

SANGUMA AND THE POWER OF THE GOSPEL IN REFERENCE TO THE GUMINE PEOPLE (SIMBU PEOPLE)

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INTRODUCTION

I felt sick to hear the news of Kaul's death. It was a great loss to my Kawaleku tribe. Kaul had recently completed his tertiary education. He had committed to the regional rugby league team. He was a promising, industrious, young man, in the field of rugby league, as well as to fill leadership in the community. He died an unexpected death in Kundiawa General hospital in Kundiawa, Papua New Guinea.

I left after class at Nazarene Bible College (Tuman, Papua New Guinea) to attend the funeral. I was late for the traditional funeral, but I was on time for the burial ceremony. The crowd was silent, as the Pastor conducted the ceremony. As I parked the truck, it drew the crowd's attention. The crowd saw me, and began to wail. I wept, and walked towards the crowd. It was a brief mourning, since somebody silenced us so the pastor could continue his preaching.

It was a comforting message about resurrection and hope in Christ. Then the Yani Seventh-day Adventist (SDA) youth, dressed neatly in black and white, sang a beautiful song. The choir indeed uplifted and comforted the mourners. At last, Kaul's casket was lowered into the grave to rest forever.

We retreated, sat around, and more people came to greet me. They all expressed to me sadness at the loss of my comrade and tribesman. One of the sympathisers made a comment, which really astonished me. This is the

translated comment: “It is very sad, we’ve lost your brother, but it is even sadder what they have done to your grandparents.”

When I inquired about this comment, I discovered that Kaul’s grandparents had been accused of killing Kaul with *sanguma*. Therefore, young men had stripped them naked, and dragged them along the three-kilometre road to the mourning place. They suffered much at the hands of the cruel, young men. They were repeatedly whipped and tortured, and, at last, buried alive in a toilet pit, a few hours prior to the burial ceremony.

I was so crushed. I asked myself, “what are the churches doing? Are they there to preach beautiful sermons and sing songs of hallelujah? Have they really brought the good news to the poor, the captive and the rejected? Are they doing anything to defend the poor, weak and helpless?” This was the challenge that drove me to this project in an endeavour to find answers.

In this article, I discuss the following points:

1. The interpretation of *sanguma*.
2. The true beliefs of *sanguma*.
3. Assessing the current *sanguma* problems in Gumine.
4. The church’s challenge to the *sanguma* problem.

Sanguma is indeed a prevailing problem. I attempt to examine the true basis of the *sanguma* phenomenon, and challenge the church to deal with it seriously. I trust this paper will serve as a tool to help pastors and Christians, who work in *sanguma*-dominated areas. It might help to effectively minister to the people’s immediate needs.

INTERPRETATION OF SANGUMA

The views and interpretation of the *sanguma* phenomenon differ among various cultures and societies of people around the world. In this discussion, I intend to examine three different interpretations: the anthropological, the Melanesian (at large), and the Gumine people's. This will give us a clearer view of a specific people group in Melanesia, and their perspective on *sanguma*.

THE ANTHROPOLOGICAL INTERPRETATION

The English word for *sanguma* is “witchcraft”. Witchcraft (witch) comes from the Anglo-Saxon work “Wicca” meaning “Wise One” or “Magician”.¹ A witch is a person, especially a woman, who is believed to have supernatural powers to harm others.² “Witchcraft is a mystical, innate power used to bring about evil.”³ Some people do not distinguish the difference between witchcraft and sorcery, however, some do.⁴

Historically, witchcraft was a predominant practice. In Europe, between 1400-1700 AD, this was an anti-Christian practice, and they pledged their association with the devil. The Christian church put to death about 30,000 women for witchcraft.⁵

Today, the belief in witchcraft exists in almost all tribal societies, such as those in India, Africa, and Melanesia (which is the focus of this paper). To discuss witchcraft in Melanesia is not easy, because these beliefs are only theoretical, and there is not enough literature that analyses the phenomenon. However, there is a wide range of literature on the subject of African witchcraft.

¹ *The World Book Encyclopedia*, vol 21, 1977, p. 309.

² *Ibid.*

³ Philip Steyne, *Gods of Power*, Houston TX: Touch Publications, 1989, p. 119.

⁴ Ian Hogbin, ed., *Anthropology in PNG*, Melbourne Vic: Melbourne University Press, 1973, p. 182.

⁵ *The World Book Encyclopedia*, vol 21, 1977, p. 309.

Some anthropologists denounce the belief as a “naïve form of expression”, or “primitive exotica”, and believe it does not exist as objective reality.⁶ A leading anthropologist, Evans-Pritchard, who has devoted much time studying African witchcraft, states, “A witch has no real existence.”⁷

They see witchcraft as an imaginary offence, with no logical and analytical basis for its existence. Material in this field focuses on describing the phenomenon, and not on discovering the basis of its existence and any attempts to curtail the problem.

However, my purpose, in this paper, is to discover the basis of *sanguma*, and give a Christian perspective, together with the use biblical principles to encounter the *sanguma* problem. *Sanguma* is, indeed, a spiritual problem.

MELANESIAN INTERPRETATION

Witchcraft, in Neo-Melanesian Pidgin, is *sanguma*. By definition, in Neo-Melanesian, it is “ritual and secret murder by means of sorcery”.⁸ This definition is true in the broader sense. There is no fine line of distinction in some cultures. However, we shall see how *sanguma* is interpreted in a few Melanesian societies. To see the distinction clearly, I shall give a brief description of sorcery.

Sorcery is the use of magic or rites to bring evil on others, as well as to bring personal benefits. “The act of sorcery consists of the rite (magic), the spell, the condition of the performer, and the tradition of the magic.”⁹ The magic and spells are born within the culture, and passed from generation to generation. An individual may perform it for a community, or for individuals, who hire him. This is supported by Evans-Pritchard’s observation on sorcery:

⁶ Hogbin, *Anthropology in PNG*, p. 184.

⁷ G. Parrinder, *African Traditional Religion*, Westport CT: Greenwood, 1954, p. 113.

⁸ Friedrich Steinbauer, *Neo-Melanesian Dictionary*, 1988.

⁹ John Middleton, ed., *Magic, Witchcraft, and Curing*, New York NY: Doubleday, 1921, p. 5.

The magic is not as a force of nature, but a culture heritage, not as something discovered, but as something coexistent in time with man, not as a vague impersonal power, but as tangible weapon of culture, not activated by the spirits of death, but deriving its power from the knowledge of the traditional, and the abstinence of living men.¹⁰

The most-important magic is in the hands of a few individuals in a community. Conversely, the more the performance of magic becomes public property, the less social utility it possesses.¹¹

Both witchcraft and sorcery have evil connotations, but sorcery is the skilful use of rites, magic, and spells, whereas witchcraft is an intrinsic part of his/her person.

