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**EDITORIAL**

# Nicaea at 1700

## *Roots and Branches in African Christianity*

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"*We believe* . . . ."
— The Nicene Creed[1]

This issue of *African Christian Theology* is a themed issue celebrating the seventeenth centennial of the Nicene Creed. For the majority of Christians around the world, the Nicene Creed of 325 and the Nicene-Constantinopolitan Creed of 381 remain normative.[2] But many dismiss Nicene articulations of Christian faith as a corrupted hellenization of Christianity. Calls to *de-hellenize* Christianity are as common as calls for decolonization.[3] In June 2025, a member of the African Theological Fellowship (ATF) referred in ATF's WhatsApp group to "the ontological Christology handed down to the African by her European colonial slavemasters, bathed in European philosophy and culture . . . ." In far

[1] Whereas the later Apostles' Creed begins with the grammatically singular "I believe" (*credo* in Latin; it is from this term that the English word 'creed' is derived), the earlier Nicene and Nicene-Constantinopolitan Creeds each begin with the plural "We believe" (Πιστεύομεν / *Pisteúomen*). While the singular form no doubt arose from the importance of an individual owning his or her own baptismal confession of faith, the plural form *we believe* can emphasize the communitarian nature of Christian faith. While we exercise πίστις (*pistis*, 'faith, belief, allegiance') as individuals, we do not walk the path of faith alone, but in community with other believers.

[2] The Nicene Creed was articulated at the Council of Nicaea in 325. A clarified revision of the Nicene Creed was articulated by the Council of Constantinople in 381. In older English texts, the term *Niceno-Constantinopolitan* is frequently used, more closely reflecting the spelling of the Latin, *Nicaeno-Constantinopolitano*. But *Nicene-Constantinopolitan* is the more common usage today.

[3] See the discussion on this point in Ernst M. Conradie and Teddy C. Sakupapa, "'Decolonising the Doctrine of the Trinity' or 'The Decolonising Doctrine of the Trinity'?," 367–370 and 375.

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too many ways in the modern era, Europeans and Euro-Americans were unaware of the ways in which their expression of Christian faith was inherently contextual, "bathed in European philosophy and culture," as my colleague aptly stated. Two often, they confused their culture and language with Christianity. Not infrequently, this continues to be the case. Recognizing that *all* theologizing is contextual and culturally contingent is absolutely necessary.

This recognition assumes an answer to the question, *Does culture matter?*, which may be formulated more specifically as *does culture play an important role in our theological formulations?* As for me, I am convinced that culture does matter, but it remains a question as to *how* culture matters. What is the appropriate role, including limitations on that role, for culture — including the philosophies inherent in our worldviews, both explicit and implicit — in our theologizing? Different cultures ask different questions. The answers given by brilliant theologians a thousand years ago, or five hundred years ago, in England or France or Germany might not be pertinent to our African contexts, simply because here in Africa we are asking different questions to which traditional Western Christian theology may have no answers. Allow me to restate my question: *When we theologize, does culture matter? If culture matters, what is its appropriate role and function?* Specifically, within the setting of the African contextual realities, what is the appropriate role and function of African culture in our (Christian) theologizing, that is, in how we express the truth of the Gospel and its implications for how we live?

Turning specifically to the questions of christology which lay behind the deliberations of the Council of Nicaea in 325, on the surface my ATF colleague's statement seems to ignore the fact that trinitarian christology was first robustly expressed in *Africa* and *Asia* rather than in Europe — insofar as our ontological Christology is a contextual theology, it represents a bathing in *African* and *Asian* philosophies and cultures as much as, or more than, in European ones. Nicene (and Nicene-Constantinopolitan) christology has roots deep in Africa. When the *African* theologian Tertullian first coined the term *trinitas*, in Latin, he was trying to make sense of the Israelite/Jewish creed, the *Shema* — "Hear, O Israel, YHWH our God, YHWH is one" (Deut 6:4) — together with the Church's experience of the Resurrected Jesus. Notably, he was not creating a new doctrine — he was just more concisely expressing what the Church had long believed, confessed, and experienced. Importantly, we should recall that Latin was an *African* vernacular Christian language for many generations before it became a Christian language in Rome, or anywhere else in Europe.[4]

