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**The Triangle of *Ghora* Killing in Rigo Inland  
in the Central Province of Papua New Guinea:  
a Biblical Response**

Thomas Davai Jr.

**Responding to Contemporary Issues:  
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**Helping Youth of the Ghatapa Association  
of the South Sea Evangelical Church  
Understand their Familial Identity in Christ  
in the Midst of Changes Brought on by Globalisation**

Celestial Prasad Yejerla

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## EDITORIAL

Long-term readers of the *Melanesian Journal of Theology* will notice some changes in this latest issue. Apart from formatting changes, most of the articles (see the final paragraph below on so-called “summary articles”) in both numbers of the journal published in 2016 will have gone through a process of anonymous peer review. The reasons for moving to a peer-review process are two-fold: to improve the academic quality of articles published in the journal; and to familiarise faculty members of theological schools in Melanesia (and the wider Pacific) with the usual process of scholarly publication. As theological faculty become research active, the hope is that this will contribute in turn to improvements in theological education and its end product, ministers of the gospel. This goal should not, however, be interpreted in an exclusive sense. The journal welcomes article submissions from any person/s with an interest in Melanesia, its churches, and people.

In this issue Thomas Davai Jr. examines what he terms the “triangle of *ghora* killing” in the Rigo inland of the Central Province of Papua New Guinea. After noting that attitudes towards sorcery killing in PNG are ambivalent, he argues that satanic power lies behind all sorcery, regardless of whether it has evil or good intentions or outcomes. Davai bases his argument on an analysis of select biblical data, including observed similarities between the characteristics of demons in the Bible and those of *ghoras* in the Rigo inland. In light of this, he finds that his church’s response to sorcery has moderated and urges a return to the strong advocacy of the past. While the focus is quite narrow in that it is restricted to the Rigo inland, the observations made in the article should have wider applicability to similar situations in other parts of PNG.

In the second article Ma’afu Palu sets out to build a theological foundation for a gospel-centred contextualisation model which can be used to address contemporary issues in Melanesia and the wider Pacific. He argues that hearing the Bible as the voice of God is essential to a gospel response by Pacific theologians and, in the process, rejects all other approaches to biblical interpretation. For Palu, the sinful human heart is the source of all contemporary problems and, therefore, the cross of Jesus Christ is the solution. A second crucial point of departure is the understanding that Pacific cultures are “gentile” and, therefore, unable to access the blessings promised

to Israel. Drawing on the ideas of a number of modern theologians and biblical scholars, Palu asserts that if the peoples of the Pacific are to be partakers of the promises to Israel, they must enter the strange new world of the Bible by faith in Jesus Christ and allow it to re-describe and re-configure the realities of their lives.

Although my own contribution approaches the biblical text from a different perspective, it arrives at a similar conclusion in asking whether the churches of Melanesia are willing to allow the counter-cultural teaching of Jesus to inform their ministry practice and theological education. From the standpoint of ancient Mediterranean culture, the Sermon on the Mount contains a profound critique of the defining principles of honour-shame cultures. The unequivocal demands of culture – the obligatory pursuit and defence of honour and the overriding need to avoid shame at any cost – are to be entirely renounced. Thus, Jesus issues an extraordinary challenge to what I have termed “cultural Christianity” in Melanesia.

Finally, while the journal will no longer be publishing complete master’s theses (because most are far too long and contain a lot of repetition and/or reiteration), it will continue to make available student research in summary form. Students will be asked to identify the key components of their argument and to edit and, where necessary, rewrite their thesis so that the published “summary article” can stand on its own as a piece of work and not require the reader of the journal to access the thesis itself. This is a valuable exercise that will help recent graduates to understand, at least to some extent, what is involved in writing a journal article. Since the thesis on which each summary article is based will have gone through an academic examination process, the resultant “article” will not have been peer reviewed. Celestial Prasad Yejerla’s offering is the first of these summary articles which will be published in a separate section in the back of each issue.

Scott D. Charlesworth  
Editor