceived indigenous religious beliefs. To the people, Zakheus' program was a new religious system built on the existing religious views through which they could see the changes and historical developments which was taking place in the region. This perspective is not a new. There are many studies on religious movements in Melanesia done in the past from this view point.

a. The people's world view and epistemology

Here, I would like to briefly mention three studies on the religious movements in Melanesia from this view point.

Hayward (1985, 1990) interpreted the religious movements which took place successively among the Western Dani from the 1960s up the 1980s as an

'outward manifestations of hopes and aspirations which had been brought to fresh intensity by the development around them, but which had been rooted in their legends and their worldview' (1985: 2). Hayward went on and said

that religious movements are 'the product of a belief system or worldview that believes that a better world characterized by individual well being, social contentment (amity, justice and equality), as well as unlimited access to the sources of wealth can be attained by performing the proper rituals' (Hayward 1985: 22; 1992).

Lawrence, is another anthropologist who in his work *Road Belong Cargo* (1989) shows that religious movements in Melanesia are rooted in the people's worldview and epistemology. After seeing the changes and imbalances from their own traditional point view, the people according to Lawrence attempt to respond to this situation by adopting the ritual means to meet their needs. Lawrence says that the people of New Guinea saw everything that the white man had and did and concluded that they were inferior. The only way to change their lot was to make available 'an abundant supply of cargo' from God or cargo deities. On the basis of the past experience the people rely on the assistance of the ancestors and on the use of magic and ritual. Lawrence sums up the world view of the Madang people area people by noting that they believed that a true relationship existed only when demonstrated by good will and by reciprocal co-operation and distribution of wealth; alongside that they held to an unswerving conviction that material wealth originated from and maintained by deities who, with the ancestors, could be manipulated by ritual to man's advantage.

Kamma (1972), who studied Koreri movement in Biak drew up a similar conclusion. Kamma demonstrated that millenarian movements in Melanesia are not necessarily the product of crises and domination by outside political and religious establishments. Such religious movements are deeply inspired by the traditions and mythology of the culture and they give expression to the anxieties and fears, the hopes and aspirations of the people for a better way of life. Thus, the Koreri movements expresses the local soteriological aspirations.

In short, these studies view the religious movements in Melanesia as manifestation of the people's view of life characterized by the beliefs that salvation and prosperity are controlled by God, spirits or ghosts which sometimes identified as ancestors. Power and prosperity can be obtained through proper ritual means and the restoration of relationship with such deities. I agree with them partly, and yet I will explain later that these studies failed to take the

historical and political context in which these religious movements took place.

b. The *Wege Bage*'s religious views: indigenous theology

For the Me the *Wege Mana* is reinterpretation of the indigenous religious views in the context of change and encounter with the *ogai*. The contact with the *ogai* brought about a drastic socio-religious and political changes which challenged their existing views. Many people were not prepared to face such changes (see Chapter 3). A new system of explanation was in demand to meet their changing situation. In this respect Zakheus' program offered the people a new belief system to redirect their religious path. This new system did not necessarily contradict the old religious assumptions; since this new was built on the old foundation. Chapter 5 has outlined the way the people created an indigenous version of Christianity on the basis of the existing religious motifs. This is understandable. Simply because all people see reality through an existing frame work which they and their ancestors had invented. In this case the Me people gradually attempted to define and develop their conceptions of 'God', 'Bible', 'Salvation', 'Jesus Christ' and 'Eschatology'. As was shown in Chapter 5, the Me and *Wege Bage* who had discovered similarities between the existing religious motifs and Christianity, used such Christian religious ideas to reaffirm their traditions and identity which was being challenged.

c. The Christian theological motifs and development of indigenous theological views

Speaking about the similarity of religious concepts found between Christianity and non-Christian belief systems, it is important to refer to two works, one by a missionary anthropologist, and another by an anthropologist for the purpose of comparison. Simply because it has been assumed that the church can use the existing pre-contact religious themes to draw the people to Christianity. It is an assumption which I doubt because as shown in this study, the local people create their own theological discourse out their own politico-religious agendas. Don Richardson (1984), is a missionary anthropologist who had worked in Irian Jaya. He documented a striking number of parallels between Christian and non-Christian beliefs in various societies throughout the world. Richardson categorized people on the basis of their religious views into three groups: 1) 'the peoples of the vague God', who know something about the true God and desire to serve him but are hampered by lack of knowledge (e.g. the Athenian, the Inca, the Santal, and Gedeo peoples), 2) the peoples of the lost book 'who are looking for special revelation that been lost to them' (e.g. the Karen, Kachin, and the Naga peoples), and 3) the peoples with strange customs that graphically portray redemption and forgiveness

(e.g. the Sawi, the Dayaks, the Asmat people). This taxonomy is based on the assumption that it is possible to put all people groups and their beliefs under such categories and that missionaries can draw various social groups to Christianity by making use of the existing religious concepts. This assumption can be justified when one reads a recent paper of Karl Rambo, an anthropologist who reported about Magruai, a pre-Christian messianic figure who appeared among the Simbu of Papua New Guinea. This key figure from pre-contact times helped the Simbu to accept and incorporate Christianity when the Simbu encountered the Western missionaries. The story about this key figure helped the people to transform Western Christianity into a local religion without a serious conflict with the teachings of the established Churches (Rambo 1990: 177).

Unfortunately, this did not happen among the Me of the Paniai region. As shown in Chapter 5, the people of this region with their religious views similar to that of Christian doctrine encountered Christianity and made use of Christian views only to express and develop their existing religious aspirations. I think Lanternari is right and when he said,

... primitive societies have borrowed from the evangelism of the missionaries a great many elements in which they saw a reflection of their own experiences of life, even though portrayed in Western Christian terms. (Lanternari 1965: 243).

In this respect Christianity encouraged and inspired the Me people to develop their own theological views on the basis of their assumed pre-contact religious views. The encounter with the *ogai* and Christianity only inspired the *Wege Bage* to state their indigenous religious views more explicitly.

d. The *Wege Mana* as a new system of meaning

Zakheus and the *Wege Bage*'s religious views, invented in the course of their encounter with Christianity, can be seen as a cognitive map 'of' reality which provided the people with a basic religious framework. Such frame of reference helped the people to explain their changing socio-economic and religious situation. At this point, Christianity as presented by the *ogai* as a new religious system clothed in predominantly western religious symbols did not make any sense, in the sense that it did not give the Me, who were caught up in the midst of change, a sense of security and a new source of inspiration to live. On the contrary, Christianity was seen as a threat to their very existence and foreign set of ideas that has nothing to do with the people's needs.

In that respect, the *Wege Mana* provided the *Wege Bage* with a sense of purpose and meaning in a context of conflict and change. One can understand

why Zakheus was willing to challenge the government officer in Waghete to kill him if he wanted (*The Alliance Weekly*, September 12, 1951), because death had a special meaning in that context. Zakheus even was willing to endure the opposition and persecution, up to the point of spending weeks of isolation in the cemetery as noted in chapter four. He felt he was not alone, God was with him. He was also convinced that he was doing God had instructed him to do. Thus, his activities were motivated by his deep religious conviction that he was there to accomplish a socio-religious mission.

The same can be said about the commitment of the leaders of the *Wege Bage* in Kamu who had been going through a series of arrests and persecutions. They were prepared to endure the rejection and opposition from the government and continue to follow what they believed to be true. One of the leaders who had encouraged the people to throw away their cowrie shells was jailed. Before he was put in jail by Senen Mote and Garis Adii, two of the local police agents, wanted to release him on the condition that he stop preaching his *Wege Mana*. But this leader preferred to go to jail and stay there for one month. It was far more better to go to jail than going home and denying his religious convictions. Imprisonment for this leader became an occasion to test his religious integrity (MK, Idakebo, June 14, 1988).

The *Wege Mana* also can be seen as model 'for' reality which Zakheus and the *Wege Bage* attempted to follow in their life journey in this world. Chapter 5 has shown five religious motifs which the people attempted to translate their beliefs in their life. These religious motifs which the people attempted to 'Christianize' or 'de-Christianize' can be seen as '... conceptions of general order of existence clothed with such an aura of factuality ...' (Geertz 1973: 90). No wonder, the *Wege Mana* drew the people away from the religion of the *ogai* and helped them shape their own religious thoughts.

The people who were encountered changes in all areas of life and were in search of meaning and direction found Zakheus' program a new source of religious security.

e. Zakheus as traditionalist

Zakheus' program was accepted out of the Me view that Zakheus was a traditionalist in two respects: 1) Zakheus' had a mission to preserve the indigenous religious views. Many argue that Zakheus was reintroducing their past indigenous religious views which was being challenged. This can be seen from the Me argument today that Zakheus redefined their perceived past religious views and empathized the strict obedience to the existing religious rules. Another activity of Zakheus which can be mentioned is the *Wege Bage's* argument that Zakheus' recognition of the presence of a female deity who lives in a small valley floor right near his house. He, according to the *Wege Bage* lead-

ers today, not only recognized the female deity but was even willing to make a ritual sacrifice to her and an offering of a pig's head to the female deity. The people today argue that Zakheus also instructed the others to do the same, saying that 'to be healthy and prosperous we have to fulfill our obligations to such spirit deities' (OU, June 12, 1990); 2) Zakheus' use of indigenous religious terms. Zakheus' own view of Christianity was informed by his upbringing. The Me—the church' people including my parents—argue today that Zakheus preached Christianity. And yet in the task of communication, he was forced to use the indigenous thought forms. In this process of transmission 'the purity of the Christian teaching was lost'. And this resulted in the Me accepting the *Wege Mana* as redefinition of their traditional religious aspirations. Zakheus' teachings became apart of the traditional religious elements; and religious views of Zakheus became a new religious basis to legitimize their existing religious views and develop their own theologies—bearing in mind the *Wege Bage's* claim that they had discovered similarities which exists between Christian and local religious themes.

6.1.2 *Zakheus' religious views: socio-political aspirations for liberation*

And yet, it is impossible to see Zakheus' religious views only as a system of belief built on the indigenous religious views. Zakheus' religious views has to be seen also from a socio-political and historical perspective. This is based on the assumption that man's religious life is colored by the group's experience in terms of historical and political vicissitudes in which the Me find themselves. This implies the religious argument of Zakheus as shown in the previous chapter cannot be understood apart from the historical context of opposition in which Zakheus and his communities found themselves. As such Zakheus religious views can be seen as Me's collective socio-political aspirations for liberation from foreign powers. Simply because such beliefs were formulated by the people who were facing the policies of elimination by the *ogas*. In this respect, I had shared the views of Lanternari, Worsley and Guillot while maintaining a degree of distance toward their one-sided approach.

a. The people's socio-political agenda for liberation from foreign powers
I would like to briefly review the studies on the religious movements done from the socio-political point of view as adopted in this investigation. Vittorio Lanternari in *The Religions of the Oppressed* (1965) suggested that religious movements as expression of the people's aspirations for liberation from the domination of the Western colonial powers. The birth of these movements can only be understood in the light of historical condition relat-

ing to the colonial experiences and to the striving of subject peoples to become emancipated (1965: vi).

C. Guillot (1985) who did his research on the work of Kiai Sadrach—a Javanese 19th century religious leader—expressed similar view. Just like Zakheus, Kiai Sadrach as a religious leader established Christian communities in rural Java and later came to conflict with the Dutch missionaries (see Sutarmanto 1988, Sumarthana 1991). Guillot views Sadrach's programs as motivated by politico-religious agendas of establishing his own empire (1985: 175). The conversion and participation of the Javanese rural people in the programs of Kiai Sadrach according to Guillot was driven by their aspirations to have a direct access to the Dutch. By following Sadrach the Javanese masses setting aside the Javanese priyayis—members of the aristocratic bureaucracy of the colonial Java—who were representing the Dutch' interest (1985: 180-181). Other study adopting similar view on Sadrach was done by Quarles van Ufford (1980: 204ff).