Consider the giant of "ontological christology" — this was Athanasius, an African (not a Greek colonist). While Athanasius was admittedly cosmopolitan, he was equally at home in multicultural Alexandria as in the African villages of

[4] See Andrew F. Walls, "Africa in Christian History: Retrospect and Prospect," 87.

the Nile valley. His christology was no different than that of Antony the Great, the African holy man who never learned Greek but only spoke the African vernacular of his ancestors. The best known systematic trinitarian theology surviving from the patristic era may be that of Augustine (354–430),[5] a man who referred to himself and his fellow bishops in the region as "us Africans."[6] Many point to "Constantine!" and assume that both the Nicene Council and the Nicene Creed were nothing more than a tool of Empire. This mischaracterization, however, ignores historical realities. Though many assume that the Council of Niceaea "took place in the social context of the Church's position as the favored religion of the Roman State,"[7] this is incorrect. The Council of Nicaea took place in 325, twelve years after the Edict of Milan (313) removed Christianity from the list of illegal religions, and the Christains bishops certainly had some favor from the Emperor, but at this point they did yet not have more favor than the priests of traditional religions. Arius, himself an African Berber, was ordained as a presbyter the same year as the Edit of Milan. But the controversy arose when Arius felt that the bishop of Alexandria was flirting with the older heresy of Sabellianism/Monarchianism. The Arian Controversy arose from a debate between competing African answers to questions that concerned African Christians.

Moreover, the Nicene Council was truly ecumenical, with delegates attending from outside of the Roman Empire — from Armenia, Georgia, the Sassanid Persian Empire, and from India. In Persia, adherence to Nicene orthodoxy was arguably a politically subversive act, undermining empire. For a significant period of time, this was also true in the Roman Empire itself. The victory of Nicene orthodoxy was not certain. When the Roman Emperors, with all their might, were trying to convert the whole Christian world to either Arian or semi-Arian christology, the African Athanasius was sent into exile multiple times rather than give up his African christology. This is why the Christian tradition in the West came to speak of *Athanasius contra mundum* (Latin: 'Athanasius against the world'). The frequent exiling of various champions of Nicene orthodoxy by imperial authorities is proof enough that the orthodox (Nicene) Christianity was certainly *not* "the favored religion of the Roman State" during this time. When the Roman Emperor Constantius II (r. 317–361), the

[5] Augustine's *De Trinitate* deserves its fame. But Christianity was polycentric in its origins, and recognizing its polycentricity and multicultural and multilingual nature is the necessary correction to misguided eurocentricity. Let us not make a similar error of insisting on afrocentricity. Thus it is worth mentioning that the *De Trinitate* written by Hilary of Poitiers (c. 310 – c. 357) is arguably superior to Augustine's, even though Augustine's has been far more influential in Western Christianity, because Hilary drew more deeply from the Greek theology of northeast Africa and west Asia. Like Athanasius, Hilary was exiled by imperial authority for his steadfast commitment to Nicene orthodoxy.

[6] Augustine, *Letters of St. Augustin* 138.4.19 (*NPNF1* 1:697).

[7] So James H. Cone, *God of the Opressed*, 107.

son of Constantine the Great, wrote to Ezana, the Christian king of Aksum (Ethiopia), to press him to reject Athanasius and to accept the imperially-appointed Arian bishop, Ezana refused (with the support of the Aksumite church leaders).

I admit that some contemporary complaints about Nicene trinitarian jargon are fair — e.g., Kenyan theologian Jesse Mgambi notes that its use of 'persons' (and presumably of *homoousios* and *homoiousios* as well!) is so foreign to African contexts as to be simply unhelpful[8] and African American theologian James Cone observes that today

> the *homoousia* question is not a black question. Blacks do not ask whether Jesus is one with the Father or divine and human, though the orthodox formulations are implied in their language. They ask whether Jesus is walking with them, whether they can call him up on the "telephone of prayer" and tell him all about their troubles.[9]

But when Cone asserts that "who Christ is," as articulated by Nicene christology, "was controlled by the Greek view of what God had to do to save humanity,"[10] he unfortunately whitewashes the *africanity* of Athanasius, his deep roots in Egyptian/Coptic — that is *African* — language and culture, and the way that African Fathers of the Early Church such as Athanasius and Augustine were, in fact, answering *African* questions.

