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WORKING SESSION 2 

‘Anglicans Are the Least Troublesome’: Christianity in Tikopia 

Christianity came late to Tikopia, Solomon Islands, compared with other islands of Oceania. Total conversion to the Church of Melanesia (Church of England) was not achieved until the mid-1950s and initially European ideas were mediated through a Melanesian (rather than European) missionary. The early history of Christianity in Tikopia deals with the suborning and absorption of the first missionary by the Polynesian Tikopia. 

By the time of my fieldwork in 1979-80 the Church of Melanesia was firmly established in Tikopia and its settlements but it had been modified in several significant ways. The Tikopia, part of a Polynesian minority in the predominantly Melanesian Solomons, are concerned with their identity and most introduced ideas or practices, including Christianity, are redesigned to some extent to fit Tikopian ideology. This has been facilitated by the ordination of several Tikopia as Anglican priests who therefore have the power to modify church ritual. My paper deals with Christianity, an introduced European concept, Tikopian identity and control of ideology. 

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