Another classic study worth mention is that of Worsley's *The Trumpet Shall Sound* (1968). He asserts that religious movements in Melanesia came as a reaction to the oppression exercised by the colonial powers. He saw Melanesian tribal societies as divided into small separate, isolated social groups: the village, the clan and the tribe. They lacked centralized political organization or economic basis to act as a united force to fight against oppressors. In such context the political leader who must avoid identification with any particular section of the society has to establish his program for liberation on a higher plane: supernatural deities (Worsley 1968: 237). The birth of the theological views presented in the previous chapter can be seen as example of the views expressed in these studies. The very religious views as shown in previous chapter bears witness to the fact that religious beliefs are not immune to the historical forces.

b. Zakheus' religious views as the people's theological arrows

The idea that the *Wege Mana* was an expression of the people's their aspiration for liberation from the domination of the *ogai* can be justified if one looks at the struggle of Zakheus and his communities facing the opposition from powerful establishment of the *ogai*. The *Wege Mana* carries the religious burden of the communities who felt deprived of freedom to express their views. Confronted with the opposition from the *ogai*, the very religious views which served as system of meaning and the framework for interpretation of the changes, later became religious arrows. Chapter 3 has shown the theological assumptions of the *ogai* which informed their policies toward the local religious views. The opposition which Zakheus and his communities faced as shown in Chapter 4 was motivated by such theological assumptions. Zakheus'

program was loaded with religious arrows of the small community prepared to defend their views and at the same time to counter-attack the *ogai* who were out to suppress their views.

c. Zakheus and nationalistic aspirations of Indonesians in other parts of the Indonesian Archipelago

The idea that Zakheus and his communities had political agenda behind their activities in the Paniai region is expressed by the few Me who have attended university today. This was also perhaps possible view of the Dutch government in the 1950s. These two groups hold the view that Zakheus was one of the West Papuan freedom fighters who attempted to drive out the Dutch. Zakheus according to these groups had become strongly nationalistic during his theological studies in Makassar from 1945 up until the 1950s. Zakheus saw the Indonesian freedom fighters who were demanding political freedom from the Dutch. When he returned to the Paniai region he wanted to organize the people to chase the Dutch out of the region. Today the people argue that the *ogai* opposed Zakheus, because they were suspicious toward Zakheus out of their conviction that Zakheus was preparing the people to drive out the *ogai* and Zakheus was aspiring to become big man of the liberated Wissel Lakes region (BE, Jayapura, August 20, 1992).

d. Zakheus' program of building his communities as building his empire

Zakheus' program of building Christian communities can be seen as his strategy of building his 'empire' to keep the Me under his control. Such communities became the power basis of his communities which he could use to challenge the *ogai* who opposed him. As noted earlier, in the early stages of his work, Zakheus travelled through Kamu, Debei and the West Paniai districts. During these travels Zakheus was encouraging the Me to follow him. There were two things which he did when he was visiting those areas which are very significant here: 1) In all the places he visited, he planted a wooden cross which he made himself and instructed the people of those places not to accept the teachers who will be sent by the *ogai*. They were to wait the teachers whom Zakheus will send after he had trained them—which did not materialized as he was arrested soon. This was an amount to say that Zakheus had a better program and better religion than that of the *ogai*; 2) In several places after Zakheus told the people not to cooperate with the *ogai*. Zakheus said, If you do not want to follow what I have taught you, get ready now, send your children to schools, cooperate with the *ogai* and make room for the programs of the *ogai* (BP, Bomou, September 5, 1992).

This instruction was given by Zakheus after he had told the people to give up their land rights to Zakheus who was planning to convert those land to

large communal vegetable gardens and coffee plantations. Zakheus wanted to earn the Dutch money for his communities by supplying the *ogai* with the vegetables from the garden from his community. Apparently some of Wege communities responded to this program. Many made big vegetable gardens. In the 1960s, I observed the Me from Wege communities selling vegetables in the government post in Waghete. Later, part of their earnings were given to Zakheus. Zakheus in the 1960s had a large amount of money with him perhaps to establish a cooperatives program. His intention for this program is not clear; but it was to prevent the people to become the object of socio-political and economic exploitation by the *ogai*. He was telling the people to work hard to earn money of the *ogai*—Dutch guilders—to enable them to shape their own socio-economic and political destiny under his leadership, by following his programs and instructions.

On the part of the Me people this political interpretation of Zakheus' work was intensified by the fact that politico-religious conflicts between the people and the *ogai* as shown in Chapter 3 and 4 has forced the Me to view all the activities of the *ogai* as politically motivated. This was due to the fact that the *ogai* were not prepared to recognize the Me socio-religious thoughts. For this reason the people's participation in the programs of *Wege Bage* and Zakheus himself can be seen as a man who had his own political and religious vision. In one of his prediction he told the people 'he was going to return and rule the world in peace and prosperity'. This prediction also has to be seen in the context in which Zakheus carried out his activities; in the midst of revolts led by the local big man and the repeated defeats the Me experienced through suppression by the *ogai* as shown in Chapter 3.

e. Zakheus' attempt to become the head of the government post in Waghete Zakheus' agenda to become a political leader is also clear from his attempt to become the head of government post in Waghete. In 1963 Zakheus returned to the Paniai region from 'exile'—the coast. As soon as he arrived the rumor spread that Zakheus was campaigning to be the head of the government post in Waghete. News which reached the missionary station in Enarotali said that Zakheus had paid f 15 to each Wege communities to get him elected as the head of the government post in the Paniai region (*De Pioneer*, Maart 1963, No 3). Many Me who participated in Wege communities deny this rumor today. They argued 'that Zakheus was not after this worldly politics, he did not want to become big man in man' eyes. He turned his back to the world because he was only concerned with God' (YG, WD, Nabire December 5, 1992). But it is true that even if he did not attempt to be the Head of the government, the Me who had participated in the Wege communities had their hidden agenda that Zakheus was a man with power: either spiritual or political.

Simply because the same people who deny Zakheus' political agenda, argue today that Zakheus had more power which exceeded that of the *ogai*—he could instantly turn one sweet potato into piles of sweet potatoes. Therefore the *ogai* who had introduced their programs in this region felt their position threatened when Zakheus returned to the Paniai region and began to draw the people away from the *ogai*'s establishment. The *ogai* did all they could do to remove and stop him from continuing his activities. To certain extend the *ogai* succeeded and yet religiously this policy only helped deepened the people's faith in Zakheus.

In this section I have argued that taking indigenous religious views within its historical setting is essential to understand the religious arguments of Zakheus and his communities. Such indigenous religious discourse cannot be divorced from their historical and political context. By historical context I am specifically referring to 1) the *ogai*'s opposition to Zakheus and his communities and the suppression of their very religious views, and 2) the context in which Zakheus appeared where in the Me were undergoing political defeat after as they took up arrows and bows to fight the *ogai*. Thus, the Me's response to Zakheus was partly motivated by their wish to be free from the *ogai*. Indeed one cannot understand the Me and the *Wege Bage*'s religious views which are apologetical in nature (see previous chapter) without considering the socio-political and historical circumstances.

6.1.3 *The Me ethnohistory, religion and identity*

I have taken the view that Zakheus' theological discourse can be seen as both a new system of beliefs which also serve as the people's theological arrows aiming at the *ogai*'s establishments. I also propose that the birth of indigenous religious views also has something to do with the Me ethnohistory and identity. The Me's knowledge of their past history at the time of contact and their wishes to preserve it became an important agenda and source of inspiration which inspired the Me to participate in Zakheus' programs.

The assumption behind this idea is that religion is also a product of history and contains the believers—as a group—view of its past and its aspirations of its future. Such aspirations carries socio-political wishes of the group which are rooted in the group's history.

a. The Me migration history, God and local deities

As briefly stated in Chapter 2, the Me people's ancestors came from the east. After wondering around in various places through the Central Highlands mountains, the founding fathers of various clans came and settled in what is

presently known as the Paniai region. Each clan has their own history of the migration and settlements. In some cases they came by two, while in many these founders of the clans came one after another. Such history of settlement has been subjected to religious interpretation. It is impossible to trace the history of the people's migration without going into the investigation of the people's religious history. One can understand why such histories are seen as 'sacred history'. Simply because the migration of the founders of the clans were interpreted as being guided by guardians of the clan, or certain benevolent spirits, or female deities or God. In the early stages of life in the region such deities played an important roles in choosing the land in which they settled. In later stages their ghosts—in some cases together with other deities—were seen as deities who intervened in the people's history in the past. On the basis of such belief, the people are always hopeful that such deities who had been benevolent to their past generations, would also intervene in their present life and the future. The religious views of Zakheus and his communities is linked up with such conceptions of Me history. The coming of the *ogai* created an atmosphere which was conducive to revive their memory of their own past history and spirit deities who are believed to have shaped their past. The religious aspirations of the Me is certainly rooted in such collective recollection of their past which inform their view of themselves and their future.

This kind of religious aspirations made the Me to be more cooperative with Zakheus. The birth indigenous religious views in the context of encounter with the *ogai* can be seen as motivated by the people's aspirations to revive their history in recognition of the ghosts or God whom they believed to be powerful forces in shaping the group's destiny and history.

b. The Me's religion, history and the question of identity

I have said that the history of the Me recollection of their past is very much related to their religion. In other words the people interpret their history from the religious view point. Such local history or religious development always contains information about: the place of origin of their forefathers, their travels, the circumstances in which they migrated, identity and description of the deities who led them to the present location; the reasons why their forefathers chose their present location, which sometimes can be identified with the name of the place because the name of their settlements is given after the circumstances which caused their ancestors to chose the location. Such history also describes the circumstances under which their clan names were given, and accompanied by predictions about the future destiny of their descendants. In some cases such histories details how and why certain small hills, or rivers came into being in the course of the settlements. In the early 1960s there were places which were viewed as 'sacred' because they were

believed to be the burial place of the certain key personalities of the clan who had in one way or another shaped the history of the clan. While in several places, there were certain locations which were also considered to be 'sacred'. Trees from such places were never cut, and the people were not allowed to enter that location. Again, such locations were believed as 'historic places' which were preserved. All this speaks of the Me ideas about themselves, their history, feeling, and their attitudes toward the land, and the spirit deities. Thus, the history has something to do with their religious ideas, and their identity of various individual clans. The revival of the indigenous religious views is also an attempt to restore the people's identity which was being challenged by the *ogai* through their activities in the region. One can understand the mood behind the people's participation in Zakheus' program, if he is aware of the preceding historical context where during the first decades of the encounter with the *ogai*, the people who had become Christian went out cutting trees from areas seen as 'sacred areas'. Their intention was to prove that God of Christianity was more powerful than the local deities. However, to the local people who participated in the *Wege Mana*, this act was demolition of their history, religion, identity, in other words the very foundation of their life. Later when Zakheus began his work, the Me who were up until that time irritated by the activities of Christians responded to Zakheus to rebuild and restore their history and identity which was being threatened. The participation of the Me in the Zakheus' activities was inspired by their agenda to renew and rebuild their commitment to preserve their recollection of their past history and identity.

c. The Me religion, history as the foundation of their existence

The people's perceived past history and religion are closely related. Such history interpreted from religious view point become the foundation for their existence. In other words the Me built their life today on such a perceived religious and historical notions of their past. One of the clear example is the basis of Me claim over their land. The Me's claim of land rights are built on their interpretation of religion and history of their clans and their settlements. Another example which can be cited is from the religious plane. The leaders of religious movements who had been preaching their own politico-religious agenda in this region got their inspiration from such history of the clan.

I have stated in the previous Chapter, how the myth of the revelation of the law or book which Yupi—the ancestor of Zakheus—received before his migration to the Wissel Lakes region was used by the *Wege Bage* to legitimate their claim that God had given them their ancestors: the 'indigenous Bible'. The various communities who had joined the *Wege Bage* did so out of their own interpretation of their own history. Zakheus did not impose his views.

The Me willingly joined the *Wege* communities out of their own agenda of using their own past as basis to shape their future. What is said here is that the Me's perceived history of their past became the foundation which helped inspired the rise of new religious consciousness. The same thing has been taking place in the past three decades. Many religious leaders from various clans has been attempting to justify their activities and claims on the basis of their recollection of their past religious views and historical account of their clan. Zakheus' fame and activities is based and supported by such perceived clan histories and pre-contact religious views. Despite of differences, the issue of history became a common point of reference for the rise of *Wege* communities in various settlements in the Paniai region. Such perceived common experience of the past became source of inspiration to construct their future which was expressed in the program of Zakheus.

6.1.4 Conclusion

I started this study and this section by stating that it is impossible to explain the religious views only from either a cultural or a socio-political viewpoint. This is based the view that religious life is a dynamic phenomenon and an aspect of human life or culture which cannot be isolated from other spheres of human life. On the basis of above considerations, I have said that to understand the religious beliefs of the *Wege Bage*, the understanding of socio-historical context in which Zakheus and his communities lived and expressed their views is essential.

Seeing the religious views against such background it impossible to adopt 'either or' option. I have therefore opted for 'both and' and beyond. Thus, religious beliefs of Zakheus and his communities has been seen as 1) reinterpretation of the existing belief system in the context of change, 2) which was used as arrows directed toward the *ogai* who were suppressing their very religious views, and 3) expression of the Me agenda of to restore their identity and bring back their perceived history in light of the contending visions. This is only to show that religious views should be treated as a dynamic and changing aspect of human life which is rooted in the history and culture of the group following the mood of socio-political and economic changes in the history of the believers.

6.2 Research agenda: present and the future

6.2.1 *Beyond 'cargo cults': search for a broader approach to the religions of Irian Jayans/Melanesians*

This research is made with the view to broaden the present understanding of the religions of the Irian Jayans/Melanesians. It seems that Anthropological study on the religions of the Melanesians/Irian Jayans in the past has centered on the 'cargo' motif as exemplified by the works of Worsley (1968) Lawrence (1992) and Kamma (1972). Such works has prevented further research to explore other religious motifs such as: the indigenous people's view of God, Jesus Christ, or salvation. The proposal to explore other religious motifs is made here because, because I take the 'cargo motifs' which has been exploited as an expression of a deeply rooted local Christian eschatology (see for example also Peter Lawrence 1992: 63-85). My approach is based on my observation that as the people come to interact with Christian doctrines. They unconsciously integrate Christianity into their religious system and as soon as it becomes part their religious vocabulary. They develop their own view such motifs in the light of their existing views and new religious views to meet the changing needs. This is in contrast to: anthropologists, missionaries and church workers who attempts to make a distinction between cargo cults or traditional religion and Christianity (see John Barker 1992).

