Kwatia, Kusi’s oldest brother, despite occasional trips to Port Vila has made his life on Tanna. Born about 1950, he was the oldest boy of his generation living in the village. His widowed mother looked after her family as best she could until she married her dead husband’s brother. Kwatia was in his mid-twenties when I first met him. Already he had ambitions to lead. Age confers authority on Tanna and Kwatia was well placed to be a future chief. Most young men are reticent to speak up during dispute-settlement meetings until, when middle-aged, they have established families and solid exchange networks with others. Kwatia, however, although still young and then the father of just one child, never hesitated to contribute to village discussions even though his elders might sniff at this impertinence. At one meeting, I was unsettled when he jumped to his feet to admonish us participants that “we old men need to take charge of things!” I was nearly Kwatia’s age, but hardly ready to embrace my old man status. Power comes with age variously. Americans scheme to stay young. Tannese men strive to become elders as quickly as they can. When the Condominium government organized a census in preparation for upcoming national elections in 1979, Kwatia took the opportunity to add a few years to his official age.

Kwatia pursued as much schooling as he could, though he completed only five years of primary education. The few island schools in the 1960s were staffed by the Presbyterian and other missions, and children typically walked several hours daily to attend these, or boarded on school grounds. Kwatia, like most children, was not admitted to one of the colony’s few mission-run secondary schools. In his teens, however, he traveled north to enroll in several technical training programs, including plumbing, carpentry, and bookkeeping. Back home in 1969, he found a job with one of Tanna’s agricultural cooperative societies at Isangel, the island’s government station. The British and French each had established separate economic cooperative societies as an initial step toward the archipelago’s eventual self-governance.
In his twenties, Kwatia pursued Nancy, the daughter of Nase who lived a few villages south around the mountain ridge. Nase held the job of assessor. The British and the French appointed two dozen of these assessors to serve as local experts, advising the district agents during island court cases and transmitting orders back to their communities. Nase noted Kwatia’s nerve. Instead of following traditional roads and asking help from intervening men to arrange his marriage, Kwatia handled marital negotiations on his own. He convinced Nancy to elope although he had no sister in hand to return to Nase in exchange for her. Instead, as do many men, he promised a future daughter. Family in Samaria helped with contributions of four pigs and the usual cooked and uncooked taro and yams, kava, bark skirts, baskets and mats, and fathom lengths of cotton cloth and blankets that Kwatia presented to Nase in celebration of their marriage and in return for Nancy’s “basket.”

Kwatia and Nancy’s first child was a son, a boy Kwatia named after himself. Three years later, Nancy bore a daughter, and old Nase named her Maui after his own daughter Maui who would soon move to Pango village, near Port Vila, in exchange for a girl her brother had found there to marry. Maui, still a baby, would live with her parents but belong to her grandfather, her namer. Nase arranged a feast to balance the one he had received from Kwatia several years before. During this, Kwatia’s family complained that Nase returned only three pigs (one already dead and eaten) while they had given him four. Kwatia employed his bookkeeping skills to keep careful counts of who had provided what during the first exchange, and he redistributed the food, kava, bark skirts, mats and baskets, cloth, and blankets that Nase provided so that everyone received, roughly, what they had given three years before. Grandfather Nase helped support Maui’s education, and she successfully completed secondary school and then nursing college in Fiji and found work as head nurse at the main government hospital on Espiritu Santo.

The cooperative agricultural and marketing societies rarely functioned well and, by the late 1970s, Kwatia was back home busying himself in a variety of local affairs. Tanna’s last Presbyterian missionary was then advocating technological training, cognizant of the island’s pitiful educational opportunities and, for those few who were selected to attend secondary school, the problematic local value of a Western-style education. He worked diligently to find funding for a variety of projects, distributing these across his congregation. He established one endeavor down on the valley floor, below Samaria. This was a small and simple soap factory with improvised equipment to press and boil coconut oil to be mixed with lye to produce a rough soap. International funders, then, could
be arm-twisted into supporting import substitutions. Hahakwi (They Scrub) Soap never made much product despite the persistent efforts of a young Scottish Voluntary Service Overseas advisor. Kwatia hurried to join the enterprise, but he became disillusioned with the broken press, wasted dried coconut, ongoing delays, and the volunteer who had various other duties elsewhere. Kwatia threatened to instruct Samaria’s soap workers to abandon the enterprise, and indeed they would, he insisted, since all followed his lead.