The Boiken dialect people of Wewak are known to dig up bones of deceased parent/relatives and keep them in their possession. This gives them supernatural powers to do evil. This is called *Maienduo* in the Boiken dialect.¹² They understand this as *sanguma*.

There is another form of *sanguma*, which Leonard called “assault sorcery”. This is often a personal attack on an enemy, which includes ripping out internal organs. The crime is repeated, until the victim is unable to remember who or what has afflicted him. Simple questions such as, “what is your name?” are asked to test the victim’s mental state. If he responds sensibly, the attack is resumed. Finally, he is permitted to go home, but only as a shell. The victim’s physical and mental integrity is damaged beyond the power to recover, so he dies.¹³ This is a common form of *sanguma* among Papuans, and is called *vada* in Motu.¹⁴

¹⁰ Ibid., p. 20. (Refer to article in Middleton’s book.)

¹¹ Ibid., p. 17.

¹² Interview, Caleb Boo, a student at CLTC, formerly active in *Maienduo*.

¹³ Hogbin, *Anthropology in PNG*, p. 184.

¹⁴ Ibid., p. 183.

The assault sorcery is also greatly feared among the Karimui-Bomai people of the South Simbu, and is known as *Bomai-Deko*.¹⁵ The Karimui-Bomai are a trading partner of the Golin people (my tribe) in Gumine. The Golin fear the catastrophe of *Bomai-Deko* as retaliation for being cheated in trading deals.¹⁶

According to the above reviews and examples, *sanguma* is a broader term, which includes both witchcraft and sorcery. However, the Gumine people's perception of *sanguma* is clearly distinct from sorcery. The interpretation, below, will enable us to understand the distinction.

THE GUMINE PEOPLE'S INTERPRETATION

The form of *sanguma*, which is greatly feared, and dominates the Gumine area, is known as *Kume*. *Kume* is a belief that certain people possess supernatural powers. They possess an animal spirit (*Kume*), which gives them supernatural abilities. The fitting description or interpretation of *Kume* is Leonard's interpretation of witchcraft (*sanguma*), "Witchcraft is the projection of personal powers, which can inflict sickness or death on others . . . [these powers are] inherited or acquired, as an intrinsic part of his or her person."¹⁷

They are addicted to doing evil, especially killing people, and eating them. *Sanguma* (witchcraft) is distinct from sorcery. *Sanguma* is known to the Gumine people as *Kume* (as described above). Sorcery is known to them as *Bikan*. *Bikan* is a man, who puts curses on people (individuals, as well as community), fauna, and the landscape (causing landslides, for example).

Gilgiai is a man who has the ability to heal and removes curses. He can also remove the infertility of women, or livestock, and cause the womb to be fertile again. *Ko-Krai* is still another form of sorcery, in which the performer has the ability to defend himself, his family, and tribe from

¹⁵ *Bomai-Deko*, a form of *sanguma*, widely known to the Karimui people of South Simbu.

¹⁶ The Golin, are a big tribal group in Gumine, which is my tribe.

¹⁷ Hogbin, *Anthropology in PNG*, p. 182.

Bikan (curse), as well as to bring prosperity (child-bearing, livestock, wealth, etc.).¹⁸ *Bikan*, *Gilgai*, and *Ko-Krai* are the common types of sorcery in Gumine. They all involve the use of rites, magic, spells, and the sorcerer's ability to control extrinsic power.

Kume is the witchcraft, which will be discussed in this article. It involves a person, who has an innate animal spirit, acquired through heredity, that becomes an intrinsic part of his/her person. Though *sanguma* is a general term, which covers both witchcraft and sorcery, my focus, in this paper, is the *Kume* of the Gumine people. To avoid confusion in the use of terminology, I will use the term *sanguma* throughout this article.

THE TRUE BELIEFS OF SANGUMA

Sanguma beliefs are often described as naïve forms of expression, primitive and exotica, and do not exist as objective reality by Western anthropologists.¹⁹ Some people assume *sanguma* might disappear, as people in Melanesia are educated, and become more modern in their outlook, and move in the direction of Westernisation.²⁰

However, that is not the case. *Sanguma* beliefs are popular topics nowadays in colleges and university circles.²¹ This should cause us to seriously think about the issue. Leonard's comments would be good advice for non-Melanesians, who overlook this issue.

Energies should not be wasted on efforts to eliminate sorcery and witchcraft (*sanguma*) accusations through education or fiat. Rather, every effort should be made to understand such events in their (Melanesian) own social contest.²²

For the Western anthropologist (and even missionary), in their attempt to eliminate *sanguma* and the prevailing problem in Melanesia, is the

¹⁸ *Gilgai*, *Bikan*, and *Ko-Krai* are three common types of sorcery in Gumine. They are very distinct from *Kume* – which is witchcraft.

¹⁹ Hogbin, *Anthropology in PNG*, p. 184.

²⁰ *Ibid.*

²¹ *Ibid.*

²² *Ibid.*, p. 185.

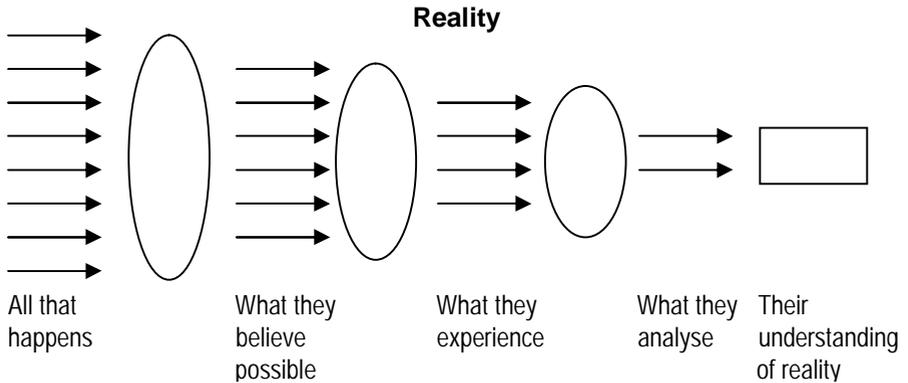
problem of worldview clashes. It would be worthwhile to look at these conflicts in worldview.

THE PROBLEM OF WORLDVIEW

I shall attend to define three different worldviews, and how each perceives reality. They are the Western worldview, the Melanesian worldview, and the biblical worldview.

Western Worldview

All people have cultures. Cultures shape and influence our life greatly. “Culture is the total non-biological transmitted heritage of man.”²³ At the heart of every culture, there are certain beliefs and assumptions that form a worldview. Our worldview is the “culturally-structured assumption, values, and commitments underlying a people’s perception of reality.”²⁴ Charles Kraft, as quoted by Bartle, uses “reality” (what God sees) in contrast to “reality” (what we see).²⁵ This diagram,²⁶ which Bartle adapted from Kraft, illustrates the worldview perception. This is how Westerners perceive reality:



²³ Neville Bartle, *Worldview and Power Encounter*, unpublished.