An example from my own village can demonstrate this idea. In the early 1960s, the rumor spread about a female spirit being who was offering guns and other Western goods. It was said that the guns were going to be used to drive out the Indonesians who were terrorizing the people to give up their aspirations for political independence. As far as I can remember, the Church goers and non-Christians attached this view to Christian's doctrine of second coming of the Lord. It was said that the return of the Lord to the world was going to be preceded by the age of material prosperity. The female deity was sent by God to launch a new era of freedom and prosperity. I was part of this community and shared this view. Basically I still hold this view even today, the only exception is that today it is related to the Christian Biblical teaching. As the Bible says,

Then I saw a new heaven and a new earth, for the first heaven and the first earth has passed away ... Now, the dwelling of God is with men, he will live with them ... He will wipe out every tear from their eyes. There will be no more death or mourning, or crying or pain for the old order of things has passed away (Revelation 21: 1, 3-4). Behold I shew you a mercy a mystery; we shall a asleep, but we shall all be changed in a moment in

the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump, for the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed (1 Cor. 15: 51-52).

What I am saying here is that, the millenarian motif—sometimes expressed in cargo cults—is an important religious motif of my tribe. Therefore Christian eschatology: the coming of Christ or new heaven and earth, etc. are interpreted by the people through their existing religious framework.

But eschatology is only one of many religious motifs. The people's belief about God, or Jesus Christ or their belief about the Holy Spirit has to be investigated. I hope this study somehow attempted to broaden the research perspectives by attempting to investigate the people's beliefs on several motifs, although it can be seen as a preliminary attempt. I guess this can be a future research agenda.

6.2.2 *Handing the history back to the people: indigenous leadership*

Another concern which underlies this study is my view that the local people are innovators. They are capable of shaping their own cultures and managing their own affairs. I suppose this runs against the current view toward the indigenous peoples' call for respect toward their aspirations. The current view is that the Irian Jayans' culture has been placed in the lowest level of the cultural hierarchy, is seen as static and irrelevant. While the *ogai's* culture is placed at the top level of the cultural ladder (Aditjondro 1994). How this idea informs the development activities in Irian Jaya and in the Central Highlands of Irian Jaya today is reflected in a seminar held in Jakarta (Kasiepo *et al.* 1987).

This idea also is prevalent in the religious literature (Hitt 1976, Horne 1973, Wick 1990). The contribution of the local leaders are hardly recognized in missionary literature. Of particular importance is the contribution of leaders like Zakheus Pakage whose contribution is rarely mentioned at all. This is in contrast to the local church communities' view that the work of Christianization of the Central Highlands of Irian Jaya/West New Guinea was carried out by the local evangelists who went to get Christianity from the hands of the Euroamerican missionaries at the mission station and spread it among their own communities. The present research started with this bias to hand back the history to the people. I am glad this study also has attempted to show, how an attempt to give the history back to the people can be done. Again I propose this concern to be placed in the research agenda. It is my hope that the political atmosphere in the future will be brighter and will contribute to research from this perspective.

6.2.3 *Indigenous Christian theology*

In this study I have attempted to present religious views of the *Wege Bage* and the people of this region in general which I take as an indigenous theology. The religious discourse presented in the present study were developed generally by the former participants of the *Wege Bage* and others who tried to keep themselves away from the church. Therefore they are anti-*ogai* in nature. I have been critical toward their theological views with their anti-Christianity bias which I can accept since they were developed in the context of opposition by messengers of Christianity. I hope in the future an investigation would be made over the theological views developed by the village church goers. Because the present study to a certain extent does not reflect the views of the village Church goers. Although they share the same views and draw their thoughts from the same source, the village church goers of this region are also actively engaged in the religious innovation and praxis in the course of their interaction with Christian message. I propose that in future research would made to investigate the theological views formulated by the village church goers.

6.3 **Zakheus and the *Wege Bage*: from confrontation to dialogue and recognition**

I have said in the introductory chapter that this study has something to do with my personal life. It is not an objective scientific investigation. Although, I have tried to maintain a certain degree of the distance; I am still a member the Me society who cannot get away from changes and conflict which I have presented. This is precisely the reason why I address the socio-political conflicts which occurred between the *ogai* and the Me sympathetically. It expresses my view for socio-religious tolerance and respect for tribal groups whose religious views have become the target of suppression. As can be seen in this study, Zakheus was persecuted as if he had committed a series of crimes. He was jailed because of his religious and socio-political views which was different from that of the *ogai*. Today, I can say that Zakheus is only one of many who has been persecuted. There are hundreds or thousands who have been forced to follow this road. The question now is this: Can we go on ignoring the call of the *Wege Bage* and various tribal groups for respect and freedom? What should be our attitude and policies toward them today?. Do we still want to carry on our agenda of transformation while suppressing their struggle for freedom?

I propose that we discard such 'confrontation approach' to indigenous theological and political views. Instead of confrontation, we open ways of dialogue and create a more democratic atmosphere where the people are guaranteed to express their views. It means that we recognize their right to follow what they believe to be true. For us in the Church this does not mean that we should stop our missionary task. The dialogue only means that we recognize the religious beliefs of others who disagree with us. The present section addresses above questions from this stand point. In the following section I want to show why the way of tolerance and dialogue is necessary. First section attempts to show that the Church can take this strategy of dialogue to improve its relationship with the *Wege Bage*. It is important to state that my objection toward the efforts of Christianization and development activity in the region is mainly on the confrontation approach adopted in dealing with the local people's views. Confrontation is an old colonial approach which do not take the people as human beings who have the rights and are capable of improving and changing their destiny.

6.3.1 *The ogai and the Wege Bage's program*

6.3.1.1 *The ogai's confrontation approach and the birth of and indigenous religious consciousness*

The first consideration why the way of respect and tolerance is essential is because confrontation strategy is a colonial strategy which only deepened the people's resistance against the *ogai*.

As can be seen from the discussion of Chapter 3 and 4 the missionary's goal in the 1950s was to build an indigenous Church. This indigenous Church was established following what they call 'three selves formula' such as: self governing, self supporting, and self-propagating. As far as the Western missionary's task was concerned, this goal was achieved in 1950. Simply because by that year a) the local leadership was appointed, b) the local churches took charge of supporting its own leadership and its programs, and c) the task of Christianization of the area was transferred to the local/indigenous church leaders.

And yet, it was the very year that a new missiological issue emerged: the birth of indigenous religious and theological views. An issue which the missionary were not prepared to face. This came with the rise of Zakheus and his activities. Zakheus served as the spokesperson for the local communities who were out to develop their own religious views. In this stage of the birth of the indigenous theology the missionary played an ambiguous role. On the one hand, the missionaries who were eagerly attempting to establish an indigenous Church as soon as possible, released Zakheus to go to preach Christiani-

ty without any organizational ties and financial support from the *ogai*. However, this freedom from the *ogai* gave room for Zakheus to go out and develop his own view of Christianity which was later rejected by the *ogai*. When the *ogai* discovered that Zakheus had a different view of Christianity, the missionary confronted him. This was the missionary's dilemma. The missionaries were willing to let the newly established indigenous Church run its own business, but not to develop its indigenous theological views. Therefore the *ogai* confronted Zakheus for preaching a different gospel. And yet this confrontation by the *ogai* sharpened Zakheus and the indigenous theological arguments. The policy of confrontation in the colonial era which was intended to stop the development of an indigenous theological discourse only encouraged its development as it was shown in Chapter 5.

6.3.1.2 *The Indigenous religious and theological views of the Wege Bage*

The second consideration for dialogue is the nature of the *Wege Bage's* indigenous theological views. When looking at the theological views of the *Wege Bage*, they are authentic and original in spite of its uncritical assumptions anti-*ogai* bias. As I see it, this indigenous theological discourse presented in Chapter 5 has the following features which can be tolerated, while noting its weakness.

a Peripheral in nature

One essential feature of this religious discourse is that it is developed in various settlements by the people on the basis of their existing framework and thought categories. The people are the real theologians. The religious views presented in the previous chapter are genuine expressions of their experience of God and salvation, etc. in the course of their daily life activity in the bush, garden, or their hamlets or during their hunting trips to far away places such as Komauto and Odaya and Southern Tigi. Therefore this theology is not mission station theology. Because the religious views expressed in this study are not an exposition of Western Christianity. It is developed by the people who work in the garden every day or taking care of their pigs and attempt to understand what the *ogai* are up to as the people watch the *ogai* come and go to this region. As it was shown, this theology is home-grown and indigenous one. The fact that this theological view was indigenous, became a weapon of the *ogai* to attack the local theologians. But as shown in this study, this direct confrontation has made the people to express their views more explicitly.

b This theology is dynamic

While the basic framework remains the same, this theology has been always in the process of change. This is a theology in which new ideas are spontane-

ously incorporated, the old ones are discarded or modified, and new ones are invented in the midst of change and encounter with the powerful establishment of the *ogai*. The people's values, ideals and aspirations change as their culture changes which in turn shape their politico-religious discourses.

c. Down to earth theology

This theology concerns the people's real issues of life and death. It is a theology born and developed as the people came to grapple with existential questions such as: why such earthquakes and floods come to us at this time, why is the production of the sweet potato declining, why do we have to be subject to foreign powers which disrespect our traditions and identity. How can we live a healthy life, while maintaining a right relationship with other members of the community or with the community of the spirit beings. What is God doing up there when we are overshadowed by the fear of sorcery and witchcraft; or the rumor and fear of headhunting sacrifice is so prevalent. Are the spirits of the dead going to intervene to halt this development and change for the better?

d. The local history as point of departure

As can be seen from the presentation in the previous chapter, this theological discourse started from their assumption that God has been communicating with their ancestors in their tribal history long before the *ogai* came to this region. It attempts to place the activity of God in the context of their tradition and history. For this reason when I came to talk to the leader of the *Wege* community in the Kamu Valley in September 1992, he told me not to go to the country of the *ogai* to learn about God and salvation. Stay here, I will teach you, because God is here, you do not need to go to the country of the *ogai*, he said. He also told me not to follow the footsteps of the other local Church leaders who had been following the *ogai* in opposing them. Because he said that they are the hands and feet of the *ogai*; as they continue to preach the religion of the *ogai* (DK, September 1, 1992).

Another argument made based on this assumption is that all tribes or nations has its own God, Jesus, the female deity, etc. Therefore Christianity is the religion of the *ogai* with their own deities which they try to hide from the local people and from which they obtain their material goods. The *ogai* are hard-hearted people charged with the task of conquering the world, extending their interests to all corners of the earth (see previous chapters). The missionary is seen as going out to uprooting the indigenous peoples of its cultural roots by teaching them to disrespect their traditions. Basing their argument on the such views, the *Wege Bage* from my tribe equated Christianity with the *ogai*'s cultural views to which the *ogai* have attempted to get the people con-

verted to. The church of which I belong to has been accused by these indigenous theologians for acting as mouth pieces of the *ogai*.

This study is done in the awareness of this kind of critic from the people. Partly, I guess the reason why the people link Christianity with the *ogai* is due to the failure of the messengers of Christianity to disassociate their culture and tradition from the Bible which they came to preach.

e. Apologetical discourse

On the basis of the above point of view the people develop a theology to defend their views by reaffirming their identity and their traditions. Finding themselves in the midst of a strong opposition, the religious views expressed was self-defensive theology against new settlers and their interests. A new theological consciousness was born. This religious view was born unplanned. It was spontaneously expressed and in the later development their theological argument become weapons against those who were in power. The local theological discourse served as arrows aiming at the parties who undermine local aspirations.

f. Does it work? theology

The Indigenous theologians of this region continuously integrate new religious ideas into the existing one. The only question the people ask as criteria to be integrated to the local theological language is: does it work? Will such idea help bring in a better life here on earth?. This is in contrast to the Church which prefers to ask the different question 'Is it Biblical?' before it can be approved. One can imagine the difference between these two criteria used and the end result of the theology. One operates in a more highly fixed and structured framework while the other is in constant movement.

g. Transformation of history

This theology is also concerned with the transformation of the society. The people in general view that such change would take place through spiritual means. Zakheus and his communities on the other hand seemed to have entertained the idea that unless the people are actively engaged in the process of transformation, the total transformation as expected would not take place. This can be seen from the village community development program in which he instructed his communities to plant and grow vegetables or coffee to enable them to earn the Dutch guilders or to establish clean village settlements. The point here is that this program had some thing to do with the people's socio-religious motif of transformation of the world.

i. Uncritical toward its religious views

Another feature of this indigenous religious discourse is that the *Wege Bage* who invent the indigenous religious beliefs are not critical toward their own views. The *Wege Bage* tend to claim that only they who had access to truth. But by not being critical toward their own religious aspirations the *Wege* people make the same mistake we—the *ogai*—had been making in claiming that only we who had a real vision of the world and history. This theological feature is I guess the weak point of this religious discourse.

