



EDITORIAL

From Ethiopia to Ghana, DR Congo to Malawi

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This sixth issue of *African Christian Theology* is eclectic rather than themed, but it has a regional focus on ancient and contemporary Christianity in Ethiopia and Eritrea with the first three articles. **Ralph Lee** examines the centrality of Nicene theological orthodoxy in the life and faith of the Ethiopian Orthodox *Täwähädo* Church (EOTC) in “**The Council of the 318: The Defining Epoch for the Ethiopian Täwähädo Church ?**,” pointing a way past the familiar polemic between ‘Chalcedonian’ and ‘non-Chalcedonian’. He draws extensively from the Ethiopian national epic, *ገብረ ነገሥት* (*Käbrä Nägäst*), and thus introduces our readers from outside of Ethiopia and Eritrea to that important African theological tradition. We then move forward in time while remaining rooted in the past with two articles from members of the journal’s editorial board. First, **Youdit Tariku Feyessa** (ዮዲት ታሪኩ ፈይሳ in Amharic script) draws deeply from traditional Ethiopian culture in her offering, “**The ‘Other’ as ‘Yene-Bitte’: Reimagining an Ethiopian Ethics of Moral Responsibility.**” Engaging with yet moving beyond European philosophers Paul Ricoeur (1913–2005) and Emanuel Lévinas (1906–1995), she proposes a contextualized ethics that is thoroughly Christian and thoroughly Ethiopian. Then Ethiopian New Testament scholar **Abeneazer G. Urga** (አቤንኤዘር ሆቸኝ አርጋ in Amharic script) exegetically explores the theme of “**The Victory of the Blood of Christ in the New Testament and in Ethiopia**” with the help of vernacular grassroots theologians, including Ethiopian gospel singers. This is an important contribution to studies of African ethnodoxology.

Next we travel west and south for an article in French from the RDC, **Trésor Khonde Ndele’s “Entrée et sortie du christianisme: L’État actuel de l’Église protestante dans certains milieux ruraux de la République Démocratique du Congo** [‘Entrance and Exit from Christianity: The Current State of the Protestant Church in Certain Rural Areas of the Democratic Republic of the Congo’].” After a careful study, Khonde Ndele “proposes a missionary model that combines a dynamic moving from the village to the city and another moving from a city to the villages and cities of the world.”

Then we journey northwest to visit Ghana as **Leopold Gadagoe** leads us through the process of “**Liberation Through Contextualization: African Women’s Theology and the *Trokosi* System within the Ewe Culture of Ghana.**” The *trokosi* practice is an ethnoreligious practice that scapegoats young females, frequently subjecting them to physical, emotional, and sexual abuse. But rightly understood and properly practiced, the gospel is inherently liberating, “fostering human flourishing and societal transformation.”

Finally, we travel back to East Africa, and back in time a few decades, as **Grant LeMarquand** invites us to join in “**Reading the Eschatology of 1 Peter with African Help: John S. Mbiti’s Contribution.**” The author is a biblical scholar, a theological educator with experience teaching in Mbiti’s Kenya, and the former Anglican bishop (retired) of the Horn of Africa (Ethiopia, Eritrea, Djibouti, Somalia, and Somaliland). Along the way, he joins Mbiti in correcting certain problematic aspects of missionary (and therefore Western) eschatology, which can have “dire ethical implications.” But where Mbiti fails to take the reality of bodily resurrection seriously, LeMarquand gently corrects his failure. Yet LeMarquand demonstrates that Mbiti can help us see that for the Apostle Peter, “the resurrection does not wipe away diversity; the resurrection redeems the wonderful diversity of God’s creation.”

This issue’s review section is robust. One book is evaluated with an article-length review, as Kenyan professor **Daniel Mwailu** treats the ninth volume in the ASET Series — ASET is the Africa Society of Evangelical Theology — *Ecclesiology in Africa*, co-edited by David K. Ngaruiya and Rodney L. Reed (2024).