²⁴ Ibid., adapted from Kraft, *Christianity in Culture*, Maryknoll NY: Orbis Books, 1979.

²⁵ Ibid.

²⁶ Ibid., quoted from Kraft, *Christianity in Culture*.

We see all things around us through these filters and lenses. It excludes some things as unimportant, and focuses on others as important. This can be different to the “reality” that God sees.²⁷

Westerners are generally more rationalistic, and only believe things that are scientifically proven. They eliminate most of the things that are outside the realm of scientifically possible.²⁸ Kraft further explains this, as quoted by Bartle:

Non-Western people are frequently concerned about activities of supernatural beings. Though many Westerners retain a vague belief in God, most deny that other supernatural beings exist. . . . Westerners largely disregard the supernatural.²⁹

The Melanesian Worldview

The Melanesian epistemology³⁰ is primarily based on religious knowledge. This is their basis of knowing and understanding the world in which they live.³¹

A Melanesian does not segregate the physical and spiritual world. All spheres of life, economics, politics, social functions, etc., are closely tied up with the spirit (non-empirical) world. Whiteman summarises this point:

Even though religious knowledge may be the most important, Melanesians do not live in a compartmentalised world of secular and sacred domains. Rather, they have an integrated worldview, in which physical and spiritual realities dovetail. They are not segregated and fragmented, as they often are for Western

²⁷ Bartle, *Worldview and Power Encounter*, unpublished, quoted from Kraft, *Christianity in Culture*.

²⁸ *Ibid.*

²⁹ *Ibid.*, as quoted from Kraft, *Christianity in Culture*.

³⁰ Epistemology means “origin, nature, and limits of knowledge”.

³¹ Mantovani, Ennio, “An Introduction to Melanesian Religions”, in *Point 6* (1984), p. 87.

Christians. The physical and spiritual, secular and sacred, function together in the Melanesian worldview.³²

Though the two dovetail and function together, their worldview is divided into two parts: the empirical, which excludes the natural environment, animals, and human beings, and those things that can be seen and touched. The non-empirical part includes spirit beings, *sanguma*, and occult forces. The non-empirical realm of the world is very closely associated with the empirical realm.³³

The empirical and non-empirical are not segregated and fragmented, as they often are for Western Christians. The Western worldview and the Melanesian worldview are opposites. Melanesians see the spirits (non-empirical) as having direct influence on all of life (empirical). Whereas, Westerners see the spirits (non-empirical) as non-existent.

How can God, the Holy Spirit, and the angels of Christianity, which are part of the non-empirical realm that the missionaries (Westerners) preached, change and influence one's life into godliness, if that is not part of one's worldview?

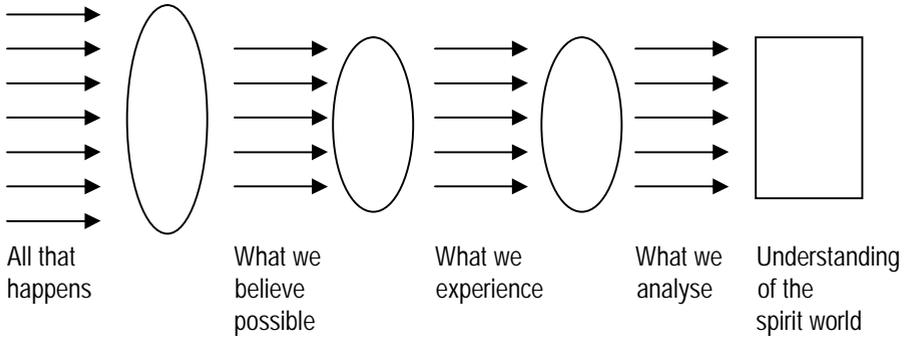
I suspect Westerners retain a vague belief in God. Otherwise, they have to step out of their natural, scientific, and rationalistic worldview, and do their thinking outside of this. This can be true if they are willing to discover the basis of *sanguma* in Melanesia.

Bartle's adaptation of Kraft's diagram illustrates this contradicting worldview:

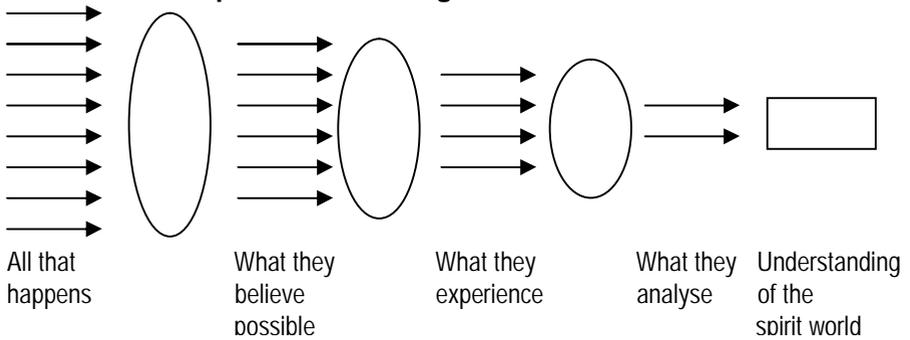
³² Ibid., p. 87.

³³ Ibid.

The Spirit World Through Melanesian Worldview³⁴



The Spirit World Through Western Worldview³⁵



The above contrast shows that Westerners have a filter in their thinking that eliminates most of the spirit world stories and ideas. They regard them as outside the realm of the scientifically possible, whereas Melanesians accept most of it.³⁶ This contrasting worldview greatly affects ministry in Melanesia, especially in the area of spiritual warfare and *sanguma*, which are the predominant problems. Bartle noted this effect in his article:

If we [Westerners] are not honest, we could find that the theology that is seen from the naturalistic, Western worldview, that we feel is

³⁴ Bartle, *Worldview and Power Encounter*.

³⁵ Ibid.

³⁶ Ibid.

so right, turns out to be inadequate, when exported overseas [Melanesia, or tribal people]. It did not answer the theological questions of the people, about the spirit world.³⁷

This is true in Melanesia. The belief in, and fear of, *sanguma* and sorcery is prevalent in Melanesia. Missionaries and missionary-influenced church leaders and pastors do little about the problem.

However, we need to observe one more worldview, the biblical worldview, and consider which of these conflicting worldviews is closer to the biblical worldview.

The Biblical Worldview

The Bible contains sufficient references to the non-empirical world, which proves that this spirit world was real and present at Bible times. Bartle gives the following data, with reference to the non-empirical world in the Bible: there are 79 references to demon and demon possession, 42 references to angels, 51 references to either Satan or the devil, 56 references to witchcraft, sorcery, soothsayers, and astrologers. He also observed that, in the first three chapters of Mark's gospel, there are 14 references to demons, evil spirits, and Satan.³⁸

The Bible also indicates that, in the beginning, God created large numbers of angels. They are spiritual beings, who may appear in a physical form. They have great power, given by God to exercise their duties.³⁹ This is true for both angels and demons. In the broader perspective, demons can be described as angels, who rebelled against God. They sinned, and came under God's judgment. God cast the chief demon (Satan), with one-third of the angels, out of heaven.⁴⁰ They are now known as demons, whose primary work is to oppose the work of the kingdom of God here on earth.

