

Editorial

The present issue begins with an encounter with “Southern” Christianity of a Pentecostal/Evangelical persuasion. “The centre of gravity...is already in the hands of the Southern churches,” says **Wonsuk Ma**, a distinguished Korean scholar and missionary who now heads the Oxford Centre for Mission Studies, in the interview with *Asian Christian Review*. Ma points out that many of those churches of the “global South,” which are now taking the centre stage in global Christianity, will take on distinctly Pentecostal features. Embodying such a trend by himself as the first Pentecostal to command the institute, Ma reveals to us the changing face of Southern (Pentecostal) Christianity, with its openness to ecumenism and other religions, its willingness to embrace both spiritual dynamism and academic inquiry, and its deep concern for social issues.

To put the interview in context, we have included Ma’s plenary speech at the Global Christian Forum held in Limuru, Kenya, November, 2007. Addressing the historic gathering which aims at building a bridge between “ecumenists” (particularly WCC) and “evangelicals/Pentecostals” (such as WEA), Ma stresses the need of these two Christian “siblings” to face one another and collaborate in order to give a greater witness to the gospel, combining the former’s emphasis on “life before death” and the latter’s focus on “life after death.” Now that Evangelical Christianity has grown to become the second largest group worldwide after Roman Catholicism (and the largest, for example, in the USA), such a call of Ma’s is indeed no longer optional but a requisite for any meaningful future of Christianity.

In the *Viewpoints* article, “Challenge in Interfaith Dialogue,” **Thomas Michel, SJ**, a veteran in Christian-Muslim dialogue, questions a conventional understanding of evangelization/evangelism which frames the dispute over gospel proclamation and interfaith dialogue. “Proclamation or dialogue?”—challenging such a dichotomized mentality, Michel demonstrates from his own experience that dialogue as life-sharing cannot leave out “proclamation” as a sharing of one’s deepest spiritual conviction, while proclamation as such cannot authentically occur outside the context of life-sharing.

In her “Cultural Rights of Migrant,” the first of four main articles in this issue, **Agnes M. Brazal** explores philosophical arguments and theological bases for the notion of cultural rights, particularly for migrants. Critically drawing on the insights of Pierre Bourdieu and Will Kymlicka, Brazal first seeks to highlight and clarify the much “underdeveloped” concept on philosophical terrain. Then she moves on to ground the concept on the theological soil, arguing that the doctrine of Trinity, with its diverse approaches in tradition (such as that of the Cappadocians, Richard of St. Victor, Bonaventure, etc.), can theologially account for the value and space of cultural rights.

Aloysius Pieris, SJ seeks a common ground between Christianity and other

religions in Asia from a Pneumatological perspective in his “the Holy Spirit and Asia’s Religiousness.” While noting that many Asian religions are non-theistic and thus ostensibly lacking a common transcendent reference with biblical religions, Pieris expounds that a positive re-reading of non-theistic spirit-uality of these Asian religions in Pneumatological terms proves to be theologically fertile and will lead to a re-conception of Pneumatology itself. Pieris further points to the common ‘spiritual’ mission of Islam and Christianity.

Andrew G. Reception’s “the Filipino Transpersonal Worldview” presents a test case for Christianity’s inculturation in Asia. Having identified, on an anthropological basis, an average Filipino perception of reality as a variation of the ‘transpersonal’ worldview, Reception illustrates how the world—visible and invisible—is seen in this perspective as “populated” by a variety of spirits, and how this worldview has merged with and assimilated the Christian faith brought by the Spanish. Reception, who sees such a distinctly Filipino worldview as *sui generis*, invites readers to further this exploration towards a fuller synthesis.

The current issue closes with a Western contribution on one of the divisive issues in ecumenical dialogue: sacraments. In the context of the ongoing international Methodist-Roman Catholic dialogue, **Paul G. McPartlan** seeks to reframe the question in his “Catholic Perspectives on Sacramentality.” Noting the deepened understanding of the notion of sacramentality in modern and recent Catholic theology, McPartlan argues that the discussion on sacraments should be situated in a broader matrix of the discussion on “sacramentality” in general. By cultivating a common and profound theology of *the* sacrament or *mysterion*—understood in the Scripture as the divine plan of salvation, which is personified in Christ and continued on by his body, the church—the age-old dispute over the number of sacraments will be overcome, and the proper context for dialogue be provided, argues McPartlan.

It is hoped that, with these theological reflections and voices, *Asian Christian Review* will continue to be a source of inspiration and stimulation for theological discussions in Asia and beyond.

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Editor
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