Looking at these theological features one should wonder whether the church can remain anti-*Wege Mana*. Because whether one likes or not the church will be forced to address such concerns. Unless the church commits itself to take them seriously it will rightly be seen as the church of the *ogai* or ‘the hand and feet of the *ogai*’. Through this openness hopefully the church will learn from the *Wege Bage* and hopefully they from the church/us. This is possible only when we give up our confrontation approach and find a more acceptable way. I have stressed the respect and recognition of the *Wege Bage*’s theological views; because I find their theological views to be original and authentic in spite of their uncritical attitudes toward their own views.

6.3.1.3 *Theology of the village church goers*

The third reason why I stress the need for dialogue and tolerance is that the village church-goers share the same theological views of the *Wege Bage* as presented in the previous section.

The idea that the church has been anti-*Wege Mana* as shown above seems to give an impression that the church has not been developing their own indigenous Christian theological discourse. Or the church has been copying Western missionaries’ theological views. This may be true in the leadership and at the institutional level. Simply because the people at the village level try to make their own theologies in the light of their encounter with Christianity. The village church goers at the grass roots level integrate various religious views such as that of church and the *Wege Mana* which are prevalent. They do so to meet their socio-psychological needs in the midst of changes. There is no one church goer at the village level who is immune to other religious views. In the people’s mind both Christian and non-Christian elements co-exists. Even those of us—the church’s leaders—agree at certain points with the theological views of the *Wege Bage*. There is nothing wrong with this. The simple reason is that our understanding of Christianity is shaped by our upbringing and personal and cultural aspirations.

In other words, religious and theological views of the *Wege Bage* and the village goers are the same. The only difference is that among the church goers,

such indigenous religious discourses are developed in the light of their interaction with the Christian Bible. There is a room for the church goers to develop a more critical theological discourses as the church continue to preach the Christian Bible. Weekly Bible studies in the local congregations were well-attended. There is no other cultural activity which draws the people attention. So the opportunity to hear Christian teaching is abundant at the village level which would enable the people to reflect their daily experience in the light of Biblical teachings. This critical reflection is lacking in the theological discourse of the *Wege Bage*. In this respect village church goers and Christianity can contribute such critical dimension in the development of indigenous theological views. It is at this village level that I find a hope for developing an Indigenous Christian theology. I discovered that the real Christian Indigenous theology is being formulated and developed at the various village churches. This is a good sign and it is hoped that the Church will encourage this development, by creating an atmosphere of openness to the ordinary people's spiritual experience. There is a good reason to make ways to be more accommodating in our approach to the people who disagree with us, because church goers at the village level had been in dialogue with the views of those who are anti *ogai*.

6.3.1.4 *A more critical approach to the Christian Bible*

The third reason why the dialogue is necessary is that both the church and the *Wege Bage* employ the wrong approach to the Christian Bible. Both use the Christian Bible mainly as a source of inspirations of their beliefs and practices. If they take it also critic and source of transformation of their self-centered aspirations and belief they will come to the same ground.

The following considerations shows that the church and the *Wege Bage* can be open to each other by taking the Christian Scripture not only as source of religious ideas but also as a source of transformation and critique of their own cultural and religious views.

a Theological reason

Let us see what the Christian Bible says about its nature and its task. All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting. 2 Timothy 3:16. Reading this Christian Biblical text one can approach the Bible from several inter-related perspectives.

1 Christian Bible as source of Christian religious aspirations

Christian Bible becomes the basis and source from which humanity can draw moral religious/moral teachings. The people can turn to the Bible

for inspiration and religious assurance in the midst of uncertainty, and meaning for the people who find their life empty and meaningless.

2. Source of moral critic

The Christian Bible can be seen also as a source of critic of non-Christian and Christian beliefs and practice. It tells us to be critical of our own cultural and religious views before we go on judging others. The Bible says,

Do not judge others, so that God will not judge you, for God will judge you in the same way you judge others, and he will apply to you the same rules you apply to others. Why then do you look at the speck in your brothers eye and pay no attention to the log in your brother's eye and pay no attention to the log in your eye? How dare you say to your brother, let me take that speck out of your eye' when you have a log in your own eye? (Matthew 7: 1-4, TEV).

This instruction make us realize that all human beings are the same: judgmental most of the time to others whom we see as heathens or syncretists and uncivilized, etc. who are inclined to mix God's truth with our own truths. This applies also to the *Wege Bage* and others who are critical toward Christianity.

3. Christian Bible as source of transformation

From the text above the Christian Bible can be seen also as source of transformation which questions our self-centered religious aspirations; and challenges us to work on religious views which transcend our culturally biased values. The Bible brings our minds and thoughts to a life beyond the limit of our religious and political aspirations to God who is the source of all life.

b. Practical and reconciliatory reason

Another reason why I have taken Christian Scripture as a starting point for dialogue is a practical reason in my attempt to find a solution to an unending theological conflict in the region. In the past both the church or the *ogai* and the *Wege Bage* have accepted it as the word of God and have attempted to use the Christian Bible to justify their religious/theological views and programs. Having taking the Christian Bible as source of their teachings, the two parties has exploited it and attacked each other which has resulted in an ongoing theological tensions between the two groups. This conflict came because I guess we have adopted a wrong approach to the Bible. Both groups take the

Bible only as a source of inspiration for their programs. The leaders of both groups continue to preach the tradition of their group by using the Christian Bible as their point of reference and failed to see the same Bible's demand to bring their tradition under its critical scrutiny. By taking such approach to Christian Bible, it is hoped that a better relationship between the two parties will be developed.

c. Cultural consideration

Another concern why this theological consideration is essential is the fact that the inherent limitation of all cultural and theological discourses. All politico-religious or theological views are born out of specific cultural context and formulated to meet certain needs of specific groups of people, propagated and defended by certain few to justify and to protect their vested interests. Unless there is a religious norm which can be used as a common point of reference, politico-religious conflict can go on. This fact has led me to take Christian Bible as meta-religious norm which transcend all other rules of conduct. I have felt the Christian Bible can liberate all people groups to go beyond their locally formulated theological views and transcend them by taking a more critical approach to Scripture and listening one another and recognizing other's religious rights to follow or chose the religion of their choice.

d. Socio-religious integration

I have also taken the Christian Bible seriously in my interviews with the leaders of the *Wege Bage* of the Kamu Valley because, for example, I view that it can provide moral support for socio-religious integration to the rest of the world.

1. Christianity which drew its theological aspirations from the Christian Bible is a world religion. This is a historical fact which can not be denied. As such, the tribal people such as the Me of the Paniai region and other tribal groups cannot help but to respond to it and take Christianity seriously as they come to inter-act with other tribal groups and nations who have in one way or another been influenced by Christian values.

2. This world religion—Christianity—has been planted in our soil since 1939. It has been present in this region and has shaped our religious history. This is a historical reality. Thanks to the *ogai* who brought it—in spite of their cultural baggage they attached to it; we do not need to travel a far to take it. Jesus Christ has been now knocking at our doors since the 1930s, the decade the Western missionaries came to this region; just as he

has been constantly knocking at the cultural doors of other tribes including that of the *ogai* in the West.

3. Christianity then become common point of reference and critique. Christianity then become a bridge for an inter-cultural contact and dialogue with the people of other cultures; while at the same time help the people maintain their identity and its critical attitudes towards the *ogai* and their own aspirations.

I have viewed Christian Bible as essential ingredients in developing an authentic critical reflection and open dialogue between the church and the *Wege Bage* for the reasons stated above. It is assumed that if both *Wege Bage* and the church can approach the Bible not only as the source their teachings but also as a social and moral critic and a source of transformation of their views, their understanding of themselves and their relationship would be improved. For us in the church, it means that we examine the doctrines, and traditions which has been passed on from the missionaries in the past and examine them critically in light of the teachings of the Holy Scripture and the need of our day.

I have shown several considerations why the confrontation strategy toward local theological or political views has to be abandoned. The simple reason behind this proposal is that such confrontation does not take the right of others to follow the religion they chose to follow. I have made this study with this agenda in mind.

Outline of the life of Zakheus Pakage

1920 (?)
Zakheus' birth

May 1943
The Japanese forces arrived in the Paniai region and Zakheus joined the Oak-tree Party and left Enarotali

July 1944
Zakheus and the Oaktree Party arrived in Australia

August 1946
Zakheus entered the theological school in Makassar, South Celebes, Indonesia

August 1950
Zakheus returned to Enarotali, Paniai region.

September-October 1950
Zakheus made a missionary trip to the Moni tribe

October 1950
Zakheus settled in Yibagouyoweta, Tigi district

January 1951
The Reverend Paksoal arrived in Tigi to help the work already started by Zakheus and yet the Me people accused him of making false reports about Zakheus

February 1951
The government officer arrested Zakheus and warned him not to continue his programs

April 1951
Mass conversion: the birth of the *Wege Bage* communities

July 1951

Zakheus was arrested again and chained for 24 hours

September 1951

Rumors that Jordan, Zakheus' brother burnt the people's homes and destroyed their properties became prevalent

September-October 1951

Zakheus was rearrested and released several days later

October 1951

The Dutch Police Commissioner from Hollandia (Jayapura) visited the Paniai region to review Zakheus case

November 1951

Rumors that Zakheus was teaching that a big fire from the upperworld would destroy the world became prevalent

January 1952

Jordan, Zakheus' brother was arrested

February 1952

The missionaries reported that Zakheus had gone mad

February-March 1952

Zakheus spent days of fasting and prayer in a cemetery in Enarotali

March 1952

Zakheus was excommunicated from the church and from the *ogai*

April 1952

Zakheus was officially declared as mentally ill and sent to the mental clinic in Hollandia Binnen (Abepura-today)

April 1952-1957

Zakheus in the mental clinic in Hollandia Binnen (Abepura)

March-April 1958

Zakheus visited the Paniai region

May 1958

Zakheus was forced to return to the coast, Sentani (Jayapura)

May 1958-September 1960

Zakheus worked for the Reverend Mickelson in Sentani

1960-1963

The years of the rapid growth of Zakheus' communities

January-March 1963

Zakheus visited the Paniai region and attempted to take over the church and the government institutions in the Paniai region

April 1964

Zakheus was forced to go back to Sentani again

January 1970

Zakheus died in Sentani

Some notes on the orthography of the Me/Ekagi language

Firstly, two concepts in the title should be explained: orthography and the 'Me/Ekagi language'. Orthography is the science of how to write according to the rules; in short, the way words are spelled. 'Me/Ekagi language' presupposes that language of that name exists. When we compare this language with the languages of the tribes in the area, we must conclude that the Me/Ekagi language really exists. But when we compare the way in which the language is used in each area, then we must conclude that the language as such does not exist, rather there are only regional dialects of the Me/Ekagi language.

To what extent does the use of the language differ in the one area from the other? This difference concerns the pronunciation of certain consonants. For example the word for 'arrow' is *mapega*, but it can also be *mapeda*.¹ Besides the difference in the use of consonants, the vowel <o> and <u> can also be interchanged. Furthermore every dialect contains words which are used less or not at all in the everyday usage of other dialects.²

In general, the verb plays an important role. The verb is conjugated: the suffix changes according to the identity of the subject (e.g. I, he, they) and the number of the subject (one, two or more than two), and also according to the time (present or past). For this aspect also there is no uniformity (e.g. instead of the form 'sedang' *uweete*³, which is common in Paniai-Tigi the form *uweena* is used in (Kamu) - *Mapia*.⁴ In the different areas there also a difference in the choice of the last component in a series of two or three verbs which form a compound (e.g. *-yaawii* and *-egai*).

More important than the synchronic language differences between the different areas are the diachronic language—the differences between the youn-

¹ What is striking here is the use of the letter <s> and/or <h> in the Mapia area, which is unknown in the other areas. There the sounds <s> and/or <h> are replaced by the sound <y>, which in turn is unknown in the Mapia area.

² Yet in general word of another dialect are understood in other areas and, for example, used in literary language as synonyms.

³ *Sedang*: engaged in, still.

⁴ The concept of the near future is unknown in Mapia; *uwuta* is used for the near future as well as the future at a greater distance of time.

ger and older generation, which become greater as the time passes. The younger generation has the tendency to adapt the Me/Ekagi language to Indonesian. They introduce new words, give a new meaning to existing words and simplify the original construction and conjugation of verbs. In addition it appears that the younger generation easily switches to the Indonesian spelling of the Me/Ekagi words. How can we take into consideration the synchronic and diachronic difference in the spelling if there is the tendency to adapt it to the Indonesian spelling?

The spelling of the Me/Ekagi language

The aim is to develop a spelling method which can be easily learned or studied and used by the writer, but which at the same time avoids misunderstanding.

Those in whose interest it is to be able to read and write Indonesian, use the letters of the Indonesian language for this purpose. This means that, since the sound <dj> is written as <j> in Indonesian and the sound <j> with the letter <y>, in the Me/Ekagi language the sound <j> is also written as <y>. Moreover this is the spelling method which is used in the region.

