

EDITORIAL

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While Christian faith asserts categorically that the Christian's citizenship is not of this world (Phil 3:10), it nowhere advocates an attitude of indifference vis-a-vis the earthly city, nor a lack of concern for its welfare. Indeed, Christian faith mandates engagement in the world for the betterment of the world (Mt 5:14-16). Just as the Father sent the Son on a redemptive mission designed to alter positively the human condition (Jn. 3:16), so the Son commissioned his own to penetrate the world and exert a salutary influence on it (Jn 17:18, Phil 2:15-16).

The articles published in this issue of CJET reflect clearly this biblical injunction for transforming engagement with the world. In the first article, Martiniquan pastor, Daniel Reivax, turns the spotlight on postmodernism. As the new mind set that has sidelined old modernity, postmodernism exerts considerable influence on contemporary life, attitude and thought. Reivax draws attention to both the challenges posed by the postmodern spirit, and the opportunities it offers for Christian witness. He suggests that our witness should take the form of a presence that makes us out as "a microcosm of the celestial city."

For his part, in the second article, D. Vincent Palmer focuses our attention on the witness of a particular section within Christianity: evangelicalism. After a global survey of the state of evangelicalism, Palmer directs a piercing gaze at the condition of the movement in his native Jamaica. He argues persuasively that while the evangelical church (and the Jamaican church as a whole) has been criticized for inadequate social action, its contribution to nation-building, particularly in the field of education, is considerable. Palmer mentions the church's reluctance to blow its own trumpet as an explanation for the criticism. Palmer's piece is not an uncritical *apologia* for evangelicalism's social relevance. He shows no reticence in pointing out the movement's shortcoming in the areas of social justice and concern for the poor.

An integral part of the church's involvement in the world is evangelization through cross-cultural and global witness. For some time, the effectiveness of that witness has been undermined by the

problem of missionary attrition. In the fourth article, Desiree Whittle analyzes the problem both historically and culturally. She concludes that the present phenomenon is due to a spirituality that exhibits a weaker commitment to the Great Commission than was the case in previous generations. She calls for the strengthening of this generation's missionary commitment.

For Christians who are committed to biblical authority, Scripture must be the yardstick for engagement in the world. However, how does the modern Christian extract the guidelines that govern engagement from the Scriptural data? In the third article, N. Samuel Murrell argues forcefully that the best way to accomplish this task is through the employment of the "hermeneutics for contextual truths." This model deals seriously with the biblical text in its context and with the life situation of the modern hearer.

We are pleased to offer this issue of the journal to our subscribers. May it be used by God to sharpen our witness to the world.