Anthropological Field Guide for Vanuatu

Third edition

Kenneth Nehrbass

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Introduction

DON'T READ THIS BOOKLET! That would be, well, boring. Just get familiar with what's in it.

The purpose of this booklet is to help cross-cultural workers in Vanuatu be as pedantic about learning the culture as they are about learning the language. You are nit-picky about learning the language, right? Perhaps you thought you didn't need to be both an anthropologist and linguist. Eugene Nida was! You can too!

This booklet will introduce you to the most essential anthropological paradigms related to Vanuatu, and help you write anthropological papers (initially, to satisfy academic requirements before you begin full-fledged field work). What topics will you address in those papers? How will you go about your research for them? This booklet will help get you started.

There are six sections to this booklet. Section One lists eleven anthropological themes in Vanuatu, and gives possible topics for anthropology papers. Section Two gives guidelines for acceptable original research methods in the social sciences. Section Three describes major historical paradigms in anthropology. Section Four contains information about publishing anthropological works. Section Five is a glossary of anthropological jargon. Section Six is an extensive subject bibliography of anthropological and missiological resources.

Remember that the point in doing good anthropological work isn't just to satisfy an academic requirement, nor to make your organization look good; nor is it simply to document a culture, even though that is worthwhile. You're doing anthropology because of the Incarnation. Jesus identified with the people He came to save from sin; and we believe that all cultures in the world deserve to have a Christian witness that is thoroughly Incarnational—one that is truly "theirs."

Chapter 1: Eleven anthropological themes in Vanuatu

Any of the following items on this list could be the basis for an anthropology paper where you do your fieldwork. They are all essential topics for a cross-cultural worker to understand if s/he plans to do long term fieldwork in Vanuatu. However, since you have not come to Vanuatu to do merely community development (as valuable as that is) but to be an agent of worldview transformation, the worldview theme is the most important one for you to study.

This section contains about 250 questions that you could explore. If you answered them all, you'd be an expert in your field. But, nobody could do that. Just pick one area for starters. Please note, though, that you should address most of the questions in any of these areas in order for your study to be deemed thorough.

Worldview

1. Cosmology: What are the named deities? Is there a distinction between "devils" and "dead men?" Is that distinction fuzzy? Is there a hierarchy of spirit beings? How do people enter the spirit world? Through kava? Singing? In dreams? Can musical instruments summon or shoo away spirits? Which ones? What else shoos away or summons spirits? Wild cane? Bathing? Bathing in coconut milk?

2. "Mana": How is power accumulated? Through rituals? Through magic? Through good behavior? Is *mana* (power) located in material objects or in spirits?
3. Time. Record how informants talk about history. How far back does their collective conscience remember dates? Are they time or event oriented? When is the best time to do various events, like: fish, drink kava, pray, go gardening, wash, rest? Why? Do they have names for different time periods/generations (called "canoes" on Tanna).
4. Epistemology: How are things known? What sorts of things are known by trial and error (scientific)? What things are known through religious transmission (myths, etc.)? Do informants mind when two truths contradict themselves (in mythology? in the Bible? When told a story about something in recent history?) How is the truthfulness of something evaluated? (That is, what is the plausibility structure for evaluating truth: because someone said so? Because it was on a computer? Because the myths say so?) How do they "know" about the origin of the universe, about the taboos, about everything *kastom* teaches?
5. Magic: How is magic used? Chart the various types of magic, who uses them, how often, whether it is secret or not. Where are the charms located? Who has gotten rid of charms/totems? When, why? Are there memorized incantations involved in magical rituals? Is there a stigma associated with magic today?

6. Sacrifice: How is it practiced? What ritual is done for reconciliation? Before a birth? At a funeral? To “release” a sickness? What do they believe is happening through sacrifice?
7. Communication: Use Lingenfelter & Mayer’s (1986) study (see Bibliography) to plot six values of communication in your field.
8. Space. What are the sacred/taboo spaces? Who may enter those spaces? To do what? Under what circumstances? What are the consequences of entering those spaces under the wrong circumstances? What symbols are used to mark taboo space? Make a chart of the various spaces in your area, and all the uses of those spaces: church station, nakamal, ocean/reef/river, bush, cooking house, sleeping house, meadow, road.
9. Affective domain: How are emotions expressed? Take notes on real situations where emotional linguistic markers are used. E.g.:“Broken heart,” “Big heart” “Turning mind,” “dead insides.” Are the categories of emotional markers fuzzy or well delineated?
10. Evaluative domain: What acts are considered right and wrong? Present informants with ethical dilemmas to see how ethical processing is done. Is there a hierarchy of ethics? What does sin mean? Why is sin bad? What are the consequences? (Hint: they will be more social oriented than judicial oriented. Sins are bad because they affect everyone negatively). Is there an afterlife? Does it involve punishment for evil doers? Is it valuable to be pure for purity sake, or only to achieve prosperity/mana?

11. Change: How is the worldview changing? How do people feel about the generational changes in worldview (don't forget to use actual interview data, rather than guessing). How do they describe the "heathen" days?

Reciprocity

1. Givers and gifts: Who gives gifts to whom? What kind of gifts? What is the market value of the gifts at a certain event? Make a chart of all the gift giving occasions, and show common and diverging elements in each of these occasions. How are gift giving occasions arranged? How often? List all gift giving events that happen in a certain region over a given time (one village in a year may not be enough). How long after the prestation (giving of gifts) must the gifts be reciprocated?
2. Change. How is reciprocity seen in the changing society (politics, MPs, the church).
3. Purpose: How are social structures (alliances) reinforced through reciprocity?

Social organization

1. Marriage: Arranged or not? Bride price or not? Exogamous or endogamous? Do a genogram of a middle aged person, back 2 generations and forward one or two generations. Note in the genogram (1) proper names, (2) how that person is called by "ego." How far back can people trace their lineage, before ancestors are simply called "ancestors?"How is divorce done? What makes someone a lousy spouse? A great spouse? Document cases of infidelity, and emic

ways of talking about infidelity (in what circumstances is it condoned? What is the spectrum of acceptance). What do married people fight about?

2. Roles: What's the role of uncle/aunt? Older brother/sister? Younger brother/sister? Grandparent?
3. Group discipline: document cases of shaming. How is *kastom* or sorcery involved in issuing discipline? How do people describe teen-agers? What makes children lousy or exemplary?
4. Group decision making: Note how group decisions are made in various domains (gardening, market) and social settings (church, nakamal, women's groups). Compare group decision making synchronically (across domains and social settings). Can an individual decide how he votes? What religion he'll be? Where he'll live? How he'll celebrate a holiday?
5. Leadership: Are there leadership ranks? How do "big men" disagree? Cite actual examples. Who is the ideal follower? What are leadership qualifications? How does a leader give a speech?
6. Land: Map your village. How many houses? Who claims to have been there the longest? What land disputes are there? What is the shared land? Collect stories of land disputes. How does adoption affect land disputes? What Western names are given for land—what's the history of those names? How was church land allocated?
7. Leadership: How is leadership succession done? How is a leader legitimated? What are the

symbols of leadership? What makes a great follower?

8. Is this a patron-client society? What is the role of the rich person? Is he expected to share his resources?
9. Grid-group. Read Lingenfelter (1998) and determine whether your culture is high or low grid, and high or low group. Is it Authoritarian, Egalitarian, Anarchic or Hierarchal (or a bunch of hermits).

Healing practices

1. Who can heal? Describe in detail how herbal medicines are prepared (this borders on material anthropology, described in a later section). Some herbal medicines are rubbed, others are spit, others are diluted in water and drunk. Are there other methods of preparation? Try to make a chart of sicknesses, and what methods of preparation/what remedies are given. For instance, on Tanna, lancing is common for infections, while herbal drinks are taken for internal problems. What is the role of the *kleva*? Document actual cases where a *kleva* was consulted. How did people respond to his diagnosis? Was it determined to be efficacious? How are healing practices taught? Is this information copyrighted? What pay is given to a *kleva*? What is the consequence for a kleva that doesn't heal the siknes? Is the pay less for an inefficacious *kleva*? Are certain *klevas* considered more efficacious than others?
2. Causation: Document actual sickness case studies, and the cause determined for these

sicknesses. Also document the healing methods employed. What explanation is there for an "incurable" disease? Do some sicknesses have more than one cause? Are causes of specific cases of illness conflicting and subjective, or is there a consensus for causality?

3. Change. Are both Western and magico-religious explanations simultaneously held for illness causation? Give examples. What does "adequate healthcare" mean in your area? To the locals? To the health care providers?

Totems and taboos

1. People think they are descended from what? Do different clans trace their ancestry to different totems (animals, crops?) Is marriage selection (exogamous or endogamous) affected by clan totems? (Hint, it usually is, in archetypical totem societies, but is not a factor on Tanna).
2. What are the taboos? What are the taboos displacements of (cf. Freud). Taboo foods? Taboo places? (bodies of water, trees?) Taboo actions? Taboo words (saying an uncle's name? Saying certain body parts?) Find out all the menstrual taboos, pregnancy taboos, and post-partum taboos. Do people really follow them? What if they don't? Are there menstrual taboos about gardening? Are there special houses for pregnant, post-partum women?
3. What are consequences of breaking taboos? How do taboos reinforce social rules and cultural values?

