

Editorial: Christ, Culture and Mission

WE COMMENCE OUR publication for 2011 with a good summary of the issues related to 'Christ and Culture' presented by Thomas Johnson, but with a particular angle which should prove to be helpful to our readers—the mission of the church; as he puts it: 'We must be converted from the world, so that our identity, values, beliefs and priorities are not those of this world. We must be converted back to the world, knowing that God has called and sent us to serve the Word in the world.'

This sets the theme for other articles. Jim Harries, for example, explains how differing cultural assumptions affect the way an African may interpret western scientific talk and the bearing this has on communicating the gospel and theological understanding. In West Africa, the concept of regeneration (being 'born again') has been a prominent feature of recent Christian experience, but, as Abraham Akrong shows, the familiar biblical model has been seen in a variety of different ways, not all of which are helpful or fruitful.

Moving across to South America, Eloy Nolivos presents a situation where two cultures—the original evangelical missionaries and the newly emerging local church—have differed in their understanding of Scripture and theology generally; now the task before local people as the church begins to develop its own identity is 'to gladly move away from their inheritance and espouse their own contextual hermeneutic', which is a task that calls for considerable sensitivity and grace.

The following articles move in other, though related directions. The

General Editor, Thomas Schirrmacher, presents an overview of Christianity and democracy, showing how biblical perspectives bear on Christians in the wider culture of organized society.

Then we have a perceptive paper on the 'relational mandate' of theological education by Hwa Yung, with a call 'to move away from the autonomous individualism of modernity and to recover the proper Christian understanding of the human person as an individual-in-community'.

Many cultures have no issue with this concept, at least within local and even regional terms, but in a world fraught with tension, it is likely to be under threat. So Christians with a clear understanding and experience of the diverse Kingdom of God, have a contribution to make to human welfare and this is as much a part of their mission as anything else.

We are pleased to have a response to an earlier paper (pages 78-80) and regret to advise of an error in another (see below)

Thomas Schirrmacher, General Editor
David Parker, Executive Editor

Erratum: ERT (2010) 34:3, page 249. The first paragraph should read: Christians should not 'bracket' their Christianity, as their moral and religious convictions are constitutive of their identity and the principal grounds on which they enter political deliberations and make political choices.

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