

Editorial: Divine Affectivity and Mission

WE COMMENCE THIS issue with a fascinating article on how the affectivity of God impacts mission. As the author, Karen Shaw (Lebanon) says, 'Emotions matter because God's revelation comes with great emotion and is meant to elicit strong affective responses.' She adds, 'The affective is a vital aspect of human personality and culture, and a necessary agent in the experience of salvation and spiritual maturity.' Aspects covered in this detailed biblical study include revelation, theological anthropology, soteriology, and pneumatology, and it concludes with reflections on how an affective theology might work out in the practice of mission.

In an equally intriguing study, Craig Ott (USA) describes how the logic of games can be applied to the contextualization of scripture. Referring to the way aims and rules in a game do not change but strategies do, depending on the way the game plays out, he shows how biblical passages refer to the objectives of God's mission and how there are flexible strategies for adapting the teaching and models of Scripture in a local context.

Moving on from here to the moral authority of Scripture, Patrick Nullens (Belgium) shows how love precedes true knowing and therefore finds the hermeneutics of love as the way to understanding the ethical imperatives of the Bible, especially in a covenantal context.

For one way in which this might work out, we turn again to the Levant and learn from Robert Hamd how, since the 19th century, Reformed mis-

sionaries focused on vigorous work among the poor, building schools and hospitals, as a part of their ultimate task, the proclamation of the gospel. However, since those days, there has been a divide between these two aspects of mission. Hamd's report on a vital present day ministry documents a deliberate attempt to recover the earlier holistic approach.

For our next two articles we turn to the 'Consultation on Scripture: Its Authority, Meaning and Mission in the Asian Context', sponsored by the Asia Theological Association in June, 2012. Athena Gorospe (Philippines) presented a paper on 'Evangelicals and the Environment' in which she advocates the 'theology of life' as a more biblically satisfactory and contextually helpful approach than the commonly used theme of stewardship, which she argues is 'limited in its usefulness' and restricted in its appeal. Another paper at that conference was contributed by Christof Sauer (South Africa) in which he outlines the comprehensive biblical scope of a statement on persecution and martyrdom from an earlier conference as a welcome example of 'globalizing theology'.

We conclude with an article length review by our General Editor of a voluminous study of the early history of the Evangelical Alliance and especially its remarkable advocacy of religious freedom. Reference to this global body is a fitting conclusion to an issue with remarkable insights from around the world.

Thomas Schirmacher, General Editor
David Parker, Executive Editor

Contents

THEME: Divine Affectivity and Mission

Editorial
page 195

Divine Heartbeats and Human Echoes: A Theology of Affectivity
and Implications for Mission

KAREN L.H. SHAW
page 196

Contextualization, the Bible, and Games

CRAIG OTT
page 210

The moral authority of Scripture and the hermeneutics of love

PATRICK NULLENS
page 227

Working with the Poor as a Means for Demonstrating the Good
News in a Middle East Context

ROBERT HAMD
page 241

Evangelicals and the Environment: Going Beyond Stewardship

ATHENA E. GOROSPE
page 256

Theology of Persecution and Martyrdom: an example in
globalizing theology

CHRISTOF SAUER
page 267

Review Article: The Early History of the Evangelical Alliance and
its Advocacy of Religious Freedom

THOMAS SCHIRRMACHER
page 275

Reviews
page 283

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