

Just Leave Us Alone!

A letter from a Papuan Tribesman

Solidarity South Pacific

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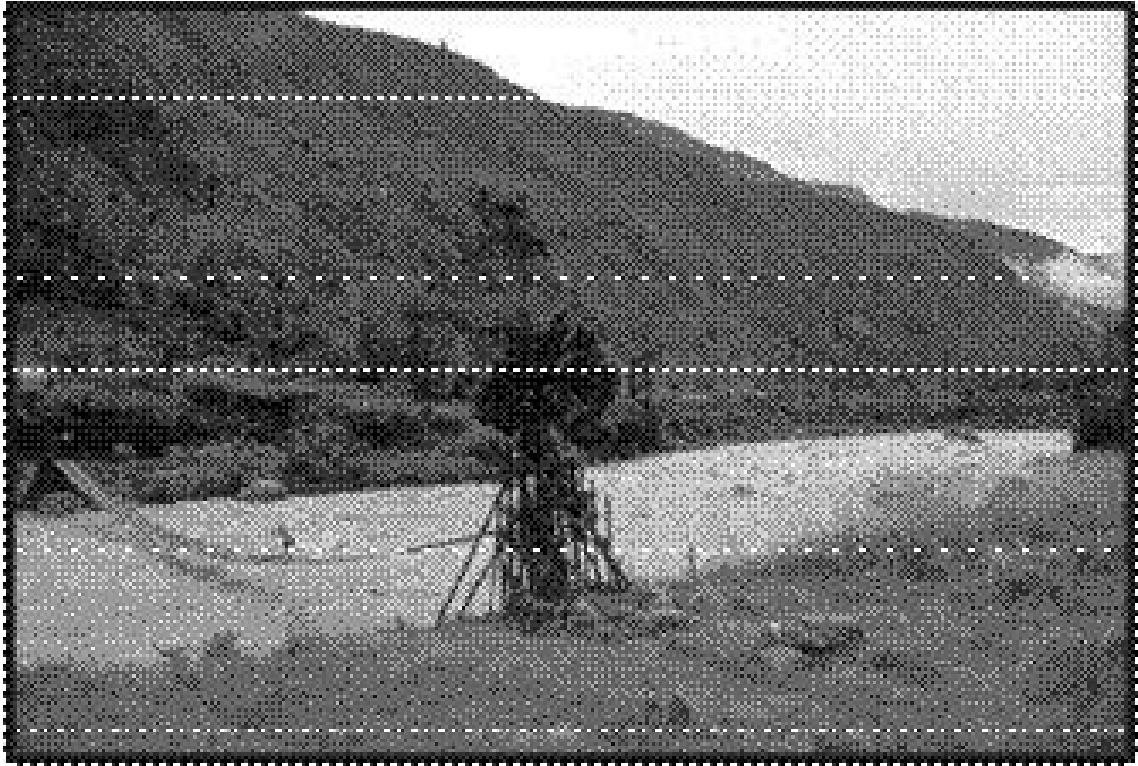


"...forgive them, for they do not know what they are doing"
Quotes Habibie, the President of Indonesia (Gospel Luke 23:34)

"Come on, how can I forgive...? I just can't!"
Replies Wiwa Wewo, a Melanesian Tribesman

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Greetings from Wiwa Wewo

Hostile, confused, primitive, wonderful, insulting, radical, extremist, funny, fantasy, emotional, irrational... are some of the possible words that will come out from readers of this public letter. All this depends on you, on how you would like to interpret these ideas. My job is to be frank to myself, and to my people, to be the best teacher as I can to my people. It is up to you to judge me as whatever you would like to call me, based on your interest(s).

I am addressing this letter to my own people, the Lani of West Papua. This is written as an internal letter, not for public readers, written with one purpose, to help my people focus our attention on our culture and its four main enemies. To give some alternative actions for preserving our identity on this earth.

This is the synopsis of my letter to my people, not a translation but a transferred version. It is just a note for the outsiders, telling what I am writing to my people. It does not recount everything I am writing, however it does point out the main points that the West needs to understand. In addition, this is not an academic script, therefore, I avoid quoting any ideas and views from anyone. The ideas are solely based upon my culture and my discussions with my own people. They do not reflect any modern philosophy. I hope I am not selling my culture to outsiders, because I am scared they will come in, learn, and finally exploit us. I do not want to commit suicide in a cultural genocide of my own making.

This is the message that confronts civilisation at the end of the century. I believe that this generation does not need a lobby, it does not need diplomacy, and it does not need politicians anymore. It needs normal people, it needs tribal people to come, stand up, shout, cry out, challenge and confront. This booklet starts this mission, without compromise, without any tactics that this modern community may possess and expect us to choose and apply. I hope the people, tribal people, in the Western countries will agree with me that the governments, the churches, the corporations, and the developmental organisations have been supporting the destruction of the planet earth and its inhabitants, including you the readers and myself the writer.

—Wiwa Wewo, Britain, Autumn 1999

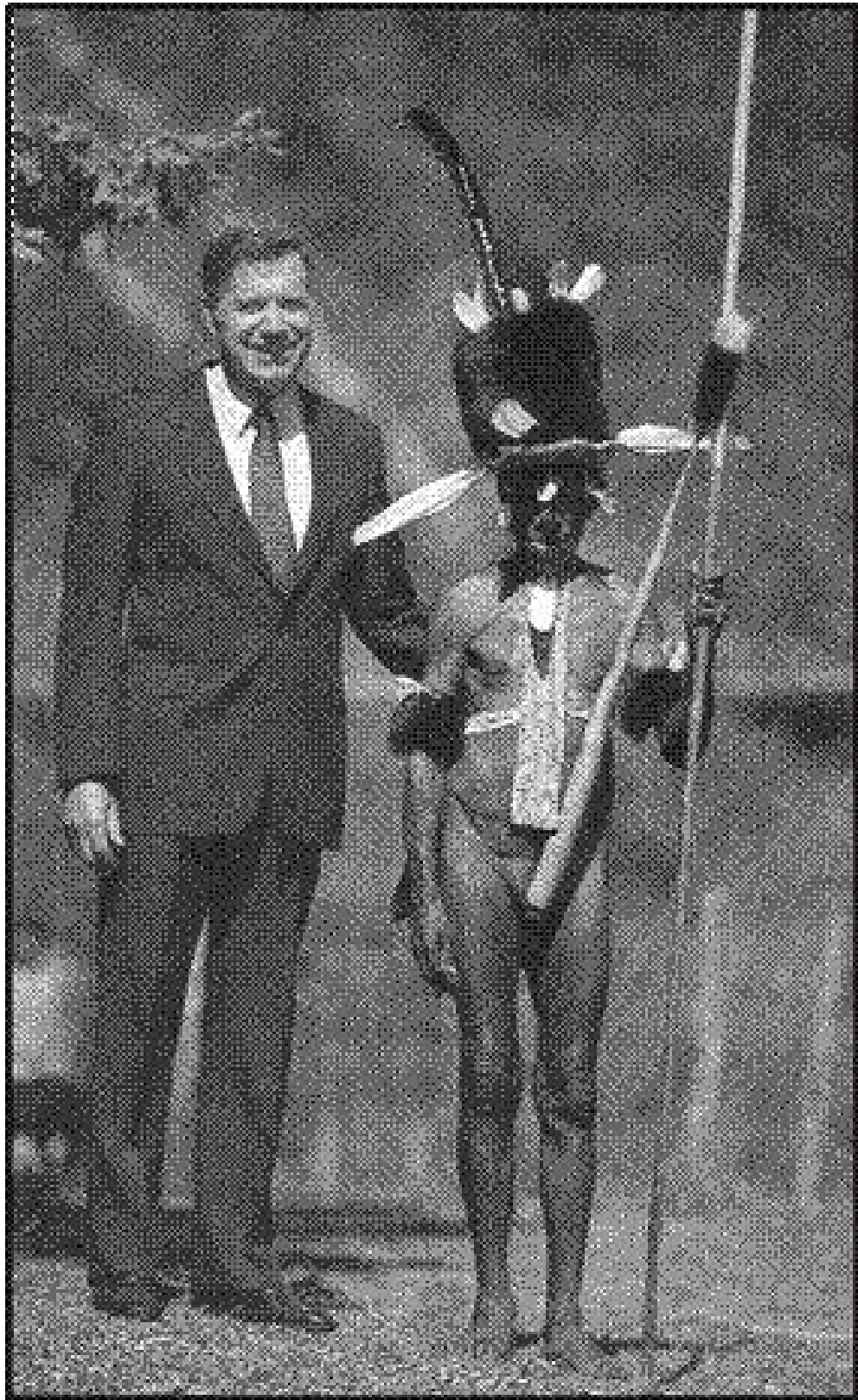
Papua's Problems in Context

Some time ago, a villager, let me call him Kurona, was living with his wives and children. They enjoyed their lives very much. Day and night they worked, cooked, ate and slept together. They were living in a sharing and caring environment. When the children became older, they became assistants to their parents. No one from other tribes disturbed their joy and happiness. All were in peace. All was in harmony. All left the others as they were.

One day a complete stranger, with different hair, skin colour, language, and culture came into the village. He came with a big smile, bringing many good things like salt, sugar, matches, mirrors, knives and the Good News. The Kuronas accepted and treated him like a family member. They thanked him. They adored him. They respected him a lot. However, over time, this guest was building up something that would eventually destroy the joy and happiness of the family. During his stay there, the guest had realised that this family had many things that he needed for his home village. Here is one of his thoughts. "Hmm, we have finished all that we had. We have eaten all. This family has lots of things here and this is unfair. But this family is stupid. They do not even use what is around them. They leave these things as they are because they are primitive. How foolish. They are poor amidst their wealth. I must invite my people and find as many ways as possible to get rid of this family and take what they have here. They do not even know how to manage what they have because they are uneducated, primitive, and undeveloped. If they need anything, we can offer them things to make them happy, meanwhile taking the precious things from this village. If there are more villagers, we must think about how to expel them from this area, so that we can own this village, just as we did in Africa, Australia and America".

Some decades later, the guest invited or aided more of his people to come in and rob the family and the village. Over time his people and other foreigners flooded the small village. Kurona thought, "Perhaps these new people need to find new villages so that they do not disturb my family's joy and happiness". He stood up and asked his guests to leave and find surrounding villages and settle elsewhere. In reply, the guest who had come first declared, "We do not want to move! This is our house! This is our village! You have to move with your wives and children!" While they were arguing in the yard, and while his remaining family members were all with him, some of the foreigners went into the houses through the back doors and very quickly and quietly took the most valuable belongings of the family. Kurona did not notice what was happening, because he was busy arguing with them.

Shocked by the reply and with what had been happening through the back doors the father, with all his limitations and his innocence, prepared his children and wives to fight so that they could remove their guests from their house. They had lost most of their belongings, their bows and arrows had also been removed from the village so they had nothing to fight with. They did their best to push the guests out of the village but the guests took out their pistols, guns, missiles, Hawks, Puma helicopters and their special forces were sent in. They declared the house and the village to be theirs. They took the sweet potatoes, pigs and crop seeds. They conquered



gardens and from the houses took everything they could eat or use. They even arrested some of the children, raped the wives and killed some of them. Luckily, some of the family members were able to escape and established resistance to regain their village.

The father and his remaining children and wives went to the bush. They could not go far from their village because they knew that there were villages further away which they had no right to enter. At the same time, Kurona knew that his village was being invaded. All they could do was go to their village and try to disturb the guests and to reclaim their home. The only thing they can do was to come and resist inside their village. And they did so. However, in response, the guests then labelled the father and remaining wives and children 'terrorists', 'guerrilla fighters', 'security disturbance forces' and other names that negated the efforts and rights of the family. The guests even got support from other people from a far away place called 'the West'. The West's people sold them automatic guns, Hawks, missiles, surveillance equipment, and all possible facilities they had. The West supported the guests' attempts to wipe out the family. In the process of wiping out this family, one of the guests said, "Forgive them because they do not know what they are doing!" In fact, the guests were working with the giant 'man eaters' and 'human blood drinkers'. They are called cannibals.

The guests have all the apparatuses to pacify the family. They have churches, NGOs, corporations, and governments. They close the mouths of the family through names like 'Good News', 'salvation', 'love' and 'development aid'. They have people who stand before the altar and preach "Love your enemies. Love your neighbour as you love yourselves". They have people who say, "Come here, we will help you with what you need: money, health service, education, family economy. Do not fight against the guests, they are bad, but to balance it we are helping you. So do not reject us". They have people saying, "kill them, finish them, get rid of them, they are primitive, they are less than human! They do not know what they need. They do not know what they want!" They have people who say, "The guns we sell them are not used to kill their own people. We have an ethical foreign policy". Who is listening to what this family is saying? Who is acting in the interests of this family? All of them are corrupt, of course. No one is actually helping the family.

How to help the family? The family says, "LEAVE US ALONE!"

I have learnt that most people in this century do not like hearing bad news. They want things to be in good condition. They want tribal people to compromise, to say like them, "all things are fine". They do not want to take risks or even hear the impact of what they have done on this earth and to the tribal people. They always want us to compromise and, to some degree, to agree with their brutal actions. This is the bad news from the edge of the world that comes to you at the end of this most disastrous century. Hopefully, most of us will die as soon as possible so that we do not become poison for the next millennium's generation.

I do not care about these attitudes;
If you are insulted
If you agree or disagree with me
If you are satisfied or dissatisfied
If you are common persons or leaders
If you are politicians or servicemen
If you are intelligence or church workers
I just cannot care about these
It is too late to be careful, unfortunately

This story tells exactly what has happened to West Papua, based on my personal and subjective perspective and view. This booklet is produced for the public to show how realistic the request from His Excellency Mr. B. J. Habibie is in relation to the demand for independence by West Papuan Tribal Leaders on April 26th 1999. The request says, “.. forgive them, for they do not know what they are doing”, quoted from the Gospel of Luke 23:34. The people say, “Just leave us alone, please!”

Forgiveness or Resistance

On February 26th 1999, 100 delegates from West Papua met the President of the Republic of Indonesia, Prof. Dr. Ir. B.J. Habibie with his ministers and chief commander of the armed forces, Gen. Wiranto. The only demand from the Tribal Leaders, represented by Mr. Tom Beanal was, “to reclaim the independence that they regard as having been taken and denied by Indonesia”. Beanal also presented some reasons for his demand and the demand of all tribal people of West Papua.

However, his demand was turned down because the government and tribal people of West Papua had different agendas for that particular and historic meeting. On one side, the Indonesian government was prepared to share views on how to strengthen Indonesian nationalism and the integration of West Papua with Indonesia. On the other side, the tribal leaders were there to ask for separation from Indonesia. This conflicting agenda did not help to get a proper response from Mr. President when it was requested he allow West Papua to separate from Indonesia. As his response, Mr. Habibie made some statements for all Tribal People in West Papua. Three of them are as follows:

“.. forgive them because they do not know what they are doing...”

“I am not a robot...”

“Go home and think about it, reflect on it ...”

For me, as a Lani, and as a citizen of the Indonesia at the moment, it is very important to clarify the significance of the first statement. I believe that this statement is not just a simple statement. It is made after careful consideration. The first reason is perhaps because most of the 100 people were Christians, therefore, Mr. President quoted one of the Bible verses. The statement emphasises the core teaching of Christianity, i.e., LOVE. To love means to forgive. Mr. President had put it perfectly and brilliantly. Nobody can be called a Christian without accepting and experiencing forgiveness from God and furthermore practising it. Therefore, no Christian can say, “I do not want to forgive Indonesians and the army!” There is no choice. Forgiveness is an absolute and un-compromised task for every Christian. We are obliged to forgive Sukarno, Suharto, Habibie, LB Murdani, Abinowo, Prabowo, Jony Lumintang, Try Sutrisno, and many other people who had roles in exploiting the natural resources in West Papua and killing the people. It is interesting to see the potential for the ‘wrongdoers’ to continue doing what they are doing if West Papuans are always forced to forgive.