³⁷ Ibid.

³⁸ Ibid.

³⁹ Mark Brimblecombe, *Demon and Deliverance*, unpublished.

⁴⁰ John 4:18; 2 Peter 2:4; Jude 6.

Satan's main purpose is to oppose God, and the work of Christ. He does this through various ways: deceiving man into sinning, causing physical sickness, and involvement in occult practices, such as, *sanguma*, witchcraft, and sorcery.⁴¹ This will be discussed in depth later, in an attempt to discover the basis of the *sanguma* phenomena.

From the biblical understanding of the non-empirical realm, I assert that the Melanesian worldview – the interrelation of both empirical and non-empirical – is closer to the biblical worldview. Mannuel frankly stated that “Western worldview is non-biblical”.⁴²

Christian ministry in Melanesia is affected. The missionary has little or nothing to say to the indigenous, prevailing problem of *sanguma*. Most indigenous church leaders and workers were trained, and worked with, missionaries, and they are partly influenced by their worldview. They are so sceptical that they deny the reality of *sanguma*. Bartle expressed this as:

We [Westerners] believe we have a true and accurate biblical theology, and insist that we must teach this theology to all mankind around the world. But, if we are honest enough, we could find that it is a theology that is seen from a naturalistic, Western worldview. We are shocked when we find out that the theology, we feel so right, turns out to be inadequate, when it is exported overseas; for it does not answer the theological questions of most people of the world [Melanesia].⁴³

I assert the root problem of this ineffective ministry for the felt needs of the people is the problem of conflicting worldviews. However, one party (Western) has to walk out of its thinking (worldview) to help the other party (Melanesian). Bartle, quoting from Tippett, challenges Westerners in their expectations of a successful cross-cultural ministry:

⁴¹ Brimblecombe, *Demon and Deliverance*, unpublished.

⁴² Barry Mannuel, *Dealing with the Demonic Today*, unpublished.

⁴³ Bartle, *Worldview and Power Encounter*.

One reason why Western theologians, medical men, and psychologists have trouble with the cross-cultural (ministry) study of demon possession (*sanguma*), is that they refuse to do their thinking outside their own scientific worldview.⁴⁴

The problem of *sanguma* is very real in Melanesia. Though Westerners may debate its existence, I assert that non-Melanesian (Westerner) gospel bearers must be willing to do their thinking outside their worldview, and effectively address the *sanguma* issue as demonic deception. Now, I shall proceed into the discussion of the beliefs of *sanguma*.

THE BELIEFS

I've discussed the interpretation of *sanguma*. I shall now take a closer look into its beliefs. To avoid repetition, I shall not discuss the general view of Melanesians on the subject. However, in the general Melanesian view, *sanguma* and sorcery overlap each other. As Melanesian cultures are diverse, the beliefs are diverse as well. I shall focus on the beliefs of the specific people group I am discussing.

Sanguma in Gumine

The Gumine people believe that certain people have supernatural power, which can do great harm to others, and even kill them. This supernatural power is an evil power. People, who have these powers, are called *Kume*, as mentioned earlier.

They believe *Kume* is an animal or creature spirit living in the person (possessor). This animal spirit is an intrinsic part of his/her person. It affects and controls his/her emotion and will. It dwells in the *Kume Galin*,⁴⁵ (*sanguma* purse – which is one of the internal organs), and communicates with the possessor. Gumine people do not specify which, or what, part of the organ is *Kume Galin*.

Azande witchcraft belief is similar. Evans-Pritchard describes *Mangu* as an oval, blackish swelling, or bag substance, in the body of the witch.

⁴⁴ Bartle, *Worldview and Power Encounter*, quote from Tippet (Mont, 1976).

⁴⁵ *Kume Galin* is Golin dialect for “belief of *sanguma* purse, through heredity”.

They believe it is found beneath the arms. Often, when the suspect dies, an autopsy is done to prove the existence of the substance. If *Mangu* is found, the suspect is declared a witch.⁴⁶

There are two ways a person can become *sanguma*: unintentionally, or inherited through heredity.

Case #1 A man married two wives. The second wife, who was a *sanguma*, had no children. The first wife, who was not a *sanguma*, had two daughters. The second wife was jealous of the first wife, and killed her, using *sanguma*. The two children became hers. Sometimes later, the wife used *sanguma* to kill her husband also. Having no husband, she moved from place to place. Not long after that, she placed her hands upon one of her adopted daughter's head, and placed her *sanguma* spirit in her daughter, making the daughter a *sanguma*.⁴⁷

Often, people, who acquire *sanguma* unintentionally, at first, seem depressed, confused, and isolated. Their personality and attitudes greatly change, and become abnormal. They have an appetite for human excrement and flesh.

The common way is heredity. If a parent is a *sanguma*, the children are likely to have it also. The Azande belief of "biological transmission of *sanguma* from one parent to all children of the same sex"⁴⁸ is complementary to the Gumine people's belief.

Case #2: Balai's mother died shortly after his father died. Olmai Ba and his wife decided to adopt Balai. Balai grew up as Olmai's son. Unfortunately, Balai inherited a flying fox *sanguma* spirit from his former parents, but nobody knew, not even his present parents.

⁴⁶ Evans-Pritchard, *Witchcraft, Oracle, and Magic among Azande*, Oxford UK: Clarendon Press, 1976, p. 2.

⁴⁷ Case study, adapted from Bartle, *Power Encounter*, Worldview.

⁴⁸ Evans-Pritchard, *Witchcraft, Oracle, and Magic*, p. 4.

One time, his father (Olmali) was very sick. Other people in the village worked *sanguma* on him. All attempts to give medical help and sorcery (Gilgai) were unsuccessful. The village *sanguma* held a meeting to kill Olmai Ba this time. However, Balai's *sanguma* (flying fox) happened to spy the meeting, and heard the plan.

One afternoon, he came weeping at his father's feet. His father asked him what was wrong, and Balai reported the plan to his father. He even mentioned the names of each village *sanguma*.

When asked, how he knew about the plan, he admitted that he had a flying fox (*sanguma*), which he inherited from his father. Though Balai was young (approximately ten years old in 1994), he was highly respected as a *sanguma* doctor among the Kawaleku tribe in Gumine.⁴⁹

The *sanguma* spirit is believed to go out at night, and be involved in all kinds of activities. This will be discussed in the next point. *Sanguma* activities are spiritual. Parrinder describes the activities of the *sanguma* as the belief that, when the *sanguma* sends out his/her soul, the body of the *sanguma* remains in bed, while he/she (*sanguma*) is absent.⁵⁰ But, if anything prevents his/her return, he/she perishes. If someone sees a dog and believes it to be a *sanguma*, and kills it, the *sanguma* doesn't die there. Rather, the *sanguma* dies in the house. If the dog is just injured, the *sanguma* in the house will also be injured.