Rambo and Kung Fu movies were then exceedingly popular, and Kwatia next leant on his connections with the British Education Office at the government center to arrange an evening film showing at the soap factory, but then shifted this to the local primary school. This festivity, though, would require both a generator and a projector as east Tanna, then as now, has no electric grid. Despite much arranging, many promises, and an audience eagerly gathered, the films, projector, and generator all never arrived.

Kwatia’s next proposal to establish a *kastom* school also failed to attract much local interest. An offshoot John Frum group in Iounhanan village, west Tanna, had already founded one of these to much acclaim. (This is the community that would, years later, feature romantically in *Tanna*, the movie.) Despite declaring a special relationship with Prince Philip of Great Britain (secretly, a Tannese brother), the prince’s followers celebrated their strong *kastom* knowledge and practice, and they refused to send their children to mission or government schools. The children instead, in *kastom* school, were instructed in traditional and island practicalities, not useless European knowledge. Men and boys also took up wearing penis wrappers, and women bark skirts, but usually only when visitors came around as the neighborhood rapidly turned into a tourist attraction. Back in Samaria, however, most people figured that while *kastom* should be cherished, government schools provided their children at least a possibly better future.

Kwatia had better luck, however, with island politicking. In the late 1970s, the New Hebrides moved bumpily along toward its eventual independence on 30 July 1980 from France and Great Britain. New resources, political organizers, and all sorts of campaign hoopla and puffery poured onto Tanna as colonial advisors and involved island leaders called meetings, ran trainings, and built political party structures, jockeying to win upcoming elections that would establish, first, the National Assembly, and eventually the National Parliament.

Kwatia also busied himself in ceaseless disputes and discussions involving Iasur Volcano that intensified during this burst of national politicking. Iasur, from the 1960s when an Australian trader organized a rudimentary air service to
Port Vila, attracted increasing numbers of tourists. But who owned the volcano? How much should tourists pay to climb it? And who would get the money? Disputing community members regularly found opportunity to club one another, block island roads, and interdict tourist visits. But visitor money was attractive and disputants also convened frequent meetings and discussions, setting up a series of not very effective joint committees to manage Iasur, seeking some sort of compromise that would release the tourist money.

Kwatia took part in these volcano discussions, and he found a larger stage with associated party politics. Years of Anglo-French rivalry in the colony spilled into emerging national politics, as each power looked toward an independent Vanuatu. Would this lean toward France (and maintain French as a national language?), or toward Britain (and Australia, New Zealand, and English)? A tiny elite group of English educated Islanders, many of whom were former seminarians, established what would become the Vanua’aku Party. This, supportive of early independence and suspicious of France, attracted mostly Presbyterian and Anglican adherents throughout the archipelago, including everyone in Samaria. In response, France helped establish a cluster of opposition parties, including John Frum and Kapiel (stone, for *kastom* adherents) on Tanna. These parties, which took independence to be a lengthy process only to arrive in some distant future, attracted the support of many in the Roman Catholic community, among others. They would, by 1978, coalesce with much French choreography behind the scenes as “The Moderates.”

After an initial Representative Assembly collapsed, the two colonial powers scheduled a nationwide election for November 1977. The Vanua’aku Party, which objected to the composition of this, boycotted the poll and instead proclaimed the People’s Provisional Government, at least in those regions of its greatest support. I was at the Australian National University at the time, waiting for official permission to start field research on Tanna. Administrative worry about growing political agitation throughout the archipelago sidetracked my request, although the Condominium finally allowed me to come as far as Port Vila in February 1978, and I managed to slip down to Tanna that April.

There, political party representatives were busy making connections and firming up support. The Vanua’aku Party appointed various *komisa* (commissioners), “subcommittees” (committee chairmen), and secretaries across the island. Iolu Apel, a young organizer and future candidate for Parliament who had worked previously for the British Cooperative system, established the Nikoletan (Canoe/group of the land) as an island council of chiefs that would look after both *kastom* and local governance. Only leading men from Vanua’aku Party
supporting villages, however, agreed to participate in this. In February 1979, John Frum and other French supporters marched on the Nikoletan house at Lenakel, burned it to the ground, seized the People’s Provisional Government flag, and furthermore uprooted its flagpole. The Vanua’aku Party continued to convene various meetings, however, and Kwatia and Rapi, his father’s brother, attended several of these where Kwatia was often appointed clerk to take notes.

