

## EDITORIAL

The articles in this journal address a number of cultural and theological issues facing Papua New Guinea and the Melanesian church today.

Peter Hinawai looks at the national elections, as a test case for Papua New Guineans to show their allegiance to God and His kingdom. Is God interested in politics of a country? He certainly is. However, unlike us, He is not for any person, clan, or party. What He requires from us is love for His truth, peace, and harmony to rule in the land. Against the background of bribery and multiple voting, Peter encourages the people of Papua New Guinea to turn to God. He encourages them to use their God-given right of freedom of choice, and live responsibly, in order to cultivate a mature faith that gives room to peace and holiness in the development of the nation.

Francis Kairiru, in his article on the Papua New Guinea forest, portrays the stark reality of a few elite exploiting the forest, through logging. According to Francis, logging itself is not bad; rather, human sinfulness makes it bad. The government has a part to play when logging companies do not correctly share the profits with the rightful owners. Francis appeals to the pastoral work of the church to defend the just and right in environmental matters as they affect lives of many people in the country.

Markus Muntwiler examines the differences between the values and the culture of The Salvation Army and those of Papua New Guineans. He suggests that, for The Salvation Army to be effective, it should find new ways of communicating ownership of property. Markus believes that the real issue is not that of property and property rights, but of attitudes towards values and ministry. According to Markus, we should see the sharing of material things as an opportunity for relationships, and sharing of the gospel.

David Thiele examines the question of the millennium in the light of pre-, post-, and a-millennial schools of belief. He believes that, though the millennium is a question of contention, we should not ignore it. We should

study the millennium in its literal setting, as portrayed in Rev 20, in the denouement of the drama of the struggle between the church and Satan. The uniqueness of Rev 20 should inspire us to look toward the Christian hope, and the resurrection of those who die in Christ.

Wayne Kendi focuses on the doctrine of justification, and its central place in the life of the church. He argues that the Melanesian church, and its individual Christians, need a proper understanding of the doctrine of justification, in order to grow into maturity. Wayne highlights the role that fear can play in Melanesian life: the fear of spiritual beings, and the fear of life after death. He emphasises that a correct “understanding of justification impacts these fears, and dispels much of the confusion and mystery that fuels these fears, through the knowledge it brings concerning God’s sovereignty, His eschatological plans, and eternal security”.

Not everyone will agree with the conclusions reached by the authors. However, we hope that, as you grapple with the issues, the thoughts of the authors will help you grow in your understanding of what God’s word says to your life and culture.

Doug Hanson.