Case #3: A group of men, armed with short guns, guarded Kaul's grave (Kaul's death was mentioned in the introduction). Not long after, a black dog approached the grave. Someone opened fire, and shot the dog in the right, front leg. Word was passed around to identify anybody with an injured right

⁴⁹ (a) Because of this, Balai became a prominent figure. (b) Kawaleku tribe – A tribe of the Golin people group in Gumine, of which I am a member.

⁵⁰ Parrinder, *African Traditional Religion*, p. 125.

arm. Appa wasn't seen around the village for two days. When some men finally found him, he complained that he injured his right arm when falling from a tree. Everyone believed that Appa was a *sanguma*.

The Activities

There are several activities the *sanguma* is believed to be doing, when departing the body, and going out in the night. The most harmless is called *Kume-Korungo*, which is a personal *sanguma* dance. Evans-Pritchard described a similar activity from Africa witchcraft, "Witchcraft is like fire, it lights a light. That light is not the witch (*sanguma*) in the person, stalking his prey, but an emanation from his body."⁵¹

There are also nocturnal gatherings for all *sanguma*. Whistle or bird cries can be heard from different directions in remote areas. Light can be seen flying to one spot in isolation. I've personally seen this (light), when I was in high school. There, they are believed to hold a meeting to decide whom is the next candidate to be killed, or which tribe owed which tribe, and when settlement is to be repaid.

There is also a belief that a cannibalism feast is held there. The corpse is buried, and firmly guarded, but the chief *sanguma* orders a deep trench to be made from the nocturnal place right to the grave. The body is pulled down, and they feast on it.

The most fearful activity of the *sanguma* is bodily affliction and killing. There must always be a reason why the *sanguma* do that. When one wrongs another, mistreats, or doesn't repay debts, he is a possible victim, if the opponent is a *sanguma*. The *sanguma* removes the internal organs and eats them. The victim gradually deteriorates and dies.

A common *sanguma* activity is cannibalism. Two basic types of cannibalism are the removal of an organ from the prey, and the removal of the corpse, on both of which they feast at the nocturnal gatherings. However, I can't remember any autopsy, medically, or traditionally, to

⁵¹ Evans-Pritchard, *Oracle and Magic among Azande*, p. 10.

prove and ratify the missing internal organ. Occasionally, a corpse is dug up after days or weeks to settle the dispute (*sanguma* has eaten it, or not) and, to their amazement, the corpse still remains. There is no evidence of the corpse missing from the grave. This doesn't convince me enough to conclude that *sanguma* is unrealistic. I argue that it is the activity of the soul/spirit. Evans-Pritchard describes this as:

The description of the feast sounds like cannibalism, yet it's spiritual. The assembled ghosts tear the victim limb from limb, eat it raw or cooked, or they suck the blood, vampire fashion. Yet all this is done to the soul, and not the body.⁵²

In like manner, the *sanguma* spirit goes out, and does all these activities to the spirit/soul of the victim. This is the best possible attempt of Western anthropology to define the non-Western belief of *sanguma* activities. This is a spiritual problem, which I shall discuss later. Let us take a closer view of the current *sanguma* issue on the society I am discussing.

ASSESSING THE CURRENT SANGUMA PROBLEM IN GUMINE

Western anthropologists and missionaries question the objective realities and the existence of *sanguma*. They describe it as "phenomenal, naïve forms of expression, primitive exotica, which exist as objective realities."⁵³

However, my point of interest does not lie in the debate of its reality, but the effect of *sanguma*. The effect of it is so real and overwhelming that we need to seriously consider it, rather than debating the analytical and rationalisation of its existence, and objective realities. Evans-Pritchard's description of the Azande people is like the Melanesian Gumine people,

Azande experience feelings about a witch rather than ideas, for the intellectual concepts of it are weak, and they know better what to do

⁵² Parrinder, *African Traditional Religion*, p. 126.

⁵³ Hogbin, *Anthropology in PNG*, p. 184.

when attacked by it than how to explain it. Their response is action, and not analysis.⁵⁴

Perhaps the Gumine people, like the Azande, are not rationalistic and analytical in what they believe, but, again, the effect is obvious, and needs deliberation. I shall discuss the following effects existing in Gumine.

THE GREAT FEAR

The fear of *sanguma* is prevalent in every society in Gumine. There is nothing that could substitute, or evade, this great apprehension in the lives of the people. People are indeed living in captivity to the fear of *sanguma*.

When one is sick, or dies, there is a common understanding that it has a plurality of causes. One may develop pneumonia, malaria, or typhoid, and consequently dehydrate, but the society will interpret the cause as *sanguma*. One may be drowned, killed by accident, or die on a battlefield, but the root cause is *sanguma*. Someone worked *sanguma* on him, so he died. The lives of the people are trapped in fear. Most people are in fear of being attacked by *sanguma*. Others, especially old, weak, and lower-level members of the community, are in fear of being accused of *sanguma*, when someone is sick or dies. The fear of being attacked by a *sanguma*, or for being a *sanguma*, encompasses the society, and is, indeed, a prevailing problem.

I was raised in my maternal village, and was constantly reminded not to go back to my paternal village. I grew up in fear of *sanguma* powers. This is one of the factors in the Gumine (Simbu) people's urban and plantation drift. Maima Brown, who lives in Port Moresby, asserted that he would never go back to his Mul village, because he originally fled due to the fear of *sanguma*. Likewise, old people (especially women), and members of the lower classes of society, are usually overwhelmed with fear if someone in the village is sick or dies. They surely know what their penalty would be if they are accused.

⁵⁴ Evans-Pritchard, *Witchcraft, Oracle, and Magic among Azande*, p. 12.

Case #4: My uncles had chased away the families of Alai and Simin from Yuribol village. They were accused of killing my cousin, Nera, with *sanguma*. They forfeited all their land and garden to my uncles, and fled to Lae, and lived there. It was sad to see this happen.

Satan has many names. Some of his names are: the accuser of the brethren (Rev 12:10), the father of all lies (John 8:44), and the great deceiver (Rev 12:9). It is evident that Satan has dominion over the lives of the Gumine people. They are kept in the bondage of fear, accusation, and assault of their tribesmen, of *sanguma*. Consequently, this brings great catastrophe on the lives and morale of the society.

Even church workers and Christians are not absolutely set free from this bondage of apprehension. Kamane, trained in Bible College, and an experienced pastor, accused his stepmother of *sanguma*, when his daughter died. His stepmother is a good Christian in his church. This is a very serious problem, and the church, known as people with the Good News, indeed, needs to consider these aspects of ministry seriously.

