MENNONITES, CHACO INDIANS, AND THE LENGUA SPIRIT WORLD

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A Mennonite settler and a Lengua Indian—the latter hired to split some firewood for Mrs. Lenco's[2] kitchen in exchange for some food for himself and his family—were standing together in the yard of the settler's Chaco farm peering into the sky. The clouds had been building up for several days and now suddenly the wind had changed. The Mennonite, a Christian, piously predicted: "I think God will answer our prayers and give us the badly needed rain. Those clouds look as if they were bearing plenty of moisture." Overtly the Lengua Indian, a professing convert for more than a decade, sighed slightly and nodded solemn agreement to his employer's pronouncement, but covertly the aborigene's "innermost" was torn by a serious ideological conflict: What was the actual cause of this severe drought? Had not both Indians and Mennonites been praying to God for many moons now, pleading for rain? If God loved them and was really all-powerful, why hadn't he sent rain? Should he, too, join the group of Indians that was secretly meeting in the jungle to perform a drinking rain-making ceremony according to the old Lengua tradition? How could one really be sure who was right concerning the origin of rain—the Mennonite missionary who says that God controls it or the old Indians who say that the birds bring it?

To the more or less naturalistically oriented Mennonite settler, the answer was obvious: "Rain comes from clouds bearing moisture and it is actualized under certain changes of atmosphere pressure; and both of these factors are 'manipulated' by a concerned Heavenly Father." On the other hand, the Christian Lengua—deep down in his innermost—still suspected that the ancients might be right after all when they said that the souls of the birds of myth age were responsible for rain. Yes, the Lengua wood-chopper saw the clouds too. In fact, he knew that clouds were essential for rain, but certainly not in the way the Mennonite settler was thinking. He knew from his childhood training that clouds are the smoke that emanates from the pillars which stand upon the edge of the earth and hold up the sky. The sky is very heavy—one knows this from observing the slight downward curvature of the earth at the horizon—and this tremen-

1 The research for this paper was carried on in 1963 under the auspices of the Indian Settlement Board and Mennonite Central Committee. The author is on the staff of the American Bible Society.

2 *Lenco* is a Lengua adaptation of the Spanish *gringo* (foreigner). They have no *g* and no *r* in their alphabet. It is today used more or less exclusively to refer to Mennonites.

dous weight on the pillars produces the smoke white man calls clouds. The rain (water) itself comes from the giant sea in the north, on the shore of which rest all the souls of the birds of myth age—when men and birds were interchangeable—and these birds bring the water dipped from the sea in gourd containers which they carry under their wings. Of course, clouds are essential, for these birds do not want to be seen by human eyes. So they come only when there is enough smoke behind which they can hide. This also explains why it rains only in spots. These spots were those which had enough clouds for the birds to hide, and that is where they emptied their gourds.

The ancients had also experienced that these rain-bearing bird-souls sometimes failed to perform their duty. At times they were known to fall asleep. At other times evil *quilyicjama* spirits (to be described later in this article) vented their anger on man by preventing the birds from performing their rain-bringing duties. In any event the aborigene knew that the "lightened" soul of a drunk shaman supported by a group of drinking Indians could both discover the cause of the lack of rain and also effect the cure. Once the soul of the shaman identified the trouble, he just needed to sing the appropriate chant—one, if the birds were asleep and needed to be awakened, and another, if the quilyicjama needed to be charmed so as to stop them from impeding the water-bearing mission of the birds. Yes, in the days of the ancients the Indians controlled the rain situation through the shaman, but now with the arrival of the Mennonite missionaries and their acceptance of the "true" God, who is the loving Father of all men. . . .

The Indian's train of thought was suddenly interrupted by his Mennonite employer's stentorian command: "It's going to rain and so you'd better stop chopping wood now and carry all you have chopped into the woodshed." Without a word the Indian moved to comply with the latest order. He then presented himself at the kitchen where Mrs. Lenco gave him the portion of food which was his wages. Without any "thank you" he took the food; then he picked up a bundle of wood he had chopped and started off toward the edge of the white man's village where his family had built a branches-and-grass shelter.

Just then the Mennonite patron appeared and saw that the Indian had left at least one armful of split firewood lying messily around the chopping block. Obviously annoyed, he called after the departing Indian: "Next time you'd better clean up *all* the wood or you won't get your bread. You have to learn to *finish* a job!" The

Indian winced inwardly at these insulting words. After all, he had left only very few pieces lying there for the innermost[3] of the wood to return to, for he did not know whether or not the soul of the wood was out of the body (just as when the human soul wanders away from the body of the sleeper in a dream) when he was chopping it. In case it had been out, it would return and should it find nothing of its "body" left, it would attack the wood-chopper in revenge.

But again his thoughts were broken by the angry voice of the employer who had just caught sight of the bundle of firewood on the Indian's back. "And who gave you permission to carry off my firewood, you thief? I pay you for cutting it, I pay you to haul it, and I pay you to chop it, and now you shamelessly help yourself to my wood. Bring it back at once! Don't let this happen a second time!" While the Mennonite farmer went to tell his wife about the latest irresponsibility of that "stupid savage," the Indian peon submissively returned his bundle to the woodshed and then trudged off to his family. Enroute his innermost was "working hard" (thinking very seriously). "What did I do wrong now to incite the Lenco's anger? Didn't I myself cut all the firewood in the forest? Didn't I alone haul it to his house? And didn't I chop it? If this firewood is linked to anybody's innermost (belongs to someone) it is linked to mine. Surely it isn't linked to the Lenco's innermost, for he has never even touched it. Why are Lencos so difficult to live with . . . ?"

The preceding story is fictitious, but all of its component motifs are based on facts and actual experiences. It serves several functions:

(1) It illustrates how greatly the view of and the reaction to the supernatural of the Lengua Indians differs from that of the Mennonites—and for that matter of most Western Christians.

(2) It highlights in an introductory manner some of the frustration, pain, confusion, and misunderstanding that these divergent views of the spirit-world can cause wherever two cultures or even individual representatives of two cultures come into contact without mutual sympathetic understanding.

(3) It shows that the acceptance of Christianity is seldom an easy answer to *all* of the aborigene's problems.

(4) It reveals that, especially where Christianity has been only very superficially understood, there remain large reservoirs of pagan fears that often haunt even the most faithful and sincere Christian catechist to a point of distraction.

In order to create more awareness of this situation, which is

3 For a more detailed description of the Lengua concept of the innermost, see Jacob A. Loewen, "The Mennonite Encounter with the 'Innermost' of the Lengua Indians," *MQR* (January 1965) 39:40-67.

probably common to most mission areas, and in order to encourage the development of greater Christian sensitivity and responsibility toward it in the missionary family, the following account of the Lengua spirit-world and the examples of internal and external conflicts due to the Lengua's contact with Mennonite settlers and Mennonite missionaries is here presented.

