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Report on MATS 2013

Scott Charlesworth

**Opening Address of the MATS Conference,
June 25-28, 2013, at Kefamo Conference Centre,
Goroka PNG**

Rudolf Lies

***Wantok Jisas: Reading Matthew's Story of the
Canaanite Woman (15:21-28) in a Melanesian Context***

John Aranda Cabrido

**A Biblical Response to Divination in the Churches
Among the Akey People on the Island of Santo in Vanuatu**

Lionel Tom

**The Resurgence of Witchcraft and Sorcery Practices
in the Gula'ala Society of the Malaita Province,
Solomon Islands: a Theological Response**

Allan Alafa Sanga

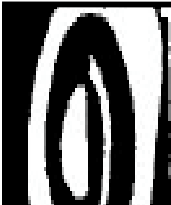
Empowering Laity

Timothy Kwara

Power of Confessing Sin in Kindred Spirit

Duli Asi

Journal of the Melanesian Association of Theological Schools



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Some back issues are available in print.

For those unable to access the internet, a printed and stapled copy of the MJT PDF file can be provided, for a nominal fee to cover printing and mailing costs. Please contact CLTC at one of the addresses below.

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ADDRESS:

Melanesian Journal of Theology

PO Box 382

Mt Hagen WHP

Papua New Guinea

Email: graduate_studies@cltc.ac.pg

Phone: (675) 276-5028

MELANESIAN JOURNAL OF THEOLOGY

Journal of the Melanesian Association of Theological Schools

The *Melanesian Journal of Theology* aims to stimulate the writing of theology in Melanesia. It is an organ for the regular discussion of theological topics at scholarly level by staff and students of the member schools of the Melanesian Association of Theological Schools (MATS), though contributions from non-members and non-Melanesians are welcome.

The *Melanesian Journal of Theology* is committed to the dialogue of Christian faith within Melanesian cultures. The Editorial Team will consider for publication all manuscripts of scholarly standard on matters of concern to Melanesian Christians and of general theological interest.

The opinions expressed in the articles are those of the authors and do not necessarily represent the views of the Editor, Assistant Editor, or the member colleges of MATS. All articles have been edited to meet the requirements of the journal. The journal is published semi-annually, normally in April and October. Articles may be submitted to the Editor at any time for consideration.

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EDITORIAL

The Melanesian Association of the Theological Schools (MATS) held its biennial meeting in Goroka, Papua New Guinea, in 2013. This volume of the *Melanesian Journal of Theology* presents papers read at the conference.

Scott Charlesworth, President of MATS, begins by providing an informative overview of the conference to set the stage for the subsequent articles. Rudolf Lies, Administrator of the Melanesian Institute, discusses MATS role in the bigger picture of theological education in the South Pacific. It is insightful read, providing thoughts on the future of research and publications in Melanesia. John Cabrido uses a narrative-critical and socio-cultural reading of Matthew 15:21-28, the story of the Canaanite women, towards contextualizing Jesus for the Melanesian culture. He analyses the story's setting, plot, and characterisation, drawing attention to elements that may have particular interest for the Melanesian reader.

The next two articles begin by highlighting the resurgence of traditional practices in Melanesia. Lionel Tom expresses concern about the resurgence of divination among Christians in Vanuatu, while Allan has the some concern about sorcery in the Solomon Islands. Both wrestle with the issues from an emic, yet biblical perspective, eventuating in recommendations for Melanesian churches today. Timothy Kwara, writing with the United Church in mind, promotes the empowering of laity so that the church can more effectively fulfil its Christian charge in Melanesia. He builds his argument from Scripture, but relates it to the Melanesian context, to provide a more comprehensive argument for his case. Our last article, by Duli Asi, addresses a subject that needs more attention in Melanesian, that of counselling. Duli's heart is in helping Melanesian pastors become effective counsellors, and his article addresses an aspect that is challenging in the Melanesian context: confession of sin.

We hope that 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