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# Transmission of Violence: The Legacy of Colonialism in Guam and the Path to Peace

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The Western Pacific island of Guam, located in Micronesia has a long history of colonisation. Through centuries of warfare, violence, disease, subjugation, and disregard for basic human rights and freedom, the indigenous Chamoru people have been wounded and defeated in innumerable ways. They have persevered and survived throughout the centuries, despite their traumatic history, but not without consequences. This theoretical article explores those consequences and the traumatic 'debris' within the context of traumatology and post-traumatic stress disorder literature, the Jewish Holocaust experience, and the modern sociopolitical atmosphere on Guam. Finally, some recommendations that have themes of empowerment, reparations, cultural renaissance, and rebirth are offered to restore balance and peace to the lives of the native Chamoru of today's Guam.

The essence of colonialism is the direct and overall subordination of one country to another on the basis of state power being in the hands of a dominating foreign power (Woddis, 1967). The act of taking over and conquering a land and its people is never a peaceful endeavour and is almost always accompanied by violence, subjugation, and dehumanisation. Sadly, over the centuries, indigenous peoples by the millions as well as human slaves from all corners of the globe have become victims of this 'policy' of colonialism or in the language of the colonialists, 'manifest destiny' (Corbett, 2003).

In the Western Pacific, when Spanish warships came to 'discover' Guam in the 1500s, they brought disease, famine, violence and war. Tens of thousands of native Chamorus died throughout the centuries of rule. The devastation was almost total, as the census numbers at the time, showed a 90% decrease from 40,000 Chamorus, as estimated by a Spanish missionary in the late 1600s, to about 4,000 by the early 1700s. Epidemics, crushed rebellions, natural disasters, induced abortions, and migration out of Guam, all contributed to a significant decline of the indigenous people. Relegated to only five settlements in which the survivors were forced to live, everyday life was a tremendous struggle for survival (Sanchez, 1989). By the mid-1850s, there were about 3,500 native Chamorus remaining. Many of those counted in the census had mixed ethnicities of Spanish

and various other European countries as well as Filipino, Japanese and Chinese.

From the time the Spanish landed on Guam shores in 1521 until the mid-19th century, the insidious conspiracy to conquer and 'wipe out' the natives was complete and successful. There were no more Native Chamorus left and what remained was a 'docile and demoralised race' (Sanchez, 1989, p. 48). The tears, the blood, the humiliation, the wresting of lands, cultural dilution, and just the overall suffering remain embedded in the soil, in the trees, in the air, and in the memories, consciousness, and inner souls of the surviving Chamorus.

There is no disputing the loss, devastation, and trauma inflicted upon the native Chamorus. What of the effects and the aftermath of such pain and how can it be conceptualised? Becker (2004) in describing theories of trauma and organised violence states that trauma: implies a notion of tearing, of rupture, of structural breakdown; can only be defined and understood with reference to a specific context, which should be described in detail; is a process that develops sequentially and contains both an individual intrapsychic dimension and collective, macro-social dimension that are interwoven.

Blagg (2000, p. 12) in a handbook describing crisis intervention in aboriginal family violence cites his own 1999 meta-analysis of literature on violence in

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Indigenous communities. He identifies multicausal factors, for high rates of violence, including: marginalisation and dispossession, loss of land and traditional culture, breakdown of community kinship systems and aboriginal law, entrenched poverty, and racism.

Becker's definition of trauma, its insidious overarching effects and Blagg's inclusion of socio-historical variables in explaining the violence often seen in indigenous communities are quite appropriate and helpful in understanding the Chamoru colonisation experience, the Japanese and USA occupations, and the continued re-enactment of violence in the homes of the native Chamoru on Guam. The theories confirm that in the area of trauma and dehumanisation, it takes more than the passage of time to heal all wounds.

In modern psychology and psychiatry, the diagnosis of PTSD (post-traumatic stress disorder) is given to individuals who have suffered a trauma that elicited reactions of intense fear, horror, and helplessness (APA, 2000). As a result of this trauma, a person suffering from PTSD would generally have three symptom clusters of re-experiencing, avoidance, and arousal. With the diagnostic label a whole host of other co-occurring and/or related psychological problems can arise like depression, anxiety, extreme guilt, anger explosiveness, and substance abuse (Davidson & Fairbank, 1993).

