

Editorial

Dear Readers,

Greetings to you from the Editorial Team of our Indian Journal of Theology. I am glad for this opportunity to serve you by putting together another collection of articles to enrich your theological reflection.

These are days when our Christian commitment is challenged by many forces. There are external forces of other faiths and ideologies that grow intolerant and unaccommodative. Some of them have turned militant and have grown with fascist tendencies. Even the very nomenclature, such as Shiv Sena, indicates a militant formation. A fundamentalist mind-set is corroding the secular ethos of our nation and its traditional tolerant culture.

We stand in need of measures and methods to cope with and to counteract these external forces. Whereas the problem posed by these external forces are real, much devastating is the problem created by internal forces within the Church today.

First among such is the type of response proposed by some theologians who rather would discredit the unique and substitutionary atoning identity of the person of Jesus Christ and cut the nerve of Christian Mission. They see no relevance in the preaching of the cross. They propose to privatize a personal faith and to stop propagating, to harmonize with all by discarding any attachment of special value to one's own faith elements, to produce a new trend in theology that shall justify stoppage of a mission of conversion, church growth and the Kingdom of God in Christ.....

Another area of concern is the growth of enthusiasm among sectors of Christian Church to propagate faith without a clarity of the content of the gospel, its relevance and its application to the actual plight of our people. What could be blamed as a mindless enthusiasm grips mission agencies and propels them into irrelevant patterns of mission activities. Such arouse more heat than emit light.

Relevant theological thought should be aroused through a process of committed rethinking of views, ways and methods. Our theologizing mode should be touched by the Spirit of Christ in its redemptive power, holy nature and ecumenical width.

Indian Journal of Theology had been a channel for such theological exploration for five decades now and shall continue to kindle the freedom to think, articulate and share.

In this issue, we acknowledge the contribution of Dr. Stanley J. Samartha. We pay him tribute through the words of Dr. O.V. Jathanna, Principal of United Theological College, Bangalore and we provide a bibliography of his writings. Dr. Samartha was Principal of our

SIGA ARLES

Serampore College for two years before moving out to his strategic ecumenical role as the first Director of the Department of Dialogue at the World Council of Churches, Geneva.

Biblical themes from Mr. Temjen Inchen, Mr. Subhro Shekar Sircar and Mr. T. Johnson would be of value to you. Rev. Gnanamithra opens out Christian education to enlighten us. Rev. Kailas Kumar Chatry, Rev. Richard Hivner, Rev. Raul Fernandez-Calienes and Dr. Siga Arles have offered missiological input from their varied areas of concern. Dr. KP Aleaz, Dr. V.J. John and Dr. Donita Aleaz review some recent books to wet your appetite for them. A delayed report of the North India Theological students conference of 2000 is included to show our solidarity with our students who shall take over from us the varied roles of ministry and theological reflection.

I thank every contributor and those who worked with me in editing, computerizing, proof checking and publishing this issue. Mr. James Elisha, Mr. S. Yesan, Mrs. Sheela Yesan, Mr. S.S. Sircar, Mr. Sandeep Choudhury, and Mrs. Padmini deserve special mention.

May Christ's Spirit kindle your minds anew for relevant mission thinking and participation in our time.

Dr. Siga Arles

Editor