

EDITORIAL

This volume presents a variety of topics related to Christian theology in the South Pacific: spirituality, prosperity, contextualisation, and pre-Christian religion.

In the first article, Gideon argues that the South Sea Evangelical church (SSEC) was spiritually vibrant at its founding, but now lacks in spiritual maturity, as evidenced by the recent Kingdom and Maeliau movements. Gideon believes there are a number of factors that have led to the present status, which can be remedied by contextually-relevant biblical teaching.

Rodney takes a critical look at the five laws of prosperity gospel: blessing, sowing, and reaping, faith, the proclaimed word, and the expiatory work of Christ. After summarising traditional cultural beliefs about prosperity, he warns that following the prosperity gospel movement can lead to a return to cultic beliefs.

Seik creatively relates the importance of coastal beacons, the Gabagaba mountain range, and the lone *Magi* tree to Christ, showing how Christ meets Gabagaba villagers' needs. Seik reveals such traditional practices of hanging smoked human bodies on the *Magi* tree, and of looking for two dancing women on the mountains as a sign of sailor safety.

In the final article, Ma'afu ponders if Tongans, before the missionaries came, could be considered Christians. His answer is a definite "no". Ma'afu notes a refreshing return in Tonga to the evangelical roots of the early missionaries.

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.