In Indonesian—except for the prefixes and suffixes of the verb forms (memper ... kan etc) and prefixes and suffixes of personal and possessive pronouns (*kutanya* = I ask, *kata-katanya* = he or she says)—elements of a group are written visually separate, from each other with a hyphen ‘-’ even though it is clear that there is an auditory link between the elements. The rules which are used in Indonesian to connect words with each other and to distinguish words from each other can easily be adopted as guidelines for the spelling of Me/Ekagi language.⁵

Clearly a good spelling system is not to be found simply by imitating the spelling system which has been created for another language. A good spelling system is one which suits the typical character of the Me/Ekagi language—which in actual fact consists only of regional dialects. Therefore, when there are no sound which correspond to Indonesian sounds, then we have adopted a phonetic spelling. For example, in Indonesian all vowel have the same sound, while in the Me/Ekagi language there is difference in the pronunciation, namely long/short and a difference in tone: <o>, <oo> and <ou>. This is essential to distinguish between words (e.g. *kugo*, *kugoo kai*, *kugou*). Thus the spelling of the Me/Ekagi language originates from the Indonesian spelling and, where necessary, the phonetic spelling.

⁵ Therefore I write ‘Koyeidabaya ma kodo’ and not ‘Koyeidaba ya makodo’; and therefore I write ‘kouda make ko’ even though these words are pronounced as ‘koudamakeko’ (compare: *setelah itu/setelahitu*).

Individual characteristics of the Me/Ekagi language

Theoretically we can distinguish four elements, which determine that a particular sound or group of sound is a word with a specific meaning. The first element is the quality of the sound; the second the quantity of the short or extended sound; the third element is the tone (high or low) and the fourth is the stress. In short, the elements quality and quantity are studied in combination with each other and subsequently the elements tone and stress.

Concerning the quality, in general, the sound of the consonant in the Me/Ekagi language is similar enough to the sound in Indonesian that the Indonesian spelling can be used for Me/Ekagi. Not all of the consonants which are used in Indonesian are used Me/Ekagi, only eleven: b and p, t and d, k and g, w and y, m and n, and/or <y> or <h> or <s>.

A special consonant in the Me/Ekagi language is the one which is usually written as <g>, although it is pronounced differently than <g> in Indonesian; but, at the same time, although they sometimes sound like each other, is not the same as <r>, <l> or <k>. In the Me/Ekagi language all consonants are pronounced equally long or short, therefore the problem of quantity is of no significance.

However the five vowel which are commonly used (a, e, i, o, u) are a different case. Unlike Indonesian, the five vowels can be long vowels in certain cases, without a change in timbre. According to the phonetic spelling system the vowels concerned are then doubled: ii, ee, aa, oo, and uu. Besides the word *ena* (een) there is also the word *enaa* (goed); besides *iyē* (leaf) there is also *iyee* (habit); besides *iyō* (hair) the word *iyoo* (seedling). When we know that *mana-tai* means 'speak' and *manaa-tai* means 'call' then it is obvious that this difference in meaning must be clearly indicated by a difference in spelling, thus that the reader should not misunderstand the meaning.

Finally there are five diphthongs: ei, ai, au, eu, ou, which are not used in Indonesian. Phonetically the sound 'ei' is pronounced approximately as the sound in May-day in English; the sound 'ou' is pronounced 'bone' or 'lone' in English.

Still to be considered are the elements of tone and stress. What we mean by tone is the high or low sounding pronunciation of a word or group of words. We differentiate in the tone of voice: high - mezzo - low. For example *ena* (een): mezzo-low, *gaaga* (my opinion is): mezzo-low. In general the stress corresponds to the highest tone. This difference is clear if we compare the nouns *uwo* (water) and *uwo* (top) or the verbs *wigii tai* (to feel) and *wigii tai* (to surface). Although these differences are important and tone and stress can be explained as in the examples above, in everyday spelling these differences are made clear, because it is too much trouble; the writers would undoubtedly neglect to use the symbols.

Morphology

In conclusion it should be mentioned that in the Me/Ekagi language two consonants never stand beside one another; there is always a vowel in between. Consequently strange words such as pastor are changed to *patoga*, sister becomes *tutege*. Two word or one word with prefix or suffix are conveniently combined into one new word. When three vowel appear after each other, the middle vowel disappears and the two remaining vowel join into one sound according to certain rules which people use constantly (however unconsciously). For example, *kedei + ido* (those mice) > *kede + ido* > *kedeido*, but *owaa + epa* (to our house) > *owa + epa* > *owaapa*. On the other hand the word *wagitaida* is the result of the combination of the word *wagita* and the suffix *-ida*; the word *waatouga* is the result of the combination of the word *woo*—which denotes place—and the suffix *-ato* > *waato*, together with the suffix *-iga* (*woo + ato + iga*) > *waatouga*.

SAMENVATTING

Zakheus Pakage en zijn gemeenschappen Inheems religieuze discours, sociaal-politiek verzet en ethnohistorie onder de Me van Irian Jaya

De literatuur over de kerstening van volken van het Centrale bergland van Irian Jaya, geschreven door de *ogai*, suggereert dat kerstening voornamelijk door zendelingen en missionarissen is bewerkstelligd (*ogai* is een Me woord dat verwijst naar Euroamericanen en Indonesiërs, maar ook naar lokale bewoners die met hen geassocieerd worden). De lokale bevolking zou bij die kerstening geen rol van betekenis hebben gespeeld en de inheemse samenlevingen zouden westerse, Christelijke denkbeelden tamelijk automatisch hebben overgenomen en geïntegreerd.

De mensen die in de loop van de tijd de leiding op zich hebben genomen van de inheemse kerken in het centrale bergland zien dat echter anders. In hun ogen waren sommige leiders sleutelpersonen die een essentiële rol hebben gespeeld in het leggen van de fundering voor de opbouw van een inheemse kerk. De lokale leiders zien zichzelf niet alleen als pioniers van missie en zending, zij formuleerden ook hun eigen versie van het Christendom, in termen van hun eigen sociaal-religieuze denkbeelden. Aldus legden zij de basis voor een inheemse theologie. Deze mensen lazen de bijbel en gebruikten religieuze symbolen daaruit om hun eigen theologie te ontwikkelen.

In deze studie wordt het leven en het werk beschreven van een van die pioniers: Zakheus Pakage. Zakheus (ca 1920-1970) was een religieus leider die met het Christendom had kennisgemaakt bij de zending, die zijn eigen versie daarvan had gemaakt en die had gepredikt onder de diverse volken van Paniai, het westelijke centrale bergland van Irian Jaya.

Tot 1950 hadden deze volken zich over het algemeen tegen de *ogai* en hun bekeringsbeleid verzet. Maar toen Zakheus actief werd vond een drastische verandering plaats in de houding van de mensen. In grote getale kwamen de mensen naar hem toe, om hun wens te uiten zijn lessen te volgen. Hij instrueerde hen om nieuwe, Christelijke dorpen te stichten, die bekend raakten als *Wege Bage*, of *Wege* gemeenschappen (*wege*, leer van Zakheus).

Voor de Me zijn er vier redenen om Zakheus als een sleutelfiguur in hun religieuze geschiedenis te zien. Zakheus was, allereerst, een man van twee werelden: de wereld van de *ogai*, en de wereld van de Me. Op een cruciaal moment was zijn rol die van een bemiddelaar tussen twee culturen. Hij bood

een vergelijk tussen twee culturen aan. In de tweede plaats wordt Zakheus gezien als een pionier op het gebied van 'community development'. Hij introduceerde een programma om schone en gezonde dorpen te bouwen dat later werd overgenomen door overheids- en niet-overheidsorganisaties. In de derde plaats is Zakheus in de ogen van velen een nationale held die de Me trachtte te mobiliseren om de buitenlandse, koloniale machten te verdrijven die de inheemse politieke en religieuze aspiraties dwarsboonden. Volgens hen was Zakheus' nationalisme ontwaakt toen hij in Makassar Indonesische strijders de onafhankelijkheid van hun land zag verdedigen tegen de Nederlanders. In de vierde plaats is Zakheus een zegsman van een inheemse theologie. Hij verscheen in de koloniale periode op het toneel, op een moment dat kerstening gezien werd als het overdragen van westelijke, Christelijke denkbeelden op de verschillende volken. Zakheus daagde die visie uit, door het Christendom te zien in termen van zijn eigen culturele achtergrond.

In deze studie worden het leven en het werk van Zakheus beschreven, en de geboorte en ontwikkeling van de *Wege* gemeenschappen, alsmede de religieuze denkbeelden die de Me ertoe brachten met hem samen te werken in de door hem geformuleerde programma's. De belangrijkste vragen die aan deze studie ten grondslag liggen zijn: 1) onder welke omstandigheden leefden de *Wege Bage* mensen? 2) wat motiveerde de Me om deel te nemen aan Zakheus' plannen? 3) wat wilde Zakheus met zijn activiteiten bereiken?

In de inleiding komen aan de orde de vraagstelling van deze studie en de betekenis daarvan, de problemen en methoden van onderzoek, en de bronnen. Het tweede hoofdstuk bevat enkele summier e etnografische gegevens betreffende de Me. In hoofdstuk 3 wordt de socio-historische en politieke context beschreven waarin Zakheus als leider naar voren kwam. Dit hoofdstuk bevat ook een beschrijving van de geschiedenis van het contact met de westerse wereld, en van de uit dat contact voortkomende veranderingen en conflicten tussen twee culturen.

Hoofdstuk 4 bevat een beschouwing over Zakheus en *Wege Bage* vanuit een historisch perspectief. Aan de orde komen de biografie van Zakheus, zijn familie achtergrond, zijn reis naar Australië en zijn theologische training in Makassar, en de periode van prediken onder de Moni en de Me. In dit hoofdstuk komen ook aan de orde de reacties van de Me, de geboorte van Zakheus' gemeenschappen en hun strijd om te overleven - en daarmee de weerstand die deze gemeenschappen opriepen. Van belang is het voortbestaan van Zakheus' denkbeelden ook in de Indonesische periode: de socio-economische en politieke crises droegen bij tot het opstaan van nieuwe leiders die hun millenaristische denkbeelden baseerden op die van Zakheus.

Hoofdstuk 5 handelt over de *Wege Bage* denkbeelden zelf, zoals de Me percepties van God, Bijbel, redding, Jezus Christus, en eschatologie. Volgens *Wege Bage* waren deze (Christelijke) denkbeelden al aanwezig in inheemse opvattingen, in gebeden en in mythen en legenden. In de context van interactie

met de *ogai* ontwikkelden de *Wege* mensen hun opvattingen omtrent God en heil - op basis van hun oorspronkelijke religieuze noties. Aldus ontstond een inheems religieus discours. De oppositie van de zijde van de *ogai* was gebaseerd op de andere betekenissen die de *Bage* mensen hechtten aan Christelijke thema's. Als gevolg daarvan werd Zakheus door de *ogai* als valse profeet gebrandmerkt. Het beleid van tegenwerking bewerkstelligde het tegendeel: het moedigde de mensen aan hun denkbeelden expliciet te maken.

Hoofdstuk 6 bestaat uit drie delen. In het eerste deel wordt teruggekomen op de vragen die in Hoofdstuk 1 werden geformuleerd. Religie wordt hier opgevat als een dynamisch aspect van de menselijke cultuur dat deel uitmaakt van de sociaal-historische omstandigheden waarin mensen leven. Zakheus zienswijzen vormen een herformulering van traditionele opvattingen en mythen in een situatie van economische en politieke verandering. De motivatie van mensen om deel te hebben aan Zakheus gemeenschappen was hun overtuiging dat hij hun oorspronkelijke geloofsopvattingen tot nieuw leven bracht. Zakheus werd bovendien gezien als een man die in staat zou zijn de *ogai* te verdrijven ten gunste van politieke en culturele autonomie van de *Me*. Zakheus programma bevorderde herstel van geloof in eigen geschiedenis van clans, van oorlogen, van oorsprongen, en een nieuw vertrouwen in een eigen identiteit van de *Me* dat was ondermijnd door de komst van de *ogai*.

Het tweede deel schetst in het kort terreinen van verder onderzoek. Het derde deel, tenslotte, bevat een pleidooi voor tolerantie en dialoog en voor erkenning van de politieke en religieuze opvattingen van mensen.

Dit onderzoek is verricht vanuit een specifiek gezichtspunt dat niet onvermeld mag blijven: de beschreven gebeurtenissen zijn vervlochten met mijn eigen levensloop. In de eerste plaats waren mijn ouders en de bewoners van mijn geboortedorp direct betrokken bij het werk van Zakheus Pakage. In dit opzicht gaat deze studie over de religieuze geschiedenis van mijn eigen gemeenschap - en van mijzelf. In de tweede plaats neem ik de theologische gezichtspunten van de mensen serieus. Hoewel ik - als predikant - een Christelijke boodschap heb, ben ik van oordeel dat mensen zoals Zakheus en de leden van zijn gemeenschappen een belangrijke bijdrage leveren tot de ontwikkeling van een inheemse vorm van Christendom. In de derde plaats ben ik ervan overtuigd dat Zakheus geen uitzondering is maar een representant van velen zoals hij, in andere tribale groepen in Irian Jaya en elders, die evenals de *Me*, het slachtoffer zijn geworden van moderne, agressieve ontwikkelingen. In Paniai, tenslotte, werden *Wege Bage* dorpen door de *ogai* in brand gestoken en werden de gelovigen gevangen gezet. Zakheus belandde in een psychiatrische inrichting. Ik heb geprobeerd hun woede en hun angst te begrijpen en mee te delen. Dit boek is daarom tevens een pleidooi voor een toleranter benadering van politieke en religieuze opvattingen van tribale groepen in Indonesië en in de wereld.

