

EDITORIAL

In the first article, Ossie Fountain sets out to answer the questions: To what extent are Bible Schools in Melanesia a foreign import? Do they meet the local needs of Melanesian churches today? In what areas do they need local adaptation? Although he focuses on the Christian Brethren church (CBC) Bible Schools, his analysis and conclusions are applicable to all Bible Schools in Melanesia. Part one, published in this volume, will be followed by parts two, three, and four in future volumes.

“How can animal spirits, dwelling inside a person, go out at night, and do all sorts of evil things?” Jacob Uri addresses the challenging issue of *sanguma*. In his article, he defines *sanguma*, gives case studies supporting its reality, and challenges the Melanesian church to address the issue. Jacob argues that Melanesian believers need to accept the reality of *sanguma*, not as Westerners do, who think of *sanguma* as merely superstitions of darkened, heathen minds. He emphatically states the church is empowered to confront *sanguma*, and should not shirk its responsibility.

Dr Bob Fergie presents the conclusions of his research into church/government relations in Papua New Guinea. He stresses that some evangelicals, throughout the history of the church in PNG, have positioned themselves at the forefront of socio-political change, because of their commitment to Jesus, and the missionary proclamation of His gospel. Bob argues that this commitment to “integral human development” was consistent with Melanesian spirituality. Based on this, he offers us a challenge for the future: “If nothing else, the challenge of this study, for evangelicals, is to maintain pro-active, prayerful, socio-political engagement.”

Captain Owen Budden argues for holiness in ethics in the 21st century. He draws a parallel between the distinctiveness of each Papua New Guinea village, and how God has set believers apart to live holy lives. Owen challenges believers to live holy lives in three ways: in obedience, in non-conformity, in confidence. He reasons that we should be encouraged to live

holy lives, because of God's desire for holiness in the nation of Israel, and in examples from the life of Christ.

In his article, "What Should the Melanesian Church of the Future Be Like?", Amos Leana takes a discerning look at the Melanesian church. After giving a history of the church in Papua New Guinea, Amos presents insightful strengths and weaknesses of the Papua New Guinean church today. Amos concludes with four recommendations for the future: the first being that the church should be one. "Its oneness demonstrates the unity of all tribes, languages, and cultures, brought under the Lordship of Christ, while its holiness is seen in its being *called out* and *set apart* among Melanesian societies."

Eschatology, the study of future events, is an area where teaching, grounded in the Word, is needed in Papua New Guinea. Cultists often take advantage of Melanesians' lack of understanding in this area to promote their beliefs. In the final article, Hane Kila focuses on the antichrist. She begins her article with the tantalising statement, "When I first heard about the antichrist, I had a sense of great mysteriousness associated with it, and I am sure that most people will have this same thinking."

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.