Material anthropology:

NB: research in this area must have some human interest component, and it must be thoroughly documented, or it will just come across as cursory ethnographic description.

1. How are things made? Baskets? Jewelry (anklets, necklaces)? Weapons? By whom? How often? What about houses? How many types? How often are they reconstructed? Describe the significance behind the procedures. E.g.: How a community gets involved in house construction, or the division of labor in making baskets, or how these practices are changing with the introduction of foreign materials.
2. Gardening. Describe gardening rituals, the physical size and number of gardens per family, and the garden's layout. Compare with other gardens in the area. Count the amt. of each crop planted, the length of the crop cycle from planting to harvest, the amt. of time invested in cultivating. How are gardens blocked from intruders? What *kastom* results are there for trespassing on another's garden? How are gardening practices changing?
3. Development. How are new materials being assimilated? E.g: the application of melted plastic on bush knives, the use of CD players and Digicel phones. What explanation is given for why Vanuatu is poor? What solutions are suggested? What do people say they are doing to change their own poverty situation? What do they say about aid organizations? What do they say about the government? Education

Institutions? Tourists? Australian business owners? Chinese?

4. How is nature used? Dogs? Birds? Volcanoes, hot springs, the reefs? For instance, describe in depth the hunt of flying foxes, or the preparation of sea turtle, from the hunt, to the dissemination of the meat.
5. Hunting. Describe how bats, eels, turtles, sharks, or any other interesting animal are caught and cooked. What is the bait like?
6. Are goods seen as limited? What do informants spend their money on? How do they physically save money? What are their fears about money? What folklore do they have about cargo (this is huge). How do they feel about and relate to rich kin? Rich outsiders?
7. If you live in an area where they make unique things like masks, you should explore all sorts of aspects: the economics of it, who makes them, how they fight about them, why they make them, their ritual use, the way they appear in mythology.

Land and Identity

1. How has colonialism affected these people? Do they own their own land? Are they displaced? In diaspora? Is *kastom,* religion, or something else a way of creating a new nationalistic identity, or identity on another level?
2. Tell about land disputes, how they're handled, if they're ever solved- what "evidence" is used to prove land belongs to a certain person?

Signs and rituals

1. Dyadic categories: what are the dominant ones? (Hint: people organize their world into dyads: Hot/cold, sacred/profane, clean/dirty, male/female, true/false, rich/poor, pretty/ugly, cooked/raw. Some of these dyads will be more salient in your field than others. Rich/poor, for example, is probably not very significant. Generous/stingy may be more significant. The Jews were really into the clean/unclean thing; that's not common in Vanuatu).
2. Dominant and condensing symbols. What symbol typifies the area you study? A pig tusk? Canoe? Banyan tree? Kava? These are called dominant metaphors or symbols. What symbols carry many meanings (called condensing symbols).
3. Myths: What types of stories are told? (In Tanna, we have five types of stories: Transcendent named deities, Imminent deities-devils-, etiological myths, and didactic illustrations.) What heroes can appear in which myth cycles? How is knowledge copyrighted? When are myths told? Which myths are tied to geographic areas? How does magic show up in myth? Are myths told the same way each time? How many myths can a single person tell? Compare at least two variants of a myth cycle and show the differences. Compare discourse features and a plot outline of at least two myths (from different myth cycles). Find commonalities in discourse features or plot outlines. What cultural values are reinforced in

the myths? What social organizational structures are reinforced in the myths? What are the major themes in myths? (Hint: In Melanesia, they tend to be heroes outwitting ogres, or tricksters causing calamity, and a broken world which gets restored –the source of cargoism. This, as opposed to the "Indo-European myth" which is found in the West, about good always triumphing over bad, or two people falling in love). One function of myth is to bridge dyadic categories (death/life, clean/unclean) by speaking to in-between categories, like spirits (which are neither dead nor alive). What betwixt and between categories are evident in the myths you've collected?

4. Dance: How often? How many types? How long does each dance last? How many dances are held in a single dancing event? How old are the songs? Are they repeated year after year? Who writes the songs? How does the author become inspired to write songs? How are the dances learned? How long do practices take? What's the purpose of dancing? Are there different purposes for each of the dances? Transcribe at least one traditional song. Or better, compare two. What are the discourse features of the songs?
5. Rites of passage: What are they? How long do they last? How are rites of passage mentioned in the myths? Describe the three stages of the rite of passage: Preparation, Separation, Aggregation. Make a chart of rites of passage, noting the frequency, duration, location,

participants, ostensible purpose and assumed deeper purpose.

6. Rites of intensification (regular rituals, like kava, church, etc): What are they?
7. Common signs: what are the various gestures? How do you signal: come, sit, stop, not possible. What are the meanings of facial expressions? How are foreign signs being adopted (holding hands, certain clothes)? How is wealth signified? How far is the "personal space" of people in your field? Can people eat in front of others? How is eye contact practiced during conversation?
8. Functional substitutes: How have *kastom* rituals been replaced by Christian rituals? Which *kastom* rituals/myths are counter to the gospel? How do *kastom* rituals meet a societal need, and how can the contradictory ones be changed to be Christian, but continue to meet the society's need?
9. Religious signs: What symbols are used in church?

Culture change and history of missions in your area

1. The church. What missiological paradigms are utilized by the various missions organizations doing work in your area? Are national churches rejecting kastom or encouraging it? Did early missionaries try to displace kastom, address it, or transform it? How has the culture changed as a result of missionization? How does the church

and kastom work together? How do they clash? How does culture change cause angst?

2. Change agents/advocates. Who are the external advocates for change in your field? What's the philosophy of their organization, regarding cultural change/worldview transformation?
3. How do informants feel about the West? How do they describe it? What misconceptions do they have? (Don't call them misconceptions in your writing, call them innovative ideas, or something like that).

Education

1. Why do people send their kids to school? How do they decide who goes to school? What is the purpose of education? What is the attitude toward school teachers? School fees? What do teachers say are the challenges of their work? What do parents perceive to be their role in education? What percentage of kids go to school? How many graduate from 6th grade?
2. Methods: How are students motivated and castigated? How are educational materials utilized?
3. Change: After being in the field for a while, note how have you seen attitudes toward education changing. What about percentage of enrollment, or percentage of 6th grade leavers?

Communication

1. Communication venue: Describe how speeches are given.
2. Style: Is communication direct (US Style) or indirect (Japanese style)? Is it "high context"? (Do

you have to be a member of the community to know what they're talking about?) That is, does speech involve many metaphors, figures of speech? Is speech affective (persuasive, emotional) or instrumental? How is speech used to empower people? To motivate them? To discipline them? How do you interrupt correctly? How do you win an argument?

Scripture in Use

1. Perceptions: Ask such questions as: How does the Bible differ from *kastom* stories? When was it written? How did they get inspired? Why should we teach it? What is its metanarrative? After doing a village checking section on a portion, note what questions seemed hardest for them to answer.
2. Orality: What's the use/response of audio scripture? Problems with it? Comprehension of it?
3. Use: What sections are most commonly preached from? Keep track of sermons preached diachronically. How are different versions of the Bible used? How are old versions of the vernacular used? What are attitudes toward those versions? What attitudes do people in related dialects have toward the printed scriptures?

Summary of guidelines for field methods

If you read all of these questions, you would have picked up on "norms" for performing anthropological research. Let me summarize them:

a. **Read first**, and continue reading on this topic during your field term. This will help you understand jargon, show norms for research, and show you where new studies could be conducted,

and which old studies don't need to be re-done. You should be familiar with the various major paradigms of anthropology, especially as they relate to Melanesia. I will list them in section three.

b. **Thesis**: I suggest you arrange your papers around proving a point. Example theses could be: "ni-Vanuatu attitudes toward education are correlated with attitudes about Christianity," or, "ni-Vanuatu do not talk about illness causation in terms of predictable cause and effect; they instead want to evaluate sicknesses on a case by case basis, and to hold to several possible causes simultaneously," or "Leadership possibilities in Vanuatu have been expanded with the introduction of the church, but power is still mutually shared between the *nakamal* and the church (or it conflicts, if you prefer that thesis).
c. **The comparative method**. Compare diachronically (across time) and synchronically (across villages, social groups like church, nakamal, women, elderly, etc.).
d. **Culture change.** You are working in one of the best fields in the world to witness culture change. Always keep in mind how the phenomena you are describing are undergoing change.
e. "**Thick description**." Don't just make assertions. Quote actual people. They prove your point when what you are saying may be controversial.
f. **Data saturation**. The culture is not homogenous. You may need to interview 25 people or so, to ensure you haven't been under-informed, or misinformed. Remember there are fringe groups,

like cargo cults, that may not represent the wider culture.

g. **Quantify and use charts**: Count anything that can be counted. Create models to help readers visualize your data.
h. **Don't compare to your home culture:** That can be done in missiology and intercultural studies. But, why would the anthropology sensitized reader be interested in how your field compares to life in America or Australia unless you were making the point that Western countries were actually influencing your field?
i. **Don't just describe**: If you follow the above six guidelines, you will avoid simple description. You must analyze your data, and compare it diachronically and synchronically (point b). For instance, don't just list taboos, but explain how taboos reinforce group norms. Don't just list the rituals, but suggest what their social function is.
j. **Contextualization:** If you're suggesting ways the church needs to contextualize the gospel, don't suggest those changes until you've adequately reviewed the literature and studied the phenomenon.