While I support calls for decolonization (and de-proselytization), including of Christian theology, as well as calls for addressing comtemporary contexts in our theologizing, historian Robert Louis Wilken revisits the value of this ancient contextual theology:

> The notion that the development of early Christian thought

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[8] Jesse N. K. Mugambi, *African Christian Theology: An Introduction*, 7. Greek-speaking Nicene orthodoxy recognizes that God the Son is *homoousios* (ὁμοούσιος, 'of the same essence or being') with God the Father. The Arian heresy proclaimed that Christ is only *homoiousios* (ὁμοιούσιος, 'of similar essence') with the Father. Nicene orthodoxy also proclaims that there is only one God and that God exists in three *hupostases* (ὑποστάσεις; the singlular form is ὑπόστασις / *hupóstasis*): Father, Son, and Spirit. *Hupostasis* was translated into Latin as *persona*, which led to the use of the trinitarian language of "God in three persons" in modern English, though this technical use of 'person' is (confusingly) not synomymous with the ordinary meaning of the word in English.

[9] Cone, *God of the Opressed*, 13. Cone continues: "To be sure Athanasius' assertion about the status of the Logos in the Godhead is important for the church's continued christological investigations. But we must not forget that Athanasius' question about the Son's status in relation to the Father did not arise in the historical context of the slave codes and the slave drivers. And if he had been a black slave in America, I am sure he would have asked a different set of questions. He might have asked about the status of the Son in relation to slaveholders." While contemporary answers to contempory questions should not *supplant* Nicene christology, they can and should *supplement* and *enrich* Nicene theology.

[10] Cone, *God of the Opressed*, 107.

> represented a hellenization of Christianity has outlived its usefulness. . . . a more apt expression would be the Christianization of Hellenism . . . Christian thinking, while working within matters of thought and conceptions rooted in Greco-Roman culture, transformed them so profoundly that in the end something quite new came into being.[11]

Similarly, Kenyan biblical scholar Andrew M. Mbuvi affirms the validity of the historical hellenization both on its own terms *and* as a model to be followed in other contexts.[12]

I admit that Nicene theological jargon is difficult to understand for those of us who don't speak Athanasius's Greek and Coptic or Augustine's and Tertullian's Latin, and also for those of us who may be fluent in a number of contemporary African languages and cultures but are not fluent in ancient African cultures. Indeed, in ordinary English "God in three Persons" unavoidably sounds like tritheism, [13] the very thing that the Nicene Council (325) and Constantinopolitan Council (381) were so careful to guard against! (So I have full sympathy with my good friend, *nana*[14] Jesse Mugambi.) Nonetheless, from Athanasius (c. 296 – 373) and Augustine (354–430) to Yared the Melodist (500s) of Aksum in the patristic era, to medieval Coptic and Nubian and Ethiopian Christian communities, to millions of contemporary Christians from Senegal to Eritrea and Morocco to Madagascar and Angola to Zimbabwe, the Creed is not mere western dogma but is also an *African* doxology which arises not from philosophical speculation but from lived experience of God in Christ.[15] Moreover, the Nicene Creed was *not* created from the top down (and was certainly not written by the emperor) — the attendees represented a

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[11] Robert Louis Wilken, *The Spirit of Early Christian Thought: Seeking the Face of God*, xvi–xvii.

[12] Andrew M. Mbuvi, *African Biblical Studies: Unmasking Embedded Racism and Colonialism in Biblical Studies*, 123.

[13] Ironically, the Latin term *persona* (which is not synomymous with either of its English descendants 'persona' or 'person') was adopted in the West because Latin-speakers were concerned that the Greek term ὑπόστασις (*hupóstasis*, usually transliterated as 'hypostasis') had "a tritheistic connotation," the very thing the Greek-speakers were trying to avoid. See James Henry Owino Kombo, *Theological Models of the Doctrine of the Trinity: Trinity, Diversity and Theological Hermeneutics*, 43.