However devastating the diagnosis, PTSD was not meant to describe whole communities, cultures, and civilisations. The diagnostic label was created almost 30 years ago to help clinicians conceptualise the fallout from traumatic events like combat experience and rape, to understand the experiences, and to develop treatment plans for individual clients and their family members who may also suffer along with the individual patient. For colonisation victims, the PTSD diagnosis is just too inadequate and simplistic to fully conceptualise the experience. There should be a diagnostic label or nomenclature developed that describes a condition where recent and past histories of the people are replete with violence, death, rape, torture, dehumanisation, loss of land, culture, language, and spirit; a condition that seems to describe all the experiences of indigenous, colonised peoples.

New diagnostic labels could be proposed such as 'rippled PTSD' to describe the effects of a stone dropped into a pool, 'post-colonialism stress disorder (PCSD)', or 'post-trauma transmission disorder (PTTD)'. Whatever the case, the past devastating injustices, wounding, and pain must not be forgotten or ignored and should, at the very least be acknowledged, talked and written about. This article will help elucidate the native Chamoru experience over the centuries within the context of being a conquered, traumatised people. Some recommendations will be offered to help modern day, native Chamorus and Guam as a whole overcome the violence of the past

and present and to propel them into and through the 21st century by following the path to peace and justice.

#### *Guam: The Past*

To the native Chamorus, Guam was known only as Guahan, which means 'we have'. The Spanish had originally named Guam *Islas de los Ladrones* (The Island of Thieves) because of their early encounters with the native people. Ferdinand Magellan, from Spain, was the first European to reach the Mariana Islands (Guam, Saipan, Tinian, Rota and other smaller islands). When he landed on Guam, the native islanders greeted him and his crew with some food, water, and supplies. As their stay lasted a few days, some of the native Chamoru men reportedly boarded one of his ships, stole a few items and a skiff boat. In early Chamoru culture it was not unusual to help oneself to 'communal' property. The 'thieves' perhaps believed that a 'give and take' exchange was appropriate. Whatever the motivation, Magellan was angered. He and a small Spanish army went to the villages, destroyed and burned 40 to 50 huts and killed seven men. To add insult to injury, he named Guam *Islas de Los Ladrones* (Sanchez, 1989, p. 30). The derogatory name remained for several decades until Guam and the other Mariana group of islands were officially named as such and proclaimed as a Spanish crown territory in the late 1500s. The native Chamorus during this time were probably unaware that this small, innocuous proclamation ceremony would forever alter the destiny in a very significant way. Prior to western contact, for centuries the Chamorus had a well-established, well-ordered society, generally peaceful. It was a self-sustaining, proud, and content community of native people that could have never envisioned what was to come in the centuries to follow.

#### *Guam: Today*

Guam is the largest and southernmost island of the Marianas Archipelago, which is part of the larger Oceania region called Micronesia. Guam is the westernmost possession of the United States of America, and has been since 1898. The island is approximately 6,000 miles west of San Francisco; 3,700 miles west-southwest of Honolulu; 1,500 miles southeast of Tokyo; 1,500 miles east of Manila and 3,100 miles northwest of Australia.

The island of Guam is approximately 30 miles in length with variable width, ranging from 12 miles to four miles at its narrowest point. The largest island in Micronesia, Guam has a total landmass of about 212 square miles.

Shaped like a footprint, Guam was formed by the union of two volcanoes. The island has two basic geological compositions. Two-thirds of Guam, the central and northern features, is primarily raised limestone with several volcanic formations at Mount Santa Rosa and mount Mataguac. The highest point is Mount Lamlam with an elevation of 1,334 feet.