Secondly, he clearly pinpointed that the people involved in various exploitative and destructive activities in West Papua are ‘foolish’ or ‘do not know what they are doing’. It is not clear whether he actually meant that the army is stupid. However, I know that they know what they

are doing. They know that they are killing people. For the sake of 'security' many trees have been cleared, many plants have been wiped out, many animals have died and many people have been killed. It is interesting to see the potential for 'wrongdoers' to continue doing what they are doing if they are always regarded as ignorant to what they are doing in West Papua, and why they are doing it. Another interesting thing in this statement is that he used the personal pronoun 'they' rather than 'we'. This means he excluded himself from the brutal actions in West Papua. Who then is responsible for this? It is not clear whom he meant by 'they'. It is my belief that Indonesians (civilians, politicians and armed force) are not ultimately responsible. We are all victims of this world system. Mr President does not seem to agree with me that we are all victims of foreign powers, foreign demands, and foreign needs.

If I want to be honest, especially in the case of problems in West Papua, I cannot see any problem in being either part of or separate from Indonesia. The problem is that Indonesia is already poisoned, already modernised, already brain-washed by other powers beyond itself. Indonesia is not an independent country, in my eyes as a tribal person. It is dependent and cannot stand on its own. It means other countries have contributions to those killings and violations of human rights. There are some countries giving advice and training in intelligence, there are some countries selling weapons, missiles, tanks, jet fighters and such like. There are some countries investing money in mining, logging, fishing, oil and various business activities in Indonesia. In short, it is illogical to always blame Indonesia for all things that go wrong in Indonesia. Other countries that have business with Indonesia and its archipelago in various aspects must commit themselves to end all the bad acts they are perpetrating at the moment. This is the way to help West Papuans to forgive. To support the Indonesian army all the time whilst asking West Papuans to forgive is illogical and impossible. Forgiving the Indonesian army will not solve the problem. The roots of all the suffering in West Papua are rooted in some of the Western countries and their population. I am referring to the West as a community, not as individuals or groups. This is the way tribal people look at things. We do not blame individuals only, we as society also take responsibility for things that individuals do.

In addition, it is ironic to see how Mr. President's own cronies have been involved in destroying the land, land resources, plants, animals and tribal people such as some mining companies and the famous Mamberamo Dam Megaproject that is underway under his support. This is ridiculous! Based on these ideas, I can say that Habibie regards Melanesians in West Papua as puppets with no brains to judge what is actually happening, how it is happening, why and on whose behalf.

Third, Mr. President actually asked West Papuans to stay with Indonesia, because 'to forgive' is similar to 'to forget'. Therefore, once West Papuans forget things that have happened in the past, what is happening now and what will happen in the future, then the demand for self-determination cannot be tolerated.

Thus, on the one hand, because almost every tribal group in West Papua are obedient to the Bible and regard it as absolute truth it becomes tactically difficult for West Papuans not to forgive as they are obliged to do. On the other hand, Mr. President does not and apparently cannot stop the misconduct of his own colleagues, particularly in the military, or he cannot stop himself from his misbehaviour towards Melanesians and natural resources in West Papua. How can he hope that West Papuans will forget about the past, present and future misconduct of the army while he himself cannot do his best to stop his army's misbehaviour? How far and how well can a West Papuan like me forgive the Indonesians? What do I expect the Indonesians to do so that I

can forgive them? Is this 'command' realistic for the contexts and situation in West Papua since 1962 up till now? There is a dilemma similar to that which the former Hong Kong Governor, Chris Patten faced when he was dealing with processes to produce the Good Friday Agreement between Republicans and Unionists in Belfast not long ago. He recalled on a TV interview in early September 1999 that it is difficult to resolve the problem in (Northern) Ireland because the memory of war and deaths of their beloved is impossible to forget. He recalled, "One woman approached me and said, 'That man killed my son'...". How realistic is the peace process in Ireland? How can we talk about peace, while killing continues, while it happened some days ago, while beloved ones are just murdered and still fresh in the memory? Perhaps the case is the same for West Papuans. How realistic is it for West Papuans to forgive Indonesians in general, and the army in particular?

This booklet is produced to briefly answer some of these questions and considerations. It is also a synopsis of my public letter that I have written in the Lani language. The purpose is to explain in depth about various issues such as culture, war, peace, environment, exploitation of natural resources and others that will hopefully help me and my people better understand our Tribal Life compared to other 'lives' on this planet earth. It is not to tell everything I have written in my language for my people. It attacks and declares war on the four major enemies of all Tribal People on earth: (1) Religious organisations, (2) Governments, (3) Aid Agencies, and (4) Multinational Corporations. It calls for an end of exploitative and destructive behaviours of these four parties and asks for reflections on what they have done so far in the 19th and 20th centuries. It urges them to "have a rest a bit!" and think "What on earth are we doing now? More killing? more cutting? more digging? more changing? more...? more...?". Will you say, "Enough!"? The main purpose of this book is educational, to educate my own people regarding our culture with the knowledge that our culture is already stable, well-established and needs no further changes. It has slightly changed but we need to preserve the remaining traditions in order to show our identities at least in the 21st century. It is the task of the younger generations to continue preserving their cultures as they wish, our task is to transfer the existing cultures to them as our inheritance that we own from our predecessors.

I am aware that I am still very poor in my knowledge to say things as I am saying in this letter. I am aware that it is too early for a Lani man to criticise 'modernity' with all others that tie to it like Christianity, Democratic government, NGOs and Corporations, which have been worshipped for years primarily by Westerners. I am aware that I am not the proper person to criticise the modern 'democratic leadership'. I am aware that I am impolite to talk against NGOs who have been helping my people in our social and economic lives so far with considerable successes. But at the same time, I am aware that I have to do so.

Let me put my message in this way:

We are OK with who we are
We are fine with how we are
We are alright with what we are
We are well as we are
HOWEVER, unfortunately;
We are getting into trouble by who you are
We are forced into difficulty by how you are
We are not safe by what you are

We are unstabled by what you have
HOWEVER
We will all be OK if we are tolerant
We will all be fine if we accept each other as we are
We will all be alright if we understand the meaning of 'life'
We will all be well if you agree that we are OK
BECAUSE
In fact I live for you, but
In fact you don't want to live for me
BECAUSE
You do not understand the meaning of life
The meaning of life is too complicated for you
ACTUALLY
Life is simple; Death is simple
What makes them complicated is 'how we live' in the 'life'.

Culture

First of all, in my personal opinion culture is the central basis of life. The ways we think, speak and behave are all coloured by our culture. Secondly, culture is tied-up to its environment; the social, political, geographic, economic and natural environment. Naturally, these aspects form culture. For example, tribal people in the coast of West Papua are hunter-gatherers because they do not need to cultivate food. Sago (staple food) is available almost everywhere in the region. Fish can be caught in the rivers and lakes in massive amounts. The case is different in the central highlands where they need to cultivate their foods (sweet potatoes) and other crops. These two different geographical conditions have shaped two distinct cultures.

Like a tree, culture is the root and the fruit of the tree (people). People distinguish one tree from the other from their fruits. But there are no fruits without roots. Culture is the root and fruit of a community. The world-view, norms and beliefs are the roots of a culture, while customs and other practices are the fruits of these roots. Anthropologists can investigate some of the roots but some deeper ones cannot be unearthed. It is not easy to judge roots from their fruits.

Third, culture forms either harmony or disharmony when one's culture interacts with or intervenes another's. Harmony exists when the culture adapts to the environment, respects and accepts whatever exists, as tribal culture does. However, disharmony always occurs when people want to change the environment. Both depend on human behaviour and attitude towards what exists around them.

Furthermore, a culture only works for its owners, regardless of whether the culture is seen as primitive, cannibal, undeveloped, modern, democratic or whatever you call it. It becomes 'bad' when another culture regards it as such, and tries to impose itself. All roots help trees grow and produce fruits. There is no need for one tree to blame the roots of another tree. All their functions are equally important. Therefore, there is no need for one culture to impose upon and expose what it has to other culture. It is ignorant to say that one culture is better than another. Thus, having a view that one's culture is better than the rest is the view of a very unwise person.

For me, a 'humane' culture is a culture that creates harmony and peace among all beings. It is not a culture that explores and exploits and finds out ways to become imperial. It is not a culture that creates hatred and trouble on this earth, not a culture that promotes one-sided view by excluding others. It is not a culture that looks down to other cultures. It is not a culture that has words like primitive, savage, Third World and so on.

Finally, naturally, culture emerges into various forms but it does not change. Most 'modern' communities believe that the culture changes; and that therefore they can change culture. In particular those who work for and/or live their lives like anthropologists, sociologists and missionaries are the most responsible people/ professions in practising this misconception. By learning the cultures of others, they treat other people just the same as animals. They manipulate, they stimulate, and they reformulate the 'culture' that they want to exist. For example, they promote marriages between one culture and the other. They promote transmigration and translocation programmes. They believe that once humans are moved from one culture and one region to the other, they will learn how to adapt, how to interact and how to live in the new environment. If there are problems at the beginning stage, then they regard it as normal. "Some generations later, all will calm down," is their statement. This is called social engineering. They call it acculturation and assimilation, terms that they like playing around with, terms that make them become honourable professors in anthropology, sociology, and the history of missionary work. Since one decade ago there has been another one called a social worker. They are all well-dressed up, big mouths, boastful-humble, pretending to have good-will, bringing good news, offering good services, delivering aid and so on.

There is a huge difference between our culture and modern culture. Our culture is more concerned with the safety and harmony of humankind with other creatures, while the modern culture is always trying to find out ways to explore, exploit and destroy other creatures. This is the foolishness of modern world. It seems there is something in their hearts, which drives them to tend to change things they face, to subdue whatever is in front of them. It does not attract me at all because this modern world is about exploration, exploitation and imperialism, about someone over someone else, about humankind against other beings, about the cruelty and greed of people for the earth's resources, even stupidly, the greed to exploit other human beings.

I realise that there are human beings on this earth who have a misconception that their culture should become the model for all people on earth. Even worse, their culture is not natural, i.e., their culture is destructive, exploitative and spread by force. They use all governmental, non-governmental, religious, and economic organisations to push their values throughout the world. Eventually, all of us will become like them and finally we will become them. To that point, they will say, "This is it. This is Christianity. This is democracy. This is humanity. All things outside this are primitive, undeveloped, cannibal, etc".

These are my predictions: At the end of the whole struggle;

1. We are all forced to become people with one religion, and if possible to become Christians;
1. We are all forced to consume Western democracy, even though it is corrupt and empty;
2. We are all encouraged to speak English, even though it is the language for almost all kinds of destruction that have ever occurred and will occur on this planet Earth;

3. We are all promoted to eat and drink what they want us to;

4. We are all financed by aid agencies to have

houses and all their facilities that they produce;

1. One world banking and economic system.

The world is becoming homogenised and diversity is becoming extinct.

We are all brutally brought into dependence and under total control of the Western world because they think their models are the only ones that all creatures should live by. That world will be characterised by monoculture in every aspect of life. This is a great disaster for humanity and bio-diversity, and all from great changes that only started less than five centuries ago. The only way to stop this from happening is for the West to sit down, to reflect, to re-examine and to repent their brutal misconduct. Repentance from being exploitative; repentance from feeling superior; repentance from feeling more civilised; repentance from calling others Third World and primitive; repentance from behaving destructively towards bio-diversity etc.

It is 'the West' that is dominating the world and endangering the earth and its bio-diversity. The West brought most of the disasters on this earth. They developed civilisation. Their civilisation developed all of the bad things that you can mention in the whole history of humanity and of the planet Earth. It starts with developing industry in agriculture. They learned how to 'conquer' all plants and 'subdue' them as they wish. One example; almost no park in Britain has untidy or natural plants because all grass, trees, flowers are cut and made tidy. The phrase 'look nice' is there in their mind. Whenever they work, they always think, "This should look nice," regardless of whether the 'niceness' is natural or made up. Even stranger, in some offices they have plastic plants very tidily placed. "Looks nice?". They do not care about naturalness but 'nice' and 'tidy' always come to their minds when subduing the plants.

Another step further, they learn how to conquer and subdue the animals. It is not surprising to see many people in the West raise wild animals as their pets. They think it is good to keep dogs and cats as pets. The main point is they want to subdue them, nothing else. They like dogs to go with them, they like cats to sit beside them. They are not happy if they find foxes in the bush. They get mad if they see lions in the garden. Some of them cannot wander around in bushes if they ever found even a baby lion in the bush. They will run if they see a small rat in their room. They will send animal police to get it and to subdue it.

Subduing the plants and animals does not satisfy them. They are not satisfied only exploiting natural resources on the earth. They even started to sell and buy other human beings. This is what they call slavery. Worse than that, not only do they sell, buy and treat people like they do animals but also they killed and wiped out many tribal people who existed in the lands before the West arrived. The examples are obvious in Africa, Australia, America and New Guinea. These all happened in the colonial era. I know that Indian Americans, Black Africans, Maori New Zealanders, Australian Aborigines, New Guinean Melanesians are aware of this. This is the exploitation of cultural, racial, linguistic and natural resources. Slavery. If not, what do you call it?

In this era of neo-colonialism they still support practices that aim at eliminating tribal populations on this earth. They are not satisfied with what they have done in America, Australia and Africa. They do not feel embarrassed with their past misconduct, and they never will. They always have something to justify their misconduct. For example, Western governments have sold

guns, Hawks, Bronco fighters, tanks, missiles, and given military as well as intelligence training to what they classify as 'Third World' countries like Indonesia and Nigeria. When Indonesia kills East Timorese, West Papuans, Molucans and Achehnese, they claim "These guns are not used for killing their own people!". Logically, if guns are not to kill people, then are they for hunting wild pigs? For hunting birds? For fishing? For what? Of course they are for killing people. Even small children will say that guns are for killing people. It is truly immoral to argue that guns are not used to kill people. Do they mean "Guns are not used to kill Javanese, but they can be used to kill West Papuans or East Timorese because they are not Indonesians!". Is this the message repeatedly stated by Western political leaders?

The West has gone beyond the command of their Bible. They do not behave like human beings anymore. It is difficult for me to understand the 'ethics' of their foreign policy. If I met them I would ask them to kill me with just one of the bullets they are selling to Indonesia rather than waiting for the Indonesian army to kill me. If I wait until the Indonesians use it to kill me, it may be a long time; surely it is more effective and quicker if they do so while I am in their country.

As I mentioned above all beings are being made to become one. Some countries have proven and shown themselves to be 'superpowers' and have demonstrated their 'superiority' over other countries. We are in the middle of the process towards a 'boring oneness'. It is unpredictable whether this 'superiority' will last through the next century. It is a mystery because it causes such misery for the beings of the earth.

Plants, animals and human beings are suffering because of the modern culture of the Western world. This culture is driven to become imperial over all other cultures. Therefore, it is important now for every ethnic group on this earth, particularly the Lani who are addressed in this letter, to prepare action against the further damage that this Western culture brings. Based on experiences in my own village and in the towns in West Papua, in Java and in the UK as well as other European countries, I would like to urge my people, the Lani, to defend themselves against this 'giant modern culture' whose 'magic hands' are now bringing damage to the earth, the earth that we live on and which we have to hand over to our future generations. This earth is not only the responsibility of the tribal people. My tribe and myself are not the only people to protect and to defend the earth's bio-diversity and its originality. The earth is entrusted to us all.

We cannot become greedy with what we can do, own, explore and exploit on this earth. We have a great responsibility to leave this earth for our future generations so that they do not get frustrated with us and our actions. I hope future generations of the West will read this booklet in coming centuries and will remember that actually there used to be tribal people who talked and fought and died for their sake, to leave this earth natural for them.

This action should start from myself. Therefore, I have set out my goals and I also put forward proposals to my people; some programmes to take care of this earth, especially the world where we live and for which we have responsibility. The goal of this letter is not to change the Lani culture nor to protect it against the change, but rather to make us ready to anticipate the balance between what I call 'the Western culture' and our own culture. And we will be able to do so effectively if we know what the West calls the 'agents of change'. In my eyes as a tribal person, these change-agents are enemies of tribal people. They change the existing culture, killing it and replacing it with their own. The great threat is the change from interdependency towards dependency i.e. dependency on the West because they possess that which makes us dependent; money, banks, technology, science, education, to mention a few. By imposing their beliefs, their education, their religion, their culture and their democracy, they are deliberately making us dependent

on them. They are expanding their markets by imposing their 'aid'. They want to make us reach the point where we will need what they have because some years later, they will need to sell us their goods. This would be a disaster.

The Four Enemies of Tribal People



Mosques and Churches dominate modern architecture in Papua: "Religion is a tool used by those in power to control the human beings of this earth."

