An English translation of Schoorl’s dissertation, originally written almost forty years ago, is most welcome. This volume is particularly important in this postcolonial era, when anthropologists, historians, and other researchers are reassessing the processes of colonialism and the effects of global systems on remote corners of the world. Here are firsthand observations and experiences of a midlevel colonial

cally simplistic) answers to their problems, energetically involving members in church activities and outreach, running responsive organizations, and in several cases providing access to international organizations and schools. Ernst argues against the widespread notion that the newcomers “buy” converts. Almost all of the new religious groups require heavy commitments from their members, including tithing, labor, proselytizing, and relatively high school fees.

Because so little information is available concerning these churches, *Winds of Change* inevitably raises more questions than it answers. Good questions. Take Ernst’s conclusion, for instance. He treats the advent of the new religious groups as a new and largely unhealthy development, moving from a studied neutrality in the first two sections to a harsh condemnation in the third. The sins of the new groups include: an “oppressive and paternalistic” theology, American-style individualism, a gentle pervasive racism, and political passivity, which, in the context of expanding capitalism, provides support for economic and political oppression. This regionally informed assessment challenges a pervasive assumption among missiologists and anthropologists, working from local studies, that indigenous Christians adapt Christianity to their own cultural premises and political ends with great facility. Many anthropologists, I expect, would have the same initial reaction to Ernst’s analysis as I did: I felt he paid far too little attention to the local scene, leaving the impression that indigenous people were merely pawns of forces much greater than themselves. But, on reflection, I realized that the greater lack is on the part of Pacific scholars: we know far too little about the regional and global organizations and forces that shape Pacific Christianity today. *Winds of Change* begins to fulfill a pressing need, but it also indicates that there is much important work to be done.

*Winds of Change* is a welcome and impressive resource, brimming with facts difficult or impossible to find elsewhere. Ernst and the Pacific Conference of Churches deserve wide praise for this well-written, intelligent, and thorough report, made available to the public for an astonishingly low price.

JOHN BARKER

*University of British Columbia*

* * *


An English translation of Schoorl’s dissertation, originally written almost forty years ago, is most welcome. This volume is particularly important in this postcolonial era, when anthropologists, historians, and other researchers are reassessing the processes of colonialism and the effects of global systems on remote corners of the world. Here are firsthand observations and experiences of a midlevel colonial
officer, himself an anthropologist, reporting on the complex and often inconsistent efforts of the government to bring development to Muyu people. The Muyu have long had a reputation as one of the most progressive of Irian Jaya’s many diverse peoples. In this and many other respects, they resemble the neighboring Yongom and Ningerum peoples of Papua New Guinea, who are now experiencing considerable change as a result of the Ok Tedi mine and both the government’s and the mining company’s efforts to develop the region.

Schoorl’s study is an example of postwar Dutch ethnography in West New Guinea. Up to now too few of these Dutch monographs have been translated into English for most American scholars to form an impression of this school, which differs from more familiar British, Australian, and American ethnography. For many readers, the style may seem as theoretically dated as it is quaint. Here, the author, it seems, was forced to explain why one (theoretical) expectation after another was not present among the Muyu. But rather than being driven by theoretical models, Schoorl’s ethnography pursues its own course, thematically and descriptively. He details the culture of a people for whom there were no ethnographic models in New Guinea. He describes a people driven by a desire for shell money, by their eagerness to travel and trade with neighbors who speak different languages, and by an atmosphere of “fear, distrust, and circumspection” engendered by the sorcery that pervades their lives. Schoorl accurately describes a society eager for change and modernization that conforms to few of our expectations of New Guineans. Here, there are complex economic relations and elaborate pig feasts that draw thousands, but none of the “big men” and political machinations so often associated with New Guinea peoples.

On several points Schoorl provides important data about traditional Melanesian societies that have profound implications for current research. For example, in describing the ethnic landscape of the Muyu and their neighbors, he documents how fluid and flexible ethnic boundaries were when viewed in different Muyu villages. In each village, informants grouped together different sets of villages as belonging to different ethnic categories, such that the villages classed as Ningerum or Mandobo differed in each village surveyed. This early observation should signal that Melanesian ethnicity was very different before government, mission, and ethnographers defined ethnic units as fixed and static linguistic categories.

While Schoorl documents traditional Muyu culture, his central concern is how the Muyu were responding to the external forces that were increasingly shaping their lives. He details the diverse efforts adopted by the government and mission, intended to force people to form villages where previously they had lived in scattered, single-family settlements. Schoorl describes the fines and other measures used to force people to stay in these new villages, inconveniently situated far from sago swamps and gardens. When people moved to the villages, they brought with them the pigs they were raising and were promptly fined.
for soiling the village. In a brilliant tour-de-force the author shows how these and other measures conflicted with one another in practice, often forcing officials to revise and modify policies every few years. Such frequent policy changes not only confused the villagers, but also demonstrated how complicated systematic development programs are in real-world situations. Schoorl, who was himself part of the colonial apparatus, presents this material dispassionately around a series of themes. By the time one reaches his closing summary, the true complexity of this case study and the interconnected character of these various issues is quite clear. This case study offers many lessons, both for policymakers and those involved in development programs. It also offers excellent case material for use in courses about rural development and culture change.

This unpretentious volume is not a gripping ethnographic narrative, even when the author's findings are striking and different from observations elsewhere in Melanesia. Some readers may feel the book is only another run-of-the-mill 1950s ethnography, heavy on description and weak on modern theory. But what this work lacks in theoretical orientation is more than made up for by its rich data, most of which will continue to withstand the test of time for many decades to come.

My one criticism of this book concerns the mediocre quality of the translation, which makes Schoorl's text seem labored, too formal, and slightly off balance. Originally written as a doctoral thesis, this book is naturally somewhat formal in style. But the original Dutch is more relaxed, smooth, and flowing than the English translation. Nevertheless, this is a work that has long been ignored by American and British anthropologists and deserves much more attention. Its publication offers a rare opportunity to see some of the contradictions and complexities of Dutch colonialism in the twentieth century, analyzed in a useful and refreshing manner.

ROBERT L WELSCH
Field Museum, Chicago

* * *


Although it has nurtured generations of ethnographers, New Guinea has been inhospitable to comparative work. The ethnography has supported theoretical debates, but these mostly take place with a few privileged instances and leave us to wonder how things would look with different examples. More ambitious comparisons have fared badly: Rubel and Rosman's analysis of exchange (1978) was ignored, Feil's speculations on Highlands evolution (1987) drew immediate fire, and the kudos for Strathern's Gender of the Gift (1988) quickly faded into bemused silence.

Against this background, Knauff tackles the problem of comparison in