

GUEST EDITORIAL

This volume covers two topics of relevance to Melanesia, and one that is relevant to Christians in the Pacific. Duli Asi looks at the effects of HIV/AIDS on Papua New Guinea (PNG) and at the risky behaviour of indigenous youth in Australia, providing insights to dealing with the needs of PNG. Ma'afu Palu describes "Pacific Theology", and how it is having a strong impact on the theology of Christianity in the Pacific. Finally, Doug Hanson reviews lessons for today from the challenges Christianity has faced in Papua New Guinea.

In the first article, Duli Asi takes a detailed look at the question of HIV/AIDS. The HIV/AIDS pandemic is having a huge impact on the lives of people in PNG. He reviews the scope of programs and treatments available in PNG, and then relates those to similar programs and treatments being adopted by other countries around the world. He then reviews the effectiveness of those programs and treatments. He also reviews those countries, which have strong HIV/AIDS programs, and compares their results with countries, which have no HIV/AIDS programs. From these reviews, he then draws conclusions for more effective HIV/AIDS programs and treatments for PNG. He also raises the cultural issues, which need to be addressed, for HIV/AIDS programs and treatments to work effectively in PNG.

Duli's second article discusses the question of the risky behaviour of indigenous youth in Australia. The questions raised in his article deal with similar issues among young people in Melanesia. The measures adopted in Australia to deal with the risky behaviour of indigenous youth can give guidance to those who are grappling with similar problems among the youth in PNG

Ma'afu Palu examines the theology of Dr Sione 'Amanaki Havea of Tonga, who he regards as the architect of Pacific Theology, which is aimed at making Christianity more Pacific in its theological outlook. Through essays in the *Pacific Journal of Theology*, and in other publications, Dr Havea has sought to promote a Pacific Theology, which

he labelled as the “theology of the coconut, the theology of *kava*, Christ the perfect pig, the Pacific Christ”, as well as promoting contextualised worship practice. However, Ma’afu, in summarising the impact of Pacific Theology, believes that, with the abandonment of the scriptures as authoritative in theological reconstruction, the outworking of Christianity in the Pacific is a form of cultural holiness, rather than scriptural holiness.

Doug Hanson reviews lessons for today from the challenges Christianity has faced in Papua New Guinea. While Papua New Guinea is called a Christian nation, the level of Christianity for many people is not very deep. Much of this can be traced back to the evangelisation of various people groups, and how well people were disciplined, in the light of the continuing influence of primal religion upon the people’s beliefs. In his article, is the quote, “Evangelicals are now belatedly recognising the fact that the process of communicating the gospel cannot be isolated from either the culture of the missionary, or that of the hearers.”

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.

Finally, it has been decided to move to an annual online version of the Journal from 2013, which will be available, free of charge, on the Christian Leaders’ Training College website – www.cltc.ac.pg – and click on the “Melanesian Journal of Theology” panel. All previous issues of the Journal are already on that website. Those, who have paid subscriptions for next year, will have their subscriptions refunded.

Robyne Hobson,
Guest Editor.