During the 1990 census, there were 133,152 people on Guam. At that time it was projected to reach 167,292 by 2000. However in 2000 the number was closer to 155,000. It represented a smaller increase than predicted. The island has been experiencing what one would call a mass exodus. It has been often stated that for every single family that moves to Guam, seven families are moving off island. However, during the last two years, some families have been returning home, due in large part to the lack of job opportunities, difficult adjustment to the USA mainland life, and homesickness.

The 2000 Census found that the Native Chamorus people make up about 37% of the island's population. The next largest group is the Filipino who makes up about 27% of the total population. 'Statesiders' or Europeans are, at about 10%, while other Asians (Chinese, Koreans, Japanese, and Vietnamese) make up about another 10%. Micronesians (Chuukese, Palauan, Republic of the Marshall Islands, Pohnpeians, Yapese, Kosrae) make up another 10%. The year 2000 was the first time ever in USA/Guam census history that the population of Chamorus fell below 40% of the entire population of Guam. This is more evidence that native Chamorus are becoming strangers in their own land, and are quickly becoming the minority. Although it cannot be directly used as evidence as the death of the indigenous Chamoru culture, it is a sad, compelling reality that soon non-indigenous populations will outnumber the native islanders on their own island. No other western Pacific Micronesian island can boast this ignominious fact.

Much of Guam's economy is tourist driven with more than 90% of the total tourists coming from Asia, especially Japan, Korea, and Taiwan, respectively. The total number of tourists in 1996 was 1,352,361 while in 1999 there were 1,155,517. For the first time in a while, in 2003, visitor numbers dipped below one million due in large part to the slipping Asian economies, typhoons, and contagious disease threats. The USA military was a positive economic presence for many decades on Guam until the downsizing in the late 90's, which has crippled Guam's economy even more, and put the government on a very precarious footing to begin the new century.

However, because of the war against terrorism and tensions in the Koreas, Guam is seeing some increased military presence. Although generally economically positive, the military build-up engenders the fear within some of the people of being targeted for destruction because of a close relationship with the US military and proximity to the US Air Force and naval bases on Guam. Some local indigenous leaders object to the build-up because of the possibility that the US government will take more land for military purposes, and because of perceived threat from North Korea and from terrorists. For many large and small business owners the increased presence is a blessing. Increased military means more

customers, more renters, and more taxes. Amid all the increased revenues' 'hype,' the local government has been sending mixed messages to the Federal government. For example, the Governor of Guam recently signed an executive order that, at first read, says that the government of Guam remains opposed to the military presence in no uncertain terms, yet the same resolution states that the government is in full support of military operations on Guam, and proud to support US Pacific Defence operations (Crisostomo, 2005a). If the government appears ambivalent, the sentiments of other local Chamorus probably reflect the same attitude. The push-pull, duality of both loving and hating US neo-colonialist actions continues today, and causes internal and external turmoil.

The government of Guam is the largest employer of all those able to work. Private sector jobs are available but very low paying. The majority of people in the community are in the lower middle to lower socioeconomic status (SES). There is high use of entitlement programs, food stamps, welfare, Medicaid, and Section 8 housing. By far the group that uses these programs most are the indigenous Chamorus.

Indigenous Chamorus have the highest rates of diabetes, obesity, hypertension, and cancer on Guam when compared to other ethnic groups like Filipinos, Europeans, other Asians, and Micronesians. Unfortunately, these health trends are almost identical for other native populations in New Zealand/Aotearoa, Hawaii, North America, and Micronesia. Over the last 20 years, Guam has seen increases in the incidences of family violence, drug, tobacco and alcohol abuse, and suicide. Adult and juvenile crimes appear to be on the rise, and native indigenous Chamorus are responsible for the majority of those crimes, by far.

Over the last few decades the Native Chamoru seem to be a sad, dispirited people, not unlike other indigenous peoples who have also suffered tremendously over the centuries at the hand of the colonial powers. In each of these areas, the native populations are highly over-represented in the adult and juvenile prisons and drug and alcohol treatment facilities (Rapadas, 2001). As mentioned previously, native groups often have the highest rates of modern-day diseases like diabetes, hypertension, obesity, and cancer (Ocampo & Kanehe, 2005). These groups are also over-represented in the usage of entitlement programs such as food stamps, Medicaid, and welfare and most native families live under the poverty levels in their respective state, territory, or country.

