

CORRUPTION OF THE HEART

An AJET Editorial

The human heart is deceitful and corrupt above all things. This corruption is seen in the way people behave and act, believe and think. Yet responses to a question like, "How corrupt or corrupted is your heart?" will yield relative answers, which are of no value in the kingdom of God.

The first article, by Dr. Keith Ferdinando, is a follow-up *response to Christopher Little's* article which appeared in *AJET* 22.2 2003. Those interested in the issue need to read the original articles which appeared in *AJET* 21.1 2002. Otherwise, the focus in the present article is on a few critical and representative issues only.

In the second article, which is a book chapter printed with permission from the publisher, the author, Dr. Richard J. Gehman, explores the meaning of *Communion with the Dead according to the Scriptures*. He concludes, "'Communion of saints' in Scripture does not refer to any fellowship between the living and the dead. Scripture nowhere suggests that the living and dead fellowship together during Holy Communion. Nor can our unsaved ancestors be included in the body of Christ." (p. 14) Believers cannot embrace a communion with the dead if they want to be faithful to the Scriptures. When our loved ones pass away into eternity they have been removed from any communion with the living. This article is well researched; and those involved in theological education need to read the book.

The third one, *Portuguese Presence and Endeavours in East Africa, 1498-1698* is Part I of Prof. Watson A.O. Omulokoli's article (Part II & III will appear in the next issue of *AJET*). It provides background information on the explorations and entrance of Christianity in East Africa by the Portuguese.

The fourth article by Kenneth L. Hall, discusses the importance of *Fighting Corruption in the Human Heart*, which according to Jer. 17:9 is "deceitful above all things, and desperately sick that none can understand it." Hall states correctly that this corruption in the human heart is a sin, which began initially in the Garden of Eden when Adam and Eve disobeyed God (Gen. 3:1-6). This inherited sinful nature has been perpetuated in the human race such that when

we become Christians, we do not automatically stop sinning because the inner disposition to sin is still there.

God's standard and expectation of pure living is required of all Christians. Since man is unable to fulfill this standard of righteousness given by God on his own, God himself has provided a solution in the coming Messiah, Jesus Christ.

In providing implications for the modern African church, Hall says Christians, in general, have not allowed the gospel to control every part of their life. This lack of quality Christianity is evidenced by inadequate discipling and syncretism – a mixing of Christian and traditional beliefs (p.57) and other vices. Fighting corruption in the human heart then calls for us to keep our hearts vigilantly, put away crooked speech and pursue a straight path for our feet (Proverbs 4:23-27).

Lastly, *The Formation of African Evangelical Theology* by Dr. Detlef Kapteina takes the reader into the history of African Evangelical theology since 1973. He points out that the late Dr. Byang Kato was instrumental in those early beginnings in addition to the historical framework of AEA structures and earlier awareness of Christian Education concerns (p. 62). His conclusion captures Dr. Kato's emphatic expression: "Let *African* Christians be *Christian* Africans, which lays stress on biblical authenticity and priority for African Christianity. This same expression has continued to be echoed by theologians since then, for example, Dr. P. Bowers' emphasis on the word *Africans*, thus "underlining the necessity of an indigenized Christian theology for Africa." (p. 83)