The term 'tribal people/community' is perhaps inappropriate to refer to all people concerned about the destruction of bio-diversity. It actually refers to the whole bio-diversity of the planet Earth that consists of plants, animals and human beings and other resources on and in the earth. Tribal community best represents this concept of 'natural life' on this planet. Tribal community will vanish in the early 21st century if we do not do anything about our existence from now on. Of course, we are already late in the day, but better late than never. The enemies are blind, they are deaf, they are mad. They have done, are doing, and will do whatever they can to destroy the natural life. What tribal community should do is to realise this and act upon this knowledge to resist properly and effectively.

There are four enemies of the Tribal Community on this earth. They are; 1) Religious organisations 2) Governments 3) NonGovernmental Organisations(NGOs) and particularly the Aid Organisations (AOs) and 4) Multinational Corporations (MNCs). These four 'people' show themselves as 'messengers' from somewhere better, safer, wealthier and more modern on this earth. A simple message that they bring is "You are wrong in who, what and how you are, therefore, you need to change, and we know how you can change your life". They have a concept of what is correct and what is wrong based on their own culture. Even worse, they judge other cultures based on their 'correctness' and 'wrongness', without any compromise to the culture they encounter. Who points out that we are wrong? Who says that we are primitive? Who decides that we are poor? Who introduces all these terms: poor, primitive, underdeveloped, undeveloped, First, Second and Third worlds, the global North/South etc.? What are the intentions of these terms? We should not be fooled.

There was no-one asking for these terms in the past. There was no single Lani person who said that we needed them. We were all OK, we were alright. But who bothers with who and what and how we are? Of course, not us, but someone else. Why is someone else bothered with our lives? Believe me, there are 'hidden agendas', and these hidden agendas are not to help us, not to make us good. They are all to kill us. They are all to destroy us. Some destroy our basis of living, some destroy our physical life and some destroy our essence of life. Therefore, I cannot say that religion is better than government. I cannot say that NGOs are better than religion. There is no comparative judgement to make. They are all wrong. They are all exploitative; they are all killing us. It is as simple as that. Interestingly, we are more concerned about our physical obliteration than that of our roots and identity. Religious groups and aid agencies are more dangerous than governments and MNCs. Because we regard them as good, and they regard themselves as do-gooders they will never admit they are killing us, killing our culture.

These four enemies are determined to work out their parts, in various areas, at various levels, to make this world their 'ideal' world. Some call it the 'modern' or 'civilised' world, some 'heaven', some 'nirvana', and some 'better life'. Let us see what these enemies do to our lives now and in the future.

The First Enemy: Religious Organisations

I was born and grew up in a Christian family, therefore, most of my criticism will go towards the work and teachings of Christianity, with very few references to the Moslem religion. As a Christian and based on my experience working in the church for more than ten years, I believe that there is something wrong with religions that come in from foreign countries. In what follows I will outline some of the problems that Lani people face due to religions from outside. Religious leaders and missionaries will definitely argue that I am wrong. They will ask my father and his colleagues as founders of my church to justify their arguments, however, this will be manipulative. It is because of the successful brainwashing process that has been happening since the 1960s. The religious missionaries and leaders from the West poisoned my father and his colleagues with their philosophy. I know, from my deep heart, that they suffer a lot because of being Christianised and civilised. I know that they miss their world, the world that they have experienced, that vanished in the early 1960s, the world that missionaries would describe as "Primitive and animist!".

Religious believers are required to believe theirs is the true religion. They stand against the beliefs that already exist in areas where they go and they also condemn other religions as misleading. Their typical statement is this: "There is only one way to heaven, therefore, if you do not do this and that, you are in danger of hell!". This message means, all other things are wrong, and this is the only truth.

If someone threatens me with anything, a knife, a bow and arrow, a gun, the Gospel, the Qura'an, culture, education or whatever, then they are terrorising me. Those who terrorise are commonly called terrorists. If I am wrong please correct me, but this is my basic understanding about terrorism. However, ironically, religious groups are called 'good people'. I just cannot understand why people who terrorise my culture are called good people.

The result is that religion has completely destroyed the way we think, the way we behave and the way we talk. In the Lani community, all people look "brown in colour but white in behaviour!". Their arguments make sense, are very strong and sound correct, exactly the same as their missionary fathers did. They want to change everything we have into their missionary culture. However, we will never change our race, skin colour, or hair because the missionaries never allowed their children to marry with us. Once an Indonesian policeman fell in love with a missionary woman in my village. She was sent back to her home country straight away, accused of falling in love with people from "outside their culture". In other words, what the missionaries want is for us to get involved in and believe in their religion, but they do not think we can marry them. Thus, philosophically and culturally, they want us to be in their world, but physically they want us to be separate because we are brown, we are curly haired, we are in Indonesia, and perhaps because they think we are inferior.

No doubt, it is obvious to me that all troubles that come into the Lani community are brought in through the door marked 'religion'. Therefore, if people come into my village and destroy my life, my worldview, my culture, then the first thing to blame is the religion, nothing else. They have started the cultural genocide, and they claim to be 'good people', preaching good news and messages of peace. What on earth is this?

It is typical of the West. They have a belief that there is always right and wrong, and that they are best to judge them. This concept relates to all other things like the way of talking, the way of working, the way of governing, the way of farming, and so on. In this way they set themselves apart from the rest of the world. In comparison, we never ever judge other cultures, other religions, or other communities based on knowledge of our own. We never tried to impose our culture and our belief on others. We never think that the West needs to learn from us. What we know is that they are Western people, they have their own life and culture, we cannot change them, because they are as they are. However, they do not have this concept. They do not judge things through the eyes of other cultures, but instead bring all things into their world and then make judgement. And this is wrong, according to me, anyway.

The result is that we Lani people have lost our own identity. If people asked "Who are the Lani?" then the first answer, unfortunately, will be "They are all Christians". They are not Lani anymore, they are Christians. If I were to list the characteristics of being a Lani, then about 90% would not exist in the life of Lani people anymore. What has happened? Christianity has replaced them all. What a pity! Western Christians, however, will say, "Praise the Lord!"

Religion does not only spread widely because they believe it, but also because they want to win other people to join their religion, to gain strength in numbers. Some of the political parties are based on religious beliefs. It is clear to me now that some politicians and political parties

have been born from religious beliefs; that they fight for religions and make decisions based on this. In other words, human beings and humanity become second to religion. That is why it is not surprising for me to see many West Papuans saying “We need to get rid of Indonesian Muslims!” even though this is not the reason we should fight for. Neither Christianity or Islam are from the Lani. Why should we bother about them? They originally come from the Middle East. So why should we bother with them and why should we base our struggle on them? Why can’t our position be based on our own culture? Is it because we are already assimilated into modern religions?

In many cases governments have sponsored the activities of religious groups. Of course, there is nothing wrong with having religions, but what is wrong is imposing one’s religions onto others and creating problems, starting wars against other religions. I agree that religion is one part of the culture but the problem here is imposing one culture to the other, and considering other religions as wrong and dragging other people into one’s religion. Religion has caused, is causing, and will continue to cause most of the brutal wars in human history, but it is still strongly regarded as something essential within human life. In what sense is it important? This is not clear, and I cannot understand it. If not the atomic bomb, religion will destroy planet Earth. However, people love religion. It is true that religion has ended some tribal wars in West Papua. This is what the Imams and missionaries are proud of. This is what they point out as the result of their ministries. However, it is also true that they have started more than one war; religious wars, denominational wars, economic wars, political wars, to mention just a few. These wars have no simple solutions, have no moral basis, and are very destructive. Imagine tribal wars. Almost all tribal wars happened because of tribal problems like theft, sexual relationships and other domestic affairs. There is rarely war because of one tribe’s intention to exploit or conquer another. Tribal wars are like small conflicts inside a family. There was no serious damage after tribal wars, there was even real peace established, which does not and cannot exist in modern society. Compare the peace that follows tribal war with that that follows wars in civilisation. What peace in the Balkans after Bosnia? What peace in the Gulf after Desert Storm?

Religions increase the intensity of war. The feeling of affiliation to religion has caused so much trouble on this planet. Let us not forget the words like ‘fundamentalist’ and ‘extremist’. For me, most often these terms are related to war and religion. From the records in the Bible and Qura’an, wars are there. Therefore, for me, trying to end wars, especially by religious leaders or religious figures, is nonsense. In Indonesia, it is called, “Usaha menjaring angin” (The efforts to catch the air). Religions even justify some wars. Therefore, as long as people are committed to religion(s), there is great potential for war, not the reverse.

Below is a story:

Once upon a time, there was a man called Mbakwi Gombo. He lived a nomadic life, a bit strange to all his fellow villagers. He built his houses on the bank of the River Mulik, a river that changes course, sometimes flowing in the eastern bank, sometimes in the middle, sometimes on the western bank. It is difficult to figure out, even within a day. Mbakwi likes the behaviour of the Mulik. He had been living in ‘his way’ all of his life.

He did not farm. He ate fruit and leaves from the forests, and meat from hunting. Most often he caught little pigs, snakes and cassowary birds. He raised them in the riverbank, he fed them and they knew him well. He built them their nests and huts. He knew when they were hungry, when they were sick, and when they were crying. He loved the animals and they loved him in return.

Sometimes, people from other villages came to his hut and asked him to give them some of the animals he had, either in the bush or those around him. He then asked people to choose which ever they preferred. After they chose what they wanted, he then led those to be killed into a pen. He then fed them well and talked to them, pretending nothing dangerous was happening. Even the food at this time seemed better than before. The animals were so happy. They greeted him very well.

Unfortunately, they were animals and they did not know what was actually happening. The guests shot and killed them in front of Mr. Gombo. The animals shouted to him, they cried at him, and sometimes they ran to him and died in front of him. Yes, but Mr. Gombo wanted money, not just to raise them. These animals could not give him money, so they should be killed to make him money.

When some of the fellow animals were killed, the rest ran away to the bush. They became wild again. However, with his skills, Gombo called them back, and fed them well. They became friends again. I do not know what was happening in the minds of those animals. Did they remember how their fellows were killed in front of their eyes? Were they prepared to be slaughtered as had happened to the others? How did Gombo managed to become a 'good shepherd' while at the same time he was their killer? How come the animals did not run away from him forever?

Who is Mr. Gombo? Mr. Gombo is 'the missionary'. And who are the people who came to kill those animals? They are the 'government'. And the animals are us, the Lani, all tribal people.

It is clear to me that religions have been used by the civilised community as a tool to brainwash and control the minds of people. When I became a Christian, I can see how foolish I was to respond to this world's powers. As a Christian, I need to forgive those who kill me, I must forget what happened yesterday, I must give my eyes if my ears are taken away. Religion is a tool used by those in power to control the human beings of this earth.

The Second Enemy: Government

In this letter, when I use the word 'government' I refer to the system and institutions of rulership and decision-making in any state. However, in the context of Indonesian rule, I cannot separate the government and the Indonesian army, because the government is under very strong control of the army. Therefore, when I write about the Indonesian government, it refers to any sector of the Indonesian state, including the army. One can argue that government is separate from the army and law, but it is difficult to apply to Indonesia at the moment.

Likewise, the government is inseparable from the concept of the 'nation-state'. This concept also comes from the West. Government has two important messages that it carries, just like the religious organisations. Religious organisations have messages about Heaven and Hell, salvation and punishment. Government has messages of democracy and development. Both sound excellent. Who would not want democracy and development? No one on this earth, except the Lani people of West Papua. Who would not want a nation-state and a government? No one, except the Lani people of West Papua. Nation-states and control are related to each other. Consequently, a nation-state must have its laws and security forces (including the army) to enforce and promote control over the people.

In exactly the way as has happened with Christianity and other religions in Lani areas, the same people say

“You need education, you need modern medicine, and you need this and that. Government has all these. Government can offer you these. What you need to do is this; Do not oppose the government. Be polite. Be silent. Be obedient. Even if your father was killed in front of your own eyes, do not oppose the government”. The church says, “the Government is appointed by God, therefore, you cannot oppose them”.

The only problem for me with development is this: There was, is and will never be an end to ‘development’. I am surprised to see how Britain, one of the most overdeveloped countries, from day to day, does not stop the development. Physical, mental and spiritual developments never stop. I thought the development activities in the West had stopped and that’s why they were coming to my village to export their expertise, to offer their money and knowledge to do the ‘development’. I thought they had reached an end point or the goal of development and therefore, they were coming to my village to lead us to the point that they had reached sometime before us. I thought they knew the outcome of all civilisation and modern life. I thought they were all satisfied and do not need any development and they are coming to help us to reach that point of satisfaction. In fact, all these thoughts are wrong. There is no single person in the West whom I have met and heard so far that agrees with me that they need to stop developing. Naturally, civilisation means developing all the time.

They say “You need democracy, not dictatorship”. What has happened with modern religions and tribal beliefs is exactly the same as what is happening with the tribal pattern of organising our society and so-called ‘democracy’. There is the same premise inside the promotion of democracy to this civilisation. There is always a belief that ‘democracy is better than other forms of government’. This is just the same as “The Bible is the absolute truth and everybody should believe it!”.

Think about what has happened so far, what is happening now, and what will be happening in the future for the sake of so-called ‘democracy’. Democracy has become a ‘powerful’ word and a necessity for the global community to apply. Indonesia is being shaken quite significantly by ‘democratic nations’ because they believe Indonesia has something wrong in its systems of government. Most of the scholars in Indonesia, the majority of whom are ‘brain-washed’ by the West, believe that democracy is the one and only system for all the governments of this earth.

When the USSR collapsed, people were saying, “The former USSR is now becoming more democratic than before” and that democracy was victorious. The western belief in democracy has justified intervention in Iraq and other Arab states and ‘developing’ countries. Politicians see and use the word ‘democracy’ as the strongest, sharpest two-sided sword to cut everything that does not suit their civilisation. This is the same as the use of the Bible for spreading Christianity. The question now is: “Is it true that democracy is the only solution for civilised and modern governments? Is it the only way of governing the community?”. Many people have told me like this, “Indonesia is not a democratic country, therefore, you are suffering a lot. That is why you are being killed. Law enforcement is not strong because your country is not democratic, etc”. I wonder if this is true and I cannot see it because I am foolish, I am just a tribesman.

This is what I can say. I cannot see anything wrong with the Indonesian philosophy of Pancasila. I cannot see anything wrong with the Indonesian rules and regulations. What bothers me is this: Why should the United States care about me in West Papua or East Timor? Why should they care about us in Indonesia? Mr. Milosevic, Mr. Hussein, and Mr. Qadafy may raise the same question. Why should this happen? Why should people think that Indonesia needs democracy? What if it does not have democracy? What if Indonesia still applies the Pancasila

with its guided-democracy principles? Why should the West bother about it? Perhaps these are sensitive questions and the answers are public taboo so I am not allowed to ask.

For me, democracy, autocracy, dictatorship, monarchy, are all the same. All are used to control and manipulate people. All are to exploit. They are all tools in the notion of the 'nation-state' that does not exist in tribal communities. Therefore, promoting democracy is not the solution for tribal communities.

Basically and naturally, I do not and cannot oppose development itself. The only problem here is that the development is 'planned'. Indonesia is one of the record-breaking countries due to its famous REPELITA (Five-Year Development Plan). Indonesia has completed its First Phase of the plan (25 years) and within the last five years has started its Second Phase of Development (for another 25 years). These are the main problems for me:

What are planned in the 'Repelita'? In West Papua, these are some of the answers: Road construction from Jayapura to Wamena, Mamberamo Dam Megaproject for processing Freeport Mining activities and for providing electricity, building the House of Representative Office in Wamena, sending Transmigrants to Arso, Kwamki Lama, Sorong and Merauke. What happens if someone opposes it? In one of my stories here, I tell of what happened to Tekimus Weya. For the sake of development, he was killed. When governments or whoever on this earth force 'planned developments' then they have to make sure that all 'planned activities' are carried out according to the budget and resources available. If it cannot happen as planned, they try hard to make it happen. The way to make it happen is by solving the problems. If lions cause problems in development, they find out ways to get rid of lions. If a crocodile causes the problem, it is solved the same way. If people cause problems, then the best solution is to wipe out the people.

