

## **CROSS CULTURAL WITNESS: CONFLICT AND ACCOMMODATION**

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The subject to be considered here is "Cross Cultural Witness: Conflict and Accommodation." Since it is impossible for anyone to write from a base that does not contain assumed presuppositions, it is reasonable to ask from what premise does the writer undertake this task which has already been approached from such various perspectives as those of anthropology, liberation, dogmatics, and biblical theology? The premise which is the groundwork is that of a biblical theology which attests that the Christian faith was supernaturally revealed in the inspired Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments; and that this Word of God reveals to us the flow of redemptive history, from the creation of man to the first century's establishment of the new covenant church, as God unfolds his will for his people in various covenant arrangements in successive eras.

Biblical inspiration, as the writer was taught in the classroom years ago by Dr Allan A. MacRae, was a special work of the Holy Spirit whereby he moved upon the writers of the Old and New Testaments so that their words should convey the thought God wished conveyed, should bear the proper relation to the words of the other writers and should be kept free from errors of fact, doctrine, and judgment. The Bible's authority transcends our understanding of it, since it is the Word of God and is so attested by Christ himself.

As Christians have sought to communicate their gospel in a surrounding non-Christian culture, problems have arisen. One problem has been how to set forth the gospel that it is truly proclaimed without compromise and understood with sufficient comprehension to provide adequate knowledge for saving faith. Paul wrote to Christians in Rome that, "Faith comes by hearing and hearing by the word of God," (Rom 10:17). But the question is, what do they hear from our presentation as we seek to communicate a message from heaven, set in a context of 2000 years ago, coming ourselves from a background of modern Western civilization, and coming to a people of a foreign culture and ideology?

As germane as the above problem is, however, it is the word "conflict" in the subject which brings another question to the fore, one on which more attention will be focused. How do the people of God, the church of God, relate to the problem of accommodation to, or conflict with, the surrounding non-Christian culture? How do they distinguish lawful accommodation from unlawful? Do they consciously wrestle with God's Word for light on how to establish a church that is both at home in its own cultural