Chapter 2 : Doing qualitative research in the social sciences

Any anthropological paper you write will involve a "substantive literature review" drawing especially on the resources in the bibliography at the end of this booklet. It will also involve your observations from your field. But your hunches, observations, and some informal conversations are not rigorous enough field methods to substantiate a thesis in an anthropological paper. Nor is a "substantive literature review" (usually) enough of an original contribution to merit a published anthropological work. Follow the following accepted norms for research in the social sciences to generate an original research paper that is grounded in your field notes and observations.

Step 1: Determine your Research problem

What is your paper about? That's your research problem. By "problem," we don't mean there's a sociological problem you're trying to fix, e.g., domestic violence. By "research problem," we mean, "What has not been written about yet? What do we not yet know about." For example, your research problem could be, "We don't know how Paamese Christians deal with sickness." Or, "Nothing has been written about the challenges that rural educators face in Espiritu Santo." Or, "We don't know what games children on Aneityum play."

Step 2. Decide on your methodology

The following five types of research are acceptable in the social sciences (Creswell, 2004: 14-15):

1. A case study (e.g., study of a Rural Training Center over a year or two),
2. A phenomenological study (e.g., the regular practice of hypnosis, or the phenomenon of cargo cult prophesy),
3. A grounded theory (a theory that explains interview data collected from about 25-50 interviewees),
4. A biography (get rich histories of two to five people in your field and compare/contrast their lives),
5. An ethnography (report "lived realities"—that is, what life is like—in a cross-cultural setting.)

Step 3: Read about research methods for your type of study

If the paper you want to write seems to be suited for a case study paper, then read a book or two about good research methods for case studies. If it seems that your paper is going to be a phenomenological study, read about research methods in phenomenological studies. If you're going to do a grounded theory, or a biography, or an ethnography, read more about those methodologies. Sage Publications (Thousand Oaks, California) is the leading publisher of research methodology for the social sciences. The following books should get you started, and will help you narrow in on what resources you need for your specific type of study (whether a phenomenological study, case study, ethnography, biography, or grounded theory):

Alasuutari, Pertti. (1995). *Researching culture*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Charmaz, Kathy. (2006). *Constructing grounded theory: A practical guide through qualitative analysis* (Third ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Creswell, John. (2004). *Research design: Qualitative, quantitative, and mixed methods approaches* (2nd ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

_____. (1998). *Qualitative inquiry and research design: Choosing among five traditions* (1st ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Denzin, Norman, & Lincoln, Yvonna (Eds.). (2005). *Sage handbook of qualitative research*. Thousand Oaks, Ca: Sage.

Strauss, Anselm, & Corbin, Juliet. (1998). *Basics of qualitative research: Grounded theory procedures and techniques* (2nd ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Step 4: Write a few pages about what your research method will be, outlining the steps

- Will you do interviews? How many participants you will have? How will you know when your data is “saturated” (that is, when you’ve gotten all the data you think you’ll get). How will your participants be chosen? Is it a random sampling?
- How will you maintain confidentiality of your participants?
- What are the limitations of your study?
- What are the ethical ramifications of your study—does it help the people in the community where you do your field work?

- What is the significance of your study? Is your study transferrable to other fields? Will it be relevant in other parts of Melanesia? Other parts of the world?

Qualitative studies do not begin with a hypothesis. They begin with field observations and a study of the literature. After “theoretical sampling” (choosing the right people for your study) and analysis of interviews, a theory emerges from the data. This is called a “grounded theory.” The following chart shows six steps toward developing a grounded theory paper.

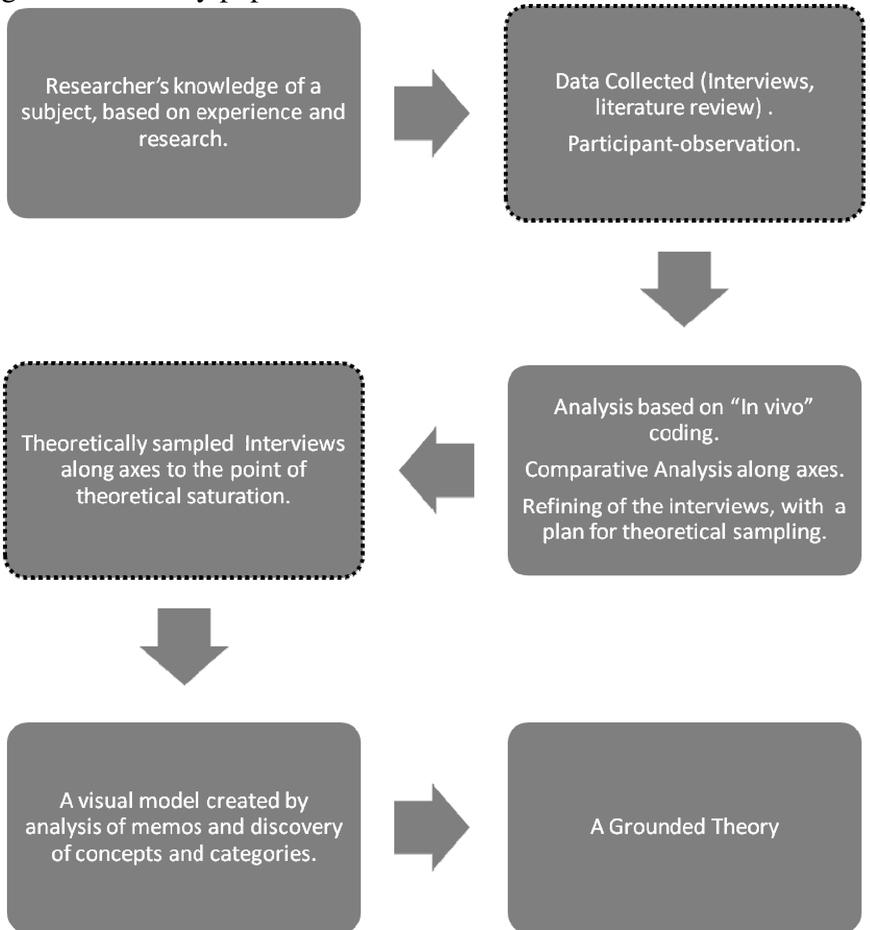

Figure 1: Six Steps to a Grounded Theory

Step 5: Carry out your plan

Step 6: Write your results

Keep this in mind when you are writing an anthropology paper: You need to interact with other anthropologists who have written about your geographical area. That means you need to be familiar with who has written about that area, and with the current trends in anthropology. Here are some current trends:

1) It is typical for anthropologists to argue that *kastom,* Christianity and cargo cults have a political impetus. Religious movements are not seen as world-view movements in their own right, but as an arena for acting out political subversion. For instance, anthropologists say that kastom is about national identity (Keesing), cargo cults are against the established government (Lindstrom), and the rise of Pentecostalism is about dissatisfaction with the *status quo* (Eriksen).

Step 7: Have an anthropology consultant review your paper

Chapter 3[1]: Historical anthropological paradigms for understanding animism

Even though animism is one of the world's oldest religious phenomena, it is still widely practiced on every continent. Why are people animists? What is the origin of animism? What needs does it meet? Since the present study is about why some church-goers retain *kastom* (animistic practices and beliefs) while others relinquish *kastom*, we need to understand why people are animists in the first place. Why do people practice magic, shamanism, divination, and totemism?

When I began my translation work on Tanna Island, I attempted to obtain a vernacular equivalent for the pidgin English word *kastom*. One man suggested the phrase *to rapəh nɨrkəkien*. That is, "You couldn't do without it." *Kastom* is the *sine qua non* of life on Tanna. In fact, I later learned that the best vernacular equivalent for *kastom* is *nareiyen* "life." Animistic religious practices are responsible for all the good things for life in Tanna.

But what is *kastom*? Over the past two hundred years, missionaries and anthropologists have described traditional

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[1] This chapter comes from Nehrbass, K. (2010). *Christianity and Animism in a South Pacific Society: Four ecclesiastical approaches toward animism.* Doctoral Dissertation. La Mirada, Ca: Biola University. p. 15-38.

religion variously as (1) a set of disjointed superstitions; (2) false religion inspired by the devil; (3) God's general revelation, like the tribal version of the Old Testament; or, more recently, (4) a socio-political movement of national identity, meant to subvert oppressive Western influence.

Sadly, throughout the history of the Christian missionary endeavor, many missionaries simply labeled animistic practices as "savage" or uncivilized; and they assumed that traditional religion could be readily replaced by Christianity. Many missionaries have been unfamiliar with the function of animism, not realizing that it is so intricately tied to worldview that it cannot be quickly surrendered. Seeing this gap in pre-field missionary training, Alan Tippett (1968) issued a call for missionaries to study theories of "primitive religion." Modern schools of world mission took that call seriously. In an endeavor to understand the people they are trying to reach, recent missiologists have interacted with anthropological theories of animism.