Why do people become less important than development? Because the money for the development is from the rich countries who give loans, and some years later they will ask for repayment. And if that happens, the governments need to make sure that the money spent is useful in generating income for the governments. There is a clear interdependence that I call "lingkaran setan" (or Satan's circle) where you cannot get out from it once you step into it. It is a nightmare, it is the Hell that the Bible describes. Hell is not somewhere, sometime later, it is here, and now. It is in the so-called 'development'. Why should we 'plan' the development? Some of the answers for Indonesia are "We want to be like Americans; we want to increase income; we want to increase capital, and we want to modernise the Indonesian people". If this is the case, then there is another question: What will happen if we become like Americans? What will happen if roads fill 10% of the land area in West Papua? What will happen if all Melanesians have more than one car? What will happen if all Lani need bread, not sweet potato anymore? What will happen if...? The basic reason for planning development, as development experts and scholars argue, is to grasp the future now, to anticipate the future and to control the changes. What happens if, for example, the world is naturally heading towards the East, but developers want it to head Westward? Imagine how the planners will bring about changes to the world against its natural changes. I am not arguing that the planned developments do not work, but I am saying that they are not helping us to survive on this planet, they are not helping our future generations to inherit this planet. They just do not care. They want the things that can happen naturally in the coming 100 years to happen today and now. This is all about development. And this is the problem.

If it is planned, then how is it planned? This is what happens in Indonesia. Melanesians in West Papua, especially the Lani people are still naked, primitive, potential killers, scary. These words are used by the Westerners. "They do not know what they need and what they want. We are

in Jakarta, educated in the West, more civilised, and know how to develop. We know what they need. Let us plan this and that. Let us impose our plans upon people in Wamena and Jayapura. If they are against this, shoot them, because they may be constraints to the development. We have learnt how to design projects, we have learnt how to resolve conflicts, we have learnt how to restore order, we have learnt how to impose martial law, we have been trained how to carry out intelligence services, we know all of these. Let us impose, manipulate, and develop. They do not know what, why and how the development works. They will learn and if they do not, it does not matter". This is called 'top-down' management, isn't it? People who are in governments, bureaucrats and politicians always have confidence in themselves, their skills, knowledge and expertise. They feel secure in this. They view a voice like mine as 'nothing' and 'nonsense'. Yes, they are the planners of the whole destruction of this planet. No one, not one tribal person on this planet can agree with their plans and them.

Government, the Church and Education have a very interesting relationship to investigate. Recently I had a tour to some of the colleges in Oxford. After listening to some stories regarding how those colleges were established, and how it is being run until now and comparing them to what has been happening in my village, it is clear that there is a close relationship between the religious organisations, governments and education.

I was educated by the church and government; they brainwashed me to agree with them all the time, to become a slave to their philosophies and religions. However, I have seen the danger of becoming their slave. Mental slavery is more dangerous than physical slavery because the 'mental slaves' never realise what is going on in their minds. They even stand up and claim themselves owning those religions and philosophies of their masters. Physical slavery never produced a slave that finally stands up and behaves or talks exactly the same as his/her master. Most often, they oppose or are different to the master. Mental slavery is really, really dangerous.

The church needs those holding graduate and postgraduate titles to lead the organisation. So does the government. The leaders are products of their own schools/ seminaries. They pay a lot of money for schooling so that finally, local people can think, behave and talk just like them. They try their best to prevent tribal people having contacts with organisations from other churches, religions or philosophies.

For example, I was taught that Catholicism is bad, they practice so many sins in Catholic Church. I was taught that Jehovah's Witnesses are bad because they deny Jesus as the Lord. I was taught that the Pentecostal churches are wrong because they praise the Holy Spirit more than Jesus Christ. I was taught that Moslems are wrong because they do not believe in the Trinity God. I learnt that Buddhism is wrong because they worship man-made statues, trees, stones, etc.

I was taught that dictatorship is bad because it does not care about human life, it does not give chances for people to express their ideas. I learnt that Palestinians are wrong and Jews are good, therefore, we must pray for the Jews and forget about Palestinians. I learnt to hate the Arab World because Indonesia is a member of the Arab League.

I learnt that Satan is the father of all disaster. Time after time, I hate Satan and his angels. I do not now know whether I believe Satan does exist.

I was taught to hate Russians because they do not believe in God. I was taught that Communism means torture, slavery, disappearance, poverty, and all other negative things. I was taught that the Indonesian Communist Party (PKI) was wrong because it caused millions of Indonesians to lose their lives.

I now realise that this story was actually in reverse, those who came with religions killed the PKI people. My teachers taught me that millions of Indonesians dying as members of the Communist party was fine. They told me that it was good that communism disappeared from Indonesia. Satan and communism are seen as the same.

All these, I learnt from what we all know by the name of 'school' or 'education'. Those who taught me are 'the church' and 'the government'. In other words, they had successfully brain-washed me to agree with them.

Now, I have come to the West and I am learning here. An interesting agenda that I learnt in this country is that the word 'democracy' has replaced the words "Salvation from every sin in Jesus!". Wait a minute, I say, I do not want to agree with you at once.

I have learnt that the things people taught me were based on their vested interests and their politics. I want to know whether you are telling me genuinely or you have something behind it. (Please refer to my comments on democracy).

Governments have used their tools (religion, army, law, NGOs, and MNCs) to justify their misconduct.

The Third Enemy: Aid Organisations

I need to make a clarification about the terms Non-Governmental Organisation and Aid Organisation. I see these two as separate and different. I do not use the term 'NGOs' because some NGOs are OK for me because they do not provide funds but only channel the voices of those whose voices need to be heard. They do not collect money, and that is good for me. The NGOs are those representing people directly from the grassroots. An example is the LEMASA (The Amungme Tribe Council).

I see Aid Organisations (AOs) as those pretending to be concerned with tribal people, but which are the same as religious people and government in principle. For one reason or another, they have a belief that tribal people need good housing, better health care, better management of family economy, better standard of education, and so on. Believe me or not, they work as the dangerous hands of governments. They drag the tribal people into the world-system of capitalism. They do not help tribal people to be protected from the world-system; they accelerate the process of their inclusion in the modern world. They know that this world is mad, disastrous, corrupt and uncertain, but at the same time they force tribal people to join the modern community.

Let me give you the following story to explain my idea here:

Once upon a time, there was a pig feast in a village called Mabuname. It was a mass wedding party that only happened once every few years. The people were happy. Many pigs were killed. As usual, women were assigned to go to the riverbank and clean the inside part of the pigs.

When they were doing their jobs, a dog came along the river. It was asking for small piece of the meat. Most of the women did not give a piece and they even threw stones at it. It ran up to the first woman on the top of the river and this woman gave a small piece to the dog. The dog waved its tail, sat down and ate the meat. The woman gave another piece. Seconds later, the dog turned into a man, a gentleman.

He told the woman, "Hi beautiful woman, go to your husband, talk to your family and take them away from this party. There will be a huge and very heavy rainstorm. You must escape to Mount Biam".

The husband and his children did not believe the mother and laughed at her saying, "Dear me, how can this woman believe a dog could turn into man!". This is a myth, not real. They were laughing at her. She only took her youngest son and escaped.

Just some minutes later, heavy rain came and flooded the whole area of Mabuname. The water covered the whole valley. No single person or animal escaped from the flood. All were dead.

During this flood, a person came to the woman and said, "Come here. You are fine. Your husband, your children and other people are celebrating the party very happily. You won't be disappointed. From this mountain, it seems like the flood is significant, but it is actually covering the joy that they have now. They are having great party. You will miss it, definitely". When the mother refused to be persuaded, the man dragged her and her youngest son and threw her into the flood. They had escaped but then they were forcibly dragged into the flood. They were alive, but this man meant to kill them.

When the mother was in the flood, she cried for help. The man then offered a boat for her and her child. The man asked for help from his village to send a rescue team, food, and other necessary equipment. They did their best but the mother and her child were very tired; they had just finished climbing up the mountain, and then they had been dragged back into the flood and now the man shouted at them to hold the boat and respond to the rescue team. What a nightmare!

This man did exactly the same thing as the AOs are doing. They drag tribal people into the flood of modern life, capitalism, dependence on money etc., then campaign and raise money to help tribal people.

They are different people (by face, by name, by nationality). If I wisely compare what both governments and AOs do, it is difficult for me to distinguish between them. Both have 'development' on their agenda. Both believe that the existing condition (tribal way of life) is wrong. They both pretend to help people. They both work for, and in line with, the great enemy of all creatures on this earth; the corporations. If this is the case, then how can an aid organisation claim to do good when actually they are doing bad things by imposing their beliefs, practices and culture onto tribal people.

The names of aid organisations are different from those belonging to the governments and churches. Aid organisations try to keep a distance between themselves and religious organisations and governments, even though it is obvious that they have certain belief systems in common. AOs always have their own philosophies, stated in their by-laws or general principles. They appear to the public as non-religious, non-governmental humanitarian organisations but they are actually the hands of certain groups. Most often, religious organisations and governments create their own AOs. This is something that we need to watch out for.

All of them have and believe in the magic word 'development'. This term is magic and powerful. Anyone questioning it like me can be called 'primitive', 'foolish', 'liar' etc.. I know that they always have reasons to justify their misconduct in the destruction of this planet.

If they believe in 'development' that means they support changes. If they support changes then they are people who always want to change, change, and change (This is all about modern society/civilisation. Please refer to the discussion on modern life).

All of them believe that what they have is better than what we have. 'They' means modern civilisation, and 'we' refers to tribal people. Especially, the AOs have introduced and promoted the 'Grass Roots' approach to development. What comes from this level to affect the top is not clear because almost all of the 'development' processes come from the top-down.

It is AOs that say “Tribal people need development”. They even determine what kinds of development tribal people need. It is they that teach how to ‘behave’ in a development project. Is it them and their agenda that are imposed and then renamed as if it were from the ‘bottom’, the ‘grass roots’. For example, if Jonah comes to me and teaches me how to plant rice and then asks me what I need for planting rice, then it is not bottom-up. A rice planting programme is top-down. I may ask for fertilisers and other farming facilities for planting rice and Jonah can claim it as a ‘bottom-up’ process, but it is actually not so.

AOs should not have any belief, philosophy or ideal, which they claim as ‘good’ before coming to tribal people. If they already have an ideology then they impose alien ideas upon us. This is the basic mistake that AOs have been committing, and we cannot allow them to continue in our villages.

The Fourth Enemy: Corporations

The virus for the whole of humanity is what I call ‘profit’. It causes various deadly diseases like the exploitation of natural resources, deforestation, exploitation of cultural heritage, mass murder, disappearance, intimidation and other misconduct.

Believe it or not, corporations are the kings that rule the whole world. Modern world communities have already become the slaves of these kings. They appear to be free, independent and democratic, but basically they are slaves. Some of the ‘kings’ that we know in West Papua are Freeport MacMoRan, Rio Tinto Zinc, AMRO Bank, PT Wapoga Timber Group, PT Hanurata (the army timber company), PT Pertamina (an Indonesian Shell), PT PELNI (ship company), PT MNA (Indonesian airlines) and others. Governments with their leaders (presidents, queens, and kings, Prime ministers) may appear to be in control, but they are not. I do not understand why they or their people think they are independent. I don’t understand why they regard their countries as democratic. I just do not understand.

Ironically, most world leaders are executives or owners of giant companies on this earth. For example, the former Indonesian president owns thousands of major and subsidiary companies throughout Indonesia. Some are in Asia and other parts of the world. Current Indonesian political leaders own many companies. Under the last President’s support, the Mamberamo Hydroelectric Megaproject is under feasibility studies, and in less than five years the Megaproject will have begun. In other words, it seems excellent for them if world leaders in government own most of the giant companies in the world or in their respective countries.

However, those who become political leaders without any involvement in business are merely slaves of corporations. No doubt, they are puppets of businessmen for sure. I am really sorry to see them. More politicians become and are called leaders even though they are not leading their countries. In fact, they are dragged into the leadership, and they are forced to say what they should say. I believe their hearts tell one story but their brain will force them to say the other, based on the voice of the business people. It is clear that the power is in the hands of corporations, not political leaders. In other words, if people want changes to political practices in our era, it is a waste of time if we lobby with the people in the governments called politicians.

Instead, it is logical if we go to the bosses of corporations. It is also logical to say that the new order of the world’s governments should be given to the corporations. We will waste time, energy and money if we do not change this view that politicians are the key people to deal with. NGOs

as well as activists that are fighting for democracy and all sorts should not deal with politicians, but with the bosses of corporations. They eat, live, sleep and dream well, while at the same time they create so much problems for this world. The problems they create are handed to politicians to deal with, while they enjoy their lives. This is unfair. Politicians should not become foolish about this.

Corporations do not care if you die, if you are poor, if you are against them; what they care about is how much profit they can make with minimum expense and in the shortest time possible.

Corporations pretend to care for other creatures, but above all profit is their lord. The US dollar reads "In God we trust". Let me add one more statement to it, because without it, the trust in God will not be effective. It reads, "In profit we thrust!". I have seen many human rights violations reported in Timika, West Papua. Many tribal people conducted demonstrations against the Freeport mining operations. Many environmentalists have expressed their concerns at the environmental destruction caused by the mining operations. Freeport, backed up by the governments, responded through their researchers that they had considered all the allegations from NGOs. They justified their misconduct as necessary and unavoidable. The message is simple: As long as they make a profit, they will do whatever outsiders suggest. However, if the suggestion is likely to cause a decrease in profit, then they will say "Wait a minute, we need to find out ways to increase the profits but at the same time to close the mouths of those shouting against the mining operation". It is logical because they have the motto: "In profit we thrust!".

Agricultural and industrial revolution are all about destruction and power control. Do not forget that people in the Western world are actually suffering a lot. As a simple example, there is no land where people can build their huts. There is no place where people can go, gather and enjoy their life. There is no place where people can grow their food. There is no place where people can pick what they can eat, such as cassava leaves and 'ndimbar' leaves in the jungle as we can in West Papua. There is nobody that can find something to eat in the modern community; they must buy it. Everything is well controlled. Control is in the hands of those with money. The rich people control money. The rich people are those who do not care about the people and our environment.

Above all, we all need to agree that corporations are the kings of the world powers. Corporations govern the world in absolute authority. The religious organisations, the governments, and the NGOs are all dependent on the corporations. There is no way to escape from the corporations in the modern world. The only way is by refusing modern life.

All aspects of life on this earth are concentrated and centralised into 'money'. Money is the evil, and the god of modern community.

What is Wrong with the Modern World?

Please note that the ‘wrong’ things in modern culture that I am pointing out in this chapter are based on my personal view. It does not represent the whole Lani people. Also, it does not mean that what I say is wrong is always wrong for every culture. Some culture will say “this is good, we want it!”. I strongly believe that there is no absolute truth, including statements of right and wrong. All are relative, and it depends on each of us.

My impression of the modern world is divided into three. Actually there should be four, but until now, as I am writing this, I have yet to identify my next impression of life in the developed or over-developed world. Again, this letter is not intended to please the ‘modern community’ or to insult them, but it aims at telling ‘my real impressions’ of the Western world to my people.

There is no Real Democracy/ Freedom

One thing that I found, particularly at times when governments have elections and campaigns, is that actually there is no democracy in so-called democratic nations. The example that I have seen is Britain. The reason is simple, because people have no freedom in their individual lives. I still cannot understand and do not know very well how a people who are not free can be called democratic. They are not free to drink. They are not free to sit down. They are not free to build their house. They are not free to walk around in the bush. They are not free to sleep outside their house. They are not free to talk to each other in trains or buses. They are not free to greet people in their lives. There is no freedom at all. They have ‘independent’ countries but are not free. In addition there are security cameras everywhere-in shops, in train stations, in the streets, near parks- everywhere, policemen are watching. I feel like I am being watched as a criminal without having done anything.

At the time I am writing this letter, there is a bill in Britain being passed through within the parliament, a bill called the ‘Terrorism Bill’. This bill will ban any activities related to supporting anything from outside Britain such as the activities of the African National Congress (ANC), Palestinian Liberation Organisation, or the Free Aceh Movement. Not only supporters of foreign organisations, this bill will also ban any citizen from Britain to protest against GM Food, against arms sales, to feed the people, against dirty politics. This bill means British people must say “Yes!” or they must say nothing about whatever politicians want to do. This bill means “Good bye democracy! This is the United Kingdom! A New Monarchy is in power! The heads of government are not Kings and Queens but the Board of Directors and Executive Directors!”

I do not know whether I can call this a free nation. Perhaps I have a different concept of the terms ‘freedom’ and ‘democracy’.

I think democracy and dictatorship are just the same, but they have different names because they have different forms. Both of them are systems of government. Both of them aim at control-

I Want To Work

I want to work. I like to work.