It seems that today's social ills have, in part, resulted from decades of unresolved trauma, violence, and unchecked colonial domination. The multi-layered 'soul wounds' have taken their toll over the centuries. As mentioned previously, there are no pure Chamorus left, they have been killed by war and disease. The original native

language has been forever altered over the centuries by an incorporation of other languages, mostly Spanish. These facts, coupled with the conscription of lands, water and other natural resources have stripped the spirit, livelihood and identities of the native Chamorus. Most recently, the Japanese brutal takeover and attempt at colonising Guam in the 1940s added tragic insult to mortal injury to the Chamoru people and culture. This relatively recent trauma and wounding of the Chamoru people continues to afflict today's generations of Chamorus, by transmission of the brutality, hatred, and violence within their own families.

World War II is the most salient and recent stressor. Guam was the only USA territory captured and occupied by the Japanese for a period of 32 months. Japanese rule was characterised by autocratic policies, brutality, atrocities, rape, and use of 'comfort women', forced marches and massacres. It was like a tragic re-enactment of centuries of victimisation, passivity, helplessness, and fatalism that Guam had experienced from other colonial powers like the Spaniards and to a lesser degree of violence, the USA invaders, who by action and inequitable policies, treated Chamorus like 'third world', second-class citizens.

More than likely, the fallout of the war left survivors with varying levels of post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD). Left without any real outlets for the horrific trauma, having to rebuild their communities from the ground up, and feeling grateful about being 'liberated,' the Chamoru people never regained a firm footing on reclaiming their lands and re-establishing pre-war life and culture. In the process of the US rebuilding, vast parcels of native land were occupied and used by the military. Placed in refugee camps for several weeks after the liberation, most families were denied title or return to their ancestral lands. The mishandling and disrespect to which the Chamoru people were subjected by the US government did not help in lessening the effects of war trauma. At the time it probably seemed appropriate because of the gratitude, but in hindsight, the USA government was asserting its colonising power like other world powers before them, and the Chamoru people continued to feel helpless well after the end of WWII.

Although PTSD is a westernised formulation, aspects of the disorder, like intrusion and numbing, are universal (Friedman & Marsella, 1996), similar to the symptoms seen in Chamoru victims. There is no doubt that the indigenous Chamorus suffered PTSD as a result of the suffering and trauma after World War II, but in many ways our experience is also unique, and requires some creative ways to heal and to restore peace and justice.

Bastien, Kremer, Kuokkanen, and Vickers (2003), in their recent book chapter on the impact of colonisation, genocide, and racism in indigenous populations, describe how colonisation results in a complete and total transformation of the indigenous people on a multitude

of levels of the economy, politics, physiological, law, social activity and psychological activity. Their paper is focused mainly on the psychological and the physiological levels. The authors hypothesised four aspects of healing colonial violence that are critical for the indigenous people to become reconstituted and re-established. The first aspect is remembering and acknowledging the destruction by colonisation. A second aspect is a reconnection with ancestral healing methods. The final two ingredients in healing colonial violence are reaching out to others, and the reconstruction of indigenous concepts of community. These four aspects seem to be a good beginning for the indigenous Chamorus, to help reclaim their lives, their culture, and their spirit.

The theme of my paper is that the societal ills of Guam are both directly and indirectly caused in part by the historical, traumatic past and the Chamorus' inability to fully overcome the damage, destruction, and loss of spirit throughout the centuries. In addition, the intergenerational transmission of violence is a real, human phenomenon that more than likely applies to the Guam experience. In the literature, discussions about the transmission of violence through the generations bring about the topic of the Holocaust, and its effects on survivors. Are there similarities between these two distinct and very different cultures of Chamorus and the Jewish people? Can the detailed study of the Holocaust victims help the USA understand the Chamoru colonised experiences?