TORTURING OF THE SUSPECTS

Satan is not only named as accuser of the brethren, he is also named as a murderer (John 10:10). He came to steal, kill, and destroy. The suspects of *sanguma* often experience severe persecution from the hands of the cruel, senseless members of the society. They are often tortured and drowned, burnt, or buried alive. This sounds like an image set back into a primitive Stone Age period, but it is a current scenario. It happens right under the nose of the government and mission (church) stations.

The suspects are questioned, if it is thought he/she was responsible for the death, or the misfortune. The *sanguma* doctor⁵⁵ determines who is responsible for the death. The society assumes the *sanguma* judgment is infallible. And the poor suspects have no hope, choice, or alternatives,

⁵⁵ *Sanguma* doctor, a person who openly declares that he is a *sanguma*, and uses his supernatural powers to interpret the *sanguma* misfortune. Often he is hired.

whatsoever. He/she awaits the cruel torment from a senseless, aggressive society.

When the suspect admits that he/she is a *sanguma*, and is responsible for the death, he/she is tortured. When the suspect denies it, he/she is forced to admit through accelerated torture, such as, lashing, burning, and chopping off toes and fingers. Humanly, it is difficult to stand the torment, so they voluntarily admit, to avert the prolonged agony of the torment. However when he/she admits guilt, the torture is repeated severely, as a means of chastisement and retaliation until he/she dies, or is burnt, buried, or downed alive.

Case #5: In August, 1995, a pilot from Dirima Catholic Mission Station crashed in Karimui and died (I had know him as a distant friend). Technically, the one-engine Cessna, overloaded with coffee bags, couldn't lift up its fuselage, when taxiing on the runway, so it crashed into the drain. The people related this tragic death of the young man to *sanguma*. The cruel, aggressive villagers tortured six innocent people in a single day. Some were buried alive in the toilet pits, others were drowned, and still others were gunned down.

This was a broad-daylight scenario, in front of the big Catholic Mission Station, as well as a few struggling Evangelical churches. Also the Gumine government station was only five kilometres away. Had the church there made any attempt to defend those poor, defenceless, and voiceless members of the society, whose lives had been claimed, in a cruel inhuman way? Had the government done anything to those cruel villagers? Both parties were silent. The society did what seemed fit in their eyes.

DEGRADATION OF A GOOD FAMILY NAME

For the Gumine people, as part of their Melanesian culture, family ties are very cohesive. The family name falls or rises with what happens to one of its members. A young man, who made his way to be a lawyer or doctor, boosts the morale, fame, and name of his family, as well as his tribe. A

criminal, or a rapist, brings shame and embarrassment to his family, and their good name is degraded.

Likewise, when one is questioned for *sanguma*, and is tortured, or cast out of the society, all the family members extensively feel the impact of its effect.

The whole family line (both paternal and maternal) is traced and identified as *sanguma* people. When the society rules a family as *sanguma*, it automatically degrades their morale, fame, and identity in the society. They live in constant fear. Their movements are monitored. They feel insecure and rejected, and often migrate to other places. This is the name they will live with. There is nothing much they can do to redeem their identity, and family good name.

It is a sad thing to see the society's destruction of self-esteem, fame, and identity of an innocent family's good name. This is an obvious breakdown of the morale of the people in the society. The breakdown of morale and self-esteem in one's life and family is a great loss, and perhaps an unredeemable catastrophe.

THE CHURCH'S INSUFFICIENT RESPONSE

The catastrophe of *sanguma* is very prevalent. The society's response is very cruel, aggressive, and inhuman. The government is too lenient. They are Melanesian, and they have the same fear and beliefs as everyone else. The Western, adopted legal systems, of which they are the custodians, don't say much about *sanguma* crime (spiritual). They are biased and uncompromising in their attitudes towards spiritual crime within the Western jurisdiction. All these inhuman executions are done behind the curtain of the society and the government. What is the response of the church, the so-called love bearers of Jesus Christ? Has the church been ignorant of this widespread dilemma? Have they shown any attempt to defend the weak and defenceless, and become the voice of the voiceless, in the face of these tyrannically-arrogant villagers? There may be some individual people/pastors attempting to address this issue, but has the church, the corporate body of Christ, done anything?

As far as my observation is concerned, the churches have shown insufficient response to this dilemma. The torture of the six innocent people, related to the death of the pilot, was done in broad daylight, right in front of the big Catholic Mission Station (Dirima).

The SDA youth, who sang in the beautiful choir at the burial service of Kaul (story in the introduction), brought much inspiration to the mourners. Yet, has the church done anything to defend the slaying of Sikil and Kia? Have they stood against the odds, and tyranny, of a cruel society, defending the weak?

The church has not boldly exercised the power given to it to break the powers of the kingdom of darkness. The church has not used the authority given to it to drive out these unclean spirits (*sanguma*). This is a veritable spiritual problem. The effect of it leads to an excessive social dilemma.

THE CHURCH'S CHALLENGE TO THE *SANGUMA* PROBLEM

The description of the *sanguma* phenomenon has consumed the capacity of this article. If the church were challenged to encounter this problem, it would be sensible to endeavour to discover the basis of *sanguma* first. It is not a social problem, but a spiritual problem. Therefore, a proper perspective, and a comprehensive view of the root of the problem, will enable the church to minister effectively.

DISCOVER THE BASIS OF THE *SANGUMA* PHENOMENON

The question of objective realities, and the existence of *sanguma*,⁵⁶ by Western missionaries and anthropologists, is unruliness, as far as scripture is concerned. This is a problem of worldview. From the Western perspective, it may be regarded as a naïve form of expression.⁵⁷ From a biblical perspective, we are in a war. We are not fighting against flesh and blood, but against powers, principalities, and rulers of this world (Eph 6:12).

⁵⁶ Hogbin, *Anthropology in PNG*, p. 184.

⁵⁷ *Ibid.*

We talk often of the red line of redemption, running through scripture.⁵⁸ Examples are Gen 3:15; Job 1:5-12; Matt 1:1-9; John 13:27; Eph 6:10-12; 1 Peter 5:8-9; and Rev 12:1-9; 20:7-10. These are only a few passages, but we seem to take little notice of the existence and reality of Satan. Dr Leahy, quoted by Mannuel, has this challenge:

The true church of Christ, guided by scripture alone, knows that Satan and his forces remain active, and that demonic activities will continue to the end of time. This belief is founded upon the word of God, and is confirmed in the experience of the church in a world, which makes Satan its god, accepting his word, and rejecting that of the Lord God. The church is profoundly aware of the reality of demon-possession (*sanguma*). Engaged in the work of God, it is conscious of that “encounter work”, of which Satan is undoubted the author. The church is also conscious of the subtlety and cunning of Satan, of his many arts, and guises, of his masquerades, and camouflage. The true church dare not “demythologise” demons, for this would mean a rejection of divine revelation, and an arrogant assertion of man’s ability to measure all phenomena, by measure of his own (worldview). The church is challenged by the existence, and continuing activity, of demons. It must be precise, as to the exact nature of that challenge.⁵⁹

This affirms that *sanguma* is a peculiar evil, caused by Satan. Some of the features of *sanguma* are affirmed characteristics of Satan. He is the father of all lies (John 8:44), and spreads lies about his powers to people in bondage of apprehension. He is a murderer (John 8:44), and can kill people through *sanguma*, and enjoys, with gusto, the society’s response to killing, torturing, and destroying innocent people. Satan only came to steal, kill, and destroy (John 10:10).

