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## PREFACE

*Nothing escapes the sweep of history which is currently in force in Southern Africa. A society in transformation is a society in which all the known are reexamined while the unknown is being experimented with.*

*Very much part of the known, in fact one of the mainstays of civil society, is religion. Very few voices if any have gone up to deny religion this role in society. It is generally recognised as an indispensable element of a healthy society.*

*But the study of religion, at school, college or university is a different matter. Again, very few want the abolition of public sponsoring of the study of religion. The issue is much rather: to what extent and to what end.*

*For the academically minded such questions translate into debates about curriculums on the one hand and theoretical reflection on the scientific nature and scope of the academia of religion on the other.*

*In this issue and some of the following ones Scriptura features a variety of contributions on the above issues. Of course this will be of immediate interest to Southern Africans, but we are convinced that despite the local flavour the essence of the debate is almost universal. For, after all, the debate is being provoked by a situation of extreme plurality, the need for radical social reconstruction and some form of fusion of Western European with pastoral African values and world views. Such issues are not confined to Southern Africa. They only cristalise here more definitively than elsewhere.*

*Scriptura has since its inception been closely associated with religious education at school and university - an education which in the Southern African context is best defined (but for non-Southern Africans quite confusingly) in terms of David Tracy's distinctions as one directed at the public audience. In the articles we select on the above topics we shall continue this tradition.*

*I trust that all the readers of Scriptura will join in the debate at hand.*

Johann Kinghorn  
EDITOR