

EDITORIAL

This volume covers a variety of topics related to Melanesia: the *wantok* system, a scrutiny of a traditional high-god in Papua New Guinea, and an exploration of eschatological frameworks for understanding scripture. Each topic, in its own way, adds to the ongoing discussion of applying God's Word in a Melanesian context.

In the first article, Paliama compares the *wantok* system, in both its traditional and contemporary expressions. Since the *wantok* system affects every sector of society, including churches, he uses the South Sea Evangelical church (SSEC) as a case study to see how its spiritual and physical development is affected by the *wantok* system. Paliama delves into the issues of leadership, evangelism, sin, ministry appointments, discipleship, and favouritism, concluding the article with recommendations for the church today.

In the next article, Auwi seeks to convince the current generation of Yuna people of Papua New Guinea that their traditional high-spirit, *Hone Hewa Tawalipa*, was the God of the Bible. Auwi argues that today's Yuna people cannot be separated from the past, because the past is their identity, where they came from, and it forms part of what they will be in the future. Building on this belief, Auwi presents a case for the Yuna people of Papua New Guinea to follow the God of the Bible, without turning their back on their traditional history.

In the final article, Ma'afu offers recommendations for implementing Pacific contextual theology. Firstly, he encourages theologians of the Pacific to stop ignoring the eschatological element of the gospel in their contextualisation efforts. Secondly, he argues that Pacific history should be interpreted in light of God's redemptive plan. Thirdly, people of the Pacific today should understand they are living in the last days, which is a call for living for Christ. Fourthly, valid eschatological frameworks, rather than downplaying the applicability of the Bible's teachings for believers

today, should reinforce the contemporary relevance of God's Word for believers of every time.

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.