

EDITORIAL: THE HOLY SPIRIT IN AFRICA

It was the African Theologian, E. Fashole-Luke, who observed that the distinctive emphasis of African Christian Theology- from the second century when Tertullian pioneered the discipline to the twentieth when black prophets have mobilized millions with their powerful words and deeds- has been the person and work of the Holy Spirit. Today all over the continent waves of charismatic renewal are surging. These waves of the Spirit often crash upon the shores of the church accompanied by the phenomena of tongues. Glossolalia is the technical term for this ecstatic utterance and the official coldness of the word stands in sharp contrast to the heated and controversial passions the experience itself generates among the christian community.

The greatest distress is often found among our youth who agonize over the question whether the gift of tongues is necessary for salvation. They have not invented the question. Foreign voices often strident in their insistence have pressed the necessity of the tongues experience on their spiritually sensitive audiences clustered in camps or Christian Unions eager to know the way of the Spirit. The result of several decades of extreme teaching on this issue has led to the current confusion among so many of our youth about even the simplest operations of the Holy Spirit in our lives. If Africa has always been marked as a continent fascinated by the Holy Spirit then twentieth century fascination has turned into a torturous confusion. **EAJET** continues with this great theme of African Christian theology by offering Nigerian professor's E. A. Obeng's personal and biblical reflections on this crucial question. Read it pastorally as wise counsel to the many puzzled believers that fill our continent.

The Spirit's work of equipping Christ's church with various charismata and generous portions of charis are the themes of the two additional articles that accompany professor Obeng's. The Reverend Yemi Ladipo reflects on the Spirit's intention in giving pastors to the church. What does the gift and task of shepherding God's flock involve? In our final article, Gordon Molyneaux guides us to think more clearly regarding a key work involving the Spirit of God as he examines the meaning of the Atonement. Hebrews reminds us that it was through the eternal Spirit that Christ offered himself up as a perfect sacrifice. In our fascination with the Spirit's gifts of charismata we must avoid slipping into indifference over His greater gift of charis in Christ. If a distinctive of the African Church has been its hunger for the Spirit may these articles both feed and whet that greatest of appetites.

Contributors to this Issue

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