I work every day.

Work is good for me.

Do you work?

Do you work every day?

I am happy at work.



ling people. Both of them have caused exploitation of nature, land and human beings. Both of them want their citizens to become objects of their governing policies.

Naturally, human beings do not need democracy. Democracy is only needed when one person or a group has an ambition to control the rest of the people or the rest of the world. Therefore, I can see in the United Kingdom very clearly that some people do accept, agree and strongly believe that democracy is the only way for humankind to live. Others are more natural, they can see that there is something wrong with their democracy. They point out how bad their democracy is. However, unfortunately, they have not got any clue whatsoever to point out what is the 'alternative' way of governing. Unfortunately, I have not got anything to suggest, nor do I have any right to do so. The only thing I can say is that my tribal way of life is already fine, at least for me and for my people. There are no politics, no campaigns with promises, no general elections, no manipulation, no exploitation, nothing endangering the earth or creatures, including other human beings.

People Do Not Enjoy Their Lives

In fact, not many people enjoy their lives, and this annoys me very much because I expected them to enjoy their lives.

In the West it seems people suffer more psychologically than physically. In West Papua, many trees are being cut down, many minerals are being exploited, much oil is being taken away, many people are being killed. These are all physical damages. Thus, the sufferings on this earth are balanced; physical sufferings in West Papua and emotional and psychological suffering in the modern community. According to Buddhism, this balance is natural and acceptable, it is called the "Karma Rule".

At the same time, it is amazing to realise that psychologically people in my culture are healthier than here in the West. I was amazed to learn about diseases like depression. I was amazed to see that so many are depressed. Perhaps that is one of the reasons why people do not greet each other on the roads or trains and buses. Maybe that is why three people that I greeted responded rudely or not at all.

Some people in the UK believe that they do enjoy their lives, as we do in West Papua, but I cannot see this with my 'primitive' eyes. The first reason is because they are all slaves of time. Secondly, because they are slaves of money. Third, they are not on their own as individuals, but they are all well controlled and well manipulated by the state. As a result, I have seen people who told me like this, "We need police very much, we need CCTV cameras everywhere, we need security personnel in buses and trains so that we feel secure". Actually they become more insecure by this stuff.

Let us read and compare the following stories: Mr. A is a British, and Mr. K. is a Lani. Both of them are answering one question: "Can you tell me your daily activities, please?" Both of them are married, with two children. They are young, aged 25.

Story Mr. Alan (A)

I think it will be very long if I tell in the form of a story, therefore, I put the story in a table to make it shorter. Please imagine what happens in the middle of them both.

DAYS ACTIVITIES

MONDAYS-FRIDAYS

08:00 Wake up and prepare (bath, breakfast)

08:00–09:00 Drive to the office

09:00–09:30 Start office work

10:00–10:15 Break (tea, cake etc.)

10:30–12:00 Work in the office

12:00–13:00 Lunch and break

13:30–17:00 Office work

17:00–18:00 Way back home

18:00–19:00 Arrive at home, shower, dinner, etc.

19:30–22:00 Pub, etc.

WEEKENDS (SATURDAY, SUNDAY)

10:30 Wake up, breakfast, etc.

10:30–22:00 Family activities such as picnics, clubbing, pubbing, etc.

In addition to his daily work, there are some hours/days that are spent for preparing lessons, writing reports, attending meetings, attending training, etc.

The Story of Mr. Kat (K)

Every morning I wake up at six. Afterwards, I eat my breakfast, but sometimes I do not have breakfast. After breakfast I go to the garden, sometimes with friends, sometimes with my wife and children, sometimes alone. It takes one to two hours to get to the garden.

I work in the garden for about 4–8 hours. From the garden, I go to collect wood for the fire. Some of the wood is for cooking in the garden, some to carry back home.

On market days, Tuesdays and Thursdays, I go to the market and sell or buy things like vegetables, salt, soap, matches, and sometimes cakes.

On Sundays, I go to the church.

How can a 'life' be enjoyable in the case of Mr. A? Almost every minute is dedicated to 'someone' 'somewhere'. Not all things are dependent on Mr. A, while Mr. K clearly controls his life well. It all depends on him. It is up to you to judge, which life you prefer. Remember that Mr. K does not have cars, roads, 'nice' foods, Coca-Cola, Burger King, pubs or hotels. I guess you will be likely to say good for Mr. A, but fair enough because you are from here. I cannot disagree with you.

In Fact, Almost Everything is Made-up

Similar to the fact above, it is surprising to see that almost everybody tends to be 'unrealistic' and likes to 'pretend'. Pretending is my favourite word when I think about my life in Britain. First time I came, I was telling the truth and real stories. Someone told me, "You are too honest! Stop it!". Then I learnt how to 'pretend'. But it is really difficult. I was born into and grew up in a different world. I cannot change my way of expressing myself in this country in less than 2 years. Also, there is no point of changing my life and the way I behave for the sake of Britain.

Sometimes I spend hours in corners of some towns in Britain. My main task is to watch the faces of as many people as possible, to watch as many events as possible. Only one question in my mind for each event is this; "Is this real?". Most of the time, the answer is "Not sure!". Only a small proportion of the time I can surely say "Yes, it is real!".

I have spent some time with my friends (men, women and families) and tried to ask the same question. Unfortunately, 'unrealistic' is the best word I can use to describe the reality I have seen.

I further asked myself, "Who is responsible for this whole disaster? Am I correct to be bothered with this? Can I change this? Should I tell them?".

In Fact, There is no Difference Between 'Modern Life' and 'Tribal Life'

I have changed my mind and belief that 'modern life' is good, better and the ideal of all human life. In fact, this is not the case. The case is that life in the world is fine, either in a 'modern' or a 'primitive' perception. The reason is simply that all of us finally die, and must die! There is no everlasting life in the 'modern' or 'primitive' world. There is no life free of suffering in the 'modern' or 'primitive' worlds.

All of us were born. All of us live. All of us enjoy our lives. All of us suffer. All of us can be healthy or sick. All of us get older. All of us die.

So, what is the point of promoting the modern world to the tribal community in West Papua? Useless! Logically, there is no point for its promotion. The only point that I can make is this:- "Modern people want my people to suffer as they suffer because they know that their world has more complexities than my world. They want my people to be dependent on money, dependent on modern medicines and technology, dependent on Western support, dependent on 'them' rather than self-sufficient and independent.

In the Modern World Everyone is a 'Slave of the Nation-State'

No one is on his/her own in the modern community, even though they claim they are individuals and they appreciate individual rights. Every single person is treated as an individual, and this is really dangerous in my eyes as a tribal person. When a nation-state promotes the idea of individualism and individual rights, it actually potentially disconnects the basic human nature of humanity and humankind as social beings.

This is what happens when a nation promotes individual rights. It promotes individual rights and ties the rights of individuals to the nation-state. This automatically disconnects social relationships and interdependence between individuals. For example, the nation-state provides assistance for youth workers, school fees for the children, housing for young mothers, jobs for the young workers, loans for young business persons, money for unemployed citizens, solicitors for law cases, and many others. If almost all things needed by an individual are provided by nation-states like the list above, then what is the point of having parents? What is the point of having family members around? What is the point of having social activities? This is a simple statement that a young person can make in modern society:- "I am dependent on my nation-state, therefore, what is the point for me to be dependent on my parents?". This is where children are out of the control of society; firstly from parents.

Nation-states have created cities, currency, jobs and so on. These are not natural. These are new inventions. Then, nation-states have forced all citizens to be dependent on them, not on each other as human beings. In other words, in modern society, people are more dependent on

nationstates rather than on someone else, that is to say, 'something', not 'someone'. Humans trust 'something' called the nation-state. This is ironic. For me, my life is in my hands, not in the hands of a nation state.

However, ironically, the nation-state is actually worse than parents and society. An obvious reason is that a nation-state never exists to make a loss or for spending the resources it has all the time. It exists to make a lot of money from its activities. The main source of money is the labour of its citizens. The nation-state controls almost everything inside and sometimes beyond the boundaries of the nation. The comparison of activities between Mr. A and Mr. K above gives us a clear concept of what actually happens in the life of a person in modern society and in tribal society. It is obvious that one is tied up to his schedules. His employer makes the schedules. The employer needs to make money by employing labour. The employer and employee pay taxes to the government. The government spends the money, but it always remembers that it needs to hold power and it needs to make its citizens dependent on the nation-state. This is one of the reasons why modern society it is so difficult to change. I say that Melanesians in West Papua do not need a nation-state at all.

Our civilisation is proud that slavery has ended, but we never admit that people who declare themselves as free are actually slaves on the nation-states. Presidents and Prime Ministers and politicians are slaves of modern states. They will never agree with me that humans can live without nation-states.

The Relationship Between the Individual and the Four Enemies in Modern Society

Corporations are ruling the world. At the moment, only influencing government, but soon they will rule us all. They are the future rulers of the world. MNCs or national ones have influence over the business of religious organisation and NGOs/AOs. They have direct access to the natural environment. Even though the natural environment is under the boundaries of nationstates, they can easily do whatever they want.

The life of the individual person is released from the control or care of the family, but it is laid somewhere, where individuals will find it difficult to find the cause of their problems. Most often they blame governments, but governments will say "I have done this and that, so many things. I cannot do all of them. This is not an easy task. If there are problems, those are still under controllable limit, etc.". Family is not wrong. Government is not wrong. That means 'YOU', the individuals are wrong. Therefore, if you have no food, if you are unemployed, if you are homeless, if you are such and such, then it is YOUR FAULT. YOU MUST THINK WHAT IS WRONG WITH YOU! You are free to make judgements, but also remember, you are free to suffer! And no-one will bother about you, because you are an individual, separate from anyone else. This is a free and democratic country.

In tribal society, family has more control on the individual person. Individuals are parts of families. In modern community, individuals are citizens of a nation-state, and nation-states control individuals.

In tribal society, social organisation has more control on the family, which also affects the relationship between the family and the individual. Spirituality is important in tribalism. However, modernism emphasises materialism. In modern society, nation states have more control over in-

dividuals rather than families, because most of the material needs come from nation-states, not families.

In tribal society, NGOs or AOs most of them belong to religious organisations; it is one of the tactics of religious organisations to obtain access to the people. In modern society, however, most NGOs or AOs are in some ways connected to corporations.

MNCs in tribalism do not exist or just nearby nation states. They have very little affect on the people. In modern society, MNCs are the lords of everything and everyone. They even determine what the people should eat and drink and when people should die.

In tribalism, only family deals with individual persons. In modernism, almost every party has something to do with individual person. Most probably, this is the main reason why many people become depressed or go mad.

In tribalism, natural resources become basis for the life. In modern society, natural resources are things that need to be taken out and exploited, until they are completely finished.

Life in modern society depends on money and this is the cause of all problems. When people are dependent on money, they become independent from their society. When people become individualistic, they become a-socialistic. If people live dependent on money, social life is not good. Individuals need to make money for themselves, and the money should be spent carefully and wisely and therefore, to live as individual person is ideal. It is difficult if only one person works for the whole family. Therefore, each person should find jobs and work to make money. If any of the members of family can make money for him/herself, then s/he becomes independent. Independent from family, but dependent on money.

The more the person becomes independent from family, the more s/he becomes dependent on money.

The more s/he becomes dependent on money, the more s/he becomes dependent on parties or organisations that can give or make the money. They are called corporations and government. Individuals establish trust and good relationship to do business with government and corporations better than with their society or family. However, there is an irony, if s/he has problems, s/he can go to neither of them. S/he should go to family, NGOs or religious organisations. However, NGOs, religious organisations and families have their own rules, principles and norms that the individual should comply to, which need time, effort, energy and sometimes money.

Religious organisations and NGOs become more similar to governments and corporations. They only talk and do business when it is beneficial, when it fulfils their vision and mission. They are not different from governments and corporations. In many ways, they are close to each other.

Summary: Modernism equals Complexity and Tribalism equals Simplicity

When I tell people that I like my tribalism rather than modernism, they most often ask, “Why?”. My answer is this: “Because modernism equals complexity and tribalism equals simplicity. Because this life is simple and I want to be as simple as this life. I was born, I grew up, and I will die! As simple as that! Do not make it complicated by saying, ‘Come and enjoy your life, experience happiness, etc. etc.’ while offering more complexities to the life rather than simplicity”.

There are many books written based on philosophical arguments, psychological perspectives, and religious doctrines. There are training and meditation exercises to experience happiness and joy of life. There are people that offer services for money to find out 'the meaning of life'. People are not aware of one simple thing. They are not aware of the fact that by going into those arguments and taking on these new concepts the 'life' becomes even more complicated than it was before. There will be more regulations, many more 'dos' and 'don'ts' than beforehand. And unfortunately, the number of 'don'ts' will be surprisingly more than 'dos'. It is typical. The more you are taught, the more you will be told and aware about 'don'ts'. The more you are not allowed to do things as you should do, the more your life becomes complicated. The more your life become complicated, the more life becomes 'unhappy', not happy, as the arguments, perspectives and doctrines promise to offer. This is typical in modern society, pretending to be offering solutions, but actually adding more complications.

I have spent more than 15 years in churches and Church ministries, some time in the Moslem religion, the Catholic Church, the Baptist Church, the Evangelical Church, the Pentecostal Church, with the Jehovah's Witnesses and some time in Buddhism. Sometimes I live in the academic (logical, rational) world, sometimes I live in my tribal world. Most often I do and say things based on the voice of my intuitions and visions, and I find out they do work. Sometimes I forget all these and enjoy my tribalism. I have crossed the boundaries and regulations made by each of these groups. I can easily go into these worlds and come back again to my world. This is why I said I am in three worlds at the moment, but I have not yet come to the fourth world. I will explain this in a separate booklet.

The most annoying thing for me is this; members of modern society never complain about it. They accept it!. In a way, they tell me, "Wiwa, this is our life, we are already here, we cannot do much to change it. How lucky you are. Do not come into this life, go back home soon!". But I cannot just do that. I want to tell them about all this.

Lani Perspectives on War and Peace



If I ask outsiders this question “How many wars do you have in your culture?” then perhaps they will mention names like the Cold War, the Balkan war, the Gulf war, W.W.I and W.W.II. We, the Lani, have our own names of war that I hope the world will learn from this letter. We have three kinds of war; ‘tek’, ‘ngget’ and ‘ome’ wars. “Tek mbanak war” is like “a war of attrition” but combined with armed fighting. It is a prolonged, never-ending war. It can be regarded as having ended, but we believe ‘its roots still exist’, and these become public secrets and unspoken bones of contention. The obvious example is the Cold War; it is over but its roots are still there, no one speaks out about it, but all acknowledge in their hearts what is happening and why.

‘Ngget’ war is a new war starting in this generation or this time. It can become a ‘tek’ war after some decades (generations) but it starts now. It can also stop and it is unpredictable. Although all wars tend to have a long history and future, as it appears it is called a “ngget” (or new) war.

Finally ‘ome’ war can be referred to as an unnecessary war or a small battle. It occurs within a family, within a group or community. Most often, paying fines can easily solve it or produce what we call “palunggwa wakwe” or a cease-fire (peace-deal).

I have told my people that the world has its own wars that are affecting our society. I am telling them to distinguish what are 'our' wars and what are not, and accordingly take all necessary steps to avoid wars like wars for the sake of religions, for race etc, which are actually not 'our' wars but imposed from the West. I urge my people to disengage ourselves from these wars and say, "West, these are your wars. We are suffering because of your wars. Come and deal with your wars. Enough is enough!"

Modern communities, which are Western in majority, are the greediest people on this earth. They caused many wars and problems in human life because of their greed for resources such as timber, gold, and copper. They need to fulfil their desire for these objects, and their desires increase even though there are not enough resources available in their countries. They have exploited brutally all that they had in the past, and now it is the time for them to come to us and exploit our resources. They are standing and opening their gigantic iron hands behind our government. Our government is fulfilling their demands.

Thus, defence against the destruction of our world and our culture is not against our government, but it is against the West and the modern world. Now is the time for the West and the whole world community to realise that we need to end the exploitation of natural and human resources. There is only a little time left on this earth.

War is a never-ending business in human history. We cannot have humankind without wars, especially when certain groups of the humankind feel they are better, higher, more civilised and developed than the others. personally cannot imagine and cannot believe that there will be peace among humankind and with other beings on this planet Earth. I believe this based on the following reasons.