How can animal spirits, dwelling inside a person, go out at night, and do all sorts of evil things? Can a man really have a cat or flying fox inside him? Most people will stand in awe of these stories, but it is possible. We

⁵⁸ Mannuel, *Dealing with Demonic Today*, unpublished.

⁵⁹ Ibid.

believe in the plenary inspiration of scripture. Do we question the reality of Satan taking the form of a serpent, and deceiving Eve? Can't he, today, take the form of animals, and live inside a person, as a demon, to disguise, and make people believe him?

The Melanesian church needs to accept the reality of *sanguma*, not as Westerners, who think of them as merely superstitions of darkened, heathen minds. The church must recognise *sanguma* as the powers and principalities of the kingdom of darkness, which has its origin right in Satan. We have to understand that Satan is our defeated foe.

REFOCUS OUR SPIRITUAL WORLDVIEW

Worldview can be changed, though not easily. Charles Kraft states, "opening up to a supernatural perspective simply goes strongly against the grain of the worldview of most Western Christians".⁶⁰ "A person has to know a shift is possible, and has to have enough understanding about what lies on the other side, to have a inkling of what to expect."⁶¹

Dr Kraft describes three kinds of knowledge: "intellectual, observational, and experiential". Acquiring and analysing information is purely intellectual knowledge.⁶² For one to effectively minister to *sanguma*, or other related spiritual problems, one has to move from intellectual to observational knowledge. Observe what's going on, and allow your perspective and worldview to be challenged. Then, practise a power encounter (deliverance). Through practice and involvement, experiential knowledge is acquired.

"Without practice", Kraft said, "there is absolutely no substitute for experience, to bring one into a new perspective, or worldview."⁶³ The church worker, from the non-empirical worldview, needs to consider this sacrifice, to appropriately minister to the felt needs of the empirical worldview people, like the Gumine people, and Melanesians as a whole.

⁶⁰ Charles Kraft, *Christianity With Power*, Ann Arbor MI: Vine Books, 1989, p. 95.

⁶¹ *Ibid.*, p. 95.

⁶² *Ibid.*

⁶³ *Ibid.*, p. 96.

However, the challenge is for indigenous church workers to refocus their worldview. Western theologians and educators (missionaries) have trained most of our pastors. Surprisingly though, the majority of these pastors don't entirely deny the existence of *sanguma*. They are still sceptical of the Western ideas and worldview.

An alumnus of the Nazarene Bible College said, "When I left Bible College, I didn't believe in *sanguma*, but now, in the field, there are lots of questions about *sanguma* I can't answer. Now I believe in *sanguma*." Theoretically, through his Western education, he denied the existence of *sanguma*, but when he was faced with real life issues, and prevailing theological questions, he refocused his sceptical worldview.

One of the factors, which cause individual pastors to inadequately do *sanguma*-encounter ministry, is Western scepticism. They need to refocus, and retain, their spirit worldview. They must identify *sanguma*, clearly, as the work of Satan, the defeated foe, and stand in the name of Jesus Christ, our victor, who has all power and authority, both on earth and heaven to destroy them (Matt 28). This power has been invested upon us (pastors, church workers) to minister effectively to curtail this disastrous work of Satan.

REAFFIRM OUR GREAT COMMISSION MANDATE

Jesus described His ministry in terms of preaching Good News to the poor, proclaiming freedom for the captives, and releasing the oppressed (Luke 4:18). Matthew and Mark have the account of Jesus commissioning disciples, but there are slight differences in their recordings.

However, disciples (and all believers) were commissioned to go into the entire world to preach the good news, set the captives free, and to drive out demons in Jesus' name (Mark 16:15-18). We are commissioned to preach the good news (truth encounter), as well as drive out demons (power encounter).

In one account, the disciples cast out demons, and rejoiced over their success. Jesus put things into the right perspective, when he said, "Do not rejoice, because the demons obeyed you, rather rejoice because your

names are written in heaven” (Luke 10:20). Kraft, commenting on this, said:

The greatest miracle (wonder) of all is the salvation of one’s soul. His name is written in heaven. The other things (exorcism) are meant to be normal occurrences for the kingdom people. It’s not a big deal to cast out the demons. The big sign and wonder is that we have been admitted to God’s kingdom.⁶⁴

Ministry to *sanguma* does not require a special gifting. It is normal for kingdom people, who are obedient to the command of Jesus Christ. The gospel contains, not only the message of salvation for mankind, but also the command and power to effectively deal with any obstruction to it, including the work of *sanguma*. Jesus’ command to drive out demons in His name is given to all those who believe.⁶⁵

Henry’s comments, as reported by Bartle, “All spiritual warfare, including casting out demons, will be successful, if the believer recognises the position he has in Christ, and the power he has in the Holy Spirit, over all other authority, including, and especially, that of Satan.”⁶⁶

Pastors and Christians workers have to be absolutely aware that we are people of the kingdom, commissioned by Christ, with such power and authority to destroy the works of Satan, if we could catch this glimpse of the dynamic power of the truth, it will revolutionise our ministry. We must know precisely whom we are, our relationship with Christ, and the power invested in us by His commission, and the calling of this ministry.

ENCOUNTER SANGUMA POWER

Through a legitimate understanding of the basis of the *sanguma* phenomenon, a shifting away from a Western sceptical worldview, and a catching of the dynamics of the truth of our dignity in Christ, we are prepared to encounter the *sanguma* problem. There is no formula, special

⁶⁴ Ibid., p. 103.

⁶⁵ Brimblecombe, *Demons and Deliverance*.

⁶⁶ Bartle, *Worldview and Power Encounter*.

rules, or liturgy to encounter *sanguma*. It is a “supernatural” encounter with the “preternatural”, where we are only the agents of the supernatural.⁶⁷

Christ has conferred on us this power and authority. By virtue of the power and authority we have in Christ, we need not fear or tremble. Satan (*sanguma* spirit) will fear and tremble at our confrontation with him. The power we have is the supernatural power, as Bartle quotes from Henry:

God intends His church to exercise direct authority over these demons (*sanguma*) in the name of Jesus. All things are subjected to the church (believer), of which Christ is the head. Demons (*sanguma*) can be addressed directly, and commanded to depart, in the name of Jesus. God has provided the church everything she needs to confront the spirit world directly, and be victorious.⁶⁸

Bartle further comments, “All spiritual warfare, including casting out demons, will be successful, if the believer recognises the position he has in Christ and the power he has in the Holy Spirit over all other authority, including, and especially, that of Satan.”⁶⁹

Case #6: Peter, a schoolteacher, discovered that his nephew had been given a *sanguma* spirit (rat) by his grandfather. Peter attempted many ways to remove the *sanguma* spirit, but was unsuccessful. Kamda, who was a Christian teacher at the school, commented, “There is Someone, who could cast it out, but you’ve bypassed Him.” (He meant Jesus.) Peter thought Kamda had the power to cast out the *sanguma*.