A simple definition of animism is the belief that the material world is populated by spirits. One college student in Vanuatu summed up his worldview by saying, "we believe there is a spiritual cause behind everything physical in the world, including the existence of rivers, rock formations, trees, animals, crops, people and sickness." Typically, the definition of animism is expanded to include the manipulation of inanimate objects, usually through sympathetic magic, for a desired end (whether good or evil). As a result of the present research, I have arrived at the conclusion that animism does not as much boil down to a belief that fetishes inherently have power, but that the

psyche is connected to the physical world. That is, regardless of whether they professes a genuine faith in Christ and the Bible, animists maintain that people's emotions and beliefs will result in physical consequences such as sicknesses (either in themselves or others), rainfall, drought, earthquakes, and abundant or scant crops from the farms.

Here, in Part 1, I give an overview of various historical understandings of animism in general. (Then, in Part 2, I give a detailed ethnography of *kastom* on Tanna, and anticipate the challenges it would pose for biblical Christianity). I attempt not only to describe animism, but also to utilize both biblical and secular anthropological theories in order to explain its psychological and sociological functions. I also suggest briefly how these conceptualizations inevitably affect missiology- for each missionary who has encountered traditional religion has responded to it based on one of the following conceptualizations of what animism is.

Folk Religion for the Bible and Early Church Fathers

The Bible contains more than 1400 years of ethnographic observations related to animistic practices both in Canaan and in the surrounding regions. Ancient Israelites could hardly be considered animistic, but the prophets recorded numerous animistic-looking behaviors of the Israelites, including astrology, sacrifice of children, idolatry, and

prayers to lower gods. Often, these animistic-ish practices were borrowed from the Assyrians and Babylonians as a safety net by Israelites who were less devoted to Yahweh. Likewise, the Egyptians were not animists proper, for they had a pantheon and well-developed priestly system, but their practice of magic and veneration of images, in modern terms, would be considered a vestige of animism.

The Bible regularly proscribes such animistic practices, and describes them to a small degree. However, the prophetic books usually expect the readers to understand implicitly the types of practices that are condemned. The purpose of Scripture was not to give an ethnography of neighboring religions; rather it was meant to help the people of God determine how they would respond to them.

Further, the Scriptures do little theorizing about what social or psychological function animistic practices and beliefs served. Certainly, the project of studying the origin and social or psychological function of religion is a recent one. However, a systematic study of the biblical descriptions of foreign religions suggests that they are considered to be corruptions of the true worship of Yahweh. McDermott argues, "There is a line of teaching in both biblical Testaments that non-Jewish and non-Christian religions were inspired by divine powers that were created good but then went bad…Hence the religions were born in deception and malice" (2007, 163). Wilhelm Schmidt (1931) painstakingly delineated his theory of "original monotheism," arguing that the earliest cultures exclusively worshiped God, and did not perform magic (cf Corduan 1998). Missionaries who adopted this approach have seen animism not primarily as a social or psychological

phenomenon, nor as a political movement, but as worship gone awry. Hence, their descriptions of tribal religions are rife with descriptions like "consummate degradation" (see early missionary descriptions of *kastom* in chapter 10).

Other Religions in the Old Testament

While the Bible regularly condemns animistic practices, it does not contain a univocal response to competing religions. McDermott contends that there are instead four archetypical responses to them, ranging from "neighborly pluralism" to "competitive pluralism" to "vehement missionary exclusivism" to "cosmic war" (2007). In some passages, there is evidence of religious tolerance, but Yahweh is certainly supreme: He is "God among gods" and "Lord among lords." Such titles intimate that God was in competition for worship among other deities. In later passages, the call is more exclusivistic: "Worship God alone." By the time of prophetic literature and the Babylonian exile, the ethos was "there are no other gods," and, "all other gods are idols" (pp. 58-59).

McDermott's point is that the Bible does not dismiss outright the religions of foreign nations; there are numerous examples of God entering into relationships of self-revelation and Fatherly chastisement with other nations. The Old Testament prophets understood it to be God's plan to make Himself known to all nations, in order that they would glorify Him (Piper 1993). To this end, God's handiwork could be seen in the lives of foreigners. "[God] declares that through his chastisements the following

peoples will discover that he alone is God: the Ammonites, Moabites, Philistines, residents of Tyre and Sidon, and the Egyptians (Ezek 25:5, 11, 16-17; 26:4-6; 8:22-23; 29:6, 8, 16, 30:19, 26, 32:15)" (McDermott 2007). Other Gentiles in the Old Testament who had some relationship with God, either as instruments of His will, prophetic voices, or receptors of chastisement, were: Balaam, Rahab, King Huram of Tyre, Abel, Enoch, Noah, Job, Abimelech, Jethro, Ruth, Naaman and the Queen of Sheeba (p. 32). Elsewhere, Don Richardson has spoken of the "Melchizedek factor"- somehow this foreigner gained enough knowledge of *Elohim* to become a priest (Gen 1:14:19-23) (cf McDermott 2007; Richardson 1981ff).

Therefore, we can see that the Old Testament's response to animistic-ish religions ranges from severe condemnation to hope. What are we to make of this multi-vocal response? I would submit that it is not evidence that the biblical authors were confused or at odds with each other, nor that God was ambivalent or changed his mind about foreign religions over time. Instead, what we learn from the multi-vocal attitude is that the people of God's response to those who do not know Yahweh is complex. Our evaluation of the world's religions cannot be boiled down to cavalier maxims. A biblical theology of religions outside the Judeo-Christian tradition must take into account the torah, the other canonical historical books, wisdom literature, and of course the NT as well. The broad picture shows that God is seeking worshippers from all nations, but He can only be fully known through Jesus Christ. Missionaries who have emphasized God's influence in all nations and religions are likely to refer to traditional religion as a type of general revelation- a local version of an Old Testament. However,

those who emphasize the corruption of folk religions will prohibit it; not recognizing it as a part of God's revelation.

Other Religions in the New Testament

The New Testament also reflects a multi-vocal attitude toward the world's religions, and allows for an amount of God's revelation through them. Jesus commended the faith of the Syrophoenician woman (Mar 7:24-30), and of the Centurion, "Never before have I seen such faith in all of Israel" (Mat 8:10, Luke 7:9). How did these foreigners come to have faith? God, in His sovereignty, must work in the hearts of those outside the covenant of Israel. Other Gentiles who had a measure of estimable faith were Cornelius (Acts 10:34-35), the healed leper who returned to give praise to God (Luke 17:18), and the good Samaritan (McDermott 2007). Jesus did not merely write off foreigners as lost causes; they too may have commendable faith.

Paul, too, believed that God's revelation was directed toward the Gentiles as well as the Jews. For Paul, the Gentiles were the polytheists of Greece and North Africa. Romans 1:18-2:1 and Acts 17:16-31 indicate that Paul believed that God had revealed himself generally to all nations. Paul found some kernel of truth in the Greek poets Epimenides and Aratus, quoting them in his sermon in Athens (Acts 17:28). Of course, Paul also believed that the false doctrines and forbidden practices of pagan religions were a result of demonic involvement. There is a cosmic warfare between light and dark, and the world's religions

are evidence of demonic tampering with people's minds and culture. "A Pauline approach can say that while the religions originated in rebellion and deception, their origins are supernatural, not natural; they teach some truth about God; and they are used by God to advance His own plan of redemption" (McDermott 2007). Again, missionaries who have approached animism with this lens have tried to find vestiges of truth in it.

Folk Religion and the Early Church Fathers

The various biblical motifs of God's interaction with foreign religions are also present in the work of the early church fathers. Justin Martyr and Origen held a radically exclusivistic stance; Irenaeus and Clement emphasized God's general revelation in other religions (McDermott 2007).

Justin Martyr believed that "evil demons, effecting apparitions of themselves…showed such fearful sights to men, that those who did not use their reason in judging of the actions that were done, were struck with terror; and being carried away by fear, and not knowing that these were demons, they called them gods" (McDermott 2007). This is a radically different explanation of the origin of religion than the psychological and social evolutionary schemes that would later be suggested by modern anthropologists (discussed below). Martyr's view is representative not only of his time, but of Judeo-Christian thought for subsequent centuries. Missionaries have typically diabolized local deities as they encountered them in the mission field.

On the other hand, Irenaeus stressed the sovereignty of God, seeing Him as the great pedagogue who revealed Himself in stages to humanity. The world's religions were part of God's progressive revelation - first general, and ultimately, specific (through Jesus Christ). God, being omniscient, was not taken off guard by foreign religions; He maintained a relationship with nations outside of the covenant community, and His Spirit was not too distant to be felt by some "godly pagans" in those cultures (McDermott 2007ff).

Like Irenaeus, Clement believed that all people had some access to general revelation. God entered into covenants (albeit not salvific ones) with various nations. God prepared the hearts and minds of the pagan Greeks by giving them some notion of the *logos.* Clement and Irenaeus both taught that when Christ was in Hades (1 Pet 3:18-19) He made himself known to those who whose hearts were prepared to receive him (McDermott, 2007: 111, 124).

Origen believed that the world's religious systems were the result of demonic powers. His theology involved a number of relevant concepts in regards to religious diversity and the origins of religion. It began with the Fall, when Satan and a percentage of demons rebelled. Since then, they have waged war against God and humans. Although God is sovereign, He allows humans the choice to accept the truth or follow a lie. The tension between providence and freedom is a historical teaching of Judeo-Christianity; however, Origen had come to some rather unorthodox conclusions by today's measure. Essentially, he said that

God evaluates all people based on their own merits (in previous lives, perhaps) and distributes them amidst the world's corrupt religions as a punishment for wrongdoing. This pattern began in OT days, when God sent the Israelites into exile as punishment. Likewise, Israel was the locus of God's blessing not because of His grace, but because of its meritorious track record. But the scattering among foreign nations was not just a punishment. In Origen's mind, it was also a plan for protecting them against the full-fledged demon worship he believed was inherent in foreign religions (McDermott 2007ff).