Religion implies a war against Satan. Therefore, if there is a religion, there is always a war against Satan. If there is a war against Satan by religious people, and they consider anyone not of their religion as 'satanic', then the war between followers of these two parties is inevitable. By so doing, religious people become enemies to each other. Consequently, it is impossible to end the war among humankind while we are still at war with 'Satan' and his followers.

Colonialism is a war over natural resources. The second war that humankind carries out is colonialism, which is basically stimulated by greed. Consequently, developed countries become over-developed and developing countries become ever-developing countries without any assurance as to when this 'developing' will terminate. Greed brings about war against the natural environment and its resources. If I refer to different kinds of wars mentioned in this part, it is clear that the war against super-natural and natural powers lead to the wars among us. War against humanity is rooted in religious war and colonial war. Therefore, if there were no religious or colonial wars, there would never have been war in human life.

Missionaries who live in West Papua have told me this; "Lani people had wars even though they had no religions in the past". The response might be, "Yes, there were no wars against Satan nor against the natural environment, but the wars we had were apparently stimulated by the 'spiritual' beings themselves to put Lani people into trouble". Moreover, tribal wars are more tolerant to the environment and other beings. Tribal wars do not use chemical weapons. They do not use bombs that have potential to kill many people and endanger massive areas of natural environment. There are reports saying that the bombardments in Iraq have caused so many problems to human beings. The same case is happening in the Balkans. The same thing is happening in East Timor. So, what are we doing here? Are our wars just wars? If so, then why should we ignore the long-term environmental damages?

Peace processes are not to end war, but to find another way, a compromised way of warring. A peace process is not a way to win or lose a war but to compromise; it is a safer way, a more civilised and modern way of continuing the war, because there will be no end to war. There have been talks for peace in the Middle East, in the Balkans, in East Timor and in Northern Ireland. Time and money have been spent on 'peace'. Many politicians have learnt and practised their expertise in conflict resolution. They think they can resolve conflicts by learning how to be diplomatic and manipulative. Many experts in international relations, politics, and peace have established their theories on how to resolve political problems.

We need to understand this; yes, it is easy to play with our knowledge about conflict resolution, but it can only work when dealing with people who are at war only for war. However, if we deal with people who are at war for very strong, comprehensive, clear and justified reason, then we will end up reaching almost nothing. Politically and diplomatically we can say, "We strongly believe in and are optimistic that the Good Friday agreement will be implemented" etc.. Diplomats say things diplomatically, but they cannot change the roots of the war itself. They need to forget their diplomacy and come to the truth.

According to my argument a permanent peace can only happen when wars between religions and over resources are ended. We need to kill our greed and our lust. We need to stop being selfish. We need to appreciate the existence of other beings on this earth. This will lead us to appreciate the existence of other humans on this planet.

I do agree that in the past we fought each other in West Papua. We were always in battles. It seems to me that war and humankind are inseparable in any culture on earth. If there is no war, then there is no humanity; it is as simple as that.

However, one interesting thing happened in relation to this 'war' story. The coming of Christianity and modernisation stopped the 'tek', 'ngget', and 'ome' wars of the past. However, neither Christianity or modernisation totally ended these wars; they brought in their own wars. For me, Christianity, the modern world and war go together, through the stories in the Bible and world history up till now. The following are wars that Christianity and the modern world have brought to the Lani. Lani people need to realise that these are not our wars and therefore, these wars should be returned to their owners, the Westerners, because we have suffered so much due to wars transferred to us by western missionaries and the modern world.

In my understanding these wars are foolish and unreasonable, but we are already active in them. These wars are the (1) Islam-Christian war; (2) Capitalist-Communist war; (3) Protestant-Catholic war; (4) Protestant denomination war; (5) Judeo-Christian war, (6) democracy-dictatorship wars and so on. None of these wars are our business, but already we are in these wars and we need to get rid of them and return them to their origins, because the countries where Christianity originated do not help us escape the wars that they transferred to us. We can look at our own land, Molucas, Kalimantan, and Java. Many Christians are being killed, churches are being burnt; disasters come to us because of our Christianity but countries with a Christian majority do nothing to help us. On the contrary, they sell Bronco fighters, Hawks, police training and equipment for the government that is killing us. What is this all about? I am confused with how Westerners manage this earth and deal with the issue of humanitarian catastrophe. I know that a 'primitive' and 'cannibal' man of Lani would never take this kind of action, but I am surprised that the West can do it easily, regardless of our sufferings. Yes, for sure, these wars should be returned to their origins because they are nothing to do with us. We do not want to be victims of these wars anymore. Enough is enough!

Peace is to “Let it be”. John Lennon and Paul McCartney have told us this; “Let it be”. This is the simplest message I have ever understood, but the most difficult for this civilisation to apply. The problem is, the modern or Western community is always unhappy with things existing as they are. They cannot leave things as they are. They cannot leave me as I am. This is a disastrous fact for the whole world that the modern community will never admit.

Politicians will never solve wars on this planet. They will find accepted forms of continuing existing wars. Politicians will never leave things as they are. They never leave me as I am. I am aware that by writing this kind of letter I am physically in danger. All governments will attack me. Definitely they will try to kill me. However, I am not scared of death. I am not scared of any government that exists on this planet. All I worry about is the planet and its resources being destroyed. All I request is that we need to stop exploiting all resources, killing each other and just “Let it be!”. By doing so, perhaps we can leave at least West Papua, the western part of the New Guinea Island, to be the precious treasure of the planet. We can let it be as it is without exploiting it, without disturbing it, without turning it into ‘capital’, without killing its people, without killing its plants and animals on it, without destroying the ecology, the ecosystem and bio-diversity.

All conflicts can end if we leave all things as they are. The democratic countries should govern their people democratically. Christians should live as Christians. Moslems should live as Moslems. Communist should live as they are. Tribal people should live in tribal ways of life. Even dictators should be left as they are. There is no point for the United States to require all other governments to copy its system. There is no point for European countries to export their systems to the rest of the world. There is no point in seeing things as “This is correct and that is wrong!”. What we should do is “Let it be!”. However, unfortunately, whether or not we agree with it, whether or not we understand and rationalise, whether or not we accept it, this world is heading to somewhere. It is being pushed somewhere.

I come to John Lennon’s “Imagine!”. Just Imagine! Imagine if we have no country, no religion, no property rights, no currency, no nation-state, no nationality, no heaven and no hell. There should have been no need for government, police, cities, and army. My father should have not been killed just because he was a Papuan, not an Indonesian. My mountain should have not been removed because of concessions and contracts between Indonesian government and mining corporations. My forests should have been untouched; we should have had power to protect them. I would have not lost my culture if I were not a Christian. I would have not hated Javanese if there were no countries like ‘Indonesia’ and ‘West Papua’. I would have loved them as fellow human beings. We would have lived in our own lands and islands.

Ends of the World?



Loggers tear down the forest and are swiftly followed by government-sponsored settlers "Everything is moving towards a boring oneness."

I have seen two ends of this world. Two powers are struggling to bring this world to two different ends. The first one is influenced very strongly by the corporations, led by a small amount of 'powerful' people on this earth. The second end is led by the common people, the population of the world. It depends on the other three enemies of tribal people; religious organisations, governments, NGOs/AOs to decide either to serve the common people's wish or to submit to the fourth enemy of the tribal people, i.e. multi-national corporations.

Unfortunately, however, the three enemies are all swallowed by the MNCs. Now, it depends on common people, that I hereafter call Tribal People, to act for the sake of our future and the future of our next generations. The last communities on this earth that really need protection from exploitation are Tribal People like us in West Papua. However, if the Tribal People are swallowed by the MNCs, then it will become a disaster for the whole of humanity.

I agree that this earth is going towards oneness in everything with emphasis on the economy, which ends up in a concentration of power. There is a belief in the West that what they have is correct, perfect, good, advanced, civilised, etc. and therefore, other people in the world should learn from them. If the rest of the world cannot learn from them, they go around the world as missionaries and as social workers. They have the face of shepherds but they have hearts of lions. They smile while eating human meat and drinking human blood, that is, consuming people and their culture. When other tribes become like them in clothing, language, religion, culture, then they say, "They are good!". If not, they label them as 'third world', 'communists', 'tribal people', 'separatists', 'terrorists', you name it. They kill whoever disagrees with them. They put sanctions on nations that do not want to work with them. I can say that the West has become modern and wealthy because of the blood, souls, and natural resources that existed in what they call the 'Third World'. Their quality of life is achieved through our sufferings.

I understand that not all people in the West agree with what is happening, and they will take a position against their governments. They will say it like this; "This is not me, it is the state. It is the MNCs, etc". Individualism appears and they avoid responsibility through this belief. It will be different in my world. If my tribal leader takes action against a missionary, I will be responsible for it.

The end of the world under the MNCs influence will be what I have called, oneness in everything. Just to give a picture, imagine you eat bread, bread, bread, bread and bread all the time, for breakfast, for lunch and for dinner. What will happen to you? The other extreme, imagine you eat meat, meat, meat and meat all the time, for breakfast, for lunch, for dinner. What will happen to you? By the end of the world history, people will eat money, money, money and money, and finally, perhaps, they will not want to eat money anymore. 'Oneness in everything means;

1. One in political systems;
2. One in economic system and organisation;
3. One in religion (most probably Christianity);
4. One in culture (clearly Western culture);
5. One in educational system (most probably American system);
6. One in language (English);
7. One in colour and race.

We will end up in a situation called "kenek lek" [kene' lek] in the Lani language which means no energy, nothing stimulating, interesting, or challenging; all will be boring. Isn't it interesting to see that we are different in various aspects? There are important values in the differences in the minds of us human beings that will never be replaced by oneness. Oneness will only create

boredom and so many psychological diseases have the potential to grow in that kind of world. However, tragically we are all promoting this dangerous end of the world. It was started by just a few mad people, who started what they call the 'modern community' with all things related to it like modern religions, modern technology, modern languages, modern fashions, modern sports, etc, that start with the word 'modern' or 'contemporary' or 'fashionable'.

The other end of the world, which is my favourite, is to return to bio-diversity and to maintain existing differences. There is an art, an additional value, or a taste, there is something to be proud of, identity, dignity, a symbol of life and living beings, all existing in bio-diversity. Dear me, why should we allow corporation-led troops to destroy this fantastic world?

Naturally, the world is reverting to its origin, its natural condition. If no one intervenes into this 'natural back to basics' move, then for sure it is going to its origin. Particularly, the Western world has started and members of its community have shown me that this move is natural and apparently has started happening since the last century. Unfortunately, the same four enemies of tribal/ common people block this move.

There are four categories of people that I can see with my tribal eyes. The first group is modern people. The second is tribal/common people. The third is 'Third World' people, people who want to be in the 'modern world' and are trying very hard to achieve modern standards. The last one is the post-modern community.

Modern people are mostly those in governments, churches, NGOs and corporations. They are not aware of the full consequences of their actions. Their magic 'medicine' is rational or has scientific approval. Everything that can be explained with scientific approval is regarded as legally and morally justified. Killing other human beings is justified. Exploiting the earth is justified. They always believe that what they do is fine for humanity. This group has the potential to cause the destruction of the earth. But what is more dangerous is that they think that the rest of the world should be based upon their values and models. This holds potential for disagreement with tribal people and the post-modern community. This group has one friend- the Third World – although finally they will become enemies to each other.

The tribal people like me want to be as we are and we are saying "Leave us alone!". We are saying "We want to be as we are, we have no problem with you seeing us as primitive, undeveloped, etc.! We are just fine, don't bother about us. We don't need you! We did not ask you to care for us". I am one of them. This group has its friend called the post-modern community.

The third group of people are those who 'need' projects, who 'need' IMF loans, who are striving very hard with their development plans, who 'need' education, etc.. This group is potentially dangerous. They will become a great threat to the world in the 21st century and onwards. They won't care about any voice against them. We have seen this group very clearly. They cannot and do not want to stop building biological weapons, they do not care about nuclear war. They will say to the West; "You have these, why can't we also have what you've got? If you can do it, we can also for sure!". They will become the stubborn nations. They are obvious to you anyway. They will say to me, " Tribal man, go ahead, tell the world about what we are going to do!". At the beginning this group will be friendly to the modern community, but finally they will turn in a contradictory direction or take a different route that will become a rival to the modern community.

The last group is the post-modern community. This term is not totally related to the term 'postmodern' in its academic usage. I use it to mean the people who have understood the advantages and disadvantages of the modern community, who find themselves in opposition to it. Their

understanding is actually closely related to tribal people. They will say, “Yes, leave tribal people alone, please!”. However, they will need to face their own people in the ‘modern community’ category. And this is a very difficult task. This is what we call, “Musuh di dalam kelambu!” (Enemies inside the mosquito net) which is more dangerous than the normal enemy. Tribal people and this group can work hand-in-hand to fight against destruction and exploitation. The only trouble is that they are both weak in terms of their politics and policies. They have power because they are the people, but they have no system in place, no network, no co-operation. Once these things work well, they will be very powerful.

It is up to you though, to put yourself in one of these groups or to make another group.

Let us stop a bit. Let us sit down for a moment. Let us reflect. Let us re-examine. What on earth are we doing here? What have we done to this earth and for its survival? What has this generation and the last five generations done to this earth? Why are we so greedy? Why are we so selfish? Why are we so exploitative? Why are we so brutal? Why are we so insensitive? Why can’t we say “Enough is enough”?

I have come to the West, spent more than a year learning and considering where we (Lani) people should go. I know that the Lani people are striving to reach certain points of modernity. However, these points of modernity were not clear when I was in West Papua, therefore, I came here to glance at the end results of this ‘civilisation’. I was glad to know that the path through modern life and modern civilisation is not the way for all life on this planet. I was glad to realise that development is not the way to solve the suffering in West Papua. I was glad to understand that getting into the capitalist world system is what the Bible refers to as “Hell”.

Some Controversial Thoughts on West Papua



Papua as an Island in the Pacific

Papua is the second biggest island on earth, if we regard Australia as a continent, rather than an island. Frankly, it is geographically strategic for the United States in its political and economic developments. It is called “The window into Indonesia from the Pacific Region”. Having this status is not beneficial because we are now involved, by force, in dealing with global needs and global markets.

Besides this, Tribal People in the region are also divided by colonial powers. Britain and Germany colonised East New Guinea, which was handed over to Australia before PNG was given its independence in September 1975. The Western half was colonised by the Dutch until the early 1960s when Indonesia invaded the region by force and with strong support of all Indonesians fighting against Dutch colonialism. Also the USA supported Indonesia because Indonesia was helping the states to destroy Communism in the Asia-Pacific regions.

Geographically, it was particularly important for the United States during the Cold War era. This is perhaps the most logical reason why the US President, J.F. Kennedy and his Foreign Minister, Henry Kissinger persuaded the Dutch to leave West Papua. It is clear that they cared only for their own nation and they sacrificed other humans who live in West Papua. I could hope they do not do so anymore, but the fact is that they do, therefore, I hope nations and people who become victims of their dirty politics will be aware of this and will do their best to protect their people rather than become slaves of the USA.

West Papua and Tribal People of Melanesia

According to anthropologists (I call them the people who learn about other people in order to kill and manipulate them) the New Guinea Island has populations that are ethnically divided into Negritos, Aborigines, and Papuans, also called Melanesians.

However, I am not a Melanesian, I am not a West Papuan, I am not an Irian Jayan, I am not Irianese. None of these refer to me as a tribal person. I know and call myself as Wiwa Wewo, a Lani man. We are Lani people who live in the highlands of an island in the Pacific region. We call this island "Muli Niname". Indonesia calls it Irian Jaya. Previously it was called New Guinea, Papua, West Irian, then Irian Jaya, and now West Papua. People from outside gave it these names. Not one of these names came from us. Basically, there is no name for the whole island, and there is no need for us to have a name for the island. Outsiders may call us whatever they want to, but the names do not refer to us as a people. Names are only given to make it easy for them to identify us. It is just the same as we identify men from women, day from night, left from right, right from wrong, etc.. To distinguish us from them, they call us Papuans, Melanesians, or New Guineans.