#### *Brief Holocaust Review*

Danieli (1985) talks about four family categories of Holocaust survivors: 'Families of those who made it, Fighter families, Numb families, and Victim families' (pp. 302–304). This categorisation would probably prove useful in a qualitative study of Chamoru victims and families during the Japanese occupation. He also talks about 'The conspiracy of silence' (p. 298). Many children of those who survived the occupation often state how their parents rarely talked about the war and that any discussion was usually met with resistance. Pier (1998), in her dissertation about community trauma and culturally responsive counselling with Chamoru clients, writes that this is probably a defence against the anxiety. This 'silence' seems very similar to the avoidance cluster of symptom of PTSD. However a detailed study would probably conclude that there is little doubt that some indigenous Chamoru families have 'made it', and continue to do well in today's society (like many Holocaust survivors over the past six decades). The Holocaust literature is mixed regarding the effects of the trauma and the victim's ability to cope. Some families have fared well, while others have not. Some clinicians and researchers have concluded that individual differences, and pre-morbid functioning, are significant factors in the favourable or unfavourable outcomes of the victims and their families. The conflict in the literature as to whether Holocaust victims are more ill or more well than others who have survived WWII, contin-

ues unabated today (van Ijzendoorn, Bakermans-Kranenburg, & Sagi-Schwartz, 2003)

Duran and Duran (1995) in their treatise on Native American post-colonial psychology refer to the 'Soul Wound' as the core suffering of indigenous peoples who have undergone violent and oppressive colonisation for several centuries. They further state that indigenous people develop a self-loathing as they internalise and identify with the oppressor. In some measure, Chamorus may have indeed a measure of self-loathing, or at the very least, a push-pull duality that is both grateful to the US for liberating them from the Japanese, but are as well resentful for the military post-war autocratic rule, second class citizenship, and at that time, conscription of about 63% of the land from the 'grateful' Chamorus. Intellectually, we can understand post-war reorganisation but emotionally, the fallout and our invisibility in the decision-making is very difficult to accept.

### *Recommendations*

The following recommendations is not exhaustive and they are not the only solutions to help reclaim Guam for indigenous Chamorus. However, at the very least they can be used as frameworks for focus groups, discussions, open forums, and research agendas for interested and concerned stakeholders.

### **Apologies, Reconciliation, and Forgiveness**

It is often said that apologies, reconciliation, and forgiveness are essential components in psychological and spiritual healing, resolving anger and restoring peace (Enright, 2001; Halpern & Weinstein, 2004). For the path to peace to begin, colonisers, invaders, and super-powers should publicly apologise for their wrongs. It begins with public acknowledgment and validation of the suffering. Would it be too bold to ask for an apology from Spain and Japan? The US government 'absolved' Japan of their sins. In addition to the apologies, a request for monetary reparations is the next logical step for Guam. Officials have been seeking War Reparations for over 25 years and recently a Congresswoman and Governor of Guam, as well as a contingent of other local public officials testified in Congress about granting monetary reparations or all those indigenous residents who suffered pain, suffering, and death during the Japanese occupation of Guam during WWII. This hearing for the legislation came as a result of recommendations from the Guam War Claims Commission. The USA Congress, with the aid and advice from Guam's Congressional Delegate and the Department of Interior, founded this Commission in 2003. The commission members were appointed in September of 2003 and held their first meeting in October of that year. Their primary mission was to determine if there was some historical inequity in Guam receiving due compensation from WWII when compared to other communities who received compensation. The Commission's main finding

was that Guam and its citizens were not compensated equitably, and so they recommended that legislation be drafted to compensate Guam residents for the suffering and pain they endured under Japanese rule. This chapter in war reparations for Guam is still being written, but if the US Congress grants reparations, it could be a good beginning to the healing of Guam and its citizens.

Worldwide talk of reparations for African-Americans for having been slaves, and for other ethnic groups like the Native American Indians, Latinos, Japanese-Americans for being interred in camps during WWII and for Filipino-Americans, continues today as well as the discussion about the devastating effects of racism and colonisation (Washington, 2005).