There was, then, the same multi-vocal response to foreign religions in the patristic age as there was throughout Scripture, and as continues today. The church fathers evidenced a continuum of interpretations of foreign religion, ranging from providence and general revelation on the one end, to demonic inspiration on the other. Indeed, the same spectrum of responses toward animism has been evidenced by missionaries throughout the South Pacific.

Modern anthropological theories of animism

Modern theories of animism diverge significantly from historical Judeo-Christian thought on the subject. Judeo-Christian theology envisions folk religions as degradations of the true worship of God. Secular anthropology envisions their origins the other way around, portraying animism as the "primitive" religion, and monotheism as a late development. My goal is not to discover the origin of animism or monotheism here, since that is a question of little missiological significance, and is impossible to determine anyway. Instead, I am looking at Schmidt's

"original monotheism" and various secular models of "primitive religion" because all of these theories provide insights regarding the function of animistic religions today. The psychological, social, cultural, or religious critiques of animism, each on their own, is not a holistic enough picture of the phenomenon. We need a "systems view" which takes into account each of these theoretical frameworks (Hiebert, et al. 1999ff). Further, missiological theory and practice in Melanesia has been influenced by these anthropological models, so it is important to understand each of them.

Evans-Prichard (1965) recounts two major developments in the modern thought on the subject: (1) the psychological explanation; (2) and later, the social explanation. These two major positions can be further atomized into seven modern explanations of the phenomenon of folk religions. Significantly, none is akin to the degradation theory or "original monotheism" found in the Bible and the early church fathers. That is, no modern theory has held that the monotheism of Adam and Noah morphed into polytheism and fetishism. The "degradation theory" was largely absent because a survey of particularized ethnographic data appeared to suggest that the world's primitive religions do not have vestiges of monotheism. In order to remedy this lack of data, and to lend credence to the degradation theory, Richardson (1981) presented data on particular tribal religions that do seem to have a vestige of monotheism. Most modern anthropologists were not privy to that data, or they rejected it as untenable. Instead, secular anthropology's legacy from the past century and a half is the formation of the following seven theories about folk religion:

1) The animistic theory (folk religion is based on a belief of the soul);
2) The nature-myth theory (folk religion is about reverence for nature);
3) The magico-religious theory (folk religion is about reverence for land/food staples to totems to gods);
4) The social theory (animists practically deify society because it endures eternally);
5) The psychological theory (folk religion is displacement of libidinous desires);
6) The economic theory (folk religion is about survival, harvest cycles and status); and
7) The structuralist theory (folk religion is a result of structural determinants in the human mind).

Animistic Model (Spirits)

For Edward Tylor (1832-1917), folk religion was an identification of humans with nature through the device of the soul (Howells 1948). Beginning with the concept of the soul, the world's religious thinkers were able to imagine all sorts of spirits, including God.

> It seems as though the conception of a human soul, when once attained to by man, served as a type or model on which he framed not only his ideas of spiritual beings in general, from the tiniest elf that sports in the long grass up to the heavenly Creator and Ruler of the world, the Great Spirit. (Tylor 1891)

Tylor posited that primitive peoples were initially incapable of conceptualizing a supreme being; "savage" culture was too limited to come up with such a grandiose cosmology (cf title of Tylor 1892). Therefore, he theorized, what the

missionaries termed the “Great Spirit” (in North American religions) was an erroneous projection of Christian ethnographers onto indigenous religions (p. 248ff). Primitive religion must have something less esoteric than God or a Great Spirit at its foundation. Tylor believed that this foundation was the notion of the soul.

James Frazer’s (1854-1941) notes on primitive religion showed a nearly universal belief that the soul can leave the human body. As long as the soul was deposited in an external object for safe keeping, the individual would live; but if it was harmed, the person would soon die as well. Anxiety over the safety of the soul, then, is the basis of much religious activity, according to Frazer. “It remains to show that the idea is not a mere figment devised to adorn a tale, but is a real article of primitive faith, which has given rise to a corresponding set of customs” (Frazer 1922LXII).

Herbert Spencer’s (1860-1929) scheme also had to do with the soul. He theorized that primitive people saw natural phenomena come and go: The seasons change, the sun metaphorically lives and dies every day; people sleep and awaken. There is a dualism in the world. This duality, which primitive people observed in every aspect of life, led them to conceptualize their own duality. People must have a double - a soul. It was a short jump from the concept of the soul to the concept of ghosts (Evans-Pritchard 1965). Dead ancestors were ghosts, and some were eventually revered as gods. However, not all ancestors made the jump from ghosts to gods. Important men who died were especially revered. For Spencer, this explained the emergence of ancestor worship and belief in deities in the ubiquity of religion (Howells 1948).

Hodder Westropp (1820-1885) developed a model similar to Tylor's and Spencer's. But Westropp's first stage focused instead on what he termed "pre-fetichism" (cf Marett's "pre-animism" discussed later), which led to fetishism and eventually to worship of the fetishes, and later, to a stage where people "grow out of fetichism" (Westropp, 1880: 309) and into polytheism, and eventually monotheism. Ignorant of modern explanations for natural phenomena, primitive people personify, or animate, natural objects; they feel a need to propitiate them. This model was based on a belief in unilineal evolution of culture: The theory that all cultures instinctively pass through a phase early on when they began having vague ideas about spirits and ghosts before they progress to more "civilized" religious ideas.

Tylor, Spencer and Westropp's theories are representative of European understanding of tribal religions in the late 19th century. During the great missionary expansion in the first half of the 19th century, European missionaries encountered the ghosts and taboo men of traditional religions, and considered such religious concepts to be "degraded," "uncivilized" or primitive.

Nature-Myth Model

Max Müller's model, which has been called the nature-myth scheme, also characterized primitive religion as an ontological fallacy. Tribal people personify natural phenomena such as the sun, moon, stars and rivers, and eventually, turn these phenomena into gods. Müller's data was based on extant linguistic connections between natural phenomena and religious ideas such as names of deities:

> [Müller's] thesis was that the infinite, once the idea had arisen, could only be thought of in metaphor and symbol, which could only be taken from what seemed majestic in the known world, such as the heavenly bodies, or rather their attributes. But these attributes then lost their original metaphorical sense and achieved autonomy by becoming personified as deities in their own right. The *nomina* became *numina.* So religions, of this sort at any rate, might be described as a "disease of language." (Evans-Pritchard 1965)

Whereas Tylor and Spencer's schemes focused on cultures where ancestors were revered, leading to eventual polytheism, Müller's scheme drew on data from cultures where nature was revered. Müller's model may well have described tribal religious expression in India (his primary field of interest); however, nature is not venerated in Melanesia – at least not in the sense that Müller describes nature-veneration. Neither missionaries nor anthropologists in Melanesia have found Müller's theory to be a fitting description of *kastom.*

Magico-religious Model

For Robert Codrington (1830-1922), primitive religion appeared to be about the accumulation of *mana,* the Melanesian concept of supernatural power. He described *mana* as follows:

> *Mana* is a power or influence, not physical, and in a way supernatural; but it shows itself in physical force, or in any kind of power or excellence which a man possesses. This mana is not fixed in anything, and can be conveyed in almost anything; but spirits, whether

> disembodied souls or supernatural beings, have it and can impart it; and it essentially belongs to personal beings to originate it, though it may act through the medium of water, or a stone, or a bone. (Codrington 1891)

The basis of primitive religion, in this model, is the pursuit of *mana.* Some magico-religious societies began to see certain ghosts or spirits as reservoirs of *mana.* This was the beginning of elevation of fetishes to the status of deities (Howells 1948).

Robert Marett's (1866-1943) explanation followed Codrington's *mana* model. He wrote witty aphorisms about animism such as "thin partitions often divide the spell from prayer" (Lowie 1948), and "savage religion is something not so much thought out as danced out" (in Evans-Pritchard 1965). Religion, in Marett's scheme, is about emotion and action, not a coherent systematic theology (Marett 1900).

The *mana* model from Codrington and Marett also served as an evolutionary scheme, moving from magic to polytheism and finally to monotheism; but in this scenario, the first cause of religion was not the soul, nor the nature-myth model, rather it was the notion of power attained through magic. The most primitive form of folk religion is an emotion of awe (p. 170) especially due to the horror of the corpse (p. 178). Marett calls this feeling of awe variously "supernaturalism" (p. 168), "animatism" (p. 171), and "pre-animism." In pre-animism, people believe fetishes have magical power, but they do not animate these fetishes by conceptualizing them as spirits (cf. Tylor). Calling on

the rain, Marett said, does not equal animism, but calling on the spirits for rain is “full-fledged animism” (p. 172).

Frazer, too, saw magic as the basis of animistic religion. He proposed that the magical worldview of primitive peoples could be explained in terms of two laws: the “law of imitative magic” and the “law of contagion” (1922ch 3).

