

Editorial

Welcome to the December 2016 edition of *Stellenbosch Theological Journal* (*STJ*) in which we present 28 peer-reviewed academic articles.

In the July 2016 edition of *STJ* we published 5 articles first delivered as papers at a conference on “Bonhoeffer and the Global South: Reception History and Contemporary and Future Challenges,” held at the end of September 2015 at Stellenbosch University. This conference focused on the reception and relevance of the German theologian Dietrich Bonhoeffer’s life and work for theological discourses in Brazil and Southern Africa.

In this edition we include four more articles that emanated from this conference (by Anthonissen, Dunn, Kgatla and Von Sinner respectively). One of the presenters at that conference, Dr Johan G Botha, died suddenly in October 2016. His dissertation in 1989, entitled “Skuldbelydenis en plaasbekleding” [Confession of guilt and representative vicarious action], dealt with the question of guilt in the thought and praxis of Bonhoeffer. We hereby honour his contribution to the church, ecumenical relations and theology over many years. Another loss for the South African theological community was the death in May 2016 of Augustine Shutte, a member of the Dominican Order of Friars, and since 1972 lecturer in philosophy at the University of Cape Town. He made a remarkable contribution to philosophical and theological discourse, and his many books include *Ubuntu: An Ethic for a New South Africa* (2001) and his earlier *Philosophy for Africa* (1993). We are glad to include Patrick Giddy’s article on Augustine Shutte’s autobiographical account of his Christian theology.

This edition also contains an article on Henri Nouwen’s spirituality of embodied vulnerability (Riaan van der Merwe) and on Edward Bailey’s concept of implicit religion (Christo Lombaard).

A number of the articles, furthermore, relates specifically to contexts in the rest of Africa, including articles on the impact of conflict on women in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (Lubunga), on changing perspectives of the Eucharist among the Kikuyu communicants in the Anglican Church of Kenya (Kiarie & Joshua), on poverty in Sub-Saharan Africa (Kakwata), and on syncretism and inculturation in Cameroon (Nyuyki & Van Niekerk). The article by Ramantswana provides a decolonial reflection on African biblical hermeneutics, whereas Dirk van der Merwe’s essay discusses some

hermeneutical principles that is needed in light of the movement from “Christianising Africa to Africanising Christianity”.

Several of the articles presented in this edition provides critical assessments of the work of some prominent Reformed theologians. Bram van de Beek discusses “a forgotten article” by the eminent Dutch theologian Oepke Noordmans on the future of the church, while Henco van der Westhuizen – a newly appointed lecturer at the Faculty of Theology at the University of the Free State – engages the influential German theologian Michael Welker’s theological hermeneutics. Jakub Urbaniak, in turn, gives a critical evaluation, from an African-Kairos perspective, of the important contribution of the South African Reformed public theologian Nico Koopman.

In addition, several of the included articles draw on the research on some of the challenges Reformed pastors and faith communities face in terms of, for instance, personal well-being and finances (Alsemgeest, Schoeman & Swart), worship (Brits), child and youth ministries (Beukes & Van der Westhuizen), mission (Tucker; Verster), and church polity (Strauss).

In October 2015 the Dutch Reformed Church voted with a majority in favour of ordaining gay ministers. In November 2016, however, this decision was overturned at a special synod meeting. Against this backdrop, the article by Compaan that offers a Reformed perspective in search of the contours of a theological-ethical engagement with same-sex relationships makes for interesting reading.

In October 2016 higher education in South Africa was intensely confronted with the #FeesMustFall campaigns, and Daniël Louw’s article provides theological analysis and commentary. Also with regard to higher education, Sunelle Stander’s article focuses on the tension between subordination and resistance with reference to the so called “maidens bursary”.

As in the past, we also included some articles that engages directly with biblical texts through various hermeneutical lenses (see the articles by Boloje & Groenewald, Du Toit, and Masenya).

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

Robert Vosloo

Editor: *STJ*