On lesser past injustices that were not a matter of life and death, a freelance writer for ESPN (Entertainment and Sports Programming Network) published on its website a story about cockfighting on Guam. The particulars on cockfighting were not noteworthy, but the comments that he made about Guam caused a storm of controversy that actually reached the halls of the USA Congress (Crisostomo, 2005b). The statements in question that have caused a furor by the writer, Mike Ogle, included:

... cockfighting is what locals do to pass the time on this 341-square mile island, ... stuck all by itself in the middle of Pacific. Truly, the middle of nowhere.

Entertainment options are limited.

People here fit into one of two categories. Either they've lived here their entire lives, or they're stationed here by the US military.

Guam, though, is not exactly the upper crust of the population. They say if an American man walks through a particular poor village in Guam, families will offer their daughters.

These statements were considered so offensive that Guam's Congresswoman Madeleine Bordallo solicited support from some of the minority US Congress members. According to Crisostomo's article, Bordallo garnered her colleague's signatures on a letter that requested ESPN to apologise and to remove the story from the website. Ultimately, after three weeks of pressure from Guam citizens from all over the country, ESPN apologised publicly and removed the article completely from their archives. The author still has never responded to any correspondence. This sad episode is further evidence that much more education and enlightenment needs to reach the everyday US resident and the halls of Congress. Acknowledgement, respect, equity, and equality for Guam and the Chamoru people seem to be a pipe dream and still decades away.

### **Effects of Colonialism and Occupation**

Detailed accounts of Guam's occupation during WWII and the effects of colonialism throughout the centuries should be included into US history books. There should

be mention of the proud Chamoru soldiers who fought and died during WWII, the Korean conflict, and the Vietnam War. US history students should be made aware of how, per capita, Guam had more of its soldiers die in the Vietnam War when compared to any other state or US territory. Despite the ambivalence that many Chamorus feel about the US government, Guam's young adults are always ready to serve when called upon by the President of the United States. Today, native Chamoru daughters and sons do proudly serve the US, and their families are very proud of them.

### Exposure Therapy

Work on exposing the secret pain of 60 years ago must continue. Denial and suppression does not serve the pain or its victims well. Ideally, 'exposure' therapy for PTSD is best handled by trained therapists; however, during the 60th anniversary of Guam's liberation in 2004, the local television aired personal stories of the painful and traumatic events of their lives during the Japanese occupation. It seemed cathartic for the elderly speakers, and probably opened the minds and hearts of the younger generation, who have never known the horror of wartime occupation. The stories also reminded the people of Guam of the strength, sacrifice, and resiliency of the Chamoru people. One of the recommendations from the aforementioned War Claims Commission was to set up a foundation to fund scholarships, medical facilities, and other public venues, which could include counselling services for the elderly as they continue to tell their stories and uncover the pain (Pieper, 2004). That would be a worthwhile endeavour.

### Research

Qualitative and quantitative research in defining Chamoru spirituality, epistemology, and pride would be a well-worth endeavour. The research might also address to what degree these variables matter to native Chamorus. What does it mean to be a Chamoru woman, or man in today's complex world? During the course of this research program, self-loathing issues can also be studied to uncover the presence and extent of the self-loathing factor as a factor in maintaining the negative behaviour that Chamorus engage in today. It is reasonable to assume that enhancing pride in culture, identity, and self is essential in reducing self-loathing, thus reducing the overwhelming societal ills that plague our native Chamoru people today. As part of the activities to bolster the Chamoru pride and standing, the government should continue to reclaim lands for homes, fishing, and farming for the native population and to help directly in reclaiming some economic footing for the Chamorus. Blagg (2000) in his handbook for dealing with violence in the indigenous communities in Australia suggests that models of violence intervention should:

- be tailored to meet the needs of specific localities;
- be based on community development principles of empowerment;
- be linked to initiatives on health, alcohol abuse, and similar problems in a holistic manner;
- employ local people, where feasible;
- respect traditional law and customs;
- use a multidisciplinary approach and
- focus on partnership agencies and community groups and add value to existing community structures where possible.

Blagg is clearly suggesting that the indigenous communities empower themselves, and that the balance between the new and the traditional is possible by partnering and using multi-agency resources, within local and federal governments.