Both of these laws are summarized by a larger ontological “mistake” that “things act on each other at a distance through a secret sympathy, the impulse being transmitted from one to the other by means of what we may conceive as a kind of invisible ether.” Therefore, many magical practices in folk religions are referred to as “sympathetic magic.”[i] The law of imitative (Frazer preferred the term homeopathic magic) means that objects which share similar properties are cosmically connected. “Like produces like…or an effect resembles its cause” (ibid). A stone shaped like a banana must have similar properties to a banana. The law of contagion requires that personal “leavings” such as a man’s nail clippings, hair, excrement or food rubbish remain connected to him. If the “leavings” are deliberately harmed (especially heated by fire), harm must necessarily befall the person to whom they originally belonged.

It may seem like Frazer is speaking tongue-in-cheek to call these “laws” as if they are laws of nature. However, Frazer is not being sarcastic or condescending. People from animistic backgrounds do not consider their magical behavior as *magic.* They perceive that when they perform sorcery or make rain that they are operating within the laws of nature. When I teach on magic in Melanesia, the

audience usually objects, "But that's not magic! That procedure really works!"

A few decades after Frazer's theory was published, Malinowski collected extensive data on the Trobriand Islanders, and arrived at a conclusion similar to Codrington and Marett's. Primitive religion, at least in the Pacific, is about an impersonal magical force. "The garden magician utters magic by mouth; the magical virtue enters the soil" (Malinowski 1935). It was unclear whether islanders believed if their garden was growing because of their hard work or because of their magic (p. 77); but gardening was done on two levels: the mechanical and the magical or symbolic. The point of the magic was to achieve prosperity- the antithesis of hunger. It means the absence of disease, dangerous influences, and disaster (p. 200, 224ff).

Of the anthropological theories that were available to missionaries in Melanesia in the early 20th century, the *mana* motif was the most apt depiction of *kastom.* Indeed, to this day, Codrington's *mana* theory remains a starting point for ethnographers throughout Melanesia.

Psychological Model (Freud)

For Freud, animism was not about the soul, nor magic, but about "[man's] practical need to control the world around him" (Freud 1950). Primitive religion must be about gaining control over nature, including people's natural desires. Taboos, then, are a repression of libidinous desires. Incest is taboo because men apparently want to sleep with their sisters. After all, there would be no need for making something taboo if people did not exhibit interest in that behavior. As Codrington noted, and later Freud, when a

man encounters his sister on a trail in Vanuatu, the woman must turn her back to him. Ni-Vanuatu see this as a sign of respect; Freud sees it as sublimation of incest- a repression of a libidinous desire. There is “no doubt” that these *kastom* rules are “universally regarded as protective measures against incest” (p. 13; cf Nida, 1954: 34).

Taboos are also displacements, according to Freud. What looks like respectful behavior between sibs as they pass on a jungle trail is actually about repression of incestuous desires. Totems, then, are displacements *par excellence.* Totems represent ancestors, and clan members are forbidden to eat (or touch, or cut) them, because touching the taboo food or stone totem is tantamount to killing the ancestor. (In fact, in the kava ritual in Tanna, touching masticated kava is equated with committing incest). Freud saw totemic taboos as a displacement of men’s desire either to kill their parents or commit incest with them. The taboo is necessary precisely because people have these libidinous desires (Freud 1950).

For Freud, taboos are also related to *mana* because they involve an impersonal regulatory power (p. 20; cf Nida, 1959: 25). But, where does the notion of *mana*- and souls- come from? Freud’s explanation was humankind’s narcissistic notion of the omnipotence of thoughts. Primitive people are guilty of the same ontological misconception that children exhibit; namely, that thoughts can be fulfilled simply by wishing them. But practitioners of folk religions, unlike children, also have the motor response to act on their wishes. Magic, then, is the combination of a childish belief in the “omnipotence of thoughts” plus a motor response (Freud 1950). As magic developed into full-fledged religion, people “handed over”

the locus of the omnipotence of thoughts from themselves to the gods (p. 93). Thus, Freud's model was an evolutionary scheme from animism to theism.

Of the early theories of tribal religion, Freud's theory was the least accessible to missionaries who encountered *kastom* in Melanesia. However, Freud's pejorative tone- likening practitioners of tribal religion to children- was certainly perpetuated in the days of Colonialism. The three models that I will discuss in the next sections (i.e., social, economic, and structural models) were not formed until well after Melanesia had been colonized, and the church was on its way to independence. Therefore, while these models are essential for contemporary missiologists to understand as they grapple with tribal religions, they were not incorporated into missiological theory in the first half of the 20th century.

Social Model (Totemism)

Many folk religions involve some sort of totemism, and anthropologists have attempted to uncover the emergence and role of totems for tribal societies. Malinowski's magic motif theorized that local crops were revered, therefore the stones they represented were essentially deified. However, Durkheim saw crop totems as symbolic of societal roles; they were revered because of their societal function rather than because of their magical power to produce crops. "If the symbol of the god and symbol of the society [totem] are one and the same, are not society and god one and the same?" (Durkheim 1915). In this view, magic cannot be the basis of religion because religion is by definition a social activity, but magic is private. Magic has "no lasting bonds

that make members of a moral bond like the one formed by worshippers of the same god" .

Therefore, for Durkheim, society is the basis of tribal religion, because society alone outlasts human generations; in fact, it is eternal. Humankind has found in society a synergistic power that is exceeded by nothing else. Primitive religion is a reification of the society, beginning at the clan level. It begins as a village cult, centered on its totem. Evans-Pritchard summarized Durkheim, "For Freud, God is father; for Durkheim, God is society" (1965).

Evans-Pritchard agreed with Durkheim, maintaining that psychological explanations for primitive religions are untenable because: (1) people learn religion when they are young, long before they attach psychological meanings to ritual or myth; and (2) even pre-scientific people know that just by wishing for something does not make it happen. Religion, then, must serve some other purpose. Since religion is (1) transmitted, (2) a closed system and (3) obligatory, it must be fundamentally social (Evans-Pritchard 1965). This social explanation given by Durkheim (and further developed by Levi-Strauss) did not relegate folk religion to mere ontological misconceptions. It was, instead, an affirmation of society. If the soul was the metonym for religion in Tylor's scheme, and magic in Codrington's, for Durkheim and Levi-Strauss it is the totem.

Economic Model: Hopkins and Radin

E.W. Hopkins (1857-1932) disagreed with Durkheim's concept of totemism as the basis of folk religion. Totemism is not a homogeneous phenomenon, and too many of the

world's religions have no vestige of totemism, such as Semitic religions, folk religions in South America, and certain African religions (1918). But Hopkins also disagreed with Frazer's theory that totems are about food exchange. Frazer understood taboos as an early form of sacrifice: a clan of a certain totem would refrain from eating the food of their totem so that there would be a sufficient supply of this food for the other clans in the tribe. Hopkins held this to be untenable.

In totemic systems (such as Tanna), clans must fast from their totemic crop for several months each year while they undergo ritual cleansing for the benefit of the entire tribe's harvest. Hopkins could not imagine that "savages" would be benevolent enough to come up with a system that involves this sort of self-sacrifice for the good of others (p. 151). He believed, instead, that tribal religion has more to do with preoccupation over seasonal changes than with totems (p. 157). The diet of tribal peoples is limited at times to a dozen or fewer nutritious items. As the seasons change, these items change in their availability. Whereas in Durkheim's theory primitive humans reified society because it was greater than themselves, and seemed to be eternal, in Hopkins' theory, animists revered the reliable, almost eternal, staple foods such as taro and yams. Of course, this scenario only speaks to beneficial crop totems. Unusual or poisonous totems (also found throughout Melanesia) must have an alternate etiology. Perhaps there are hygienic or safety reasons that led animists to revere these items. Hopkins' theory, then, relegates the basis of animism to an ontological misconception, where the impetus for primitive religion is economics.

Paul Radin (1883-1959) also focused on the role of economics in primitive religions. He sees economics as the foundation of the doctrine of ghosts, spirits, totems, magic, and ritual. Primitive religion is about humankind's fight for survival. Since survival relates to finding sufficient food supplies, religion is essentially an economic endeavor. Primitive people fear normal cycles such as harvests and the sunrise more than crises like birth or death (1957ff.).

Radin further developed his economic motif by paying special attention to the role of the "religious thinker" in primitive religions. His thesis was that even in primitive societies, people fall on a spectrum from devout on one end to weakly religious at the other. Many are simply laymen, with little inclination toward religious thought. Others, the priest-thinkers, are religious formulators (p. 11ff). Their job is twofold: (1) to secure their position (an economic concern), and (2) to increase the authority of the elders (a societal concern) (p. 18-24). Radin conceptualized animism as an economic arrangement where the chiefs maintain social order by threatening to work in league with the shaman to make social deviants sick. Subsequently, health could be restored by paying the shaman for his services of healing. In this scenario, the shamans essentially extort the laymen, and the common people fear the shamans, which keeps them in line. For Radin, animism is more about fear of economic ruin than fear of spirits (p. 44).