Papua means people who have black skin and have spiral/ curly hair. New Guinea is related to Guinea in Africa. This name is typical to the West. They have York in the UK, and they called a city New York in the United States. They have South Wales in UK, and called a part of Australia New South Wales. They have names like New Caledonia, New Zealand, New England, and such. New Guinea is the 'New' of Guinea in Africa. It does not refer to the people at all. Similarly, Papua describes the skin and hair, but it does not explain anything about the culture. In fact, almost all names of nations in the world are not from their origins. Let us think about the names like Indonesia, Indochina, Malaysia, Tunisia, etc. These are not real names. These names are just names given by foreigners who happened to see these regions when travellers from the West visited these places. They do not refer to any of the cultures of these people.

West Papua has a strong Tribal System from its origin. People live in tribal boundaries and systems. Throughout the world, West Papuans have very strong tribal systems. We all live in two worlds realistically, (1) Tribal world, and (2) Modern world. However, in 100 years time from now, the West or the modern people want us all to forget about our tribal ways of life and they want us to become modern people, westernised people, evangelised people, democratised people, and united and homogenised people.

It is estimated that about 22% of the world languages and ethnic groups are in New Guinea Island. In West Papua, there are about 245 tribes and languages. In other words, this island has the richest human diversity on earth. The simple story is this:

All Melanesians in West Papua are taught to speak Indonesian language. That is what Indonesia's 'Youth Pledge' on October 28 1968 is about. It says "One nationality = Indonesian; One language = Indonesian; One nation = Indonesia". Youths who gathered in Java at that time were actually foolish because they did not anticipate the impact of this pledge. This is a common and effective tactic. Consequently, people are not allowed to use local languages in schools, there are no textbooks written in local languages etc.

All Melanesians in West Papua are targeted to have straight hair, not curly hair. There have been some secret documents produced against Melanesians saying that the obliteration of the "curly haired" head in West Papua is urgent. One of them stated it like this:

Try your best to make friends with Melanesian girls and make them pregnant. Ask them to marry you. If their parents refuse, leave them pregnant because you have done your job, "Making the child not curly haired anymore!"

The majority of Melanesians in West Papua are targeted to become Moslem (I am not a Christian fanatic and I am not for any religion. I do not like any religion at all)

Most of Melanesians in West Papua are forced to leave their villages, because tribal systems operate very strongly in villages. If tribal people are relocated to the cities, tribal systems will not work anymore. There is a programme called "Translocation and Settlement of Nomadic Citizens".

This is not a threat for Melanesians only, but it is a threat for the whole human race on this earth. The policies of the Indonesian government need to be stopped.

West Papua as a Victim of the US

It is apparent to me as a Melanesian in West Papua that the United States is the country most responsible to all tribal people of West Papua. Lani people, please remember: Americans are the people most responsible for our deaths, for the exploitation of our natural resources.

The next countries responsible for the problems in West Papua are the Dutch and Australians. The third are the United Kingdom, France and Germany.

Where is Indonesia, then? Indonesia is almost as much of a victim as Melanesians. They think they are clever, but I am afraid, the facts show that they are not. They are not more than 'puppets'. Some of the Indonesian politicians like Prof. Dr. Amin Rais understand this issue, but some are already blind and they cannot see what I see. They pretend to be politicians, to be educated in the West, to be generals and to be clever, but the facts say to me, "Not so!".

Let us read what John Otto Ondowame has written below:

"East Timor's unanimous vote for independence is the beginning of the road to freedom for Indonesia's 'colonies'. The events of 30th August 1999 will undoubtedly inspire others struggling to disentangle themselves from the Indonesian regime, in particular West Papua (the western half of the island of New Guinea which the Indonesians call Irian Jaya). I know there are some who would prefer to call West Papua a 'territory' rather than a 'colony'. But, whatever the semantics, one thing is obvious; Indonesia's annexation of West Papua in 1962 will increasingly be scrutinised by the international community in the near future. It is also conspicuous that regardless of what Jakarta and the international community says, the 'Balkanisation' of the Indonesian archipelago seems inevitable. The reasons are obvious. In many ways the nation-state of Indonesia is an artificial construction of the post world war era.

“Secondly, because of the oppression, exploitation and genocide propagated by a Javanese-dominated centralised power structure, civil society is bound to react. In a way, in the last fifty years, the Indonesian state has been digging its own grave. On the issue of independence, despite the indifference of the international community, West Papua has always resisted against Indonesian rule. Unfortunately our struggle has been long ignored by the rest of the world because it serves their political, strategic and economic interest to do so. Indeed the people of West Papua have been victims of international political conspiracy dictated by the cold war era.

“Australia, the USA and their Western allies denied West Papuans’ right of self-determination and independence because of their attempts to prevent the spread of Communism through Indonesia and to Australia and the Pacific Islands. Consequently, West Papuans had to pay the price for the interests of Western countries. The underlying interests of these countries have been exposed in SBS’s Date Line program on 26 August 1999. Because of pressures from Western countries (especially Australia and the USA) and with the knowledge of the United Nations, the Dutch government — the former colonial power in West Papua — was forced to transfer West Papua to Indonesia. This was made official by the New York Agreement of 15 August 1962, signed by the Dutch and the Indonesians and blessed by the USA and the UN. Six years later, West Papua’s annexation was completed by the administration of the Act of Free Choice of 1969 — *musyawarah* (consultation) as it is referred to by the Indonesians. For West Papuans this was an act “free of choice” and a mockery of internationally accepted norms.

“Only 1,025 Indonesian-appointed “representatives” voted on behalf of a population of more than 800,000 Papuans. Administered under gunpoint, the participants in the act of free choice voted to be a part of Indonesia. Through this process West Papuans were denied their right to have one-person-one-vote as accepted by international practices. In effect, there was never a proper referendum to allow West Papua to choose their political status. But, despite the fact that the international community knew that *musyawarah* — a Javanese village tradition for consultation, not a referendum — was unlawful and violated the people’s right to have one-person-one vote, they endorsed it because it served their political interests. Hence, the people of West Papua were never given the opportunity to vote for independence. Instead they were merely ‘consulted’ about their integration with Indonesia. This means that the international community contributed to West Papua’s forceful integration with Indonesia. This for West Papuans was the beginning of a new era of colonialism. In today’s world, colonialism, as a political tool, is out of place.

“East Timor has proven that in spite of Jakarta and the global community’s propaganda, the struggle against Indonesian colonialism will end in victory for the colonised. East Timor’s independence brings to an end one of the most painful, oppressive and exploitative colonial legacies of our region. Jakarta is defeated by the people at the ballot box. East Timorese in voting for independence has confirmed what the world have always known, but chosen to deny. Now that you have seen East Timor through the ballot box, give us, the people of West Papua, the same opportunity to determine our political status — a right denied to us in the 1960s. We want to be a people free from Indonesia’s colonial grasp and enjoy peace, democracy, freedom and social progress. Our questions have to be answered: what can the international community, especially western countries, do to set right the wrongs done during the cold war era?; Has the political and strategic interests of the cold war now overtaken by economic interests manifested in Western multinational companies’ exploitation of our natural resources?

“Are we, as a people, of less importance to you than our minerals and forests? Is there any morality in today’s globalised world? Are the lives of black Papuans of less value than that of

white Europeans? Answers to these questions are indeed not simple. The simple truth, however, is that the governments of Australia, the USA, Holland, and the UN have a moral responsibility to end the colonial subjugation of West Papua. They owe that to us. It is an issue they cannot continue to side step, ignore and pretend they did not have anything to do with. We have been treated as a political pawn by the international community in the 1960s. That same international community has a responsibility to assist us. Canberra and its allies must apologise to the people of West Papua for the past mistakes and take moral accountability for their future.

Australia's commitment to bring peace and order to East Timor is a good beginning. There is more to come. As a powerful member of the region, and torn between the South Pacific and Southeast Asia, Australia will not escape their obligations to bring peace to the region. It is in Australia's interest to do so. Dotted along its strategic buffer line are the issues of Guadal canal in the Solomon Islands, Bougainville in PNG, West Papua and East Timor. West Papua is equally important and will soon become a thorn in Australia's side if it is not addressed quickly. It is an issue Canberra cannot afford to ignore. As Michelle Gratin wrote in the Sydney Morning Herald of 14 September 1999, "Australia may be faced in a few years with questions of what attitude it should adopt to an East Timor situation in Irian Jaya" (refers to West Papua). The people of Australia must realise that Canberra has a moral obligation to help end Indonesian colonialism in West Papua. Today it is East Timor, tomorrow it will be West Papua. If the West Papuan cause and that of other colonised peoples in Indonesia are ignored, there will be serious strategic, political and economic problems for Australia in the near future. Australia and international community must recognise that the presence of Indonesia and the role of its armed forces in the region will be a cause for instability. It is therefore pertinent that the international community finds a mechanism to end Indonesian colonialism.

"We, the people of West Papua, will not sit and watch. We will continue to fight against Indonesian colonialism. We will continue to struggle for our rights to determine our future and to be respected. In the best interests of all of us, Australia must respond now. Not tomorrow. We do not want to repeat in West Papua what occurred in East Timor in the post referendum period. Concerned with the escalation of conflict and violence in West Papua, I call the governments of Australia, the USA, the Dutch and the UN to pressure the Habibie government into starting a peaceful dialogue, organising referendum on special autonomy or independence for West Papua under the supervision of the UN. Such a process must use a formula that satisfies the conflicting parties.

"Jakarta must also allow international independent humanitarian organisations, journalists and UN observers into West Papua. Trade and military ties and assistance to Indonesia must be stopped. Indonesian troops must also be withdrawn from West Papua. Members of the South Pacific Forum must address the issue of West Papua. And, most importantly, initiate to reopen the legal and political discussions on the act of free choice of 1969. The stability, security and progress of the region cannot be guaranteed unless these issues are dealt with."

I have seen one person called Yani Yikwa being killed by the army in my village. Let us follow the story below. Yani is from the area called Tenakawe. In 1976–1978 he was helping the Indonesian army to kill people from Kelela, Tagime, and around. He was a famous person in tribal wars. The Indonesian army used him to gain their victory.

In 1979 the people who had run away to the bush returned to their villages and surrendered to the Indonesian army. In Lani tribal system, if someone becomes your enemy this year, it does not mean that next year he will still be your enemy because they can become friends. In other

words, if Yani helps the Indonesians now, next year, potentially, he will be working with the other tribes who were fighting against Indonesia. They will become friends. Some of the secrets that Yani learnt could be made public in this 'future friendship'. This is perhaps the background to the thoughts of killing him, but I don't know exactly.

One day, Yani asked for permission from the post commandant to leave his village and visit my village. The commandant said, "Wait a minute, I want to send a letter to the commandant in the village where you are going. Let me finish it and you can help me by carrying it to the commandant there".

The commandant gave the letter to Yani. The letter says, "Kill the man who carries this letter. His name is Yani Yikwa. Kill him now and today!"

Yani has his disciples, about 5 of them with him. On their way to my village, his disciples were asking him, "Can we read what the letter says? Sometimes Indonesians send letters to kill tribal people". But Yani maintained, "No, we are friends. We cannot have any suspicion of them as you are saying. Forget thinking like that!"

Once they arrived at the village of their destination, he handed the letter to the commandant. The people were waiting on the ground. Five minutes later, the commandant asked, "Which one is called Yani?" (In Indonesian, he said, "Yang namanya Yani yang mana?") Yani answered, "An o nogoba!" (In Lani meaning, "It's me sir!")

The commandant asked him to come forward. Once he came close to him, he kicked him in his stomach. He dragged him to his special place. They kicked him. They tortured him. They cut his ears, his body, his stomach etc. with razor blades and knives. They heated iron and put it on his body. They stacked knives on this body. They tried to kill him but he did not die. His body became red, just like a pig being cut into pieces, but his eyes were still open and looking straight at the torturers. They finally opened up his hat and in his hat was his power that kept him alive. At that point he died.

It was a market day. Many people, men, women and children (including myself), knew that Yani was being tortured.

Yani had been killing the people in my village. Therefore, there was no one brave enough to take his dead body and burn him (we do not bury as you do here). Also, the trauma of seeing the torturing was very strong in every single person. Even up till now, I still have that trauma. When I see Javanese, child, man or women, my feeling is "These are the people with the potential to kill me. When will they kill me? Are they here to kill me? If yes, how will they kill me, where?". Such questions arise in my mind when I see them, even the church leaders. I still cannot believe that they are good people.

Let me give you another story. This story was written by The Guardian columnist and environmental campaigner, George Monbiot. He met someone called Tom when he was in West Papua sometime ago, or maybe from e-mail contact with someone from there. Here is the story from The Guardian dated 16 September 1999.

"In West Papua, another of the regime's occupied territories, I met a man I shall call Tom. At the age of 12 he had watched as his uncle became an experiment in agony. The operation took 12 hours. Early in the morning, Tom's uncle had reported to the local army headquarters to ask permission, as required, to go hunting. He had a large, bushy beard, and this, the soldiers decided, identified him as a rebel. They took him into the kitchen and started questioning him. Tom hid in the bushes by the window, and saw everything.

His uncle denied that he had done anything wrong. The men produced the simple equipment that all soldiers in Indonesian annexed lands carry; cutthroat razors. They sliced off his ears. They held them in the kitchen fire with tongs, cooked them, and then forced him to eat them. Then, very slowly, they opened up his cheeks, so that the flesh hung off the bone. They began to strip the muscles from his arms and legs.

Beneath the laughter of the soldiers, Tom could hear the blood running through the kitchen floorboards. An iron bar was heated until it was red hot, then pressed into his thighs. The soldiers mixed up a pan of chilli and salt, and rubbed it into his wounds. By nightfall, Tom's uncle had been scalped and largely flayed, but he was still alive.

The soldiers stuffed him into a rice sack, dragged him a mile over the rocky ground, then dumped him in a hole. Tom could still hear his uncle's cries, but by the time he had fetched his relatives to pull him out, the man was dead."

I personally do not know what Tom is thinking right now or what he was thinking at that time at the age of 12. This year, he is 31 years old, old enough to think about what had happened to his uncle.

This is another story about a young Evangelist, Tekimus Weya by name. At that time I was the Chairman for Youth Commission at the Synod office of my church. Tekimus was appointed by the commission to the Transmigration area in one of the Timika villages called Kwamki Lama. I produced the Letter of Appointment for him and off he went.

On December 24th, (I forgot the year, maybe 1990), Christmas Eve, he went to Kwamki Lama to celebrate Silent Night. He returned late that night. On his way back, he was shot to death by the Indonesian army. He was with some other men. His friends escaped but he was killed.

The friends ran away and stayed overnight in the bush. In the morning, they reported to the people in Kwamki Lama and around. They could not celebrate Christmas on the 25th of December because their 'shepherd' was dead. They gathered, shouted and went to find him.

They found him buried not far from the place he had been shot. His body was taken home and burned.

In reaction, I, as the chairman of the commission, launched an inquiry. We decided to sue the Regional Commander of the Armed Forces, but we failed because the missionaries who were working with us were scared that they would be kicked out, and that the army would think that missionaries had taught us to react in that way. We did not do anything about his death other than burning him. I cannot believe this can happen in a religious nation, a nation like Indonesia that bases its politics on 'The Only Almighty God'.

I want to stop telling you these stories, but I think you will understand more of my feelings when you read more of them. Below is another story. This is a story of a mother called Unuwokwe Kogoya Yikwa, who was killed with her child (3 days old) crying beside her dead body. This incident happened in a small village called Arin Kobak, in Kanupaga in the highlands of West Papua.

The Indonesian army learnt that people in Mbogondini village had been fighting with the people in Kanupaga in the past. They learnt that the Mbogondini people still had memories of the past wars. They started to encourage Mbogondini people to go and fight people and villages around them. Some war chiefs were elected/appointed by the army. They had some war feasts before commencing the wars.

One day, they planned to attack Arin Kobak village, a small village, on the slopes of Mount Tari. In the early morning everybody was still asleep. The village guard, who was my own maternal

grandfather saw that there were enemies coming towards the village. They were already only 50 metres away from the village. He shouted and told the people to run away.

It was too late. The people came in and killed so many of them. Mrs. Yikwa, with her newborn baby could not run, the baby was just born three days ago. She could not run fast. She just bowed down and begged for mercy. The person in front of her tried to rape her, but she was found to be losing a lot of blood after giving birth. So, they decided to kill her. She begged and begged them not to kill her. My grandmother, who was more than 60 years old, was a bit further from them, and listened to her voice. She heard Unuwokwe being killed. Unuwokwe shouted and screamed. Her husband, who is my own uncle, ran away because of the enemies. Her vagina was cut by machete into pieces. Her baby was thrown onto her, facing his mother's blood.