THE LENGUA SPIRIT WORLD

For centuries the Lengua Indians, in small family bands, wandered over vast ranges of hunting and gathering land in the Paraguayan Chaco. Their total numbers probably never exceeded 5,000, which is about their current population. But if people were few and far between, the Lengua Indian always found himself surrounded by an almost unbelievably vast and complex world of spirits, from the majority of which he could expect nothing good. The *Handbook of South American Indians* (hereafter abbreviated *HSAI)* says that Chaco Indians considered every awe-inspiring object to be the receptacle of spirit forces.[4] In actual fact, however, we can say that for the Lengua this should be expanded to state that *all objects* contain spirit power—even common bricks or firewood have an innermost.

The Supreme Being

The *HSAI* reports that missionaries have never been able to find a concept of a Supreme Being among the Chaco Indians.[5] To a certain extent this is true also of the Lengua. Beetle, the Lengua myth says, created the world and also everything in it, but Beetle has never shown any further interest in it. Beetle does not seem to be any specific beetle or even a special kind of beetle, but "beetle" in the abstract. Indians trying to explain the concept of Beetle point out that at night one hears and sees many flying beetles that bump into other objects. Many of these flying beetles are not real insects, but spirit powers of Beetle disguised as individual beetles. When one hears and feels them bump into oneself and other objects, one knows that the "power" of Beetle exists. Alarcon and Pittini (hereafter abbreviated A&P), however, have pointed out that Beetle can be personified,[6] as in the myth relating the creation of men. According to their version, the first "human" creation of Beetle was a race of giants. Then one day he made the ancestor of the modern Lengua. He fashioned two Indians from clay and then laid them

4 Julian H. Steward (ed.), *The Handbook of South American Indians* (Bureau of American Ethnology Bulletin 143) (Smithsonian Institution, 1946) 1:352.

5 *Ibid.,* 350.

6 José de Alarcon y Canedo and Riccardo Pittini, *El Chaco Paraquayo y sus Tribus* (Torino: Ajani Canale, 1924) 75.

side by side to dry. But he placed them too close to each other and so they dried together like siamese twins. This condition made it impossible for the newly-made men to defend themselves against the previously created race of giants who always tormented the lesser human creatures. In despair the men cried to their Creator. He saw their plight and separated the two humans, but they were still afraid and unable to fend for themselves against their larger rivals. To further help men Beetle finally took away the bodies of his first creatures and thus made it physically impossible for them to fight men any longer. These disembodied creatures are the spirits of Lengua experience. These spirits, collectively referred to as *quilyic-jama,*[7] have continued to war against man; and since they lost their bodies because of man, they are constantly trying to possess the bodies of men. The Anglican pioneer missionary W. B. Grubb writes that life for the Lengua must be viewed as a continual struggle between men and the opposing evil spirit-world.[8]

Malevolent Spirits

This group of spirit beings includes especially those who are not considered to be of human or of animal origin. Nevertheless in their behavior and manifestation they generally appear as humans.

Yave is the chief of all the evil spirit world.[9] He is greatly feared by young and old. In fact, the repeated mention of his name during the anthropological discussion caused several of the Christian informants to shudder with dread. When called upon to describe Yave's appearance, informants were quite vague and reluctant. There seemed to be general consensus, however, that he looked like a man. Some felt that he was like a very old man with wrinkled but "Indian" skin. Invariably his clothes were described as long and black in color. The reason informants gave as to why so little was known about his appearance, was the fact that only shamans could today see him and live to tell about it. For an ordinary person to meet Yave meant certain death. Even seeing him at great distance indicated that either the person himself or some near relative was going to die. The Lengua also explained that he aways carried a big club with which he beat people even when they didn't see him. The group could name several known persons who had returned blue and bruised after such an encounter with the invisible Yave. Others added that he always carried a bag full of poisonous snakes (see *Yatepjapque* below) which he would send as agents to kill people.

7 The spelling follows Spanish orthography and sound values.

8 W. Barbrooke Grubb, *An Unknown People in an Unknown Land* (London, 1925) 114.

9 Concernig the use of *yave* there seem to be great regional differences which range from chief devil to a minor evil spirit. The version here presented was gathered by missionary G. B. Giesbrecht at Yalve Sanga.

Yave is said to take special interest in the -jangauc, the soul-of-the-dead. He was like a father to the -jangaucs of the recently dead and called these souls-of-the-dead his children. The Lengua avoided places where someone had died recently, because they believed one is much more likely to meet a Yave there.

Yatepjapque is a spirit that has the appearance of a tall white man. He is a forest dweller who seizes people when they came near him. Children are his special prey. Generally he is described as carrying a bag of snakes, as in the case of Yave. Once a brave boy who had been kidnapped by Yatepjapque tried to kill the demon, but he failed, for Yatepjapque is vulnerable only at his ankle.

A&P record the following myth about Yatepjapque, which they spell as Yatafapkae.

One day a father and his son went deep into the woods to look for honey and lost their way. When the boy realized that they were lost, he panicked and ran away from his father, shouting loudly. As he was running about wildly, he fell and broke an arm and a leg. Yatafapkae, who was walking in the forest collecting poisonous snakes, heard the boy's cries and came to him. Yatafapkae was white and tall with flowing hair and a long beard with a very abundant growth of hair. Over his shoulders he wore an animal skin with black hair. In his hand he carried a big stick, which served as his weapon. At his side was a big bag full of all types of moving poisonous creatures. The child was overcome with fright at the first sight of the white giant. But then the calm smile of Yatafapkae seduced the boy, so that he permitted himself to be picked up. The giant held him for a while and then ordering the serpents not to harm the child, he put the boy into the bag with the snakes. The reptiles obeyed him, but still they crawled all over the body of the frightened child. Then the giant went home. He took off his bag, but left the boy and the snakes in it. When the giant returned to the forest, his wife felt sorry for the child and took it into her arms. In her care the child's broken limbs healed rapidly in a mysterious way. Once the boy was healed, he begged his benefactress to show him the way home to his family. Finally she agreed and even accompanied the boy for some distance. The joy of the family was great when the lost child returned. When the boy described the giant being to them, the people imagined all kinds of evil things. Since the people were so happy they celebrated with a big festival in honor of the brave boy.

Meanwhile the giant returned to his wife and looked for the boy. He was terribly angry when he learned that the boy had left. His wife would not tell him in which direction the children had gone, so he took the branch of a certain tree and threw it in every direction until it indicated the way the boy had taken. He followed the boy and came to the village during the celebration. Here he was gentle and only begged for the boy, but the parents refused. So the giant returned to the forest. All the people were now afraid of his magical powers and so they decided to follow the giant and to destroy him. It was a difficult pursuit, but finally they found and surrounded him. When he saw the people's intention to kill, he said, "An axe cut in my leg will be enough to kill me." So they chopped into his ankle and he died. But since then the people have never

had peace. They have pangs of conscience and they are always afraid that the food will be exhausted.[10]

This myth was told in a number of versions. One involved two children and the limbs of one became disjointed when the giant spirit forced it into the bag. A shaman later cured the child and received honey for three years from the family. Another version contends that this was really the first white man the Lengua ever saw.