Nine books are evaluated with full-length review essays. *The African Church and COVID-19: Human Security, the Church, and Society in Kenya* (2022), co-edited by *African Christian Theology* editorial team member Martin Munyao, is reviewed by **Phillip A. Cantrell II**. Next **Chammah J. Kaunda**, another one of the journal’s editors, offers a treatment of *Intra-African Pentecostalism and the Dynamics of Power: The Nigerian Winners’ Chapel in Cameroon* (2024) by Amos B. Chewachong. Writing from the Ethiopian Diaspora in North America, **Melesse K. Woldetsadik** offers a careful evaluation of *Reading James Missiologically: The Missionary Motive, Message, and Methods of James* (2025), co-edited by Abeneazer G. Urga. Then **Nathan Scott**, a scholar of St Augustine, reviews Catherine Conybeare’s *Augustine the African* (2025). Conybeare and Scott remind us that Augustine was, in fact, African. As these pages have previously reminded our readers, Augustine was a man who referred to himself and his fellow bishops as “us Africans.”

Next we have two contributions from Ethiopia. **Nebeyou A. Terefe** (ኑቡ ዓለሙ ተረፈ. in Amharic script), another one of our editorial board members, reviews a recent work by Kenyan biblical scholar Humphrey Mwangi Waweru, *The Apocalypse of John and Liberation Theology in Africa* (2024). Then **Bruk**

Ayele Asale (ላይላ ሳላል in Amharic script) reviews *The Doctrine of the Holy Spirit* (2025) by Ethiopian theologian Yacob Godebo.

We then travel southward to Kenya, as Bishop **Francis Omondi** offers an evaluation of fellow Kenyan theologian Simon E. Chiwanga's *Muhudumu: The Episcopacy in Africa Reconsidered* (2011). The kiSwahili term *muhudumu* (sometimes spelled *mhudumu*) means 'servant' or 'minister'. Omondi himself exhibits a model of servant leadership as a bishop of the Anglican Church of Kenya, an antithesis of the *bwana kubwa* ('big man') model of leadership. Chiwanga's book promotes "a leadership model that seeks to empower all church members to participate in God's mission." As he trains others to truly *serve* as church leaders in true diaconia, he has found Chiwanga's book so valuable that he convinced us editors that it was deserving of a retrospective review. Looking further south, and maintaining a focus on Christian ministry, from Zambia comes a review by Willem-Henri den Hartog which explores the grassroots ministries explored in *Diaconia: Acts, Understandings, and Stories of Service in a Pluralistic Southern Africa* (2025), edited by Johannes Knoetze and Jacques W. Beukes. Next, Donald Stanley Meador, formerly a theological educator in Brazil, reviews *Towards a Malawian Theology of Laity* (2020), edited by Volker Glissman.

Finally, we have four 'Book Note' short reviews, evaluating *Crashed Realities? Gender Dynamics in Nigerian Pentecostalism* (2024), *Spirit-Empowered Witness: A Lukan Theology of Preaching* (2022), *Spectacular Atonement: Envisioning the Cross of Christ in an African Perspective* (2023), and *Kwame Bediako: African Theology for a World Christianity* (2021).

In our first three years, the journal has offered voices representing sixteen countries in Africa — Cameroon, Côte d'Ivoire, DR Congo, Egypt, Ethiopia, Ghana, Kenya, Malawi, Mozambique, Nigeria, Rwanda, Sierra Leone, South Africa, Tanzania, Uganda, and Zambia (this includes authors of reviewed books). Also represented are Jamaica and Barbados in the Black Caribbean, as well as Australia, Canada, Germany, The Netherlands, the United Kingdom, and the United States.

If your country has not yet been represented, then we encourage you to consider submitting something for a future issue.

As always — *tolle lege*, 'take and read.'¹

¹ According to his *Confessions*, in 386 Augustine of Hippo heard the singsong voice of a child nearby chanting *Tolle lege, tolle lege* (Latin: 'Take and read, take and read'; *tolle* can also be translated 'take up'). Augustine picked up a copy of Paul's Letter to the Romans which happened to be nearby and began to read. This marked the beginning of his conversion to Christ. He relates this in *Confessionum libri XIII* 8.29.