

## **Editorial**

With his celebrated 1996 publication, *The Clash of Civilisations and the Remaking of World Order*, Professor Samuel Huntington caused an enormous stir when he claimed, among other things, that Islam would replace Communism as the greatest threat to world peace and harmony as known and propagated by the West. Moderate Muslims and broad-minded Westerners had every reason then to dismiss this as an unwarranted alarmist propaganda. But the events of September 11<sup>th</sup> in New York and Washington have unequivocally shown that there is indeed a 'fault line' between civilisations. Shortly after that dark day in human history, I received a phone call from far away Switzerland by an elderly Swiss lady who declared that the attacks were an outward manifestation of an obsessive jealousy over the economic and military power of the West. It is gratifying to note that an important Arab voice in this matter was more optimistic and conciliatory. Speaking to the English Parliament on 8 November, King Abdallah of Jordan declared that the time has come for the age-long tension and hatred between the West and the Arab world to be replaced with a new era of dialogue, tolerance, trust and hope for all humanity.

The papers in this volume show how the goals and aspirations of cultures do, and should, coalesce in ways that are harmonious and complementary. Through a careful study of Igbo Wisdom Knowledge, Professor A.E. Afigbo identifies salient African contributions to universal human and spiritual values in the face of an ever increasing drive towards globalization. Against this background, Elochukwu Uzukwu calls for a radical blending of elements of Christian tradition with those of African culture in the pursuit of theological education in Africa. Efforts at incarnating Christianity into African culture has been a primary concern for the local churches in the continent. It is little wonder therefore that inculturation featured prominently as the primary theme of the 1994 African Synod. Professor Uzukwu reiterates that the Vatican II recommendation of a 'more radical adaptation' to indigenous cultures is a task that calls for 'more imagination and creativity.'

Regrettably, there are not a few voices that point out that Rome's insistence on a micro-government of the universal church not only beclouds imagination, but also limits local initiatives. The paper by Chukwudi Njoku and Mathijs Lamberigts, as well as the one by Professor Joy Ogwu, show in various ways that the prospects of inculturation and changes in the church are better served by a courageous adherence to the principles of collegiality and subsidiarity.

One would like to agree with the popular belief that the primary distinction between civilizations is cultural. But this does not make the economic factor any less compelling. The United States of America, the worst polluter of the environment, has recently vetoed a global treaty on the protection of the environment on economic grounds. More recently still, the Christian Aid and other NGOs have called for an international control of the Multi-Nationals to prevent them from using their economic power to the disadvantage of developing Nations, just as Shell and other oil companies have been doing in the Niger Delta region of Southern Nigeria for many decades. Protus Kemdirim's paper on Eco-Theology reminds our readers that the global protection of the environment is a sacred obligation.

Finally, in this volume's special feature, Professor Ben Nwabueze shows in meticulous detail how the unconstitutional introduction of the Muslim Sharia law in a good number of states in Northern Nigeria goes contrary to religious freedom and religious neutrality of the state. Shortly after the September 11 incident in America, several Pakistani nationals were arrested in Nigeria who claimed they were in the country to teach Muslims the Jihad. For the first time, it became evident that the bloody religious clashes that had claimed thousands of lives since the introduction of Sharia in Nigeria may not be totally home bred. This is a practical demonstration that the call for dialogue between peoples and cultures should indeed be a global concern.

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