Lhama acyayhem is a very evil spirit with the appearance of a long-legged man. His main occupation is stealing human souls, but he will also steal whole people and children. Once this spirit lays hold of a person he disappears very rapidly together with the victim. Lhama acyayhem is able to cover very great distances in an instant. There are many spirits of this kind in the world, but each one is limited to his own area and each area has only one.

The spirit *yam conalhama* lives in the woods. His main function seems to be to make people lose their way. Generally he appears as a man, but he has also been known to appear as a young boy who calls people to come to him. When people try to go to him he always leads them astray.

There is also a female spirit called *yam yintelhvoyam* who also inhabits the forest. When people meet her, she generally has the appearance of an aged woman almost doubled over by a big bundle of firewood on her back. If people see her and try to approach her, she "takes their face away," i.e., she blinds them and causes them to faint. After she has moved away people gradually regain consciousness. While she does not generally harm or kill her victims, to meet her is a very traumatic experience.

Much more terrible, however, is *somtaj,* a paralyzing spirit. When people see him they freeze. Their legs become paralyzed. They are able to see but not to flee. Even dogs have been known to become paralyzed. They howl pitifully, but are unable to move. No one is ever known to have escaped a somtaj. When the victim is paralyzed, the somtaj devours it on the stop. The only evidence of a human or animal encounter with this spirit ogre is a small pile of remains.

Ajale is the "owner" of ostriches. Ostriches are like domestic animals to this spirit creature. He greatly resents the fact that humans kill and eat his ostriches. People hunting ostriches must take great pains to avoid him, for if he locates them he causes the people to sink into the ground and disappear without a trace.

The *movjem* is a dangerous spirit who is abroad only during

10 Alarcon and Pittini, *op. cit.,* 78.

the night. No one has ever seen a movjem, but this spirit is recognized by his whistle which sounds very much like that of the night bird called nata. In fact, movjem have been known to appear in the form of a night bird. Should anyone dare to approach the place where a movjem is whistling, he will instantly be killed by an arrow. While no one has supposedly seen a movjem, this being is described as having the appearance of a boy or a crying child. There are very many movjem, but they roam around singly.

Although he is a forest-dweller, the *yam sovalac* is actually feared out on the open grassy plains. The word sovalac means giant or also spider, and is also used for the men masked with pellet bags over their faces who drag the pubescent girl at the yanmana festival. This spirit is likened to a man masked with a pellet bag. Generally his face is very flat and his nose also has a broad flattened appearance. This spirit is feared because he seeks to devour man's -vanmongcama, his living soul. If this spirit is able to apprehend and dispose of a man's soul, the person always falls ill and dies. If a shaman is at hand immediately he can sometimes succeed in rescuing the stolen -vanmongcama before the yam sovalac devours it. For such a rescue operation the shaman uses either his own soul or the quiltongcama as media. Occasionally the yam sovalac uses the movjem as helpers. The latter usually stands on guard by stolen souls that have not yet been devoured.

Grubb tells of another spirit creature that has the appearance of a naked woman whose body is covered with long hair. This being resides in the forest but likes to visit the village streets at night in order to steal personal belongings. She is generally blamed for all articles that are lost or misplaced. If people catch sight of her and give chase, she disappears mysteriously. People have really never seen her close because of this. She is not greatly feared.[11]

The *HSAI* lists a white water demon that resides in the swamps and lagoons. It can sometimes be seen floating on the water during moonlit nights. It appears to be associated with the arrival of disease.[12]

All diseases, especially epidemics, are viewed as being caused by evil spirits. There is a special smallpox demon who lives in the hills and has an ugly face marked by many small pits.

Spirits of Human Origin

In this category several of the non-material aspects of the living human being should be mentioned, the *-vanmongcama* and the

11 W. Barbrooke Grubb, *The Church in the Wilds* (London, 1914), 64.
12 *Handbook*, 351.

-valhoc. Both of these have been described in another paper.[13] The -vanmongcama is man's living soul. The word also covers the area of dreams and visions of western ideology, for during these states the -vanmongcama leaves the body and actually experiences what is viewed as dreams or visions. If a -vanmongcama should enter a strange body it functions like a malignant spirit and causes illness. Shamans frequently send their -vanmongcama to kill an intended victim. At other times the shaman uses his own -vanmongcama to rescue that of another stolen by a yam sovalac or by some other spirit medium.

The -valhoc is viewed as the seat of a man's emotions, but sometimes it can almost be defined as "spirit" especially in such a tripartite classification as body, soul, and spirit. The Lengua believe that not only man, but all things possess a -valhoc and therefore spirit power. Many -valhocs, like that of a clock or a camera, are classified as "sick," i.e., if they enter a person he will become ill. Again, if the -valhoc of a doll should enter the womb of a woman, the latter would immediately become ill and die. Actually, it seems that all -valhocs can be harmful. For this reason the man chopping firewood left a few pieces of wood beside the block, so that a returning "spirit" or "innermost" of the wood would not turn around and enter the wood chopper's body in revenge.

Though not very explicit the informants spoke about mol-valhocs, a collective category of -valhocs that roam loose or without bodies in the universe. When told about Choco shamans in Panama, who as apprentices carve canes under a teacher-shaman who then empowers such a cane with a spirit, the Lengua felt that such spirit power proceeded from the -valhoc of the teacher-shaman.

When a person dies his living soul, -vanmongcama, and his -valhoc cease to be and in their place (or out of their make-up) the -jangauc, the soul-of-the-dead, emerges. The -jangauc represents one of the most frequent and most immediate sources of spirit fear for the Lengua. The jangauc of the deceased always wants to take its friends and acquaintances into the beyond with it; hence it is greatly feared, especially during the first month after a person's death. In order to escape it, the immediate relatives engage in various types of subterfuge. (See the section on protection against spirits.) -Jangaucs of older people are especially dangerous to children, because grandparents love their grandchildren so much. One missionary reported that on the death of the aged father-in-law, in an Indian home that had three youngsters, the parents made big fires and much noise

13 See footnote 3.

every night for several weeks, because "the -jangauc of the grandfather always returned to molest the children." So great did the son-in-law's distraction become that he finally wanted to leave his new settlement plot for fear of this -jangauc.

The attachment to private property that in life was a function of the -valhoc is continued after death by the -jangauc. For this reason Lengua bury all private property with the deceased. Should anything be kept, the -jangauc will most certainly avenge such infringements on his property.

Missionary Henry Toews reported an incident about an Indian who picked up a cast iron pot belonging to a woman who had died three years previously. But the moment the culprit lifted the vessel he was observed to jump into the air as with a sudden fright and then run for the nearest cactus bush in the forest. He rolled his body over the prickly bush until the blood was flowing freely. After repeating this with several cactus plants he started back toward the house, but half-way there he fell down and fainted. When he regained consciousness some time later he reported that the very moment he had looked at the pot, the -jangauc of the owner had jumped at him. He had taken off for the cactus bush hoping that the pursuing -jangauc would get caught on the thorns, but it had not and had continued pursuing him. Half-way back to the house he had lost his -vanmongcama, but luckily it had been able to elude the pursuing -jangauc, and, since it now had returned to him, his life was saved.