[14] In dialects of Akan, spoken primarily in Ghana, "*nana* is a gender neutral honorific title for a living elder or an ancestor. A bearer of the title is considered to enshrine the communal moral ethos and as such to be a representative of the standard of the ancestors. The term is sometimes used as a personal name." Rudolf K. Gaisie, personal correspondence.

[15] For both the Early Church, inside and outside of the Roman Empire, and contemporary African Christians, "the doctrine of the Trinity . . . emerges from the worship and the personal coming of God in the Son and the Holy Spirit," confirming "that the Trinity first and foremost is not an adjunct in theology and neither is it a mere doctrine of abstraction but to the contrary, it is a salvific reality experienced in Jesus Christ and the Holy Spirit." Kombo, *Theological Models of the Doctrine of the Trinity*, 120.

suffering people who had just emerged from a period of intense persecution at the hands of Empire — and the Creed arose as an ecumenical and global expression of a lived faith.

The Nicene Creed (325) and its revision, the Nicene-Constantinopolitan Creed (381), arose equally from the testimony of the Apostles, the witness of Scripture, and the Church's lived experience of God in Christ. From Thomas's addressing the resurrected Jesus as "my Lord and my God!" (John 20:28), the Church has struggled to reconcile two credal statements: the monotheism[16] of "YHWH our Elohim, YHWH is one" (Deut 6:4) and the early apostolic claim that Jesus is identified with YWHW.[17] Some scholars claim that such a "high christology" is necessarily late and non-original in the Christian movement. But a fair reading of the New Testament documents, the Apostolic Fathers, and outside sources such as Pliny the Younger make it clear Jesus was worshipped "as a god" (so Pliny) from the beginning. In recent scholarship, the work of Larry Hurtado (1943–2019) has definitively shown this to be the case.[18]

Trying to sensibly discuss this mystery — the monotheism of "YHWH our Elohim is one YHWH" and the early (and biblical) claim that Jesus is identified with YWHW— led to the orthodox doctrines of Trinity and Incarnation. The Nicene Creed of 325 was the attempt of the worldwide Church — African, Asian (as far east as India), and European — to articulate what the Church had always and everywhere believed while adopting technical language to guard against the Christological heresies of Arianism and adoptionism. But because the theological controversies of the day were primarily about the Christ, God the Son, the Nicene Creed said of the Spirit simply "we believe . . . and in the Holy Spirit." But additional clarification was eventually needed, and so the Nicene-Constantinopolitan Creed of 381 drew upon Scripture to expand the credal statement. Regarding the Spirit, it says "we believe . . . and in the Holy Spirit, the Lord and Giver of life, who proceeds from the Father,[19] who with the Father and the Son together is worshiped and glorified, who spoke by the prophets."

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[16] While in the time of Moses, Israel might have worshipped YHWH as a form of *henotheism* (i.e., many deities might be recognized but worship and allegiance are given only to one) rather than *monotheism*, by the first century Jews (whether or not they accepted Jesus as Messiah) and converts to Christianity were thoroughly monotheistic. This is why the Romans considered Christians to be "atheists": Christians denied the existence of any gods other than the one true God who was revealed in Jesus.

[17] Here I hasten to observe that the seemingly contradictory is not necessarily mutual exclusive. Theologians can learn from physicists on this point. Is light a waveform of moving energy or a discreet material 'packet' (i.e., a *photon*)? The answer is "both."

[18] See especially Larry W. Hurtado, *Lord Jesus Christ: Devotion to Jesus in Earliest Christianity*.