Some minutes later, my grandmother came and took the crying baby and fed him with sweet potato to stop him crying. He did not, and he could not stop because he had drunk his mother's blood. The baby died soon because he had drunk a lot of blood from his mother.

These are some of the stories that I have been closely involved in and experienced in my own life. I cannot tell all of them, and I do not want to.

So many stories similar to above, or even worse, remain untold and buried in the hearts and minds of all West Papuans. The questions now are like this;

1. How can I forgive those who killed my uncle?
2. How can I forgive those who shot me in my leg?
3. How should I forgive those who killed my beloved child?
4. How should I forgive those who killed my wife/husband?
5. How should I forgive those who raped my sister/wife in front of my own eyes?
6. How can I forgive the United States who had strong interest in my region and asked Dutch to pull out and allowed pro-Western Indonesia to invade my people?
7. How can I forgive the Dutch who came to my island for food and then left without any responsibility, without concern about our lives?
8. How can I forgive missionaries who started the contact with us, who opened the door for the army to come in and did nothing about our deaths?
9. How can I forgive the churches that destroy my culture?
10. How can I forgive...?

How can Mr Habibie ask me to forgive all this that has happened in my life? These are not tales, not myths and not fiction. There are real to my life. These are really emotional questions that we are asking in response to the request to 'forgive' and to 'forget'. To Grant West Papua Independence is not the Solution That Will Bring Peace in New Guinea

The theme of this chapter is exactly the same as the poetry I read in Chapter one. It relates to the quote from Mr. Habibie, former President of the Republic of Indonesia. It refocuses our mind to his quote: "... forgive them because they do not know what they are doing". Perhaps, what I am

saying here is the response to his statement. “Yes, we will forgive, if only you leave us alone!”. The concept of ‘leaving us alone’ does not necessarily mean creating an independent nation of West Papua. This is the point where I am different from those campaigning for an independent nation of West Papua and creating another nation-state called ‘West Papua’.

For me, an independent nation-state of West Papua is not the solution to the suffering of ethnic Melanesians in West Papua, even though it may reduce the level of suffering. For me, Indonesians are not the people who cause all problems occurring in West Papua. For me, Indonesians are as much victims as us Melanesians. I know that Mr. Amin Rais, Mr. B.J. Habibie, and other academics and politicians in Jakarta understand my thoughts.

Let us go back to the history of West Papua annexation by Indonesia. Sukarno claimed West Papua as a former Dutch colony, but the superpower nations agreed to give West Papua to Indonesia for different reasons. They allowed Indonesia to invade West Papua for their own interests and political benefits. They did not care about the people of West Papua, or the people of Indonesia. The main focus for them was to make “the Pacific region safe from the Communist influence, full stop”. This could be achieved through the Indonesian government, particularly under Suharto’s leadership.

Let all Melanesians in West Papua or East Papua think about the problems that are appearing in our society. Let us not be fooled about these problems.

Who caused East and West Papua to be different countries? You have read the answer, right?

Who has caused most of the deforestation in our land? Who needs wood a lot nowadays? What has happened to the woods in the countries that need and import our woods? For example, if PT Hanurata or PT Wapoga Timber Group in Jayapura clear forests in West Papua, then who is asking for these logs to be taken out? The main question is: Who is demanding that the suppliers supply logs? You know the answer, right?

In the case of Tekimus’ death, why did they kill him? Because the army wanted to secure the mining operation. Who owns the mining companies? If not Freeport MacMoRan, who else? If not Rio Tinto Zinc, who else? If not the AMRO Bank, who else?

In the case of murders and bombings of the villages in West Papua I would like to ask my people these following questions:

Who are Indonesians? They are from Java, Sumatra, Bali, Kalimantan, Sulawesi and Molucas.

Where do they get guns? From the countries of the missionaries working in your villages. They bring good news, and they sell guns to kill you. When we fight against the killings, they come to the altar and preach, “Obey your government, because this and that!”

Where do they get Bronco fighters? They are from America, the country of most of the missionaries you have, starting from Richard Archbold, the geologist-pilot, who spotted the highlands of West Papua in the 1940s. Since then, many Americans have been with you, talking with you, sleeping with you, wandering around in your villages as ‘do-gooders’. And of course, they are well educated to be able to show that what they are doing can be justified in their standards as ‘good’.

Where are Hawks from? Where does Indonesian army get these automatic guns and missiles? They are from the United Kingdom, where our British missionaries come from. They are from France, a nation that has no moral or political relationship with us in West Papua.

Who is causing mass deforestation processes? Some companies and subsidiaries of companies from Jakarta, but most of them are from abroad like Malaysia, Japan, Korea and Europe.

What is happening with Mamberamo? The Mamberamo Dam Megaproject is being carried out under Mr. Habibie's support since he was the Minister up till now, and the biggest financial support comes from Germany and Australia. How many German 'do-gooders' are there in your villages? Remember two Germans named Ottow and Geissler. How many Australian 'do-gooders' in your villages? Do not forget that their countries are destroying our lives. They cannot deny it, they cannot wash their hands of it, it is their countries and their governments' policies, and they have to do something about all this.

How did this start? It started with Portuguese traders who named New Guinea in 1511, it started with Ottow and Geissler, the Apostles of West Papua in the late 1500 whose country is now sponsoring the Mamberamo Dam Megaproject. It started with Richard Archbold whose country, Australia, is most responsible for the massive and rapid destruction of nature and biodiversity in West Papua. It started with Australians who marched from PNG into the border area and reached the highlands in 1960s.

I am blaming them all only for one reason: THERE WAS NO SINGLE LANI, AMUNGME, MONI, MEE or other tribes in West Papua that asked them to come to explore and exploit. No single request. No one and nothing sounded like, "Come here, save us, tell us good news, teach us democracy, introduce to us development!" and such. However, they invited themselves to West Papua and declared wars (see section about wars). Now they do not want to take responsibility for wars they have created. War against poverty is the worse war of all. In this war alone, billions of pounds have been spent. There is a huge problem on the issue of 'poverty', what it means and who defines it.

Also the island has about 7% of the world's plants and animal species. However, unfortunately the World Bank has been supporting what Indonesia calls the Transmigration Programme. Indonesia has its own minister and department that manage this policy. What is the secret? The secret is publicly announced in Indonesia's banner/motto: "Unity in Diversity". Multinational corporations like Freeport MacMoRan, owned by the USA, based in New Orleans, have destroyed so many lives of the plants and animals in the highlands. Transmigration has destroyed many plants and animals for the sake of settlements. Mamberamo Dam Megaproject is underway. It will destroy the heart of the island, the people, flora and fauna.

So What Instead?

The modern community is formed into a life where the question "So what instead?" should arise if someone opposes what exists. This is based on the concept and belief of left-right, day-night, true/false, good-bad, and such. Therefore, if I have opposition to almost everything that exists in modern community in this booklet, then readers will automatically ask me this question, "So what instead?". In other words, this question is typical to Western civilisation. It does not exist in tribal people's minds.

The answer to this question will not be like the answer from an educated and modern person. It will be nothing. Nothing is the term I can use to refer to answers that a tribal person can give to questions from a modern person. Nothing is typical to tribal people.

The answer is John Lennon and Paul McCartney's "Let It Be!"

You are all civilised. The language that I use to express this view is the language of the civilised community. You understand more than I do, because I use your language to express this. I have

spent almost 30 years just to learn this civilised language just to come here and deliver this message to you all. That time spent was in order to come and give you this answer. I will tell you once again: “Let It Be!” is the answer to the question, “So what instead?”.

If you do not know how to “Let It Be!” then go to the tribal community. They are experts on this. They will teach you. Forget about your civilisation and learn from them. Remember that this civilisation is not perfect, this civilisation is not the only way all humans should live, this civilisation is destructive, dependent, exploitative, corrupt and deceptive.

If I am primitive, let me be primitive
If I am animist, let me be animist
If I am un-contacted/unevangelised, let me be so
If I am poor, let me be poor
If I am starving, let me be starving
If I am naked, let me be naked
If I am in the jungle, let me be there
If I am illiterate, let me be so
If I don't know English, leave me knowing nothing about it
If I am not a Christian, let me be so
If I do not eat rice, do not drink medicine, that is fine for me
If I can not drive, it is absolutely acceptable for me

You have no right to tell me this and that. You have no right to come and introduce yourself as whatever you are. You are not needed here in my life. We do not want you to be here, because you are automatically part of the destructive and exploitative community. Do not come here with whatever names. You are all corrupt.

We do not want to be dragged into the ‘mud’ of modern and civilised community. You are already in the ‘mud’; be there and do not drag us into it. We do not want to share in your success or suffering. We are just fine as we are.

Conclusion: Leave Us Alone!



We are entering the new millennium, the century of another nightmare for all the creatures on this planet. Please bear in mind that I am not going to dictate my preferences on what we should do, but I would like to show why I am against almost everything that exists in our community today. Perhaps they will illustrate why I am saying these things. You can ignore them, you can consider them or even you can tell me, “Nonsense, primitive man!” All are dependent on you.

The Religious Organisations

The religious organisations should abandon their old methods of preaching and reaching out to the world.

The belief of “This is the only way, and the only method, the only, and the only...” should not be allowed in any religious organisation in the world. If we are not wise enough, then we will still claim our religion, our belief, our concept, our faith as the best above all others on earth.

We have not yet and will never feel sorry about millions of people who have sacrificed their lives. We will never feel ashamed that we have created so many wars and conflicts. We will never feel responsible for the destruction and bloodshed that we have brought to earth. Just for the sake of our alien beliefs that we have been imposing on other people, we become blinded people in our hearts and feelings. We still regard this as worthwhile, and embarrassingly enough, we are proud of it. Are we mad or normal? I am not sure. Most probably we are not quiet and natural as we should be.

In Indonesia, religions have caused so many conflicts and even deaths. Our president and our political leaders are proud of being religious leaders. They are happy about it. They justify whatever happens for the sake of religions as ‘good’; this is for the sake of religions, not for the sake of humanity.

The Governments

I find it useless to give my views on the governments because the system has already been in place for centuries and they are regarded ‘good’ for developmental purposes. It is pointless to disagree with governments, just a waste of time.

What they should do is to be aware of various issues and problems they have created on this planet. They need to be open to criticism and to act upon the criticism. When I refer to the ‘Governments’, I am not talking about the leaders of the governments. I think that they are humans, just like me. They know what is wrong and what can be done, or not done about it. I know that they finally find it impossible to convert the system, other than perhaps Michail Gorbachev and BJ Habibie.

Clearly, the system of governing the world is itself ‘something’ or let me refer to it as ‘someone’. Almost no one is able to oppose “him / her / it”. It is in place, it is well established, it is operating, it is justified, it is accepted, and it is unchangeable.

Every government in the world should be aware of ‘What is best!’ and ‘What is worst!’ for its people. The United Kingdom is top of the list for this. Some people may say United States as the best, but wait a minute, I have got some reasons for saying this. Indonesia is, as far as I know, the worst. Other people may say a different country but this is only based on my knowledge. The most apparent evidence is what British politicians have done to their colonies. On one hand, it looks like Britain has given independence to all its colonies. On the other hand, actually they are not free at all. And yet, those colonies are reluctant to admit that they are still under British colonial rule. They are in love with Britain, and losing it is an unpleasant choice.

Gorbachev was a good example. Will Indonesia learn from him? Habibie was a good leader. Will they learn from him? Perhaps they see Mr. Habibie as a foolish politician, but actually he is not that foolish.

If I were Javanese,
If I were an Indonesian elite politician,
If I were an Indonesian armed commander
If I were a person with certain amount of power,

If only...

I would have allowed West Papua to go ahead with its will: revisit the Act of Free Choice in 1969, I would have allowed Acheh to become an independent state, I would have encouraged Molucans to be strong and independent, I would have offered independence to what are known as outer islands of Indonesia archipelago.

Unfortunately...

It seems this is just a dream that will never become a reality. It is also most likely that outer islanders will separate themselves, even if the Javanese do not allow it to happen. It is apparent that Javanese are in a pluralist dilemma, the dilemma that makes them unable to decide what is best for themselves. This is the reason why the United States feel they must intervene, this is the reason why Britain is offering training and equipment for the Indonesian police.

The NGOs and AOs

Ironically, non-governmental organisations or aid organisations are not better than religious organisations, the governments and multinational corporations. For one reason, they will never admit that they have done many things wrong with their developmental activities in my country. These will be their typical statements:

“We come here to help you. You need medicine, you need education, you need cash crops. You need to improve your standard of living. The church and government have not yet done as well as they could. Therefore, we come to help. We are more responsive to your real needs”.

There will be almost no sentence, as usual for anyone of us, showing the negative side of development activities carried out by NGOs and in particular what we know as aid agencies. Aid is always justified as “good for the poor and primitive people in the third world countries”. And this is the problem.

NGOs now should come back to their home countries and discuss what they have been doing. They need to ask themselves: “Are we part of the destruction of this planet?”. If yes, they should change the way they behave towards tribal people. If they cannot, they must stop doing what they are doing.

This is not the time for promoting cash crops, co-operative units, family development, education for children, road construction project, housing project, blah, blah, blah. This is the time to stop doing anything with planning and programming.

Main issue here is: Do not plan development, but plan activities to respond to the changes that naturally happens. When we plan for development, we are geared to making sure the implementation happens based on the plans. Therefore, if problems arise in the implementation, we tend to solve the problems. This is the main reason why NGOs are the same as MNCs and governments. Governments and MNCs have long term and short term plans drawn from their strategic plans. Based on these plans, they do their best to implement. If the implementation goes wrong, they find out why. If they see that tribal people are part of the problem then what do they do? They push tribal people out from their lands. They kill rebellious tribes. They systematically engineer the society. The goal is to make sure the programmes are implemented as the plan. If NGOs work in this way, it's better we stop them doing their business, at least in West Papua.

Not only that, most of them have been proven many times to be working for governments and most often for intelligence services from their country. Of course, for good money. Therefore,

it is unwise to allow NGOs to operate in West Papua, pretending to be good, but actually being dangerous for the tribal people unless they genuinely want to change their misbehaviour towards tribal people in West Papua.

The Corporations

It is obvious to me that multinational corporations are the future rulers of the whole world. At the moment, they are already ruling the world, but from behind the scenes. Some time in the future, they will come out openly as rulers of the world.

It is interesting to notice how capitalists play around using any tool as they can in our civilisation, but people never point the finger at them, except current protests such as J18 in Europe, N30 in Seattle, USA, also perhaps Mayday 2000. First they operated behind elite groups in the churches. Then they also operated behind elite groups in the governments. Some of them are still successfully operating behind NGOs and AOs. With all these tools at their disposal, they will finally declare the whole world as their belonging.

I am not surprised if people in the West refuse the World Trade Organisation (WTO) and Genetically Modified (GM) crops.

At the end of the day, MNCs will control everything, even the genes of human beings. They will be able to manipulate the genes of human beings as they want. Most probably what they want are humans who are hard working and very loyal to the bosses. Most probably they will not have a critical way of thinking. I have seen this already exists in Britain. People do not care about what is going on in the surrounding villages. They do not care about what is the meaning of life. So much time and energy are spent for their own personal problems. Capitalists deliberately create or allow as many personal problems as possible. These make the people concentrate more on their personal problems rather than dealing with global problems. This worries me a lot.

This raises a question: “When can we globalise our struggle against capitalism and environmental destruction?”

Amin!!

Solidarity South Pacific

For over thirty years the tribes of West Papua have been resisting the destruction of their land and peoples by multinational corporations and the Indonesian military. In the jungles the guerrillas of the OPM (Free Papua Movement) fight a western armed military with only longbows and their knowledge of the land. This is but one of many struggles in the South Pacific.

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Civilisation... a View from the Bush

This pamphlet is very unusual. Here in his own words are the views of a tribesman from the remote highlands of New Guinea. This letter offers those of us in industrial civilisation a rare glimpse of our own society through the eyes of one from beyond its borders. Sent to Britain by his people to find out about 'that Europe thing that is attacking us' he wrote this letter back to his country in 1999.



Written originally in his native tongue, Lani, a version of Leave Us Alone has now been written in English by the author. This you hold in your hands.

Subjects covered in this pamphlet include:

- Papuas Problems in Context
- The Four Enemies of Tribal People



- What is Wrong with the Modern World?
- Lani Perspectives on War and Peace
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Just Leave Us Alone!

A letter from a Papuan Tribesman

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