Later that year, both sides agreed to participate in a new nationwide poll to elect a new National Assembly and also island government councils. Kwatia tackled the job of teaching women and younger folk how to vote, and how to vote correctly. He also counted up potential voters in the region, reporting these numbers upward. The parties held community meetings and posted election posters. Summoned to attend too many, and too frequent, of these meetings, Samaria families convened yet another to distribute responsibilities. Rapi and Iau would attend to kastom concerns; their brothers Koke and Nakutan would look after the church and school; and their son Kwatia would do politics. He participated in candidate selection meetings for the new assembly and for Tanna’s island council, although Vanua’aku Party leaders already had made many promises here. When Kwatia returned home to Samaria to report meeting decisions, he often code-shifted into Bislama rather than using Nafe language, signaling his command of the new and still confusing field of national politicking.

Kwatia soon angled to run on the Vanua’aku Party (VP) ticket for the new Island Council, partly by contributing a little money to candidates on the national ballot. He had to pay a 5,000 francs Nouvelles Hébrides (about US$500.00) filing fee and I contributed 1,000 fnh of this. The two sides (Vanua’aku Party and the Moderates) each nominated fifteen candidates whose election to the council would depend on the breakdown of island votes. Kwatia was placed tenth on the Vanua’aku Party list, but only the first eight were elected as Tanna’s voters reproduced the island’s essential dualism: 2,784 votes for the VP versus 2,718 for the Moderates.

Kwatia’s budding political career, however, was not much derailed by his loss. The Island Council never functioned well as only its Vanua’aku Party members would agree to meet, although Kwatia was later appointed council secretary. The New Hebrides became Vanuatu on 30 July 1980, but this was an unsettled independence. A rebellion on Tanna and a more serious one on Espiritu Santo, led by Jimmy Stephens and his Nagriamel movement, disrupted once rosy visions of national unity. On Tanna, John Frum and other French supporters proclaimed an independent Tafea Nation (an acronym of the archipelago’s five southern islands Tanna, Aneityum, Futuna, Erromango, and Aniwa) and, on 26
May 1980, kidnapped several government officers. British forces retrieved these and arrested rebel ringleaders. On 10 June, the John Frum army marched across the island and attacked the government station at Isangel, and also the British prison, aiming to free their compatriots. There, they encountered an opposing force of Vanua’aku Party supporters. Rebel leaders, including Alexis Youlu (cousin of Iolu Apel, and likewise a newly elected National Assembly member who had received the most popular votes), attempted to negotiate a truce. Just before dawn, however, wild shooting started, the prisoners made a run for it, tear gas grenades exploded, twelve men were wounded, and Youlu was shot and clubbed dead. Although several inquiries looked into the fracas, no one was charged with his killing.

In subsequent years, Tanna’s council of chiefs reformed and resumed its old Nikoletan name, although it has never attracted island-wide support. A new Nikoletan house opened in 2017. Political rivals established competing chiefs’ councils that assert their own, purer kastom authority including the Council of the Twelve Nakamals. Kwatia joined the Nikoletan, serving first as its treasurer, then chair of the island court system, and eventually as Nikoletan chairman. He also advanced into another religious arena of leadership becoming a church pastor.

In the 1970s, the US Congress, the Federal Communication Commission, and television manufacturers all worked to expand the number of Ultra High Frequency broadcast stations. Miscellaneous pastors and ministers from across the land, including my fellow townsmen, Tulsa’s Oral Roberts, Billy James Hargis, T. L. Osborne, and Kenneth Hagen, jumped into the medium if they weren’t already broadcasting, becoming televangelists. On the air, they raised considerable funds from the fervid faithful, and some of this money sloshed into the mission fields, including Vanuatu. Jimmy Swaggart opened an outpost in Port Vila, as did Oklahoma’s Rhema Bible Training College. A steady flow of missionaries from a variety of new churches, many from Australia or New Zealand, wandered about Tanna seeking converts even though most island families had been one sort of Christian or another since the turn of the twentieth century.

One of the several Apostolic missions, already active on Ambae Island in the 1970s, sent island missionaries south to Tanna. In 1978, two of these visited Samaria’s environs, conducting faith healings. In Pentecostalist tradition, the Apostolics favor altar calls, laying-on-of-hands, speaking in tongues, and hymns accompanied with the guitar. Such flamboyant ritual astonished Tanna’s staid Presbyterians. Kwatia’s father-in-law Nase invited the messengers to attempt their faith cures, including treating Kwatia’s brother Tio’s painful shoulder.
Kwatia, when he married, moved out of Samaria. He cleared a small hamlet up the slope at Mount Nebo, and lived there with his wife Nancy. These geographic moves are strategic. Everyone living together in one home ground, like Samaria, has an obligation to support village leaders in community political and religious endeavors. Kwatia, though, was eager to escape the oversight of his elders, his father’s generation. His new separate residence freed him to go his own way. He had also decided, when younger, not to drink kava, which also allowed a certain independence from daily exchange duties.

