

## EDITORIAL

In the first article, James Yugari asks penetrating questions of the church in Melanesia. Too often, the traditional big-man model, as opposed to the biblical servant-leader model, determines church leadership. James focuses on his own Helahuli tribe of the Southern Highlands Province of Papua New Guinea. He draws relevant comparisons between the two models, and makes specific recommendations to Helahuli churches. The article offers excellent insight for those interested in church leadership in Melanesian contexts.

In the second article, Daniel Johnson takes a critical look at the reincarnation beliefs of the Butonese people of Indonesia. The Butonese have an almost unique belief in reincarnation among Muslims. Daniel argues that this belief came from Hinduism, but focuses more on identifying ancestors. He concludes that, to effectively share the gospel with Butonese, one must understand this “complex of beliefs”, and clearly teach the reality of resurrection faith. Only then will Butonese truly understand eternal life.

Next, Alexander Henning argues for equality between men and women in Melanesia. Through a careful exegesis of Gen 2:18-25, he concludes that the order of creation does not establish a hierarchical order between man and woman. Rather, the focus of the passage is that man and woman share the same nature. Alexander shows how this misunderstanding exhibits itself in Melanesian culture, and he challenges Melanesians to move towards more gender equality in their lives and customs.

David Thiele comments on an article about the Antichrist, published in volume 19-1 of this journal. He applauds the author, Hane Kila, for her clear presentation, but counter-argues her on two points. First, he says that the Antichrist should be understood as a movement, rather than a person. Second, the 42 months should be taken qualitatively rather than quantitatively. He rightfully concludes that all should study eschatology, because it forces one to ask questions such as, “How then should I live?”, “Who shall I worship?”, and “What will be my God?”

Francis Poye, from the Dinga tribe in Chimbu Province of Papua New Guinea, explores his people's historical worship of the sun god *Yanigelwa*, and the factors that led to syncretism in Dinga churches today. After giving detailed examples of how the Dinga people worshipped the sun god, he critically examines the introduction of the gospel, and its resultant syncretism, and concludes with specific recommendations for the Dinga church. The article shows how difficult it can be to avoid syncretism in some cultures.

Finally, in "Articles and Books Relevant to Melanesia", Daniel Stollenwerk writes a thorough review of *Culture and Progress: The Melanesian Philosophy of Land and Development in Papua New Guinea*, Nancy Sullivan, ed., Madang PNG: Divine Word University Press, 2002. I'll let Daniel's concluding words speak for themselves: "*Culture and Progress* remains a highly-impressive – even daring – gathering of contemporary PNG thinkers, confronting perhaps the most crucial and contentious issue in Papua New Guinea today."

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

Doug Hanson.