Structural Model: Levi-Strauss

Whereas early anthropologists used the totemism of tribal religions to highlight the differences between simple primitive societies and complex modern ones, Claude Levi-

Strauss (1908-2009) concluded that totemism in fact serves the opposite function: It shows how all human minds are alike in their need to distinguish between types of people and between classes. He was most concerned with how totems reveal innate cognitive structures (1963ff) or how totems fit into a hierarchal structure (p. 65). Levi-Strauss also observed an animistic tendency in modern Western societies, as evidenced in pop culture and linguistics. As Goldenweiser pointed out, modern societies anthropomorphize animals (cf. Mickey Mouse), have mascots for sports teams, and speak of humans in animalistic terms, e.g., "What a louse!" or "What a snake!" (Sapiro 1991). Structuralists like Levi-Strauss do not employ the evolutionary schemes of early secular anthropology; instead, they focus on themes that are evidenced in all religious systems. These universals can enlighten us about the structure of the human mind.

The Postmodern Model: Subversive Discourse

Just as early anthropological theories of primitive religion reflected the ethos of colonialism, the most recent developments in the anthropology of folk religions reflect the postmodern ethos. Studying folk religions at face value was the first step in postmodernism toward vindicating them as legitimate worldviews of marginalized peoples. It is no longer acceptable in postmodern scholarship to frame tribal religions as if they are based on epistemological or ontological misconceptions and superstitions. Instead, current anthropologists give voice to indigenous people groups who have long been the silenced subjects of colonial oppression. This is not to say that contemporary anthropologists have ceased looking at animism through

the psychological, economic, social and structural frameworks. The voices of the nineteenth and twentieth century anthropologists still resound. But folk religions are now given a voice to speak for themselves, in their particular situation, rather than being forced to fit into the evolutionary schemes of early anthropology.

In his essays on Aboriginal religion, Stanner (1966) takes issue with the early evolutionary schemes, not because of the futility of attempting to reconstruct the origin of religion, but because the psychological, social, economic (and even structuralist) theories failed to recognize that religion- in and of itself- is meaningful to its adherents. Religion is *religious* in nature. Is it not arbitrary to assign social or psychological meanings to the deep structure of a religion? Is that not imposing modern criteria on primitive religion? Does this not strip animists of the part of their worldview that is most significant to them? Tribal peoples do not conceptualize their own belief in spirits and magic as a psychological, economic or social phenomenon. To them, totems are simply their ancestors; and it is pejorative, and even myopic, for Western anthropologists to redefine totemism in foreign terms such as Durkheim's social scheme or Levi-Strauss' structural framework (p. 47-49, 131).

Postmodern anthropologists see modern conceptualizations of primitive religion as too general to be helpful. Evans-Pritchard (1965) gave a harsh critique of the animism of Tylor and Levy-Bruhl, and the magico-religious theory of Marett and Codrington. He referred to early theories of religion as "erroneous" saying that "no theoretical statement would pass muster today" (p. 5). These early theorists were guilty of "absurd reconstructions,

unsupportable hypotheses and conjectures, wild speculations, suppositions, assumptions, inappropriate analogies, misunderstandings, misinterpretations and…nonsense" (p. 5). Today, they are considered irrelevant or wrong: "No one accepts Frazer's theory of stages today" (p. 28).

Harvey (2006) has recently taken issue with modern anthropological theories for presenting animism as if it were based on epistemological and ontological misconceptions- the products of naïve primitive minds. In the view of early anthropologists, animism was simply an ontological mistake; it confused the animate with the inanimate. In the new (postmodern) view, animism is not a mistake; instead, it is a subversive worldview, protesting the empiricism of the Western epistemology. Animism, today, is not about belief in talking animals and magical stones, but about subverting "the oppositional and divisive binarism and destabilizing the hierarchy of science over magic" (Garuba in Harvey 2006). Postmodern anthropologists have redefined animism as a celebration of primitivism in light of a complex and impersonal world.

In this way, Harvey has de-mystified animists, making them seem less esoteric. Animism is not merely a superstitious belief in souls, it is a perfectly tenable belief in personhood- even in the personhood of animals, trees, stones and artifacts. "A fuller dialogue with animist discourse would further open the possibility…that life and personhood may not be solely human traits" (p. 24). Animism is a "style of worldview that recognizes the personhood of many beings with whom humans share this world" (p. 205). It is talking to trees rather than cutting them down (p. 21). Postmodern anthropologists describe

animists as having a personal relationship with birds, fish, local rivers, and thunder. Unlike the modern worldview, animism's concept of personhood is not a binary category (i.e., something is either a person or it is not), rather, it is a continuum. There are degrees of personhood (p. 106ff).

Harvey contends, then, that Marett and Codrington were wrong to define *mana*, (or *wakan,* or *manamanitou*) in terms of a magico-religious - as opposed to scientific - epistemology. Rather, animism is about social relationships, including the maintenance of relationships with dead ancestors (p. 129). Animistic praxis is no longer defined as a superstitious way of ensuring health, happiness or cargo, but as a way of defining relationships (even relationships with the environment) to make better hawks, better people and live the "good life" (p. 172-173). "Life is a process of becoming increasingly human, of learning what it means to be a human person, and how best to achieve and enact such lessons. A similar point might be made about tree persons, animal persons, bird persons and rock persons" (p. 175). In this scenario, shamanism is about restoring social relationships, because "ill-health is often understood as a result of inadequate interaction with other persons…Ill-health results from inadequate relationships and knowledge" (p. 149).

Postmoderns describe animism as subversive discourse, a rejection of binary categories, and an emphasis on relationship rather than power. These are unarguably postmodern values; but whether they can accurately be described as values in the folk religions of today is questionable.

Missiological consequences of anthropological theories about animism

Both testaments and the church fathers saw foreign religions as degradations of Yahweh worship. Modern anthropologists developed an entirely different framework for understanding folk religions, focusing on the psychological and sociological function of these religions. Additionally, Postmodern anthropologists see folk religions as a program of reifying personhood. How can theology be synthesized with Modern and Postmodern anthropological insights?

First, we need to summarize what Christian theology has to say about folk religion. The following biblical concepts have guided the church's approach toward folk religion, and continue to frame evangelical missiology:

1. God's plan is for all nations to know Him, and He has revealed Himself throughout history- to some extent- to peoples outside of Israel (and the church). All peoples and religions are under His providence. God appoints the times and places where people will live, and He chooses how He will reveal Himself to them.
2. God is the source of truth and light. To the extent that other religions reflect the truth, they are of God.
3. Foreign religions are degradations of true worship. God allows people freedom to chose or reject him. God has, at times, "given people over" to their human-made religions as chastisement.
4. To the extent that the world's religions are in error, they are of Satan, the father of lies.

5. Animistic practices such as witchcraft, sorcery, divination, idolatry, and clairvoyance, are forbidden in Scripture.

Historically, missionaries have presented the Gospel as a corrective measure for doctrine and practice. Missionaries did not envision their work as bringing "savages" along an inevitable path of unilineal evolution of religion; they saw their work as bringing people back to the Creator of all who revealed himself to all. Missionaries assumed that the light will shine in the darkness, people will come to know God fully, and they will leave their animistic ways. Non-Christians would recognize the shortcomings of their folk religions, and come to true faith.

This historical-missiological view toward animism seems rather straightforward. What can modern (and postmodern) anthropological theories add to this discussion? Coming from a worldview of materialism (the material world is all there is), secular anthropologists seem to contribute little to the missiological questions of providence, freedom, revelation, orthodoxy, or conversion. Further, evolutionary schemes and Freudian psychoanalysis can be at odds with evangelical thought. Secular anthropological theory, however, is helpful for missiologists in working out the nuances of the particular folk religions in which they work. The anthropological models discussed above should encourage missionaries who work among practitioners of folk religions to understand the social, psychological and economic ramifications of the particular traditional religions they encounter. Table 1 lists numerous questions for missionaries to pursue as they analyze the traditional religion in their context. Such questions are the makings of a worldview analysis.

Table 1: *Questions raised by various anthropological models of animism*

Magic, Nature-myth model	1. "*Mana*": How is power accumulated? Through rituals? Through magic? Through good behavior? Is *mana* located in material objects or in spirits? 2. Magic: How is magic used? What are the various types of magic? Who uses them? How often? Is it done in secret or not? Where are the charms located? Who has gotten rid of charms/totems? When and why? Are there memorized incantations involved in magical rituals? Is there a stigma associated with magic today?
Ontology (Nature-myth model)	1. Cosmology: What are the named deities? Is there a distinction between "devils" and "dead men?" Is that distinction fuzzy? Is there a hierarchy of spirit beings? How do people enter the spirit world? Through the religious use of drugs? Through singing? In dreams? Can musical instruments summon or shoo away spirits? Which ones? What else shoos away or summons spirits? Certain plants? Ritual bathing? 2. Soul and spirits: What is the view of the soul? Is there a concept of dualism? Are spirits either totally bad or totally good? Or are they conceptualized as more or less like humans without bodies?
Social model	1. Society: How is society elevated to the status of god? 2. Totems: Does the totemic system involve taboos? Is it related to exogamy or phratries?
Economic model	1. Religious thinker: What is the role of the "religious thinker?" (*vis à vis* Hopkins and

	Radin). Does he have an economic motive? What are the dynamics of the relationship between the shamans and chiefs? 2. Givers and gifts: Who gives gifts to whom? What kind of gifts? What is the market value of the gifts at a certain event? What are the gift-giving occasions? What are the common and diverging elements in each of these occasions? How are gift-giving occasions arranged? How often? What are all the gift-giving events that happen in a certain region over a given time? How long after the prestation (giving of gifts) must the gifts be reciprocated?
Taboos	4. Totems: People think they are descended from what? Do different clans trace their ancestry to different totems (animals, crops?) Is marriage selection (exogamous or endogamous) affected by clan totems? 5. What are the taboos? Is there a taxonomy of taboos? What are the taboos displacements of? Taboo foods? Taboo places (e.g. bodies of water, trees)? Taboo actions? Taboo words (e.g. saying an uncle's name or saying certain body parts)? What are the menstrual taboos, pregnancy taboos, and post-partum taboos? Do people really follow them? What if they don't? Are there menstrual taboos about gardening? Are there special houses for pregnant, post-partum women? 6. Totem and taboo: What is the relationship between totems and taboos? What is the *emic* explanation for why certain things are profane and others sacred? 7. Breaking taboos: What are consequences of breaking taboos? How do taboos reinforce

	social rules and cultural values?
Postmodern	1. Subversion: How does tribal religion form group identity and help rural people cope with the drastically changing world around them?