Kamda was invited over, and he prayed. After three days, the *sanguma* spirit (rat) left the little boy. Kamda commented, “We have the power above demons, *sanguma*. We need not

⁶⁷ “Supernatural” means “beyond natural, done by God”. “Preternatural” means “beyond natural, but not done by God”.

⁶⁸ Brimblecombe, *Demons and Deliverance*.

⁶⁹ Bartle, *Worldview and Power Encounter*.

beg them to leave, however, we must simply command them to leave.”

All Christians, including pastors and church workers, are challenged to consider the *sanguma* encounter ministry seriously. We ought to admit the fact that it is a prevailing catastrophe. It doesn't require a special gift or training to encounter this problem. We are called and commissioned to preach the good news, as well as to drive out demons. We, the church, must realise that we are the body of Christ. We are conferred with power to destroy the work of Satan in the lives of people, just as Christ came to destroy Satan's work (1 John 3:8).

The following practical points summarise this article. Pastors and Christian workers ought to consider them seriously, when working, or preparing to work, in *sanguma*-dominated areas. They will then be able to effectively minister to the felt needs, and the prevalent problems, of the people.

1. **We must get our worldview right.** If we have been sceptical of a Western worldview, which denies the realities of *sanguma*, we have to admit the fact that it is a real spiritual problem. It has its origin in Satan, and works through demonic deception.
2. **We must confess all our spiritual inadequacy, and be convinced that we have a power that is greater than the power of Satan (*sanguma*).** We have been called, commissioned, and conferred with power, by Jesus Christ, to destroy any obstruction to the kingdom of God. Indeed, *sanguma*, sorcery, and demonic deception are all obstructions to the kingdom of God.

We need to consider the following points, when we are ministering, or preparing to minister, to *sanguma*-affected people:

1. **Understand the basis of *sanguma*.** We must admit the fact that *sanguma* is a real spiritual problem. We've see the

effects of *sanguma*, such as, accusation, murder, spreading of lies, and fear. These are the peculiar characteristics of Satan. Therefore, *sanguma* has its origin in Satan, and works through his demonic deception. We, the kingdom people and ambassadors of Christ, have been saved, called, and empowered to encounter the work of our defeated foe, in the lives of the people.

2. **Refocus our worldview.** Western theological educators train most of the pastors. These educators have been influenced and affected by their worldview. Therefore, they are sceptical of the Melanesian spiritual worldview, and shallowly deny the reality of *sanguma*. This is one factor why churches are ineffective in their power-encounter ministry against *sanguma*. However, pastors ought to shift their Western, sceptical worldview back to the Melanesian spiritual worldview. We have to see that it is a spiritual problem, and that we have the spiritual answers.
3. **Realise the power we have in Christ.** We have the power that is far above the power of Satan and *sanguma*. Jesus plainly said that all power in heaven and on earth is His (Matt 28:18-19), and He gave authority to His disciples to drive out demons (Matt 6:7; 10:1), trample on snakes and scorpions, overcome the enemy, and assure them of total protection (Luke 10:19). We must realise, and be convinced, of this great power we have. We need to consider this, if we really want to experience the power of God in our ministry against *sanguma*. We need not fear *sanguma* power. We are protected by Christ's power, and we are authorised to trample over them, and destroy the work of Satan in people's lives. This is good news for Christians in *sanguma*-dominated areas. They will not be harmed. Therefore, they need not fear.
4. **Confess our spiritual inadequacy.** We know very well that God is all-powerful, and He conferred on us His power and

authority to deal with demons (*sanguma*), but we've been ignorant, and haven't exercised this power. We must confess our sins of spiritual inadequacy and misrepresenting the true God of power to the needy world. Ask God for His forgiveness, and then acknowledge the power and authority we have, so we may truly represent God in this area of power-encounter ministry.

5. **Realise our position and dignity in Christ.** There are no right words to say. There are no magical scriptures to quote. There is no special gifting required in this power-encounter ministry. It is purely our position in Christ that determines the success. It is who we are in Christ, and how closely we walk with Him. Importantly, it is the holiness of one's life that determines the success. We seriously have to maintain our personal life of holiness, and, by virtue of the power and authority we have, we may truly represent God, and confront *sanguma* power. We must be convinced of the power we have in Christ. Dealing with *sanguma*, or demons, is not a fearful ministry, but it is a privilege given to us by our victor, Jesus Christ. We have the greatest power. We need not beg a *sanguma* (demon) spirit to leave someone's body. In the name of Jesus, we simply need to command them to leave. No one will have courage to attempt this power-encounter ministry unless he is convinced by the power he has.

6. **Encounter the *sanguma* problem.** Pastors need to be with the people, and be enthusiastic in what their greatest needs are (perhaps *sanguma*). Pray for healing, and denounce the work of *sanguma*, when one is sick, and believes it is caused by *sanguma*. Some people in the church, ones who have not truly repented, may still possess *sanguma*. Pastors need to pray for discernment. If a pastor suspects *sanguma* in a church member's life, he needs to ask deep personal and spiritual questions, pray, and do deliverance ministry, when one honestly admits, or manifestation is evident.

- 7. The pastor ought to consider the risk of playing the role of a *sanguma dokta*.** Pastors may attempt to do deliverance healing, to defend the weak and poor suspects, which society is ready to destroy. This may be very difficult and risky, but the pastors need to consider taking this risk to bring the witness of God's power to the people.

CONCLUSION

The *sanguma* catastrophe is a prevailing problem, though many people are sceptical of its existence and reality. We must not allow this scepticism to hinder us in ministering to the people. As a matter of fact, the effect of *sanguma* is disastrous. The church cannot sit back and question the reality of this phenomenon, and give Satan the liberty to enjoy the gusto of destroying innocent lives by taking their souls to hell.

The church must be convinced that *sanguma* is the real work of Satan, through his demons. We must be convinced that we have the power that is greater than the power of *sanguma* spirits. We (the church) have been entrusted with the power and authority of Christ to deal with *sanguma* (demons) effectively. Just as Christ came to destroy the work of Satan (1 John 3:8), we are called and empowered to continue the destruction of evil's work. Just as the Father sent Jesus to do the work, we are sent into the world (John 20:21) to confront *sanguma* power, to release the captives, and open the eyes of the blind.

It is a privilege to continue the Lord's work to destroy the work of Satan. It is a privilege to represent this God of power, and see the defeated foe being defeated in the lives of the people.

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