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Reformation: Then, Now and Onward

Mark W. Harris

Stephen Bevens, in his now classic book, *Models of Contextual Theology*, argues that the theological task is always informed by three sources or *loci theologici*: scripture, tradition, and human experience or context.¹ The degree to which one considers or responds to the gravity of these loci, vis-à-vis the others, will influence the way that one engages in the theological task.

If this is the case, then one way to understand the Reformation would be to suggest that it reflected a re-prioritization of the *loci theologici*. Under the influence of the Roman Catholicism of the time, tradition and scripture provided the two primary poles of influence, with any attentiveness to context relegated to marginal status. In contrast, the Protestant movement both emerged as a response to the contextual demands of the era and reordered the ongoing priority of the *loci theologici*, such that scripture and context now became the primary influencers in theological deliberation, rather than tradition and scripture.

The Reformation can thus be understood, at least in part, as an ongoing process of theological reflection which is attentive to the questions and demands of an ever-changing context.

In these two issues of *Consensus* (vol 38, issue 1 and 2), the writers seek to commemorate the Reformation through their attentiveness to context. For whether they are writing as a woman, in a society which is still systemically misogynistic, or introducing a new voice and perspective from Asia or the global south, or revisiting Luther's writings or the biblical narratives through the lens of contemporary concerns, all the writers are seeking to wrestle with their context as a primary influence in theological deliberation. In that way, they are not only commemorating, they are also participating in the ongoing reformation.

We are grateful to those who have made these commemorative issues possible, those writers who have contributed their voices to this ongoing dialogue, and those of you who read these issues, and hopefully be challenged and inspired by them, as together we seek to be faithful in an ever-changing context.

Soli Deo Gloria

¹ Stephen B. Bevens, *Models of Contextual Theology*, (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 2002), 4.