

EDITORIAL

This volume offers a variety of topics, related to Christian theology in Melanesia: contextualisation of a Solomon Islands' feast, the history of the Catholic church in the highlands of Papua New Guinea, and lessons for the Melanesian church regarding suffering in missions. Each topic, in its own way, adds to the on-going discussion of applying God's Word in a Melanesian context.

Cephas Kuba, a Solomon Islander, compares Kabu feasting in his community with biblical feasts, analysing the contributions the Kabu feast makes to the Mbahomean community, and making recommendations to the South Seas Evangelical churches (SSEC) about whether the Christian community should participate in this cultural celebration. Other church leaders could employ the method the author uses in his analysis, as they evaluate cultural festivities in their own communities.

Zdzislaw Kruczek provides a history of Catholic missions in the Papua New Guinea Highlands. Beginning in 1934, with the entry of Divine Word missionaries into the central highlands of Papua New Guinea, Zdzislaw highlights events in the ensuing 72 years of missionary endeavours. He concludes the article by looking to the future, stating that there are three priorities: family, education, and catechesis, together with proper care being taking of everybody in the Archdiocese.

Continuing in the vein of the history of the Catholic church in Papua New Guinea, Jan Walkusz looks at Zdzislaw Kruczek's academic achievements, from the "typologico-essential" perspective, and probes his historical assessment of the church in PNG. As part of his synopsis, Jan discusses Zdzislaw's dissertation, written in Polish, entitled *Catholic Mission in the Mt Hagen Archdiocese in Papua New Guinea 1934-1984*, which he completed in May, 2006, at the Catholic University of Lublin, Poland.

Jan's and Zdzislaw's articles are a valuable source of information for anyone interested in the history of the Catholic church in the highlands of Papua New Guinea.

Amos Leana turns our attention to suffering in missions, acknowledging that Christian life and missions are more than power and victory – they include suffering. Suffering exists, because we live in a fallen world. Due to original sin, man and nature are fallen. Amos explores the lives of Abraham, Moses, Jeremiah, Jesus, and Paul and finds four common themes of suffering: suffering glorifies God, God shares in our suffering, believers grow spiritually through suffering, and there is hope in suffering. His message to the Melanesian church is clear: suffering is not optional in missions. Will the Melanesian church, one that is slowly becoming a missionary-sending church, preach this truth?

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.