RINGKASAN

Zakheus Pakage dan komunitas-komunitasnya

Wacana agama pribumi, gugatan sosio-politik dan etnohistori suku bangsa Me/Ekagi, Irian Jaya

Kepustakaan tentang penyiaran agama Kristen di Pegunungan Tengah Irian Jaya, hingga dewasa ini ditulis oleh *ogai* - penyiar agama berkebangsaan Barat dan atau orang dari luar Irian Jaya. Karena itu tidaklah mengherankan apabila karya tulis tersebut memberi kesan bahwa 1) kegiatan Kristenisasi kepada kelompok-kelompok suku di kawasan ini dilaksanakan terutama oleh *ogai*. Masyarakat pribumi sendiri tidak atau kurang berperan dalam kegiatan tersebut. (2) Penduduk setempat secara langsung mengambil alih dogma dan aliran kepercayaan yang disiarkan penyiar agama tadi.

Penelitian ini dibuat dari sudut pandang orang pribumi dan bukan dari pihak *ogai*. Berbeda dengan pandangan *ogai* diatas, jemaat-jemaat Kristen yang tersebar di Pegunungan Tengah Irian Jaya memandang tokoh masyarakat dan pemimpin gereja setempat sebagai 'Bapak-Bapak Gereja'. Warga jemaat-jemaat tadi mengakui inisiatif perintis-perintis gereja setempat dalam menjemput Kabar Gembira itu dari pos, tempat kediaman *ogai* tadi, dan mengantarkannya ke tempat mereka dan atau membawanya ke tempat pemukiman kelompok suku lain di lembah-lembah yang sulit untuk dijangkau. Dari sisi teologi, perintis gereja pribumi juga merumuskan Kekristenan itu sesuai dengan aspirasi dan kerangka berpikir sosial-keagamaan dari kelompok masyarakatnya. Perintis-perintis ini menemukan cerita-cerita dalam Kitab Suci, lambang-lambang serta konsep-konsep agama Yahudi dan menggunakannya untuk memperkuat pandangan teologisnya. Selain itu mereka juga memanfaatkannya untuk mengungkapkan orientasi keagamaan mereka. Dengan demikian mereka meletakkan dasar bagi pengembangan teologi pribumi. Hal ini dibuktikan oleh karya dan pandangan Zakheus Pakage yang menjadi pokok pembahasan dalam studi ini.

Hingga tahun 1950 masyarakat suku Me secara umum menolak *ogai* dan semua bentuk kebijakannya. Tetapi keadaan ini berubah pada saat Zakheus kembali dari Makassar dalam bulan Agustus 1950. Masyarakat secara kelompok datang kepadanya lalu menyatakan keinginannya untuk mengikuti ajarannya. Zakheus kemudian mengajar mereka untuk membentuk 'kamp-pung-kampung Kristen' yang oleh *ogai* dan penantanganya disebut *Wege Bage*

yang berarti 'orang-orang yang mengganggu dan merusak tata kehidupan masyarakat'.

Studi ini membahas kehidupan dan karya Zakheus Pakage, lahirnya *Wege Bage* dan sejarah perkembangannya; pandangan teologis yang melatar-belakangi kegiatan *Wege Bage* dan yang mendorong masyarakat untuk ikut berperan serta dalam kegiatan *Wege Bage*. Studi ini juga menggambarkan perlawanan dan tantangan yang dihadapi Zakheus dan *Wege Bage*. Masalah-masalah pokok yang dibicarakan dalam studi ini ialah 1) Dalam kondisi yang bagaimana Zakheus dan *Wege Bage* berkarya dan melaksanakan programnya; 2) Faktor-faktor apa yang mendorong masyarakat berperan serta dalam kegiatan *Wege Bage*; 3) Apa yang menjadi agenda dari *Wege Bage*, dan 4) Apa yang ingin dicapai Zakheus melalui kegiatannya?

Ada 4 hal yang mendorong saya melakukan studi tentang peran Zakheus yang menyebabkan ia dikenang masyarakat sebagai seorang tokoh sejarah yang amat penting dan amat berpengaruh adalah:

Pertama, Zakheus dikenal sebagai penyanggah dua kebudayaan yaitu lokal dan modern. Kedua kebudayaan tersebut pada saat itu masing-masing tengah mempertahankan keberadaannya. Zakheus muncul sebagai seorang tokoh 'penengah' dan berhasil mengatasi pertentangan tersebut. Ia menawarkan kompromi. Ia beranggapan bahwa kehidupan baru dapat dibangun diatas fondasi yang lama.

Kedua, dilihat dari aspek pembangunan yang dilaksanakan dewasa ini, program yang dikemukakan Zakheus pada awal 1950an pada dasarnya bercorak 'Pembangunan Masyarakat Desa' seperti yang dilaksanakan oleh pihak pemerintah dan LSM dewasa ini. Apabila menyelidiki upayanya untuk membangun komunitas-komunitas Kristen yang sehat dan bersih, di kawasan Paniai, maka Zakheus dapat dipandang sebagai seorang tokoh 'perintis' Pembangunan Masyarakat Desa.

Ketiga, Zakheus juga diakui sebagai seorang pejuang pembebasan. Dari sisi politik, bagi banyak orang Me dan pemerintah Belanda pada tahun 1950an, Zakheus ialah seorang tokoh nasionalis. Karena katanya Zakheus telah menyaksikan perjuangan bangsa Indonesia mempertahankan kemerdekaan dari Belanda, pada tahun 1945 sampai dengan 1950 pada saat ia mengikuti pendidikan teologi di Makassar. Sekembalinya ke Paniai, Zakheus memulai gerakan penyadaran untuk menghalau penjajah Belanda dan mempertahankan otonomi sosio-politik dan keagamaan di kawasan ini. Berdasarkan kegiatan tersebut pejabat pemerintah Belanda di kawasan Paniai menyeret Zakheus ke penjara.

Keempat, dari sudut perkembangan teologi, studi inipun sangat penting karena Zakheus bertindak sebagai 'penyuar' teologi pribumi. Pada tahun 1950an di jaman kolonial Kristenisasi dipandang sebagai upaya mentransfer pandangan agama dari Barat ke Timur, Zakheus dengan gigih menantang kecendrungan ini. Bertolak dari pandangan hidupnya dan sejarah lokalnya

Zakheus mencoba melihat injil melalui pola pikir sukunya. Upaya Zakheus ini dicap oleh pihak *ogai* sebagai 'ajaran sesat' atau pemberontak, akhirnya ia keluar masuk penjara. Karena itu, studi ini dibuat karena dianggap penting untuk diketahui.

Tesis ini terdiri dari 6 bab. Bab Pendahuluan pada pokoknya akan membahas latar belakang; masalah penelitian dan metode pendekatan yang dipakai; pentingnya studi ini, sumber data dan permasalahan yang dihadapi dalam penelitian dan urutan pembahasan penelitian ini.

Bab 2, memuat catatan ringkas etnografis. Bab ini secara ringkas memberi gambaran tentang kehidupan orang Me sebelum kontak dengan dunia luar. Bab 3, menyoroti konteks socio-historis dan perkembangan politik; dan konflik yang terjadi sebagai akibat dari pertemuan dua kebudayaan antara *ogai* dan local. Bab 4 membahas sisi sejarah dari Zakheus dan *Wege Bage* serta pertumbuhan komunitasnya. Disini akan ditonjolkan perjuangan Zakheus dan komunitasnya dalam mempertahankan eksistensinya di tengah-tengah penolakan dan perlawanan dari *ogai*. Situasi ini sangat penting karena konteks perlawanan ini mewarnai argumentasi keagamaannya mereka. Bab 3 dan 4 berupaya menjawab salah satu pertanyaan yang diangkat dalam studi ini yang telah disebutkan di atas: Dalam keadaan apa Zakheus dan komunitasnya hidup dan melaksanakan programnya.

Bab 5 secara khusus membahas pandangan religi yang menjadi sumber inspirasi bagi orang Me dan *Wege Bage* sehingga mereka bersedia dan secara giat terlibat dalam programnya Zakheus. Pembahasan dipusatkan pada beberapa tema: Allah, Kitab Suci, Keselamatan, Kristus dan Eskatologi. Menurut *Wege Bage* motif-motif keagamaan ini telah ada dalam agama dan tradisinya sebagaimana terkandung dalam legenda, doa-doa, mitos serta cerita-cerita rakyat dalam bentuk yang sederhana dan asli. Atas dasar unsur kepercayaan yang telah ada ini masyarakat merumuskan dan mengembangkan teologi pribuminya dalam konteks interaksi dengan agama Kristen dan perlawanan dari *ogai*. Dalam proses perumusan teologi pribumi ini masyarakat memasukkan muatan lokal yang berupa simbol dan pengertian lokal kepada ke lima unsur/motif-motif KeKristenan. Akibatnya, disatu pihak pandangan yang demikian dianggap sinkrestistik dan karena itu Zakheus dan *Wege Bage* dipandang sebagai pengajar ajaran sesat, tetapi di lain pihak tindakan penolakan ini justru memperdalam dan mempertajam pandangan teologis *Wege Bage*.

Bab 6 adalah kesimpulan yang terdiri atas tiga bagian. Bagian pertama, berupaya menjawab pertanyaan yang telah dikemukakan dalam bab pendahuluan, seperti: Faktor-faktor apa yang mendorong masyarakat suku ini sehingga menerima program yang ditawarkan Zakheus?; Apakah yang ingin dicapai Zakheus melalui kegiatan-kegiatannya? Untuk menjawab pertanyaan-pertanyaan di atas saya berpendapat perlu adanya cara pendekatan yang bersifat terbuka. Ini berarti terdapat beberapa kemungkinan alasan masyarakat berse-

dia berperan serta dalam kegiatan *Wege Bage*: 1) Masyarakat memandang kegiatan Zakheus sebagai upaya penegasan dan penafsiran kembali agama pra-kontak dan mitos dalam situasi sejarah dan kebudayaan yang tengah berubah untuk memenuhi tuntutan psiko-sosial yang baru. Seperti ditunjukkan dalam Bab 3 kontak dengan kebudayaan baru meretakkan asumsi-asumsi sosial keagamaan yang telah ada. Karena itu masyarakat tengah mencari kepastian dan dasar kepercayaan yang baru pada waktu Zakheus kembali ke kampung-halamannya. Kehadiran Zakheus dengan pewartaan yang bernafaskan aturan-aturan religi yang telah dikenal masyarakat mengokohkan kembali agama pra-Kristen yang telah mulai goyah pada saat itu; 2) Aspirasi sosial-politik untuk membebaskan diri dari pengaruh dan dominasi *ogai*. Zakheus memulai kegiatannya ditengah-tengah kegagalan masyarakat menghalau *ogai* dari daerah itu. Sikap anti-*ogai* ini telah diperdalam oleh perlakuan kejam dan brutal dari pihak Jepang seperti: memaksa masyarakat untuk membawa makanan tanpa dibayar, pembakaran tempat pemukiman; pembunuhan; pemerkosaan dan penolakan terhadap adat istiadat masyarakat. Semua ini telah menimbulkan pandangan anti *ogai* yang mendalam. Keadaan ini menyebabkan masyarakat pada waktu itu melihat Zakheus sebagai tokoh atau pahlawan yang akan berhasil mengusir *ogai* dari daerah itu dan membebaskan mereka dari dominasi *ogai*; 3) Semua suku bangsa di bumi memiliki persepsi kolektif tentang masa lampaunya dan persepsi demikian mempengaruhi pandangan mereka sekarang tentang diri dan dunianya sekaligus menjadi dasar untuk membangun masa depannya. Pandangan keagamaan dan politik kelompok masyarakat itu tidak dapat dilepaskan dari sejarah masa lalu kelompok itu. Lebih jauh dapat dikatakan bahwa aspirasi kelompok untuk memelihara ingatan sejarah masa lampau kelompok itu adalah bagian dari muatan aspirasi keagamaan. Dari sisi ini *ogai* dan kebijakannya di daerah ini diterima oleh orang Me sebagai upaya menghilangkan identitas dan ingatan kolektif orang Me tentang masa lampaunya; sementara mereka didorong untuk menerima agama, aspirasi sosial politik dan sejarah kelompok *ogai*. Pandangan keagamaan dan kesediaan orang Me untuk menerima kebijakan Zakheus sangat berkaitan erat dengan keprihatinan mereka untuk mempertahankan identitas dan pandangan kolektif tentang masa lampaunya sendiri. Inilah tiga kemungkinan pertimbangan yang mendorong orang Me bersedia berperan secara aktif dalam program yang ditawarkan oleh Zakheus. Demikian juga dapat dikatakan bahwa ketiga pokok pikiran ini menjadi rencana kerja yang tersembunyi dibalik kegiatan Zakheus menyiarkan agama Kristen di kawasan Paniai.

