

## EDITORIAL

In the first article, Revd Ako Arua and Daniel John Eka present land disputes as the major cause of tribal fighting in Melanesia. The question they ask is, “What role should Christians play in tribal fights?” After looking at factors involved in tribal fights, and relevant teachings from scripture, they answer the question, with six possible alternatives that could be used, when land disputes occur.

What makes a youth program in Melanesia successful? Emmanuel Kauna answers this question in his article, “Spiritual Growth of Melanesian Youth: a Case Study”. Based on original research among the youth at Waigani United church in Port Moresby, Papua New Guinea, he concludes that goal-focused leadership, people-oriented programs, and solid church support and commitment are key ingredients.

Tim Schlatter, in his article “The Biblical Concept of Sin, Relative to Animistic Worldview (Part 2 of 2)”, provides the last three chapters of his article. The first three chapters were published in the last Journal (MJT 18-1). In it, he explored the theology of sin, from a scriptural perspective, and contrasted the way animist groups conceptualise sin, with the view of scripture.

In chapter 4, Tim provides an overview of translation theory. Seeking functional equivalence, and abandoning literal woodenness, makes accurate communication possible, especially in cultural situations, where the receptor’s worldview and language greatly differ from that of the source text. Several translational considerations are discussed, relative to establishing key religious-term equivalents within these cultures – multiple-sense lexical items, concordance, semantic domain analysis, and a variety of non-literal solutions.

Chapter 5 presents a specific solution for communicating “sin” in the translation of Tabo scriptures. After considering several

alternative possibilities, among them, a choice for rendering ἄμαρτία (the most-generic Greek word) is made. Then, for each of ἄμαρτία's 10 New Testament synonyms, the parameters of meaning for the primary sense of each synonym is determined, thus distinguishing them from each other. For the resultant discrete clusters of meaning, appropriate Tabo expressions are suggested, bearing in mind the discussion of biblical theology, anthropology, and translation theory, from the preceding chapters.

Chapter 6 concludes the article, by expanding the decisions reached for translating ἄμαρτία in Tabo to translation in general. The hope is expressed that translators, working in animistic settings, will be careful to understand exactly how the people, they work among, understand (or potentially misunderstand) biblical references to sin. Semantic domains of any traditional religious terms must be determined before simply adopting them as suitable substitutes for biblical counterparts. If a certain receptor language word has too wide a range of meaning, it may be inappropriate to use alone, especially if it carries theological overtones that directly contradict the Christian message.

In the last article, Penuel Idusulia describes the types of spirits encountered in the area of North Malaita, in the Solomon Islands. His article begins with a personal encounter with a spirit, and ends with recommendations from God's Word to churches in Melanesia. It is an article, written by a Melanesian Christian to Melanesian Christians. An easy, but thought-provoking, article to read.

Not everyone will agree with the conclusions reached by the authors. However, we hope that, as you wrestle with the issues, the thoughts of the authors will help you to grow in your understanding of God's Word, and what it may say to you and your culture.

Doug Hanson.