The Scriptural account of the two thousand pigs that drowned in the Sea of Galilee[14] was interpreted by the Lengua as involving moljangaucs, i.e., collective unattached souls of the dead roaming the world in search of bodies to possess.

Epilepsy is usually interpreted as being possessed by an alien -jangauc. When such an alien enters a person, the latter goes into a seizure; and when the alien soul leaves, the person recovers consciousness. Should the -jangauc stay permanently the persons becomes insane.

The -jangauc leaving the body of the deceased should really proceed to the shade world, the *pischischi,* at least within a month after death. In the shade world it continues to exist in its disembodied state much as it lived in life. The -jangauc is an exact replica of the living person, both in form and temperament. The -jangauc of the lame and deformed will continue to be deformed, and the good-natured person's soul-of-the-dead will likewise be good-natured.

14 Mark 5:1-21; cf. Matthew 8:28-34 and Luke 8:26-39.

As has already been stated, Yave, the chief of the malignant spirits, likes to adopt the newly released -jangaucs as his children. Those that enter into this relationship do not usually go to the shade world, but remain here and become quilyicjama who do Yave's bidding.

The quilyicjama are the most numerous of the evil spirits. They are the most frequent sources of illness and disease, and are the special carriers of epidemics. Quilyicjama seem to have originated from two sources: first, from the disembodied spirits of the first race of creatures in Beetle's creation, and secondly, from the -jangaucs that fall under Yave's influence. The quilyicjama of the first source are still mortal enemies of modern Lengua, for they still resent the loss of their bodies, which happened because of men. They seem to have an insatiable desire to possess bodies; for this reason they stalk man's -vanmongcama when it leaves the body in a dream and carry it away captive. At other times they try to take up residence in a human body when the -vanmongcama is absent during a dream or vision. The Lengua say that it is dangerous for man to dream because over every sleeper there hover scores of enemy quilyicjama. Even at daytime men are perpetually surrounded by these dangerous enemy spirits.

Grubb reports one man's account of a dream in which he had observed his own soul emerging from the body; at the edge of the village clearing it was attacked by several quilyicjama. The soul escaped and was able to return to the sleeping body in time to head off others that wanted to take possession of the soulless body.[15]

At night flying beetles are regarded with serious suspicion, for they may actually be quilyicjama. Bernard Toews reported that during a smallpox epidemic several terrified Lengua came to his house from the Indian village saying they were being pursued by a smallpox quilyicjama. They left posthaste when they saw "it" fly over, but several hours later they were back saying it had just landed on the other side of the Lenco's house. They then pointed to a bright phosphorescent light on a bush in the garden. He thought it was a firefly, but the Indians insisted it was the smallpox quilyicjama. He finally went and caught an extra large firefly. When he tried to show it to the Lengua Indians they just covered their eyes and screamed with fear. Even looking at it might cause them to get sick.

Grubb classifies the quilyicjama into several types. The most common is the felon quilyicjama which is responsible for all lost

15 Grubb, *Unknown People*, 134.

or stolen articles. This one is not really feared, but rather ridiculed. The second type is tall and of a terrifying appearance and flaming red eyes. It dwells mainly in the woods and is a herald of death. The third type sails on the water and can be heard shrilly whistling among the reeds as he sails his spirit craft over the waters. This one is viewed as very malignant. The fourth kind has the bodily appearance of a young boy, but with a shining light on each side of his head. This one is regarded more with awe than with dread.[16] While Grubb gives this as a classification of quilyicjama, this researcher feels that possibly he is using the word here in a more generic sense to include all types of spirit beings.

Other-world Beings.

As the *HSAI* points out, there are beings like man in some of the other "worlds" of Lengua cosmogony. These worlds are located in the sky, under the water, and in several other special places. All have resident beings who live and behave very much like men. In fact, most of these are very eager to marry human beings. For this reason they resort to all types of devices to ensnare people or even to kidnap them.[17] In this category one should possibly treat the myth about the girl who fell in love with a tree that was really an other-world man who wanted a human wife. When the girl finally succumbed and made love to the tree, humanity was punished by having human passions become so strong that they often cannot be controlled.

Another myth with several versions records the story of an orphan girl who consented to become the wife of a man from the under-world.

Informants were not agreed as to the origin of these "other-world people." Some felt they were remnants of myth age people, others tended to equate them with some type of quilyicjama who had lost their bodies at the time of creation, but who continued to live as if they were people.

Animal-linked Spirits.

These are of two kinds, those spirits that are closely linked with certain animals, and others that are of animal origin.

One of the commonest animal-linked spirits is *singvapon-quiscama,* the spirit of the crowing hen or the spirit of the crying dog. When a hen makes certain noises that are interpreted as attempts to crow like a rooster, she is viewed as being possessed by

16 *Ibid.,* 118-19.
17 *Handbook,* 369.

the spirit singvaponquiscama. Again dogs that howl continuously in a sing-song whining fashion are likewise viewed as possessed by the same sprit. Especially if the chicken or dog should try to mount the roof of the house, the state of possession is serious and such an animal must be killed immediately. The Lengua view this possessing spirit as an advance courier who has come to spy out the situation; and that the howling or crowing on the house top is actually a signal for attack to its spirit cohorts. The attack could involve the death of only one person in the family of the owner of the possessed animal, but it could also signal the arrival of an epidemic or an enemy attack.

The spirit of the tiger, called *neptanaap -jangauc,* is feared especially by hunters. Ordinary tigers do not possess such a spirit or soul-of-the-dead, but a tiger that has killed a person and has eaten that person's flesh, especially his liver, will thereafter have a neptanaap -jangauc when killed. Because the hunter who kills a tiger does not know whether the animal has acquired such a venging soul-of-the-dead, he cannot sleep peacefully for the first few nights after the killing. Very much like the murderer or the warrior returning from battle with a scalp, the tiger hunter will sleep within a circle of fire fueled by red quebracho wood which gives off a continual spray of sparks to frighten away the venging -jangauc.

One of the informants claimed to have known a man who was attacked by a neptanaapj -jangauc. He could provide no details except that they believed that the -jangauc of the tiger ate the man's soul and so he became ill and died very suddenly.

Also associated with tigers are the -jangaucs of shamans. Since they do not usually go to the shade world, as do ordinary men's souls, but continue to roam in this world, they often are believed to take residence in tigers; especially a man-eating tiger is most likely to be inhabited by a shaman's -jangauc. If the shaman's soul-of-the-dead continues wandering for more than two years, it frequently assumes the shape of a tiger. This kind of tiger cannot be shot, because it is not a real animal, and only a spirit apparition of the deceased shaman's soul. If a hunter tries to shoot such a tiger it usually just disappears before he can even aim at it.

