

Editorial:

Education, culture and faith

Education remains a key issue for Christians today, just as in the past. The opening article, a speech given at a secondary school jubilee by our General Editor, Dr Thomas Schirmmacher, presents a forceful argument for a biblically based but fully comprehensive educational philosophy with the aim of providing a school where Christian values and content are taught, exemplified and practised with full awareness of the cultural context.

It is appropriate to move on to a study by Jan Hábl (Czech Republic) of one of the most influential educators of the modern era, Jan Amos Comenius (1592-1670). It focuses on the anthropological assumptions of his educational project, which is to be *humanitatis officinae*, i.e., a 'forging-place of humanity'. Pointing to the significance of Comenius, Hábl states, 'In the context of the dehumanising tendencies of current society, pedagogical *humanisation* seems to be an urgent issue in contemporary education.'

Theological issues lie at the heart of this topic as much as they do with any other, so we present the proposal of Hanniel Strebel (Switzerland) for a 'Theological Prolegomena of Education',—an exposition of the thinking of Herman Bavinck (1854-1921). This paper deals with the aims of education, the nature of humanity and certain areas of methodology as advanced by this famous Dutch Neo-Calvinist who was thoroughly immersed in educational matters and public life in a time of great turmoil. He had a comprehensive world-view, energised by a profound

theology which can still be of assistance today.

Although the exposition by John J. Davis (USA) of the meaning and significance of *perichoresis* (the relations within the godhead) may at first appear unrelated to our theme, it does show that in the broadest of ways the very nature of God is a crucial factor in our humanity, not least in regard to the notion of person. The author's list of practical implications could easily have been expanded to cover the topic of education and culture.

Jim Harries (Kenya) returns to our pages to explain how the categories of sin and taboo have become so confused as to cause both to disappear from view in the West. While taboo might be strange to western ears, Harries concludes it is 'a necessary category' and one 'that needs to be clearly recognized for the sake of the healthy functioning of non-western communities'. So we have moved into a non-formal area of learning and development, but one that it is just as important in its own context as the thought-provoking material presented in the other articles.

We round off this issue with a practical article by Jonathan Cole (Australia) which sets out ways in which the disunity of the church in relation to doctrine and fellowship can be better understood and thereby overcome. Unless this problem can be tackled with integrity, any efforts to advance our thinking and practice in the area of education, culture and faith will be limited.

Thomas Schirmmacher, General Editor
David Parker, Executive Editor

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