

Editorial

Welcome to the second edition of the *Stellenbosch Theological Journal (STJ)*, previously known as the *Nederduitse Gereformeerde Teologiese Tydskrif / Dutch Reformed Theological Journal (NGTT)*. Please visit our website www.stj.ac.za for more information on the rich heritage of our journal, as well as on its scope and vision.

In this edition we present 36 peer-reviewed academic articles. The first five articles (by Enstedt, James, Naudé, Sigurdson, and Ward) have their origin in an academic initiative that began with a symposium on urban theology in December 2013 at the University of Gothenburg, Sweden, with contributors from South Africa, the United Kingdom and Sweden. This project continued with a writing workshop in September 2014 at Zuurberg Village in the mountains outside Port Elizabeth, South Africa. The “urban” aspect of theology is associated with the geographical cityscape, as well as with specific questions and problems that emerge from this setting. By considering the new urban situation, the symposium aimed at exploring new ways of practising theology in relation to existing and emerging urban realities. We include a selection of the papers presented as part of this research project on urban theologies.

The next six articles (by Cezula, Claassens, Smit, Vosloo, Wasserman, and West) were first presented in March 2014 as part of Biblica’s “Conversations on Reading the Bible” conference. At this interdisciplinary event, held at the Stellenbosch Institute for Advanced Studies (STIAS), several papers and responses engaged with some of the thorny hermeneutical challenges marking the use and abuse of the Bible in the South African and broader African context.

The rest of the articles included in this edition of *STJ* deals with a wide array of themes stretching across the various theological disciplines. The year 2015 will be remembered, among other things, for the fact that questions related to migration and refugees marked the global socio-political and economic discourse. The article by Roderick Hewitt brings these realities into conversation with a biblical text. Also in 2015, student protests on university campuses resulted in the decision to have a zero percent increase in student fees, and rigorous and heated conversations – also on social media – accompanied the nationwide protests. The article by Reggie Nel deals specifically with the role of social media in the new struggle of young

people against marginalisation, relating the process to the challenges it poses to missional ecclesiology. During the high tide of the #FeesMustFall movement in October 2015, the first Russel Botman memorial lecture was held at Stellenbosch University. Prof Dirkie Smit spoke on “‘Making History for the Coming Generation’ – On the Theological Logic of Russel Botman’s Commitment to Transformation,” and we present his lecture commemorating the theological legacy of the previous Vice Chancellor and Rector of Stellenbosch University.

A century ago – in 1915 – the well-known doctor and New Testament scholar Albert Schweitzer travelled up the Ogoewe River when he observed a group of hippopotamuses and came to his “reverence for life” rule. Pieter Botha’s article offers an in-depth engagement with Schweitzer’s ethical vision as it relates to gratitude and reverence for life. Much more can be said about the articles presented in this edition of *STJ*, but suffice it to say that they portray in their various ways the resources that theological scholarship can draw upon in service of rigorous academic discourse.

Next to the peer-reviewed articles, this edition of *STJ* includes four book reviews, including reviews of books by or about leading international theologians such as Jürgen Moltmann and Rowan Williams. Two important publications, also for South African readers, namely Ernst Conradie’s extensive *The Earth in God’s Economy* and the collection *Contesting Post-Racialism*, are also reviewed in this edition.

Our discourse section (in Dutch) reflects something of the conversation that took place at a symposium on “Pasen als paradigmawisseling” (Easter as Paradigm Change) at the VU University, Amsterdam following the publication of Dirk-Martin Grube’s book *Ostern als Paradigmenwechsel. Eine wissenschaftstheoretische Untersuchung zur Entstehung des Urchristentums und deren Konsequenzen für die Christologie* (Neukirchen-Vluyn: Neukirchener Verlag, 2012). After Grube’s opening remarks about his book, the rest of this section presents responses by Peerbolte, Benjamins and Van den Brink, followed by Grube’s brief reply to his interlocutors.

We also remind our readers that several of the previous editions of *NGTT* can be accessed online via our website.

Robert Vosloo

Editor: *STJ*