

Editorial: The Integrity of Creation

Revd Christopher Garland, Editor

Most of the articles in this issue were given as papers at the Study Institute of the Melanesian Association of Theological Schools on “The Integrity of Creation”, held on September 12 and 13, 1990. At the Study Institute we welcomed new members to MATS, and we were very glad to have a paper from one of the Seventh-day Adventist representatives, who were with us for the first time.

There was a lively discussion throughout the Study Institute, which resulted in the statement on the integrity of creation, which is also included in this issue. Participants at the Institute had wished to combine a stress upon our responsible stewardship for God’s creation with an offer of a personal relationship with Christ. There was also discussion on how God is related to His creation. Some thought that talk of God’s indwelling in creation might be misunderstood as pantheism. Others argued that the Word had dwelt among us in Jesus Christ, and, so we can talk of His continuing indwelling presence among us by the Holy Spirit. By His dwelling among us, God is not enclosed within any of His creatures, yet He is involved with them all, so that anything we do for the least of God’s creatures we do for Christ (see Matt 25:40). God’s direct care for every creature gives us the greatest reason to care for them all.

During the Study Institute, we were glad to be given a description from the Melanesian Environmental Foundation, which is supported by the Melanesian Council of Churches, of the work it is doing to raise consciousness on environmental issues at a grassroots level, particularly through its video, *Brukim Bus*.

As the Study Institute continued, we became more and more aware that there were no women taking part, and that we were, therefore, unable to make first-hand use of the contribution that feminist theology is making to concern for the integrity of creation. In Papua New Guinea, women do much of the gardening, and, so, are in close touch with the earth. They have many valuable skills as mediators, and so can help in the human task of mediation between God and nature. A woman would be able to speak much better about the

contribution of women to ecological theology, and we must ensure that they are in a position to do so in the future.

The Study Institute was followed by the Annual General Meeting of MATS, at which Joshua Daimoi, Principal of the Christian Leaders' Training College, was elected as chairman of MATS, with Vasi Gadiki, Principal of Rarongo Seminary, as vice-chairman. Kasek Kautil agreed to remain secretary-treasurer for one more year. Dick Avi, our out-going president will act as representative of MATS at the Canberra Assembly of the World Council of Churches in February, 1991. There were several changes to the editorial board of this Journal, and we hope that, among other things, this will lead to an improvement in the range of contributors to the book reviews.

We heard at the AGM that plans are well in hand for the appointment of a lecturer in theology at the University of Papua New Guinea, and we hope that, by the time this issue is published, his name should be known.

This issue reaches you late because the first issue of the typescript went missing after being posted. It was later learned that there was a mail robbery the day after the typescript was posted, so it may be assumed that it was stolen then.