Captivated with the Apostolic message, Kwatia decided to leave the Presbyterian denomination much to his family’s dismay and his uncles’ fury, and so did Nase, his father-in-law. The upstart Apostolic mission then offered several tangible benefits, including three pickup trucks that its members could use, although these soon broke down. One of Kwatia’s brothers, and several cousins, followed him into the new church although his half-brother Simeon was then training to become a Presbyterian pastor.

Grandfather Nase built a small Apostolic chapel in his village, but his son and Apostolic Pastor Harrison, a man from Tonga who was sent to lead the new church, disputed church responsibilities and the pastor fled, moving his family in with Kwatia at Mount Nebo. Kwatia offered to clear a parcel of his land on the valley floor and he raised funds to build a sheet iron church house. After some quick study, he next declared himself, or was declared, to be an Apostolic elder and then a pastor himself. When Pastor Harrison moved to Middle Bush to lead newly converted families there, Kwatia assumed his pastoral duties, moving down to the new valley church house, dubbed the Manse. Kwatia subsequently served as chairman of the Tafea District Council of Churches, adding to his various Council of Chiefs responsibilities.

What was left of the Manse blew away during the cyclone of 2015, and Kwatia subsequently has dossed down inside the Nikolatan house, rebuilt at Lenakel, Tanna’s emerging urban center that people have renamed Blackman Town. Here, he is well placed to keep his eye on ongoing island political and religious concerns and percolating chiefly schemes.

Brokers

The Tannese are eager importers. As did Kwatia, they seek out interesting material they can broker among themselves: The two dogs that Cook left at Port Resolution in 1774, new cultigens and flowers, foreign place and personal names, novel spirits and rituals, modern political practices, and more. People are likewise
quick to invent all sorts of homegrown novelties—John Frum among the most successful of these—although these command greater public attention if presented as a momentous spiritual inspiration rather than some humdrum personal idea or thoughtful proposal. On Tanna, individual creativity doesn’t spark. It’s boring. Brokers, who import appealing news from the outside world, thereby distinguish themselves. People admire, and sometimes need, their inspiring connections and they will usually give some inspired broker at least an initial hearing.

Kwatia, along these lines, built a winning career on brokering outside knowledge. He moved along from learning the secrets of plumbing, carpentry, and bookkeeping, to helping organize Vanuatu’s pre-independence political campaign and elections. Other young men in those years also quickly made themselves into indispensable clerks, subcommitteemen, and secretaries. They admitted the authority of their elders, those chiefs, but they knew that their schooling and their national connections provided new bases of status and political influence. Someone had to take notes, to count heads, and to teach others how to use the electoral system where voters chose paper slips with candidate names, photographs, and symbols, placed these into envelopes, and then into ballot boxes.

Rival island brokers pushed other sorts of alien wisdom, whose inward flows increased as the colonial New Hebrides transformed. Some then, to give one example, advocated membership in a mysterious outland organization, the Red Cross. Pay up 60 cents for a “chair” and one could win money after every forthcoming island disaster or unfortunate house fire. Alongside politics and religion, Kwatia developed a reputation as a kastom expert although, given his father’s early death, he relied on his uncles and on his active participation in dispute-settlement meetings to build this knowledge. He drew on this in his capacity of island court judge.

Kwatia was not alone in leaving the established island churches after 1980. The older mission churches lost members to glitzier brands of Christianity. Eager missionaries and new resource flows attracted many to join incoming Baptist, Latter-day Saints, Baha’i, Four Corners, Holiness Fellowship, Assembly of God, Living Waters, and many more congregations, most of which proclaimed gospels of health and wealth. Several Tanna families decided that Islam is the true kastom. Sulphur Bay’s John Frum movement, in 2000, also broke up into three parts, one of these the Unity movement that followed the inspirations of the Prophet Fred.