-Jangaucs of Domestic Animals. Informants varied somewhat in their certainty that all domestic animals had -jangaucs when they died. The fact of their close association with humans, especially the sharing of human food as in the case of the dog, convinced most Lengua that such animals were different from ordinary animals and that they were survived by -jangaucs like humans when they died.

Very similar feelings seemed to be present for the horse that had faithfully carried its master for a long time.

Of course another angle should be pointed out. Domestic animals belong to the private property category which is soul-linked to the owner and therefore dangerous to all others, especially after the owner's death. Grubb mentions the fear of horse bones several times in his writings.[18]

Bernard Toews reported that at one time many dogs had been falling prey to a kind of pest and so it was decided to dispose of all the infected animals. Even though several weeks were spent in careful explanation and preparation, the Indians had real concern about what might happen. Although only those animals which were willingly brought by their owners were disposed of, an older woman cried when she saw the missionary after the shooting, "What will happen to you now, your hands are full of dog blood?" It is interesting to note that, first, she feared what the -jangaucs of the dogs might do to the missionary; and secondly, she held the missionary to be the killer even though he was only the one who had introduced the idea of getting rid of the diseased animals. The actual shooting had been performed by a stranger.

The Spirit of Ostrich. The spirit owner of ostriches has already been discussed. In addition to this spirit, ajale, the hunter must fear the spirit of ostrich itself. Grubb reports that ostrich hunters must take great precautions lest they fall prey to he angry spirits of their ostrich victims. Before firing the fatal arrow, hunters anoint it with odoriferous herbs to appease the injured spirit of the bird. When he has killed the bird, the hunter plucks handfuls of breast feathers and deposits them in neat piles along the route of his return to his house to decoy and delay the avenging ostrich spirit. Once released from the body this spirit at first "looks around in surprise." When it finally "comes to" it begins to look for its body. When it finds the clump of feathers it always spends some time trying to find the rest of the body near by. While the spirit repeats this at each bunch of feathers, the hunter reaches home and here the barking dogs frighten away the pursuing ostrich spirit.[19]

Some informants spoke also of another spirit shaped like a small ostrich which liked to devour human beings. One informant equated it with the "owner of lightning."

Another spirit that is greatly feared is the spirit of serpent. This is the embodiment of all snakes and appears to find its culmination

18 Grubb, *Unknown People,* 126.
19 Grubb, *Church in the Wilds,* 122.

in the rainbow, which is held to be some kind of a serpentine monster. Grubb reports that when the rainbow appears in certain positions in the sky Indians are afraid to handle sharp instruments for fear that they will be cut with them in revenge of a deed done by their "ignorant" ancestors who unwittingly cut off and ate a portion of the rainbow serpent's tail. Even though the transgressors were immediately destroyed by a flood, the rainbow serpent continues its vengeance by turning sharp instruments against their human users.[20]

Also to be classified with spirits in this category are the rain and thunder birds. As already stated in the introduction, the -jangaucs of the birds of myth age are the bringers of rain. Modern birds are not believed to have souls-of-the-dead, but during myth age humans, animals, and birds were all the same. Accompanying the good bird -jangaucs are also the thunder-and-lightning birds. The latter are viewed as having "bad innermosts." The lighting birds spread their wings in a jerky fashion and this creates flashes of lightning in the sky among the clouds. However, when the lightning birds are angered or called by a shaman, they throw down red-hot rocks at lightning speed. However, sometimes the lightning bird sends bolts down upon the people of its own accord. This is actually in revenge of the time when people—long ago, possibly in myth age—stole the fire secret from the thunder bird. The thunder bird sometimes also brings floods to put out all of men's fires in revenge of the original fire theft. These myth age bird-spirits are also associated with wind, frost, and hail. Whirlwinds are considered the result of spirit movement, and a whirling of ashes early in the morning before the fire has been started indicates that some -jangauc has come to warm itself and is now trying to fan the fire. If it finds no warmth, it may become angry with the people and do them harm.

Another spirit associated with natural phenomena is the moon-eating jaguar. This spirit-animal always tries to devour the moon. Most dangerous is the time when the center of the moon is "eaten" out and only a "bloody" red ring remains around the outside. At such times Lengua Indians have been known to make noise to frighten away the celestial jaguar before it finishes off the moon entirely. Such times are considered most propitious for the epidemic-bearing quilyicjama and they are greatly feared.

In general Chaco Indians very carefully observe the behavior of birds and animals, for in it they see omens of various types.

20 *Unknown People*. 141.

Impersonal "Spirit" Powers.

That all objects possess "soul-stuff" has already been alluded to. The Lengua "suspect" at least that all things have a -valhoc and proceed accordingly. The leaving of a remnant of bricks or firewood for a wandering "spirit" of these objects is a rather good example of behavior in the light of this belief. An even better example comes from the preparations for becoming a medicine man. In order to practice a medicine man must get control over this primary power in the universe. This he achieves during a retreat into some solitary forest area. The would-be medicine man or shaman finds or makes a small water hole, into which he throws broken files, old knives, rusted axe heads, nails, bits of wood, leaves, herbs, grasses, rope, paper, skins, leather, cloth, bones, glass—in short, anything he can find. Now in mission times frequently money, pages from the Bible, or hymnbook (one Mennonite dairy farmer "lost" his milk production record booklet when an aspiring medicine man took it for this ritual), even Catholic medals are thrown into the brew, which is called quilyetmecja. This material is stirred to foment fermentation, for the "essence" of all these materials is to be extracted. The resulting brew is to give the drinker a share in and control over the basic soul-stuff in the universe. While the potion is brewing, the power seeker subsists on snakes and other vermin, especially poisonous creatures, which are to give him immunity to their venom. When the brew is ripe (about five days) he is to drink one or two liters of it each day for five days without vomiting. If he is successful he has gained power over basic "soul-stuff" and he is now able to generate spirit power and create an unlimited number of spirit powers, which are called -quiltongcama. These become his messengers and errand spirits through which he effects his work of hurt or healing. Some of the informants felt that the shaman actually could regenerate or replace the souls of his patients when their original soul was too weak or sickly.

Through the tapping of the basic soul-stuff of the universe, shamans have been "known" to create their private personal spirit helpers. Thus one old shaman has developed a spirit he calls sicayajan. It has feet and legs like a dog, a small head and face like a cat. It stands about one foot high and is so swift that when it starts moving, no one can see it. It can pass through any medium and can also assume assorted forms and colors.

An interesting innovation was observed with one medicine man who has recently installed an extensive aerial with which he claims to draw both power and information from the atmosphere.

THE RELATIONSHIP OF THE LENGUA TO THEIR SPIRIT WORLD

Becoming Aware of Spirit Presence. The presence of enemy spirits, while readily assumed in principle, was not always readily discerned in practice. Some Lengua, however, insisted that one fairly reliable proof of the presence of harmful spirits was the "swelling of one's head." The enlargement, the informants conceded, was not actual, but the sensation of it provided definite evidence that malignant forces were near.