[19] Roman Catholics and most Protestants add the *filioque* [Latin: 'and the Son'] clause here, asserting that the Spirit "proceeds from the Father *and the Son*," but that was a much later

"Bible names for Bible things" is a popular slogan in the Christian tradition in which I was raised, but it ignores the nature of language and of culture. On such *solo scriptura* grounds,[20] many reject the technical language of Nicene orthodoxy. But *solo scriptura* is far more radical than the *sola scriptura* of the Protestant Reformers; while it may sound appealing, it is not tenable. If the *solo scriptura* principle is pushed, then we would be limited in our worship to the use of Greek, Aramaic, and Hebrew. Ultimately, *solo scriptura* does disservice to the principle of translatability[21] and fosters the very spirit of proselytization[22] that we do well to reject when practiced by those engaged in Arabo-Euro-Asian domination of Africa and Africans. So I encourage all of us to endeavor to explore how the mystery of our faith can best be articulated in our own day and in our own vernaculars and contexts. As we do so, we should take care lest we discard what the first centuries of the African Christian Church believed and practiced simply because modern European slavers nominally confessed (albeit without meaningful praxis) some of the same things. *Ressourcement* is important: "the African church must recover its past, its history, and its traditions," remembering that "the very essence of Christianity is trinitarian" and "every aspect of the Christian life and experience is and must be rooted in the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit."[23] Naturally, when we move into vernacular theologies — thinking in the contemporary languages of Africa or elsewhere instead of insisting on anglophone or francophone or lusophone theological forms — differences in our theological articulations can be

addition. A discussion of the *filioque* controversy is beyond our scope here. I exclude the term above to avoid anachronism.

[20] Most readers are familiar with the "five solas" (*quinque solae* in Latin) of the Protestant Reformation: *sola scriptura* ('by Scripture alone'), *sola fide* ('by faith alone'), *sola gratia* ('by grace alone'), *solus Christus* ('by Christ alone'), and *soli Deo gloria* ('glory to God alone'). All five of these work together. But *solo scriptura* (which Latin readers will note is grammatically incorrect) refers to "scripture alone" in exclusion to Creeds, history, community accountability, etc. While *solo scriptura* claims to find authority in Scripture alone, in practice it finds authority in *individual interpretation* of Scripture alone, precisely because it rejects the guidance of Church, precendence, history, and even of the Holy Spirit.

[21] See Kwame Bediako, "Biblical Exegesis in Africa: The Significance of the Translated Scripture;" Lamin Sanneh, "Gospel and Culture: Ramifying Effects of Scripture Translation;" Sanneh, "The Significance of the Translation Principle;" Retief Müller, "The (non-)translatability of the Holy Trinity," 1–2; and Andrew F. Walls, "The Translation Principle in Christian History."

[22] On the crucial distinction between *conversion* and *proselytization*, see my "Conversion or Proselytization? Being Maasai, Becoming Christian;" and also the essential work of Andrew F. Walls, including especially his "Conversion and Christian Continuity" and "Converts or Proselytes? The Crisis over Conversion in the Early Church." For a summary discussion in French on Walls's views on conversion, see Hannes Wiher, "Le prosélytisme: Une évaluation évangélique ['Proselytism: An Evangelical Evaluation'],"124–127.

[23] Samuel Waje Kunhiyop, "The Trinity in Africa: Trends and Trajectories," 66, 65.

accentuated, much as patristic and medieval Syriac and Gəʿəz (*or* Geʿez) theological formulations sound rather different from the latinate theological formulations of Western Christianity to which most of us are more accustomed.

This issue begins with an editorial essay from Chammah Kaunda, one of our managing editors. Looking toward an indigenous African (re)discovery of the Nicene Creed, he takes "a Decolonialpentecostal Back-gaze" at the Nicene era in "The Echo of Nicene Faith." Such engagement with Nicene articulations of faith do not lead to a Hellenstic intellectual colonizing of the mind of Africans but rather can serve precisely to help *decolonize* "the mind of African Christians." Proceeding to the article section of this issue, "Out of Africa, For the World: The Nicene Creed of 325" by patristics scholar Sara Parvis, explores the debt that Nicene orthodoxy owes to the ancient African church. Our second article, Calum Samuelson's "*Täwaḥədo* Theologising as a Guide for Ecumenical Fellowship," requires some additional introduction, as it uses Gəʿəz terminology with which many of our readers will be unfamiliar.[24]

