

Christian Mission in the Third Millennium *Globalisation and Reconciliation.*

This end of the 20th century reveals in a startling manner the incredible possibilities of making the world a single place. The great advances in information technology and the influence of the mass media bring peoples and cultures together in a way that would have been impossible fifty years ago. The fact is real that we are becoming more and more neighbours – Chinese, Westerners, Africans, Latin Americans, Japanese, Indians can be brought together through the Internet, the CNN and other wonders of modern communication to share the sights and sounds, the joys and sorrows one of another. Paradoxically, the more we are brought to a common place, the more we face the challenge of making the world a “place for all”. The more modern patterns of communication bring us together as neighbours, the more we face the challenge of “neighbourliness”. Christian mission in the third millennium must face this challenge.

The hard reality today is that global capitalism aided by modernisation, and dominated by the Western civilisation, has the project of realising the world as a single place in order to have full control over it. The fact emerges that the majority of Africans and Latin Americans (about 80%) freeze outside of this new single place, while watching the minority bask in the warmth and opulence this global village provides. For the latter there can be no place as good as this global village, for the former the recolonisation of lands and peoples portends no good.

Contributors to this issue of our **Bulletin** address the question of globalisation and mission in the third millennium. Coming from different worlds or civilisations they take these worlds on board in expressing their views. Odozor carefully notes that our world is gradually becoming a single place as testified by the growing interdependence and shared vulnerability experienced today. He equally notes that Africa is clearly marginalised in this globalised world. Ike and Ngwoke spell out the reasons for this marginalization: Western capitalism, which spreads out its tentacles to control all economies of the world, does not have mercy on the weak. Focusing

on the World Bank Report on Nigeria, Ike and Ngwoke show the World Bank prescriptions as characteristic of how not to develop Nigeria. The Bretton Woods institution fails to take the human into consideration. Instead of SAP and other death-dealing prescriptions like privatisation, liberalisation, deregulation, and so on, our contributors prescribe a deliberate undertaking of a massive human capital enhancement programme. Christian mission in Africa and the world has the task of challenging this economic programme of globalisation, which has stolen from the masses their subjecthood and purchasing power.

Schreiter and Wilfred examine the question of identity and tradition which globalisation challenges. Globalisation intrudes into local communities, destabilising cultural values. Schreiter uses the semiotic-linguistic model to analyse the reaction of cultures to this phenomenon. Wilfred who considers globalisation as the pinnacle of imperialism draws attention to the limitation of the semiotic-linguistic model, but utilises the same model to analyse globalisation. According to Wilfred the future of mission in the third millennium will focus on inter-cultural encounters respectful of the other as in dialogue between the religions. Unity in the world is not achieved through creating an “*administered world*”. Unity can begin only where people become *subjects* in this process. The subjecthood of peoples is the foundation for the emergence of unity.

As the world becomes more and more a single place, the conflicts we experience in Bosnia, Algeria, Rwanda, the Central and West African regions show the world is not yet a “common place for all”. Neighbourliness in the global village may be created through healing of memories, reconciliation and conflict resolution. This is the substance of Uzukwu’s reflection on the Church as agent of reconciliation. The SIST mission congress, held between November 11-17, 1996, underline reconciliation as a key priority of the Church’s mission in the third millennium. The image of the Church as Family of God challenges all Christians to work relentlessly in making the world a place for all.

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