Kwatia’s Apostolic mission has roots in American Pentecostalism. In Vanuatu, it introduced novel liturgical ritual including altar calls (sinners come forward to be saved), immersive baptism, faith healing through prayer and touch, speaking
in tongues and, where electricity is available, electric guitar performances. Nase’s Apostolic chapel featured a cross inscribed with Acts 2:42: “And they continued steadfastly in the apostles’ doctrine and fellowship, and in breaking of bread, and in prayers.” I attended the ribbon-cutting of this chapel, joining the celebration. Collected area pastors wore white shirts, ties, and sunglasses. New converts shyly joined in with call-and-response antiphony and sinner altar calls. I can say, based on my Oklahoma experience, the attempted glossalia and clumsy faith healings were pitiful. People did their awkward best with all this. No Islander I knew in the 1970s could fall into an ecstatic trance. Tutored by sober Presbyterians, Christian ritual (apart from enthusiastic singing) was then very composed and mostly dull. Even those brokering novel information from ancestors and spirits merely went to sleep and dreamed, or sometimes secluded themselves inside a house or some forest glade. In years since, the Apostolics and other Pentecostal converts have honed Islanders’ rapturous skills. The Prophet Fred who, after many years’ employment on Korean fishing boats, returned to Tanna in 2000 with a new message of island unity and a distinctive connection to Fetukwai, the spirit of the morning star, likewise incorporated trance into his weekly Wednesday services. Women followers, who Fred dubbed *glas* (glass; mirror), somehow learned to trance, and in these trances they jerkily danced as they discerned through the Holy Spirit those in the congregation who had committed sin.

When I left Tanna for the first time at the end of 1979, I found myself caught between Kwatia and his uncle Rapi as I was preparing for a going-home feast. Both asked for my heavy black shortwave radio. This was a clunky piece of Soviet Union technology I bought in Australia, but it efficiently picked up broadcasts from across the world. I promised this to Rapi but Kwatia dearly wanted it, and he listed off all the various assistance he had offered me during the previous months. He threatened to bash Rapi, and alarmed family members jumped in to separate the two. I hedged by appealing to Rapi, who agreed that the radio might belong to everyone in Samaria although Kwatia would look after it. I promised to buy Rapi a new radio on my way home through Port Vila. The row continued, though, and Rapi yelled that he would rip the *kaio* (plumed hair stick, signifying chiefly status) from Kwatia’s head; that he would never become a leader. Rapi’s prediction has come true, but only for Samaria itself since Kwatia has instead excelled in broader political arenas. That shortwave radio, that voice transmitting alien news, was then a broker’s prized tool. Like ancestral dreams, it could inspire. Nowadays, however, outland voices stream into Tanna from many sources and devices and from many directions. Island knowledge brokers have likewise proliferated.
Respect

Brokers, with luck behind them, gather audiences who want to listen and learn. Tanna’s diffuse systems of authority, however, along with its numerous and sundry chiefs, can undercut a particular broker’s message, his popularity eventually draining away. It is difficult for chiefs and leaders to smother the competition. Yes, men do deny women and their juniors the right to drink kava and, thus, to be inspired while intoxicated. But anyone can dream up ancestral wisdom or connect otherwise to inspiring figures. Movement leaders for years, for example, sought to prevent Elizabeth, daughter of John Frum boss Nampas at Sulphur Bay, from contacting John Frum to diagnose, cure, and to prophesy. But to no avail. She simply accepted gifts of flowers from her followers, disappeared into her house, and emerged with novel, desired information. Travel, access to education, even radios, and today’s tourists all offer brokering possibilities.

On Tanna, “the kingdom of the individual” as anthropologist Jean Guiart called the place, most anyone can achieve distinction even if this distinction is temporary as people move along to attend the next marvel, the next outlandish wonder. Brokers must be vigilant. Gusts of incoming novelty can unsettle carefully constructed island hierarchies, turning aside people’s interests. Where brokers are attentive and messages effective, however, island hierarchies remain strong as was the Presbyterian Tanna Law of the early twentieth century, and the John Frum movement up through 2000. People willingly give support to wise leaders and to their projects. In November 1979, I worked the polling station at Iamanuapen School, finding voter names on the parliamentary electoral roll and handing out ballots. Privately, I ticked off the candidate I guessed a voter would support, based on that voter’s home village. When we counted up the 220 ballots, I was off only by eleven votes. Nearly everyone had followed their village leaders’ instruction about whom they must choose. In the 1970s, politicking was fierce and allegiances strong, and brokers could count on their supporters.