Others felt that at least at daytime one could rely on a "good" warning spirit called *avaemnec,* whose principal occupation is to point out the dangers that people meet. This spirit looks ahead both in time and space and warns the human of possible trouble, including the presence of harm-seeking quilyicjama. Through the warning of an avaemnec persons become aware of the presence of lurking enemies, a dangerous snake, or even a thorn in the trail. Communication is by way of "the hairs on our toes," which function as the receptors for the message from the avaemnec and transmit it to man's -valhoc. For this reason children are instructed never to pull out the hair on their toes.

A third and very frequent source of warning concerning spirits is found in the omens one observes in the natural and animal world. The cry of certain birds, for example, signals the approach of certain diseases, while the cry of others merely indicates the arrival of visitors. The "crying" of the dog and the "crowing" of a hen are direct evidence of imminent spirit attack. In fact, these very animals are already possessed by a singvapongquiscama. Generally such behavior heralds the arrival of death in the home of the owners of the animals, but it can also signal the advent of a general epidemic. A meteorite can indicate either sickness or death, but a comet marks the decease of a famous shaman. A solar halo indicates that war is imminent, but war parties meeting a jaguar who is scratching the ground would immediately return home, for the jaguar's behavior is an indication that powerful spirit forces have been enlisted by the enemy and defeat is inevitable. Whirlwinds are evidence of spirit activity. The swirling of ashes in the early morning signals the return of an -jangauc that is trying to warm itself.

The more one observes, the more one realizes that almost all events "symbolize" something, and more likely than not, that something involves the unseen spirit-world.

The Fear of Spirits. The *HSAI* minimizes the Lengua fear of the spirit world, saying that early observers tended to overstate the case for "romantic" reasons. It certainly is true that by daytime, under

normal conditions, and near home on familiar territory, the Lengua is not too concerned about harmful spirits. But when the evening shadows fall, especially in unfamiliar surroundings, every unidentified noise becomes an object of concern, if not fear. However, even at night circumstances play a very important part. If the clan group is enjoying peace, relative health, and has a fairly good food supply, they were generally also at peace concerning the spirits. Under such circumstances they generally built their villages with two rows of houses, with an ample "street" between the rows and a reasonable distance between the houses. If the group, however, found itself in a strange or dangerous area, the houses were built in a circle, close together, and with only a small area for a common fire in the center. Under such circumstances any report of spirit encounter during the day or the observation of an evil omen automatically caused the group to huddle together more closely around the fire. Should the shaman of the group pronounce that he had seen or was seeing evil quilyicjama near by, the group would often would wake together around the fire all night, casting apprehensive glances over their shoulders at each sound in the surrounding jungle.

A few actual example may serve more effectively to illustrate Lengua fear. During the 1963 study the writer learned to know a Lengua man who not only feared the spirits, but who himself was the object of spirit fear by his fellows. During the first night on this mission compound at about 1:30 A.M. the silence of the night was rent by blood-curdling human screaming that lasted some fifteen minutes. The crescendo of the screams was only broken when the person became out of breath. The morning inquiry led to the introduction to a very shy man whose one leg was severely damaged by fires into which he had fallen during one night's screaming. By daytime the man seemed quite normal though somewhat morose and deeply suspicious. Under the patient and knowing questioning by the missionary, the subject told about the evil demon that plagued him so terribly. He described the frightening apparition as having the form of a man, with a very hairy body, short pointed ears like a dog, big eyes like an owl, and with legs that permitted him to take 100-meter strides. The "spirit's" hair was cut like a white man's, he wore a black loincloth, and his face was long, narrow, and yellowish. This tormentor appeared almost nightly. First, he stood in the doorway and "screamed" at his victim, who would awaken in fright and begin to scream back at the spirit in full volume. Meanwhile the tormentor would pummel his victim with his fists. The day he was burned the victim had been beaten unconscious. The man

had changed residence frequently, but within a week his tormentor would always catch up with him again and the nightly screaming visits would resume.

The investigator found great reluctance to talk about the origin of this man's fears. Some years previously, however, the man had mercy-killed a mortally wounded man and people felt that it was the -jangauc, the soul-of-the-dead, of that man which was now tormenting him. Because he was the object of perpetual spirit pursuit, all the people shunned and ostracized him.

In the case of the man who had dared to pick up a kettle which had been property of a deceased woman (see above), the resulting vision of the -jangauc drove the "guilty" man from cactus to cactus until the was bloody, and finally his great fear made him lose consciousness. Another illustration (see above) is the fear of the Lengua men "pursued" by a smallpox quilyicjama, which drove them from their camp to the Mennonite village, then into the bush for several hours, and finally back to one of the Mennonite homes.

The Mennonites in the Chaco say that such extreme examples of fear have been much less frequent since the Lengua have become Christians. However, the nurses at mission dispensaries can still recount many examples of intense fear that accompanies illness, especially epidemics. As soon as illness strikes, Indians voluntarily seek opportunity to purge themselves of sin in public confession, for they see sin, sickness, and evil spirits to be links in a chain of evil. The investigator himself was impressed with the growing fears and doubts that plagued even the leaders of the church during the 1963 whooping-cough epidemic that took the lives of several dozen infants.

The fear that a number of the informants experienced during the investigation has already been mentioned. It was remarkable that for several of the Bible-school students and preachers the inquiry was so threatening that they literally froze in their seats, and refused to approach the microphone to relate concerning their knowledge of and experience with the spirit world.

Following another study session on the spirit world in which the anthropologist sensed growing internal tension among those present, he decided to corroborate his feelings. Cheerfully and rather carelessly he remarked: "Isn't it wonderful now. Formerly you used to be afraid of all these things, but now you are Christians, now you have no more fear." A heavy silence followed until the host finally ventured: "Well, we still are afraid quite a bit . . . even today." Looking from face to face it was quite obvious that this "confession"

would have done good to many more who were present. To the researcher it indicated that the common missionary approach which treats spirit fear as "foolish superstition" is in actual fact not minimizing the fear but merely internalizing it. Here it is suppressed so as not to give offense to the "unbelieving" missionary. This actually leads the convert into a two-story Christianity, the upper of which acts as if there were no spirits and the lower level covertly shivers and cringes without any hope of release or protection.

Protection Against Spirits. It is very interesting to note that one of the major efforts of Lengua culture to create immunity against, or at least a certain resistance toward spirits and spirit fear, was associated with the yanmana festival, the female puberty rite. At the climax of this celebration a series of masked "spirit" men, with pellet bags stripped over their heads and faces, "attacked" the pubescent girl and by twos dragged her until she lost consciousness. All the while they were dragging her, the women and "friendly" males chased the aggressors who were called sovalac and who were impersonating enemy spirits. The society gave several rationalizations for this ceremony. One of these stated that the girl who would become a mother must be hardened against the spirit world and its fear. Possibly these mothers were then to pass on at least some of this "resistance" to spirits to their offspring. There is reason to believe that it was also associated with the strong menstrual taboo. Since menstruous women represent one of the major causes of power loss in the tribe, and for that reason also avenues for alien spirit penetration, this ceremony was to strengthen the females' resistance to spirit invasion.

