

Introduction

This is the joyous, historical event of the publication of the very first volume of the African Theological Journal for Church and Society (ATJCS). The Journal is a joint venture of NetACT, in partnership with Christian Literature Fund and Huguenot College. It is intended to be a theological journal of high academic standards. The articles are therefore strictly peer-reviewed. The scope of the journal covers all major disciplines of theology, written from or for the African context and is aimed at making a contribution towards the church's role in society. It is an open access, electronic journal hosted on the NetACT internet portal. There is a need for scholars from African Theological Institutions (and others) to publish in a peer-reviewed, academic journal of high standard, but which is affordable or free (no page fees!).

We trust that initially at least two regular volumes of this journal will be published annually (in September and April each year). From time to time special editions on specific topics may be published. Scholars are most welcome to send the outcomes of their research to us. We are also eager to publish book reviews on newly published books from or intended for the African context.

This first edition consists of five articles:

Prof Sunday Agang is provost of ECWA Theological Seminary, Jos (JETS) in Nigeria. His article *Integrating Public Theology into African Theological Institutions' Curricula* makes the argument for the inclusion of African Public Theology into the curricula of all African Theological Institutions in order to bridge the disconnect between the sacred (devotional life) and the secular (everyday life) of Christians in Africa. Churches and church leaders should become involved with the important issues of the public domain and a new generation of pastors should be trained accordingly.

Dr Fred Olwendo is lecturer at Daystar University. In his article *The metaphysical, ethical and theological musings on embryonic stem cells: a response to Peter van Inwagen* he reflects on the intricate ethical

question: do embryonic cells have/ought to be given complete moral status of human beings' courtesy of their potentiality? He enters into a discourse with Peter van Inwagen and also reflects on some African narratives, theological perspectives and implications.

Dr Mipo Ezekiel Dadang is a member of the ECWA Theological Seminary Jos, Nigeria. In his article *125 years of Serving in Mission (SIM) in Nigeria: A missiological-theological appraisal of missionary work*, he provides an historical overview of the work done by SIM, especially the significance of their theological and holistic views of mission practice.

Dr Joshua Bagudu Boyi is staff member at UMCA Theological College, Ilorin, Nigeria. In his article *The response of Christians to Islamic violence in Northern Nigeria*, he asks the question whether the only option for Christians in responding to the religious violence in Nigeria is counter violence – as self-defence or as reprisal. He proposes the biblical notion of non-violence.

Dr Annette Potgieter is lecturer in theology at Huguenot College, Wellington, South Africa. In her article *Standing in God's favour: spatial reasoning in Rom 5:1–5* she argues that Paul redefines ideas such as "love", "favour" and "glory" in order to communicate from a bodily perspective the significance of a believer's relationship with God. "Space" and "body" have become very relevant concepts during the 2020 Covid-19 lockdown period.

This edition concludes with a review of the newly published book: *African Public Theology*, by Sunday Agang, Dion Forster and Jurgens Hendriks.

Dr Gideon van der Watt
(General Editor)