With intensifying global flows, political and religious alliances have increasingly splintered. An assortment of incoming overseas information and resources present richer brokering opportunities. Samaria itself, home of seven families in the 1970s, has fractured. By 2000, the village housed only two extended families as onetime residents staked out their own new hamlets along the ridge from valley floor to Mount Nebo, and as they enlisted in diverse new religious and political associations.

Chiefs, today, have many worries. They fixate on respect, or rather lack of respect. Respect, for individual Islanders, is the converse of shame. While elders
everywhere might grumble that younger generations ignore their hard-won wisdom, on Tanna these complaints are particularly rife. The New Bislama Dictionary’s definition of respek provides just one exemplar sentence: Ol yangfala long taon samtaem oli no gat respek blong ol jif, “Young people in town sometimes don’t have respect for the chiefs.” Respect, when a chief command this, guarantees that people esteem his advice, admire his leadership, and contribute to his community projects. Lack of respect signals that people’s ears have turned elsewhere. When missionary William Watt translated the New Testament, he mainly used the Nafe verb isiai to mean “honor,” as in the fifth commandment, Tikisiai remam ribnam, “Honor your father [and] your mother.” Its meaning has slid now toward respect. When trouble or community conflict occurs, frustrated talk turns to the need for, and the sad lack of, nisiaiien or respek.

In 2010, I recorded Kwatia’s recollections of his career. He ended the story with a typical chiefly respect gripe: “Before, life on Tanna was good. But today young people are watching too many videos, learning how people in those videos and in Port Vila behave, and they adopt those behaviors and no longer respect their chiefs.” Respect worries notably have increased in conjunction with Vanuatu’s substantial urban migration flows, in that wayward migrants can partly dodge chiefly surveillance. In town, moreover, although they live with kin, migrants are surrounded by strangers from other islands who, lacking proper respect and honor, may be up to no good.

Respect worries color Vanuatu’s national political discourse as well. Many continue to quote Father Walter Lini, the country’s first prime minister who, combining respect with honor, wrote: “We believe that small is beautiful, peace is powerful, respect is honourable, and community is both wise and practical for the people of Vanuatu.” Focused adamantly on respect, few acknowledge Lini’s associated appreciation of smallness, peace, or a wise and practical community. Iolu Abbil (Apel) from Tanna, who served as country’s sixth president, reminded members of Parliament “about the importance of instilling youth with the value of loyalty and respect.” Government agencies likewise evoke respect. Vanuatu’s Department of Correctional Service’s motto is Sefit, digniti, rispek mo gud fasin blong evriwan, “Safety, dignity, respect and good manners for all.”

Respect serves as a marker, a canary in the urban coalmine, of the strength and viability of hierarchical relationships that conjoin parents and children, husbands and wives, people and chiefs, and even prisoners and their keepers. Respek talk sustains these inequalities, or at least tries to. It signals ideals of cooperation that alien ideas and urban experience threaten and corrode. Respek is the antidote, so people hope, to novelty, to creeping individuality, and to troublesome
urban freedoms. Kwatia, reflecting on his career, compared town and island and, like nearly everyone, deprecated life in Port Vila despite its occasional charms and excitements. Life, he said, is better on the island. In Port Vila, one must have money to eat, drink, and even to sleep. On Tanna, everything is free, at least for those with a family, pigs, and gardens. On the island, moreover, a man is his own boss, although elders like Kwatia enjoy such personal independence largely because they command younger dependents.

Making himself through the years into a chief, Kwatia subsumed politics, religion, and also kastom. As an island court judge, land concerns him greatly. Not just disputes over land, which are incessant, but worry that Islanders might sell their home grounds to outlanders, as has happened in Port Vila and around Efate Island where much land has been alienated. Tannese migrants themselves have purchased some of this. In 2012, Kwatia shared his chiefly wisdom with people gathered in Blacksands settlement, outside Port Vila, for the naming ceremony of his great-nephew: “Without our land we will starve. We are adrift at sea, but we must cling to kastom.” Kwatia has clung to Tanna, and done well, but many other family members have sought a living in Port Vila’s settlements. Samaria, since 1980, has emptied out. Or rather, village families now stretch across islands.

Notes

1. Terry Crowley, A New Bislama Dictionary (Suva: Institute of Pacific Studies, University of the South Pacific; Vila: Pacific Languages Unit, 1995), 200.

Further Readings

Vanuatu Independence


**Anglo-French in the New Hebrides and Vanuatu**


**Chief Councils on Tanna**


**Prophet Fred’s Unity Movement**


**Respect Concerns**