

EDITORIAL

The Melanesian Association of Theological Schools has appointed the faculty of the Christian Leaders' Training College to be editors of this Journal. Many thanks are extended to Revd Christopher Garland of Newton College, who has ably acted as editor, over a number of years. Thanks, also, to Revd Dr Wesley Kigasung, and the staff of Martin Luther Seminary, who have previously managed subscriptions to this Journal.

I must apologise for the lateness in production of this issue of the Journal. The cover date retains the intended publication schedule.

This issue contains the papers presented at two conferences of the Melanesian Association of Theological Schools in 1994. The first conference was the MATS Study Institute, which had the theme of "Pastoral Care in the Theological Training Context". The second conference was the MATS Student Conference, which had the theme of "Renewal in Theological Schools in Melanesia". The reader needs to understand the context to make full sense of the papers.

The articles present two areas of great importance to theological colleges, and local churches, alike. They are areas, which tend to be more the forté of local churches. However, most theological colleges have a clear holistic concern for the student. Where students, upon graduation, are destined for church leadership, there must be spiritual and psychological maturity, as well as knowledge of the Bible and ministry.

The theological college, to some extent, is a "hot house", exerting great pressure on students, in many areas of their lives. These include living conditions, cultural differences, study pressures, challenges to old ways of thinking, and so on. Although there are some casualties, the pressure that theological colleges exert on students is necessary for their growth, and for the assessment of their suitability to graduate and minister.

Yet, how well equipped are theological colleges to address the full needs of students? The focus of the college tends to be academic teaching. Often there is not the time to deal with deep pastoral problems, because the programme must go on. Spirituality can take second place to the requirements of the curriculum.

The answer, I think, is not so much in the programmes, but in the personnel. The teachers, through their relationship with Christ, can make any subject a spiritual experience. Teachers, who have a love for people, will provide pastoral support, whatever the programme requires. Renewal in students' lives will result from college staff and leaders, who are praying, and living out a life of worship to God.

In preparing leaders for the church, the theological colleges should be providing a model of pastoral care and renewal that is needed in churches in Melanesia. They should show the way ahead.

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