One partnering model for collaboration could be the local government and the US Federal government agreeing to use recovered unused military property to establish large-scale schools for indigenous Chamorus, similar to those schools established in Hawaii called the King Kamehameha schools. There are already some smaller schools like the Chief Gadao academy established several years ago on Guam, but the focus and constituency in those smaller schools is narrow and reaches far less people. The Government of Guam should establish Chief Quipuha schools for indigenous Chamorus, named after one of the more important early native chiefs of the 1600s. These schools could teach a balance of relevant, modern skills and traditional skills. These schools could also enhance and develop new programs that promote and support the Chamoru language and the arts of song, dance, painting, sculpture, and other kinds of art forms.

### Celebrate Matrilineal Heritage

Guam should celebrate its matrilineal heritage and continue to foster and protect the women and children who are often the victims of violence and injustice. Continued support and fostering of local indigenous professionals who can direct research, assessments, and treatment of all the societal problems occurring among the native people (Twaddle, Roberto, & Quintanilla, 2002) is necessary. Other programs to develop other health and exercise professionals to balance old and new programs for exercise, activity, as well as working at, publishing, and advertising the indigenous healthy Chamoru diet (pre-fast foods, like McDonald's and canned meats, such as Spam) should be explored and developed.

### Catholic Influences

Catholicism, the legacy of Spanish rule, has probably done more good than bad for the native Chamoru. The

Church has its faults and by all accounts, the Catholic Church has been guilty of their own brand of colonisation and domination. However, by and large, the Church has had a positive effect on the Chamoru people over the last few decades. Many elderly report having positive memories and associations with the Church as they suffered through the experience of World War II. The Church became a central point for Chamorus to gather, pray and celebrate their everyday lives especially during the two-and-a-half years of Japanese occupation during the War. Almost 90% of all churchgoers on Guam are Roman Catholic, and each of the nineteen villages has one, sometimes two parish churches. It seems only logical for the Church to endorse research and programs that seek justice and peace for a people who have been wronged. The Church could lead by example by acknowledging and apologising for the injustices done to the native Chamorus all in the name of the Roman Catholic Church and Christianity.

### Chamoru Peace Summit

Plans for a Chamoru Peace Summit should begin to address the crisis in our community where violence, drug use, crime, suicide, and cultural disintegration continue to plague the Chamoru family. US military personnel and other Federal officials should be invited to observe and participate. Speakers from other indigenous populations should be invited to talk about their own experiences of colonialism and racism and how they have tried to overcome the effects in today's modern world. We need to reverse the trend of complacency, passivity, victimisation, and fatalism. Although this approach sounds very individualistic and westernised, if done correctly and sensitively it can ensure healthier generations of Chamorus: mentally, physiologically, and spiritually.

### Conclusion

Peace in our world and in our time has been elusive. War is kill or be killed. Violence and hatred begets violence and hatred. What is certain is that for this century and for this generation, the conditions and criteria for peace in the 'war on terror' seem to be muddled and blurry, unlike the peace of the World Wars of the last century. Peace in the near future really seems elusive, and mostly unattainable. For those at home, far away from the 'war on terror,' a different battle is being waged. There is violence and hatred in our homes. There are all forms of abuse. Mistrust and disrespect are the rule rather than the exception and for many of the homes and families, peace also seems elusive and unattainable.

Many recent Hollywood movies, television programs and news and feature writers continue to characterise Guam as some remote outpost in the Pacific where there are few people, if any; where nobody in their right mind would be; and where outcasts are banished. In much of

the US consciousness, Guam is invisible, insignificant and inconsequential, except as a strategic military base and a joke on the screen. The history is not a joke. The violence and trauma are not funny.

The centuries cannot be undone obviously, and Chamorus must move progressively into this new century because the past is gone and the future remains uncertain. When the people of Guam finally feel respected, and acknowledged, and when the people in power have truly listened, then the healing of centuries of suffering can continue unfettered. The Chamoru people and the Chamoru spirit, can truly be free.

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