Bagian kedua mencatat secara singkat beberapa pokok yang dapat dipertimbangkan menjadi acuan untuk penelitian di masa depan. Dan bagian terakhir dari bab kesimpulan ini memberi saran kepada pihak-pihak yang berwenang dalam transformasi kebudayaan dewasa ini untuk melaksanakan kebijakannya secara lebih toleran dan dalam spirit penghargaan hak dan pandangan sosio-religi dan politik masyarakat pribumi.

Akhirnya harus diakui, semua kegiatan akademis selalu diwarnai oleh sudut pandangan tertentu. Demikian juga studi ini disoroti dari pemahaman dan perjalanan hidup pribadi saya dalam beberapa hal. Pertama, orang tua saya dan warga kampung tempat saya dilahirkan secara giat telah melibatkan diri dalam kegiatan yang diadakan oleh Zakheus. Dari segi ini studi di atas dapat dipandang sebagai suatu studi pengalaman sosio-religi warga kampung saya, orang tua saya atau mungkin pengalaman religi saya sendiri. Kedua, saya memandang pandangan teologis *Wege Bage* sebagaimana yang dikemukakan dalam Bab 5 sebagai ungkapan teologi pribumi. Pandangan optimisme ini membuat saya lebih toleran terhadap teologi ini, walaupun saya kritis terhadap sikap *Wege Bage* yang tidak kritis terhadap pandangannya sendiri.

Studi inipun memiliki warna sendiri karena adanya pandangan bahwa Zakheus mewakili banyak suku bangsa lain di Irian Jaya dan dimana saja yang telah menjadi korban kebijakan kekuatan sosio-religi, politik dan ekonomi dari luar dengan pendekatan yang konfrontatif. Di Paniai banyak tempat pemukiman *Wege Bage* yang telah dibakar oleh *ogai* dan banyak pula warga *Wege Bage* yang melewati hidupnya di penjara. Dimasa lampau saya telah mencoba memahami kemarahan, tangisan serta keresahan mereka. Studi ini diadakan dengan tujuan untuk mengusulkan pendekatan toleran, dialog dan pengakuan hak terhadap pandangan politik religi berbagai kelompok suku di Indonesia.

DUWAMOTI

Zakheus Pakage ma Edage Bage ma Okeiya gaata ma keititaido mana

Ayii mana Paniai doko wegata mana maida make-ko ogai ka buku umina ugayake topai. Okai kou kapogeiyeyido kodo ebatitouyogo-ko mana muto wiya topai. Eitikago mana muto-ko koudani, ayii mana kouko okei ogai ka tito-tito tiyake wegata. Mee tuma ka wegata mana kodo okai kou kapogeiyeyido kodo duba amawi beu. Tiyake Mee tuma ke epaa-pa tigo ayii mana wegai-beu bukaa, okai kou ogaika ugata buku kodo ebatitouyogo-ko. Wiyago mana mutoko kou dani. Mee tuma ke okai ogaika wegata dana gaata mana kodo to wado-wado to tita. Ini mee tuma ka gaata dimi mana kodoko woyaikiyake.

Itoko ki buku kiko okai kei mana muto wiya wegaage kei peu-peu etaina beu. Kou okeiya gaata kou na makodo. Kodoya ito wagii ena naimiyake kouya, ko ini mee tuma kaa keititaido kodo ugaine. Kouko ayii mana kou ini Mee tuma ka gaata mana kodo. Zakheus Pakage ma Wege Bagee ma ka gaata mana ma keitita peititaido kodo wegaine ki buku kiko. Ogai metaida make bulan Agustus tahun 1950, to utuya ko Paniai doko bagee ogai ka mana kodo epaapa-tigo moti beu. Mee ka gaiko ogai meta kou ko mee tumaka umitou kou peu-peu yataine tiyake meete kei gaayake. Okai kouya ogai ka mana kou yaapei dimiibeu. Kodoya bulan Agustus tahun 1950 duba Zakheus meyake wako Makassar make (itoko Ujung Pandang wegaigai kodo) Sekolah mumai tiyake, mee ka dimi mana betokita. Mee umina yame yagamo Zakheus-pa meta okaiya wegata mana koto yuwine tiyake. Okai kou okapa mana yuwine meta bagee kodo Zakheus ya etopita, Sekolah ena kebayake. Ki buku kito mana muto magoo dani topai. Zakheus umitoutita mana, okaiya ekowata mana, dana Wege Bagee ka keitita peitita mana dana okeiya gaata manaido kodo.

Egaadou mana-ko, Wege Bagee umitou dana mana wegata ga kodo kawé dani situasi duba? Okei umitou dana okeiya keitita-gaa kodo peitita-gaa kodo yape duba igapu uwa dan gaga duba umitou tita beu yape beu duba dana dimi mobu duba okei mee tuma ekowata? Dana, ma dimi gayake Zakheus mana kou mee tuma Paniai doko yamoti-ta? Zakheus kidi okaiya keititaido kodo ma dimi gayake keitita? Okai kei egaado manaido keike gaipeu, kouko ki buku (ugapa) kiko okai kei egaado manaido kei okeiya gaata dimi ubateida make ugapa kouya.

Ki buku kiko amo-na gakeko pasal benumi. Edoga pasal kiko gomoti. Gomoti pasal kiko mana muto wii topai: egaado mana, yukuma wegaage

kede, wiyaago ko Zakheus ya umitou kou ito ini epikai gaipeu mana, dana Zakheus ma Wege Bagee mana kou maida make aniya gaata dimi wegaine mana. Wiyaago pasal kiko Mee tuma ka umitou, iye piye ogai mei beuto kodo maida make ebiyapa. Widaago pasal ko: 1) Ogai Paniai doko meta ma, ayii mana wegai gomotika mana ma; dana 2) Mee tuma umitou aka-paka tita kodo, ogai ka mana, iye piye kodo eepe yake; 3) dana okai kii pasal widaago kii duba maiya, dimi mana akaiye tita kodo:ogaika dimi ma, mee ka dimi ma. Okaikou dimi mana akaiye tete -tete ga kodo Zakheus Makassar make meyake bulan Agustus 1950 okaiya ayii mana wegai gomotita.

Wiiyago pasal kouko Zakheus umii tou, dana okai Australia uwita dana sekolah Makassar uwita kodo mana. Kouda makeko okai wadomeya ko okai ya keitita peitita mana topai pasal wii duba kouya. Okai ki pasal duba kiya maiya Wege Bagee ka keitita mana topai tahun 1950 make itoto utuya. Idibaa-go pasal kiko, Zakheus ma Wege Bagee ma ka gaata dimi mana kodo. Kouko okeiya gaata mana muto idibii maida make: Uगतame, ayiimana, ayii, Jesus Kristus dana wiwiitida.

Benumaa-go pasal kiko mumai yago pasal kidi. Okai kouya ki pasal kiko egaado mana wegaage kede amo etine mana (jawaban) topai. Kei jawaban amooti mana keike miyo pasal idibi duba wegage kede maida make kabo makiyawiyake. Okai kouya edoga egaado mana wegaage kodo maida ko: miyo pasal wido ma wii ma kou dootouyogo ko Zakheus ma Wege Bagee ma umita tou kodo mee-ka umitou yage-yage duba, dana dimi mobu beu, dana ogai ma mee tumaa-ma dimi mana akaiya yupi duba umitou tita. Okai kouya ki egaado mana ko gaipeu umina. Okeiya umitou tita gaa ka keadaan kodo gatouyogo, Paniai/Tigi Kamu mee tuma Zakheus ya mana motita dimi kou ewaiida. Okeiya umitou tita gaa ka keadaan kou gaatouyogo ko yame ma yagamo Zakheus ya mana motita kouko dimi wido kou woo-gawiyawiyake motita (kouko okai Zakheus na okai kei mana muto wido kei widokei woo-gayawiyake ayii mana kou wegata).

1. Edoga mana muto ko, Paniai doko bagee ka gaiko, Zakheus ya mana kouko miyaato ka ibo ka wado maki-maki tetai manaido kodo gaata. Tiyake, Zakheus ki mee tuma gaiko mee ka dimi udo mana kodo wegaate ki egayake Zakheus mana kou motiita. Ogai meyake ko mee tuma ka umitou kou dimi yage-yage buka, tiyake Zakheus meyake okai tika ka daa mana kodo wegai gomotiyake mee akage nako dimi mobu aawita. Kouko okeiyaiko Zakheus ya wegata mana kodoko koda miyoka tota mana kod nogayake.

2. Wiyaago mana ko Zakheus meyake ga ko mee tu ma ogai be egaiyogo. Kouko, Nipon meyake mee tuma ka umitou wegeke umima tiyake kouya. Mee ka gai ko ogai keike mee tuma ka umitou kou wege ke niyataine metegai kei gaiyogo ka koda Zakheus meyake okai ya mana wegata. Kou Zakheus ya mana wegata kodoko, mee ka gaiko okai Zakheus ya mana kou makodo kipa-

ko ogai uwiyake miyo meeka umitou dimi mobu kaita nogaata. Zakheus ya mana kodo meka gaiko kunci bukaa gaata; okai kou mana moti peeko, ogai kede yamo uwiyake okeiya makiyo, ini mee tumaa ini ya iyee kodo peepe umitotaige dimi woo gayawi yake.

3. Widaago dimi mee tuma ka wo gayawiyake Zakheus ya mana kou motita kouko koudani: Zakheus ya mana kouko mee tuma ka gaiko miyoka me tumaka sejarah, mee tuma keitita peitita kodo wado nigo maketeki Zakheus gaata. Kou miyatoka ogai mei beu to ibo ka wado maki manaido, kouko mee tuma-tumaido ka sejarah kodo, Zakheus kida nii madagai ki gayawiyake mee tuma yame yagamo okai Zakheus pa meta. Kouko okeiya gaiko, ogai meyake miyoka ogai meu gaaka gaata dimi manaida kodo ogai meyake bado miyo daidai dani buka kouya. Okaikei mana muto wido wegaage kei wogawiyake mee tumaa kou Zakheus epeta.

Kodoya, ogaika gaiko okaikou Zakheus epeta dimi wegage kodo peu-peu etita. Ogai ka gaiko ki mee tuma ka gaate kouko peu koyoka ini ogaika dimi kouto makodo koyoka, iniya dimi mana kouto niyamotii etita. Okai kouya ogai ma mee tuma akagee na ma ka okei Wege Bagee peu-peu etita. Tiyake Zakheus ma Wege Bagee ma ibo yape motita. Ki buku kiko Zakheus ma Wege Bagee ma ka dimi managaata kou peu-peu etaine ugaibeu. Dana ogaika dimi kouto ena-wado taine ugai beu. Kodoya enaimo mana aka yuwe dana mana wegaike. Ayii mana ko itoko iniya mana giimouda ogai ka niyauga maketegai kodo koyoka ini mee tuma na ogai na, Wege Bagee na enaimo ebatai dana boko petai kou gaipeu umina. Miyaato umege yato kodo ini Paniai doko koudanite ini ayii mana wegaiyogo ko iniya gaata kouto makodo makodo, meino ka kouko peu-peu eteige. Kouko Zakheus ma Wege Bagee na okai koukei etita ogai ma mee tuma akageena ma ka.

Mee tuma kouko aniya gaata, aniya iye kouto makodo-makodo; meino ka dimi kouko peu peu. Okai kouya ini idima ayii manakou enaimo yuwi gaipeu. Pembangunan wegaigai kou maiya okai koudani. Ogaika iniya kitiipage program kouto epei eneigai kouna peu. Okei ogaika pembangunan kou keitai yato ikiya gaaga taka ki kawiki nigaadou gaipeu. Dana amo iniya bagee amo migogu makidoutou kou wagii kou gaipeu. Zakheus ki aniyagaiko pembangunan ito wegate kou okaiya ita emuwakita yamake ogai okaiya gaata dimi ewo; okeiya gaiko okai peudimi awenenyaketete egata. Ito maiya okai iniya gaata dimi mana ena kodaya ogaika peu-peu nitete duba umitou teete inike. Ki buku kiko okai keidani dimi-do kei gaamakiyake ugapa. Meeka umitou kouko ena toko beu, ena akageena na mei peu na mei okai kouya, koya mana akayuwe, mana akamote, dana umitou kou kii-iyaida kou-iyaida tiyake kodoko koyoka. Ini mee tuma ogai kii-keitai, kou-keitai enete kouna ni eyuwai na ena.

Three stories

Koyeidaba Mana

Koyeidaba mana ki kidani. Koyeidaba ki waato make miyo meta. Mee ino ka keitai ko Pugomoma kiga ewaa kita. Okai podomitai da ko nota epa na topa wegagai. Kou nota epa kodo imo umina teiga gaako mee nota mobu; kodoya kou nota epa kodo imo kodo weikogi teiga gaako igapu uwa yarweigakou.