*Täwaḥədo* is a technical Gəʿəz term, used also in modern Ethiopian languages such as Amharic and Tigrinya, that refers to the christology of the Ethiopian and Eritrean Orthodox Churches, stating that Christ has a single, unified nature. Its use originated in the aftermath of the Council of Chalcedon in 451, which attempted to further clarify Nicene understandings. *Täwaḥədo* christology is closely related to the miaphysite christology[25] of Cyril of Alexandria (c. 376 – 444) and the Coptic Orthodox Church. Both *täwaḥədo* and *miaphysite* christologies are thoroughly orthodox as regarding the Nicene Creed of 325 and the Nicene-Constantinopolitan Creed of 381, and both fully subscribe to the *intention* of the Chalcedonian Definition's attempt to emphasize that Christ is fully God and fully human, but they reject the *dyophysite* ('two natures') formulation of the Chalcedonian Definition on the grounds that it sounded (to the non-Chalcedonians) as though it claims that are two Christs rather than one. The division between the so-called Chalcedonians and non-Chalcedonians largely came about through misunderstanding, as the technical Greek terms being debated had different meanings, rather than single

[24] Geʿez (ግዕዝ), sometimes referred to as "Old Ethiopic," is an ancient Afro-Asiatic South Semitic language once spoken in what is now Eritrea and Ethiopia. It became an ancient Christian language alongside Greek, Syriac, and Latin.

[25] *Miaphysite*, derived from μία φύσις (*mía phúsis*, 'one nature') is the description of most non-Chalcedonian christology. It refers to Christ having a single united nature that is both fully divine and fully human. Many textbooks from the Western tradition (Roman Catholic, Protestant, and Eastern Orthodox) erroneously refer to the Cyrillian christology of the Oriental Orthodox churches as *monophysite*. Monophysite christology, however, implies a decreased importance and subordindation of Christ's humanity. As a technical term, *monophysite theology* would be an apt description of the theology of 'Oneness' Pentecostalism. *Monophysite* is not a fair characterization of Coptic and Ethiopian Orthodox christology; its use represents an uncritical repetition of ancient slanders.

shared meanings, in different regional dialects of Greek. Of course, regional rivalries and personal rivalries also played a role. Given its aftermath, it is for good reason that patristics scholar and missions historian Andrew F. Walls has characterized the Council of Chalcedon as "the great ecumenical failure of the fifth century."[26] I concur with this evaluation, and I suggest that we do well to recognize its challenges.

It is worth pointing out that since at least 1964, the Chalcedonian Eastern Orthodox Churches and the non-Chalcedonian Oriental Orthodox Churches have agreed that both the Chalcedonian and the Cyrillian christological formulations are fully orthodox, and that both sides agree that Christ is *fully God and fully human*. Similarly, since 1973, the Roman Catholic Church and Coptic Orthodox Church came to the same agreement. In a Common Declaration issued in 1984 by the pope of the Roman Catholic Church and the patriarch of the miaphysite Syrian Orthodox Church stated that

> The confusions and schisms that occurred between their Churches in the later centuries, they realize today, in no way affect or touch the substance of their faith, since these arose only because of differences in terminology and culture and in the various formulae adopted by different theological schools to express the same matter. Accordingly, we find today no real basis for the sad divisions and schisms that subsequently arose between us concerning the doctrine of Incarnation. In words and life we confess the true doctrine concerning Christ our Lord, notwithstanding the differences in interpretation of such a doctrine which arose at the time of the Council of Chalcedon.[27]

Although technical terminology can be confusing and divisive, and its translation challenging, it is important to remember that our "belief in the triune God is not just an abstract theological postulation by sophisticated theologians, but has serious meaning and implications for Christian spirituality and practice."[28] But as the universal Church has recognized that God has revealed

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[26] See Andrew F. Walls, "The Break-up of Early World Christianity and the Great Ecumenical Failure."

[27] "Common Declaration of Pope John Paul II and The Ecumenical Patriarch of Antioch His Holiness Moran Mar Ignatius Zakka I Iwas."

