

HEAD AND HEART

An AJET Editorial

In the second of his 2008 Byang Kato Memorial Lectures at the ECWA Theological Seminary in Jos, Nigeria, *Christian Intellectual Responsibilities in Modern Africa*, Paul Bowers alerts evangelicals to the need for “a responsible theological engagement with our African *intellectual context*.” Bowers is not complaining about the kind of intellectual activity that produced the Africa Bible Commentary and the series of individual Biblical commentaries beginning to flow out of it. Rather he contends that we should be responding also to the wider intellectual activity in Africa. How many AJET or ABC readers have also read Thandika Mkandawire, ed., *African Intellectuals: Rethinking Politics, Language, Gender and Development*, (Dakar: CODESRIA Books, 2005)? Many of us are familiar with the need to address the remnants of the traditional African worldviews that sometimes drive otherwise faithful Christians to seek the older spiritual powers in times of crisis. But Bowers points out that “across the continent one can readily find highly educated African Christians functioning in the professional and academic worlds of modern Africa who often live dichotomized intellectual and spiritual lives, devoted to Christ in their personal life and witness, but functioning by alternative more secular interpretive commitments in their public professional life.” Can Christian universities produce leaders who can help these believers deal with modern Africa as it is as well as helping others who retain some traditional ways of thinking?

Not everyone is equipped, called or otherwise personally motivated to tackle this larger academic discourse. But if we are, then we would do well to also heed the main thrust of our second article, David Tarus’ “*The Significance of Intellectual Humility for Theologians Today*”. This article is more concerned about our attitudes than our achievements. Intellectual pride has led more than one well-educated evangelical to rely too heavily on his reason and too little on the faith that was delivered once for all to the saints. The risk of catching the disease of intellectual pride need not increase in proportion to the number of degrees we earn.

Our third article started as an address to the *Theological Education in Africa Conference* held in June 2008 in Jos, Nigeria. Danny McCain, a professor at the University of Jos, takes us *Beyond the Centre: A Focus on Some Broader Issues in Theological Education*. After carefully pointing out that the core foci of a theological institution is to provide its students with

instruction in Bible and theology, training in ministry, and spiritual formation, McCain goes beyond these to challenge us to *professionalism*: in our teaching methodology, in research and writing (Hear! Hear! and Amen!), in administrative techniques, and in continued learning. He next focuses on *integrity* in everything from finances to the use of academic titles. The latter section ties in nicely with Tarus' point about academic pride. McCain's third challenge, *image*, collects together the issues of campus beautification, appropriate professional dress, and the institution's affiliation with a university or its accreditation with an organization like ACTEA. Before ending with a challenge for theological institutions to practice *cooperation* by sharing resources and personnel with one another and other groups, McCain focuses on the challenge of *relevance*. This challenge dovetail's neatly with Bower's challenge to engage modern Africa's intellectual context. A number of the issues that McCain lists as necessary to help our students to minister effectively in today's Africa also can be found among those addressed by Africa's intellectual elites: HIV/AIDS, corruption, governance, violence, pornography, secularism, and the environment. One good resource from an evangelical perspective that addresses many of these relevant issues is Wilbur O'Donovan's *Biblical Christianity in Modern Africa*, first published in 2000 by Paternoster Press, and recently re-published by the author through Kijabe Press in Kenya. For those close enough, it can be obtained at the ACTS Bookshop at NEGST in Karen, Kenya.

One issue that arouses very strong passionate responses in both Christian and non-Christian circles is abortion. This is tackled in our fourth article, Emeka C. Ekeke's *Abortion Technology in the Twenty-First Century: A Christian Bioethical Appraisal*. Amongst the negative effects of globalization is the transfer of modern abortion technology and, too often, the attitudes that make its use legal. Ekeke not only informs us about the current technologies used in the USA and their affects on the unborn, their mothers, and society, he passionately defends the right to life of the unborn on Biblical, scientific, and ethical grounds. This article leaves you in no doubt about the ethical stance of the writer. We hope that the article provides African Christians with the information they need to stand firm on an issue that has, so far, defeated "right to life" Christians in most Western countries.