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Chapter 4: Publishing anthropological works

Here are suggested places to submit articles for publication. (They would also be good journals to subscribe to, and many allow electronic subscriptions. Many of these journals are associated with anthropological societies to which you will belong if you subscribe to the journal).

Remember that contact information (especially the editor's name and email address) for these journals may change. Some journals here may no longer be publishing new issues.

The writing guidelines for a number of these journals are hyperlinked. If you're reading this on a computer, the hyperlinks probably work. In general, anthropological papers should conform to the guidelines of the American Anthropological Society, which can be found online by Googling "AAA Style." Missiological papers should conform to the APA Style (Google it).

Grammar and Linguistics	
Pacific Linguistics	Department of Linguistics School of Pacific Studies Australian National University Box 4, P.O., Canberra, ACT 2600 Australia
Oceanic Linguistics	http://muse.jhu.edu Editor

	Oceanic Linguistics, Dept. of Linguistics, Univ of Hawai'i at Manoa 1890 East West Road, Honolulu, Hawai'i 96822-2318

Sociolinguistics or Scripture in Use	
Word&Deed	
SIL @ Dallas for monographs, grammars	MaryRuth Wise/IntlAdmin/WCT@SIL

Missions and Missiology	
International Journal of Frontier Missions	IJFM Rory Clark, Editor 1539 East Howard Street Pasadena, CA 91104 E-mail: ijfm@wciu.edu Submission guide:IJFM guidelines.pdf
Missiology: American Society of Missiology 20 pages preferred	Terry C. Muck *Missiology Editor* E. Stanley Jones School of World Mission and Evangelism Asbury Theological Seminary 204 N. Lexington Avenue Wilmore, KY 40390 Phone: (859) 858-3581 Fax: (859) 858-2025 terry_muck@asburyseminary.edu Submission guide: Missiology Style Guide 3.txt
EMQ	emq@wheaton.edu PO Box 794

	Wheaton, IL 60189 www.billygrahamcenter.org/emis submission guidelines:EMQonline.htm

Translation	
The Bible Translator	Technical Papers: Dr Philip Towner, 1234 Wilderness Park Court, Eagan, MN 55123, phtowner@comcast.net Practical papers: Dr Graham S Ogden, PO Box 201, Daylesford, Victoria, 3460 Australia.gsogden@compuserve.com
Journal on translation	Editor JOT@sil.org

Secular Anthropology	
Journal of the Royal Anthropological Institute [RAI] (Formerly called "Man")	http://www.therai.org.uk/pubs/jrai/jrai.html submission guidelines are rai.htm
Pacific Studies (don't get this mixed up with the Brigham Young U. title by the same name)	http://www.usp.ac.fj/editorial/jpacs_new/ *guidelines are* pacific_studies.htm
European Journal of Cultural Studies	http://ecs.sagepub.com/
Pacific Studies	pacificstudies@byuh.edu
Asia Pacific Journal of Anthropology	tapja@anu.edu.au http://rspas.anu.edu/au/anthropology/tapja ANU Canberra, ACT 0200

	Australia 6000 words; send abstract of 150 words Harvard form
American Anthropologist	http://www.aaanet.org/publications/ameranthro.cfm must submit at http://mc.manuscriptcentral.com/aman
American Ethnologist.	www.Aesonline.org/ae
Anthropological Quarterly (George Washington University)	http://www.aq.gwu.edu/ The Editor Anthropological Quarterly George Washington University 2110 G St., NW Washington, D.C. 20052 aqsubmissions@gmail.com
Folklore	Email to: articles@folklore-society.com Or send by three copies by post to: The Editor, Folklore, The Folklore Society, c/o The Warburg Institute, Woburn Square, London WC1H 0AB, UK.
Journal of Pacific Studies (SPATS)	Pacific Journal of Theology PO Box 2426 Government Buildings Suva Fiji info@spats.org.fj; www.spats.org.fj (679) 330-3924
Oceania	http://www.arts.usyd.edu.au/publications/oceania/oceania1.htm Department of Anthropology, SSPS, Mills Building A26, University of Sydney(H42), 116 Darlington Road, NSW 2006 Australia. Guidelines are at oceania1.htm
Journal of	www.unm.edu/~jar

Anthropological Research	Journal of Anthr. Research MSC 01 1040 1 University of New Mexico Albuquerque, NM 87131-0001
The Australian Journal of Anthropology	http://www.aas.asn.au/aas_taja.php TAJA, c/o Dept. of Anthropology, University of Sydney, NSW, 2006, Australia. **Tel**: (61) (0)2 9036 9352 **Fax**: (61) (0)2 9645 6171 **Email**: aas.taja@arts.usyd.edu.au
International Journal of Anthropology	anthropos@unifi.it www.pontecorboli.it MG Fiore Inst. of Anthropology Via del Proconsolo, 12 – 50122 Firenze Italy
Journal of the Polynesian Society	j.huntsman@auckland.ac.nz A4 double spaced Univ of Auckland Private Bag 92019 Auckland, NZ

Chapter 5: Anthropological jargon you should know (and use)

- **Animism**: a “primitive” worldview that finds a supernatural cause or explanation behind most phenomena. Also referred to as “primal” religion, “tribal religion” or “folk religion.”
- **Comparative method**: Rather than presenting ethnographic data as uniform, the comparative data shows how people from within a culture, or across cultures, vary on a cultural issue.
- **Condensing symbol:** A symbol that has many meanings, such as cars in America: status, transportation, independence, and even romance.
- **Data Saturation:** When you interview informants on a topic, and find that no new ideas are being stated, you have reached data saturation. That’s when you know you’ve done enough interviews on that topic.
- **Dominant Symbol:** The symbol that is most salient in your field of study.
- **Dyadic**: Two categories, usually two opposing categories.
- **Diachronic**: Across time
- **Endogamous:** Marrying inside the clan.
- **Epistemology**: The way that knowledge is gained.
- **Ethnography**: The study of a culture.
- **Exogamous:** Marrying outside the clan.
- ***Mana***: The unseen “power” that Melanesians are attempting to gain by doing magic.

- **Mechanistic Metaphors:** Explaining the world through non-personal metaphors like: germs, accidents, *karma*, the will of God.
- **Organic Metaphors:** Explaining the world through metaphors of living things, like: God's will, demons or angels, mother nature, and community.
- **Prestation:** the heap of gifts given at a ceremony, perhaps from one clan to another.
- **Reciprocity**: The cultural element in tribal societies where gifts are given along to alliances, rather than freely to anyone.
- **Semiotics:** The study of symbols and metaphors.
- **Social Organization**: The way that a society is organized: leaders, marriages, political and social groups, etc.
- **Synchronic**: Across different domains in a culture. A synchronic study of American attitudes toward guns would look at participants from various religious groups, regions, ages, etc.
- **Totems**: In traditional anthropology, the concept of totems involves (1) exogamy and (2) taboos. Traditionally, tribes have phratries or moieties, which are both fancy ways of saying that the tribe is split in groups (moieties refer to two groups, phratries can be more). Members of one group traditionally must find spouses from without their group. That is, they are exogamous. Phratries/moieties are marked by a totem, a crop or animal that they consider their ancestor. Members of the taro clan would observe taboos about the taro that members of other clans don't need to follow. (Eating the taro would be like eating your ancestor). In Vanuatu, there is a vestige of ancestral totems linked to clans, and clans observe totemic

taboos. But exogamy/endogamy rules are not linked to the totemic system.

Chapter 6: Bibliography of Vanuatu resources

An internet search on JSTOR reveals more than 500 articles with the keyword "Vanuatu" and more than 1000 articles with the keyword "New Hebrides." I have downloaded all the ones that seem particularly of interest to us, and they are on the accompanying CD Rom. How many search results are there if you plug in your island?

Suppose you're doing field work on a certain island, but many of these articles are about other islands in Vanuatu. No problem. This bibliography should help you see who the important anthropologists are in Vanuatu, and you can compare your data with theirs.

I have put an * by ten references that any cross-cultural worker in Vanuatu simply must read, no matter what anthropological theme you are exploring.

Some of these themes have only a handful of references. That's because (1) few people have written on it, and it's your turn; or, (2) I haven't studied those areas in depth, so I'm not familiar with which articles are out there.

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