[28] Kunhiyop, "The Trinity in Africa," 55–56. Thus Jean-Paul Sagadou asks a crucial theological question: "How do humans, in whom the image of the Holy Trinity is imprinted, share in trinitarian life? Conversely, How does the Trinity penetrate human life in a new and complete way?" Sagadou, *À la recherche des traces africaines du Dieu-Trinité: Une approche narrative du mystère trinitaire*, 61; my translation. Sagadou's French reads "Comment l'homme, dans lequel est imprimé l'image de la Sainte Trinité, partage-t-il la vie trinitaire ? Et inversement, comment la Trinité pénètre-t-elle de manière nouvelle et entiere dans la vie de l'homme ?"

Godself as Trinity, perhaps rather than focusing on debates about translating Nicene theology we should turn to doxology and praise.[29]

The remaining articles belong to the eclectic section of this issue. Emmanuel Oumarou of Cameroon explores a "Sunomilean Theology as a Model of Inter-Contextual Biblical Theology: Conceptual and Methodological Foundations for Theologizing with Others," coining a new term from the verb συνομιλέω (*sunomiléō,* 'to converse with'). Oumarou's sunomilean theological "discourse thus emphasizes mutuality, reciprocity, and correlation in communication." Rahila L. Jakawa of Nigeria offers "Partners, Not Rivals: Gender Inequality and Its Implications for Women's Participation in Pastoral Ministry in Church of Christ." Finally, Rachel Fiedler, Rhodian Munyenyembe, and Atipatsa Chiwanda Kaminga, all of Malawi, offer a study on the "Prevention and Care during the Covid-19 Pandemic: Masculinities as a Double-Edged Sword for Men and Women in Church Leadership in some Malawian Urban Churches."

Seven books are evaluated with full-length review essays. First Kayle Pelletier offers a review of Samuel Waje Kunhiyop's *African Christian Theology*, a systematic theology for Africa.[30] The next four book reviews concern African Christian contextual realities. Nathan Scott evaluates Adam Simmons's *Nubia, Ethiopia, and the Crusading World, 1095–1402*. Nebeyou Alemu Terefe focuses on Ethiopian traditions that extend at least as far back as the medieval period but which continue to the present in his evaluation of Alexandra Sellassie Antohin's *The Covenant's Veil: Ethiopian Orthodox Tradition of Elaboration*. Moving a little south and to strictly contemporary times, Kevin Muriithi Ndereba reviews Kyama Mugambi's *A Spirit of Revitalization: Urban Pentecostalism in Kenya*. From southern Africa, Daniel Andrew examines Peter White's edited volume, *Faith, Spirituality and Praxis: Exploring Dynamics in African Grassrootes Theologies and Churches*. Our final two book review essays return to the beginning: the evaluation of Scripture. Bitrus S. Sarma evaluates Tekalign Duguma Negewo's *Creating Community Identity in Matthew's Gospel Narrative* while Dion A. Forster explores *Reading Hebrews and 1 Peter from Majority World Perspectives*, edited by Sofanit T. Abebe, Elizabeth W. Mburu, and Abeneazer G. Urga.

Finally, we have four 'Book Note' short reviews, introducing *Medieval Ethiopian Kingship, Craft and Diplomacy with Latin Europe* by Verena Krebs, *Christianity in Malawi: A Reader*, edited by Klaus Fiedler and Kenneth R. Ross, *Who Are My People? Love, Violence, and Christianity in Sub-Saharan Africa*,

[29] This is also the conclusion of Müller, "The (non)translatability of the Trinity," 8: "Worshipping the Trinity would be the more appropriate course of action."

[30] Kunhiyop discusses trinitarian Nicene theology in *African Christian Theology*, 4, 7, and 45–49.

and *Shame in the Individual Lament Psalms and African Spirituality* by Mark S. Aidoo.

This issue offers voices representing nine countries in Africa —Cameroon, Ghana, Ethiopia, Kenya, Malawi, Nigeria, South Africa, Uganda, and Zambia (this includes authors of reviewed books). If your country is not represented, then we encourage you to consider submitting something for a future issue. But for now — *tolle lege*, 'take and read.'

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