Pugomoma make ko yamo (Tigi yato) yamo uwiyake Keniyapa oma migii dimi-dimi. Kouda make ko Duwamo, Tigi peku watiga owa mige-mige dimi, Kamu doko amokato. Kamu doko wadouyo kiyake Idakebo owa migiyake okaiya ego taku-taku agiyo keitita kouda meka go motita.

Okai kou ego taku-taku ewa awita kodoko: igapu uwuwa naiya agiyo Koyeidaba ya oogomake tita okaiya gane kodoto widimiyake tiyake; igapu uwa duba Koyeidaba ya mobu meya wita. Dana didi bagee didi beu yawiyake tita. Tigi Paniai bagee, Kamu doko, Debei-Mapia doko bagee, Idakebo to Koyeidaba ya mee egomotita.

Okai kou maida makeko, mee tumaa ino dubaiga okai Koyeidaba kidi wagii-dimi meta. Tiyake okai kei peu dimi gaata bagee keda Koyeidaba wagiita. Koyeidaba wagita bageeke: Mote ke mege motita, Dou tuma ka, okai Koyeidaba totaida edoga dokita. Goo tuma kaa okai Koyeidaba egoogo wado Odiyaidimi Koyeidaba wagitaida wado emakegata. Agapa ka aagaata, Pigai ka okai ya kedi kipo epigoota, Tebai pa ka ke Koyeidaba ya bado teba gane teba ya duwata.

Koyeidaba ya emo ko emopeku ewakiyake, itona emopeku teigai kou, Idakebo ka. Koyeidaba ya bokai manako mana muto wrya wegata: Edoga mana ko, gaaga kabu, didi kabu, boka kabu ikima uwi yawi taita, etita Koyeidaba ya. Wiyago bokai manako, Piturwo ko piturwouda waguwo ko waguwouda wado akado taitage.

Koyeidaba pane kane ko okeyai wiya ekako: Nooku ma Yegaaku wiyaa. Koyeidaba wagiita gaa naago ko Nooku ma Yegaku wiyako bugeepa/bugurwa auwitouyogo. Okai kouya okeyai ko owapa amete Odiyaidimi daki eyake Koyeidaba wageete mana ayuwita. Okai kou Koyeidaba wagee te mana kodo ayuwiyake okeyai yege yiyi waiwai agomoteiyogo ga koda, aadopaiya kei panekame wagiita bagee kede okeyaina wagiine wado epeta.

Yegaku ko waatouga woo okita. Nooku ko touye mana ma dokiyake yamatouga yamo uwita. Okai Koyeidaba wagiyaakeko, naiya agiyo betokiida tita.

Eitikago, Koyeidaba ya ma kodo narya agryo kida tita. Okai nonoko-ko nomo kita; puko-bemu kita, peka ko ugubo kita, geko mito - kugou, toko mito ko eto muuti kidoke tita. Wiyago ko, maakodo narya agryoko inoko igata, inoko betoki-daa tita. Nomo ko - nomo kebaya kita, eto ko pagimo kida tita.

Koyeidaba's story

Koyeidaba came from the East. Some people say Koyeidaba appeared in Pugomona. From Pugomana he went South and attempted to settle in Keniyapa but he decided not to and went on his journey towards the direction of Lake Tigi until he came to Duwamo. He then tried to built his house in this place but once again he left the place until he came to Makewapa (Kamu Valley). Koyeidaba settled in Idakebo and began to perform miracles such as bringing out food supply in times of famine just by rubbing his hands. He brought out food and satisfaction in times of famine. He also healed many sick people.

Koyeidaba drew people from Paniai and Tigi its surroundings, the Debei Valley, Kamu and Mapia areas to Idakebo (where he performed many of his wonders. Therefore there arose a thought to kill Koyeidaba in some people's thought. Those who had had this evil thought killed Koyeidaba. The clans which participated in killing of Koyeidaba are the following: Mote (to take) took cowrie shell and betrayed Koyeidaba; Dou (which means to see) had seen Koyeidaba's whereabouts before the killing and reported to the party who were after him to kill him; Goo (which means to drag) dragged him away to Odiyaidimi, the place where he was killed); Agapa (which means to cut and split the body into two halves); Pigai (to slice)—sliced his fingers, Tebay (to split) cuts his hands and feet into pieces; etc.

Koyeidaba had two sisters. Noku and Yegaku. When Koyeidaba was killed they (the two sisters) were in the garden in the bush. They heard the news of Koyeidaba's killing when they came to Odeyaidimi on their way home. After hearing the news of Koyeidaba's death Noku and Yegaku began to wail. And yet as soon as they began to wail, the people who had killed their brother came and pursued them to kill them. Yegaku fled to the East or to the North (the direction of Sirirwo). While the Noku went to South while taking along the Touye Mana. Koyeidaba's blood filled a big pool which is today known as Emopeku meaning the Pool of Blood.

After the killing of Koyeidaba the food stuffs underwent drastic changes. First, some parts of Koyeidaba's body changed and became food plants cultivated (in the Paniai region) today:

- his brain - taro
- his eyes - an edible green
- his lips - a type of banana
- his shin - a type of sugar cane

Secondly, the true food which was cultivated in the region also under went a change. The true taro become—*nomo kebaya*. The true sugarcane—became *eto pagimo*.

Me keneka wido akawudaka tita mana

Tikai mee keneka wido akawudaka tita mana ko koudani. Mee adama ena yoka wido makiyawiyake okei umitoutogo. Yoka ibo me kide eka ko Waagapi. Ipouga me ki diki Yamaagapi, dana amoye me ki diki Totaagapi, Yamaagapi ma Wagapi ma Wiyake okeiyai umitou ena umina. Naka me kidi yumapa. Okai kouya nakame adama kidi ide umina. Kouko okiya ke nakame adama kida mana yamotito kouya. Totaagapi kidi dani ko beu. Nakame kida etiya manaido kodo yuwega teyu wegato.

Kigena wagen a ko yamagi ma Waagapi ma wiyakede duwo umi dimi meta. Iboume, yamagapi ki yamatouge yamo dow a mita; wenekai pouga ki watouga (Siriwo yatouga) wo uwita ta kodoya okeyai auwai beu yato nakame adama kidi okeyai manatiyake uwo tepo menita. Totaagapi kidi etete mana ko aki ki touye kugo kou moti etita. Kouda make ko aikaneiya kedeke dow a uwita. Kodoya okeyai duwai auwai beu yato, Totaagapi ya mana muto ena etita, kouka koudani ikai ke koya auwai, emino ga wado mana kitaitano.

Kouda makeko, Yamaagapi mana Waagapi ma wiya keda ekebata bagee ke okai tonawi, eiogiya te agiyo okei ipuwe, kouke nakame kida uwotepo manita kouya. Kodoya okai eogiyo te agiyo ewa kodoya okei dimi mobu beu. Kouko okei ayi mana ewo kouya. Okai kouya okai Ugatame eubate anitai kawetai. Kigema wagen a kouko okei bagapi dimi meta: -Ugatame kidi topiida/epikaine tiyake. Bagapiyake dopaiya, Ugatame kidi epikaine kipako waiko kideika koteka yago bagee keipa Paniai doko ka kigaitai okapa uwi. Koukeitiyake yamagapi, ya miyo-kebai-kebai bagee ke dege kei keiyoka yama touga tikai metakai. Waagapi ya kebata bageeke watouga make meta kei.

The story of the separation of three brothers

The following is the story of separation of three brothers. An old men had three sons. They live in the Paniai region. The eldest was Yamagapi. The second son was Wagapi and the youngest was Totagapi. Yamagapi and Wagapi were hard working and obedient to their father. Therefore the father was quite pleased which them. Not like Totagapi who often was disobedient to his father.

One day there came in the mind of Wagapi and Yamagapi an idea to leave the (Me people) country to go abroad. Yamagapi the eldest went in the Southern direction, and the second son Wagapi went toward the Northern (East-

ern) direction. But before they departed, the father gave them the secret on how to become wealthy and prosperous. While to Totagapi, the youngest son, the father said 'I punt the Me people's indigenous religious load on your shoulder'. Then before the two brothers left the country Totagapi said farewell and said have a safe journey, but remember that one day I'll call both of you to return.

Then the descendants of Yamagapi and Wagapi became prosperous and rich, because the old man had given 'the secrets' before Yamagapi and Wagapi departed. Then they began to search for the whereabouts of God. One day they performed bagapi, a religious ceremony to identify the location where God was. They wanted to know the land where God is associated to. After the ceremony, it became evident to know God they had to travel to the Paniai region where its inhabitants were the penis gourd. Therefore the descendant of the Yamagapi came to the Paniai region from the South and Wagapi's from the North.

Mee edadee tai yagamo ena wagiita manaa

Tikai, mee ewa-ewa gaa kooda, mee ena kii (mee ka keitai ko Pakage ena ki) aiko Yaba konyu umigo togo. Kigeena wagee-na okai bugu tai dimi gayake okai goomotu. Eitkago nagoo kodo okai pita kobu-goo wuoyogaa nakaa woyaikryake owaa-pa uwi. Wanee-yato ko mee yagamo ena kou meyake kooda mee kidaa piya kobryake wooyoyakitanda kooda make piya kobryake mumai yatryawitoyogoo-ga.

Aweetaato-ko kidaa mee kidi okarya buguda wadouyo-ki-piya, kooda piyaido kodo kobigoo maki doke titouyogoo. Kouda make ko kidaa kidi eda wotai goomoti tani uwaata koka okarya owaa-pa uwi. Kooda geto yato ka keitita kodo dari aweta-to na wadouyo ki-piya koda bugu kodo mee yagamo koda eda wagu-goo ebobryawitoyogoo.

Okai kouda make wadoko me yagamoo koda okai tuku-tuku tigoo bugu yakowai, eda yawagu, yabautu yagou, nota-ryo yawei, yabautu yayou, notaryo yawei dana okai kou bugu kodo nota nomo idima mee ka weya agryo idima kogu wogu wogu mee yagamo koda keryati-yawryake, narya debida duba umewo tita.

Kodoya kigeena - wageena mee ena kii enaki meyake okai kou okarya umitou kodo aka-paka tidoke tita. Kida meta kidi, amo tota idaa kidi edopiya, okarya buguda nota, nomo narya agryo debidaa. Okai bugu triyaga marya okarya bugu kodo agaape-ena to mumai, edawagu agape-ena to, nota-ryo weu apape-ena to tidaa. Okai konyu kigeena wageena kita meta kidi okai tota kida bugu watrya koda gaboo kryake edoutogi. Okaikou naago okai kouda koda uwatege. Kii-dani beu kou-dani beu. Okaikouya kouda koda wanee yato na toupigaa nogayake okaikoda gabokryake okai toogi. Wanee epo gaa kodo amo buguda koda mee gekege dari, koyoka edoopi ya kou me yagamo enakou, kooda totame kidaa bugu

kodo waikoto kida kidi mapega googo, wagiya-wiyawi piga okai komonda. Me kidi kou yagamo kodo mapega epeete uweete, uweete, meete-uweete meete wouyo gaa make koda yagaamo kode wadouga ta beu miyougata beu igadoke kou pijaa epaapa nakaa make. Kouda make ko kou pijaa epaa kodo kipaaga no goyake mapega googo wagiya-wiyawiya makodo emo pudugu tigo miyouyo.

Okai kouda make wado ko kida tota me kidi na bugu okai kida ekowai goomatita.

The female guardian spirit deity

Long time ago, at a time when the people were few, an early settler of Yaba—believed to be the ancestor of the Pakage clan—was living in Yaba, which today is occupied by the Mote clan. One day this man started to make a garden. The first day he started to fell some trees and prepared fence out of these trees to protect his garden from wild pigs. The following night there was a tall woman—*mee yagamo*—who came during the night and felled the rest of the trees. This female deity came to work for him. She made a fence for the garden, tilled the ground and later went out to find the right sweet potatoes, vines and others seeds to be grown in the garden. She protected the garden and made the garden prosperous. This went on for some time. Every time he wanted to make gardens the *mee yagamo* above was there to help finishing the work. He became a man with a special skill for making gardens. However, there was another man who came much later to this area (believed to be the ancestor of the Mote clan) who was jealous of him. One day this newcomer went to kill that women who had worked for the earlier settler. The night when he killed this female spirit, he decided to go and watch in the garden which the earlier settler had just started. Around middle of the night the female guardian spirit appeared. She wanted to make sure the garden was in good shape. When he saw the female spirit, he shot her. The spirit deity however fled and escaped. That man went after her and pursued her until he came to a big tree from where he could not trace her footsteps. He thought the lady had turned into tree. He was right because as he felled the tree, her blood started to flow out of the tree. Since that time, the ancestors of the Pakage clan have to work as hard as the others.



The dedication service of the mission's plane on November 3, 1956 before it was destroyed during the Obano Revolt



A wreckage of the mission's plane destroyed by the Me during the Obano Uprising

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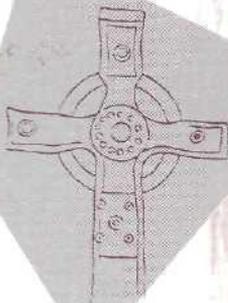
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