While there still is plenty of fear today, it is also true that there has been a sharp decrease since their nomadic pre-Christian days. The camp with a circle of houses and the common fire in the center is pretty well unknown today. In other words, fear complexes involving the total village are today less prevalent. Still very common, however, is the individual fear. If an individual is alone or has reason to believe in the presence of hostile spirit forces, he generally resorts to sleeping, or at least camping, within a circle of fire which he keep going all night. Red quebracho wood was the most sought after for this purpose for the sparks it throws off are more effective in frightening away the spirits. Formerly all murderers, warriors returning with scalps, individuals who felt themselves especially pursued by the shaman or his quiltongcama helpers, or even just people who were alone in a dangerous place resorted to this method of protection. Even today one frequently observes, especially after

a murder or some other gross personal or property violation, that the culprit tries to protect himself against sent and unsent spirits by this ring of fire. It is frequently a community's first indication of guilt in the case of a secret crime. Missionary Dietrich Lepp reported that quite recently after an Indian had rather unexpectedly "caught" a valuable fur-bearing animal, he was seen sleeping in such a ring of fire. The "lucky" hunter slept this way for two nights and then disappeared. After his departure people learned that a certain Mennonite's trap had been robbed.

A further method of protection involved a fumigation ceremony with palo santo (guayacum sanctum) wood, which gives off a very odoriferous smoke. A person who had seen a spirit in the forest in a dream or had become aware of it through an avaemnec warning would "bathe" himself in the palo santo smoke, decontaminating him from any contact he might already have had with the spirit and also insulating him against any immediate attack. Such fumigation could be extended to the whole family and even to one's house and property. Related to the smoke ritual was the drinking of palo santo tea or the bathing of the body in warm water. In fact, for the Lengua hot water has always been rated high in spirit-medicinal value.

Should any person in the village wake up after a dream involving spirit encounter or just feel the presence of hostile spirits by means of "the hair on his toes" or a "swollen head," he would usually break into a chant. Such a chant was generally carried on in a rather low monotonous voice, but it still followed certain patterns. The chant began with an almost inaudible murmur and gradually increased both in pitch and volume and then finally decayed into a low, soft rhythmic repetition of syllables. The syllables as a rule were meaningless, but occasionally a short utterance of conjuration or deprecation was added. Chanting could be amplified in power if it were accompanied by a gourd rattle containing power objects. Those persons who had "received" songs through spirit enduement, visions, or even purchase could use them as shields to ward off harm by the spirits. Judging by frequency, chanting was the favorite form of seeking protection from spirit attack.

The reasoning behind chanting was—as in the production of rain—that it charmed spirits into quietness. In this charmed state spirits could be identified and caught by the shaman who had power to cast such victims into an unquenchable fire or the bottomless chasm; and it was impossible to escape out of either of them. When asked if this eternal fire was something like the hell spoken of by the missionaries, the Lengua hastily affirmed that this fire was much

fiercer and it was much older than hell, for it had existed since the very beginning.

The most common protection against the -jangauc, the soul-of-the-dead, was to have the immediate family cut their hair and to paint their faces, sometimes their whole bodies, with charcoal as a disguise to prevent the -jangauc, who is considered to be very short-sighted, from recognizing them. Such a disguise usually was carried on for one moon after a person's death. The belongings of the deceased were all carefully disposed of. Horses, dogs, and goats were shot, the latter could be eaten by the clan. What could be burned—arrow shafts, bows, stools, etc., was put to fire; and the rest was buried in the grave with the corpse. It was crucial to eliminate every vestige of property to which the -jangauc could be linked; any remnant was inviting trouble and death.

In the nomadic era not only the shelter of the deceased, but the whole village was put to flames and the whole clan fled the scene of the death. Before such departure people tried to bury all the ashes from household fires, lest the spirit return at dawn and try to warm himself and then be disappointed and angered to seek revenge. To prevent such pursuit of the group the Lengua developed elaborate rituals. One involved burying a stirring paddle, especially if the deceased was a woman. The paddle was buried with the ashes before the camp was burned and abandoned. The reason was that when the -jangauc returned to the campsite, he tried to find clues as to where the group had gone. He would discover the buried stirring paddle and then ask it about the direction the group had taken. The paddle, which had been buried before leaving, would now plead ignorance because it had been buried before the people left and for that reason had not been able to see the direction.

If a person or a whole community became concerned that a dangerous -jangauc had located them, there were a number of avenues of protection open to them. First, they could burn the village and flee. As a substitute they could apply a palo santo fumigation ceremony to the whole village. A large fire of palo santo wood was built beside the village so that the smoke would be carried by the wind through the entire layout. In case only individual families were involved they could build large fires and make much noise, especially during the night. An actual illustration of this has been described in the account of the father-in-law who was very fond of his grandchildren and whose -jangauc became a big problem to the recently settled son-in-law. In this case, after weeks of fires and noise, it was

finally only the intervention by the missionary Alex Bartel that prevented the man from deserting his newly acquired settlement farm.

More recently, especially under the settlement program which ties the Indian family to a specific plot of land and which has led to the construction of more permanent houses, the destruction and abandoning of whole villages has become unfeasible. In fact, even the destruction of the individual house means a large capital loss. For this reason the moribund are generally moved to a temporary shelter, or an older semi-abandoned house in the yard, is usually destroyed when death occurs. When a person dies in a permanent house two methods of keeping the -jangauc from recognizing his former home have been observed. If it is a wooden structure it is often dismantled and moved several feet, where it is rebuilt more or less as it was before. In the case of an adobe brick structure, dismantling is not feasible, so generally only the windows or the doors are changed.

People who have to venture into unknown regions or who have to hunt dangerous animals can also take various precautions. The fumigation ceremony described earlier could provide protection. Shamans could also provide charms or fetishes for spirit protection. Grubb describes the use of a red headband with a fringe of feathers taken from a rare but powerful bird to protect the wearer.[21]

The protection against the ostrich spirit has already been described. It involved three elements: the precautionary anointing of the fatal arrow, the breast feather decoys to allow the hunter's return and finally the barking dogs of the village.

Before shooting tigers, who might have a neptanaap jangauc (from killing a person) or be possessed by the soul of a deceased shaman, hunters generally gave a soothing explanation to the tiger victim. This is illustrated in the discourse by "Father of tiger," the Lengua hunter who had more than a half dozen tigers to his record, to a predatory animal that was decimating the mission's flocks: "Father tiger, I will have to kill you, for you have become bad and destructive. If you only killed to eat, we could understand you, for we too know what hunger is. But now you kill much more than you eat, sometimes you just kill a sheep and leave it. That is very bad. Therefore, I must now kill you."

Of course, the major protection of individuals and the clan as a whole rested with the shamans. The medicine man's protective

21 *Ibid.*, 118.

service was based, first of all, on his intimate knowledge of the spirit world. Next, he had the capacity to see and to diagnose the specific spirit problem at hand. Furthermore his power over basic soul-stuff permitted him to create spirit armies, with which to impose his purpose almost at will. Next was the special connection between shaman and specific spirit forces or beings, such as a star or other spirit being from whom he had received special favor. Then through fasting and visions he had accumulated a repertoire of power songs for all occasions. His chant could awaken sleeping rain-birds, or it could charm quilyicjama, who were preventing rain-birds from their duty, to become quiet and to retreat to their lair. In fact, as mentioned earlier, the spirit-world lived in mortal fear of being trapped through a shaman's chant and then to be committed to the unquenchable fire or the bottomless pit. The rattles that shamans used were filled with spirit-charged objects that added efficacy to the shaman's singing.

It is interesting to note the important part that liquor played in power. Drinking capacity was a necessary precondition for power. Drinking added "wings" to the "lightened" shaman's soul so it could travel speedily. It fortified his voice so that his chants became irresistible to the spirit enemies.

An interesting sidelight on songs comes with the matter of returning lost or stolen souls. Once the soul-thief spirits had been charmed and overcome, the quiltongcama returned the soul to its body home. The shaman had a special song to encourage the entrance of the soul into the body. He then sang another song to "fix" the soul in the body again, so it would not wander away by itself.

If and when a person's body had been invaded by enemy spirits, it was again the shaman who had the power to extract them. After chanting and thus subduing and charming the spirit forces, he rubbed the area where they were located, spit on it, and then sucked and extracted the intruders.

LENGUA CHRISTIANS AND THE SPIRIT WORLD

In this section attention is focused on the adjustment the Lengua Christians are making and point out some of the problems and difficulties they are experiencing.

Christianity as a "Partial" Religion. Possibly the most serious problem for the Lengua stems not from Christianity proper, but from the framework within which it has been taught. By and large the

Mennonite colonists and the Mennonite missionaries have relegated the "spirit" concerns of the Lengua to pagan superstition. Often there has been conscious effort to create doubt as to the validity of this spirit world, but even in the absence of efforts to destroy these beliefs, all conversation and teaching "assumes" that this spirit universe is not real or valid. In some cases missionaries consciously avoid these areas of Lengua belief in their conversation hoping to thereby weaken their hold on the people. This means that for the average Lengua, for whom spirit fear was the major concern of life, Christianity at best shows no concern and at worst expresses contempt for his deepest fears. He must therefore repress his fear. He may not even verbalize it lest the quality of his Christian faith be questioned.

That the spirit fear is still there can be seen in the strong fear reactions of even the preachers in the Bible school during the spirit-world investigation. There are also the "confessions" to the investigator that people "still were quite afraid" of the spirits, even as Christians. Even apart from words, the observant visitor sees spirit fear as motivation for many Lengua behavior patterns.

However, not only does Christianity disregard Lengua spirit fear, it also has destroyed the shaman who formerly could "control" this sphere. Thus now—because the Lengua still believes and experiences its validity—he is left without any means of control or protection. One must honestly face the possibility that the persistence of shamanistic practice may not only be because of the deep entrenchment of paganism, but also because the Christianity that he has received does not give him any means of handling the spirit area of his experience.

For the researcher the frequency of mental breakdown that was observable among the Lengua raised the serious question—are these cases of mental collapse possibly the result of internalized fear that finally robbed the person of his reason?

It seems to this observer that the Indians are attempting to develop some controls over this problem area. Consider the great emphasis on congregational singing. Many services under exclusive Indian direction use the major part of the meeting time in singing. Could this be a cultural extension from the use of songs and chanting to charm the evil spirits? Could this be a largely covert attempt to "lull" the harmful forces into harmlessness? The former way of life used this pattern and certainly singing is pursued with an eagerness that attracts attention.

A second pattern that may be linked to spirit control is the eagerness with which sick people confess sin. Maybe in the abstract sense in which the foreign preacher uses "sin," it can most readily be equated with evil spirit forces. Therefore, confession is the "extraction" of the non-material disease-bringing elements.

Rain was another very vital concern of the Lengua. Its spirit linkage has been discussed earlier. Rain-making was the shaman's second major activity. Here again Christianity appears helpless. It is true one can pray, but when in 1963 the Lenco and the Indian Christians prayed months on end and no rain came, what did that mean? Did Christian prayer lack the power? Did God not have any concern? Or could it be that some evil spirits were after all keeping the rain-birds from coming?

Christianity as Material and External. The Mennonites operate very heavily on an ethic that sees no sin in work. In fact, they generally tend to link "good" Christianity with hard work. While not overtly stressed quite in the same tone, this ethic also puts its blessing on personal accumulation. One should save for the rainy day, for old age, or "to give to missions." The Lengua who views work more as a "discomfort," if not an evil, is therefore constantly in conflict with his Mennonite neighbor. The Indian's non-work is ridiculed and his total sharing (of edibles) is condemned. For the Lengua Christian the increase of individual "work" and the possibility, not to mention the practice, of material accumulation spells some grave moral problems. Not to share is one of the worst sins, maybe even crimes, he could commit. Misgivings, tensions, guilt, and frustration abound in this area.

Most subtle and possibly even more dangerous is the externalism that the Mennonite legalism fosters. This runs quite counter to the Lengua ideals that inner intent is basic and most important. Often it may actually lead the Indian into a two-story Christianity in which the lower story lives in spirit fear, but the upper tries to profess faith and joy in the Lord.

The attempt on the part of the missionary medical staff to teach germ consciousness has also led to some serious confusion. In the past they saw "physical" beetles as spirits. Now they are told these beetles are only beetles. Germs—which one cannot see—bring disease. Does this not mean simply that the disease bearers recognized by missionary medicine are merely smaller "beetles" than the Lengua formerly recognized?

Two-way Misinterpretation. The inadequate understanding and the lack of appreciation of the Lengua spirit-world has actually led the missionary into "misinterpreting" Christianity. Thus the use of "quilyicjama" for "devil" actually gives the devil a human origin. It is a human -jangauc gone bad. This certainly is not a very adequate concept for the devil of the Bible. What may be even more confusing is the use of -jangauc for soul in the earlier Bible translation. True, it means soul, but a soul-of-the-dead. For practical purposes, Christ thus came to save souls-of-the-dead and not of the living. The actual word for living soul, -vanmongcama, was in this translation reserved for dreams and visions which, by Lengua standards, are merely activities of one's living soul.

On the other hand, because the exegesis of the Scriptures was not "pre-programmed" for the Lengua spirit concepts, some rather unfortunate misinterpretations have crept in from the Indian side. Consider the interpretation of the "legion of evil spirits" that entered the swine in the land of the Gadarenes as being moljangaucs—loose, disembodied souls-of-the-dead.

An even more serious problem involves the Spirit of God. Is this the innermost or soul of God? Is God "soul-less" when the Holy Spirit is with us? These are some of the many concerns that plague even Christian Lengua today.