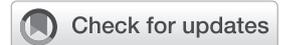


Africa platform for New Testament scholars

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This year marks the sixth year that *HTS Teologiese Studies/Theological Studies* publishes the special collection Africa Platform for New Testament Scholars. Since 2020, 52 articles have been published in this collection with the addition of 6 articles in 2025. The aim of this special collection remains to facilitate the publication of academic articles in the field of the New Testament and related literature, authored by scholars from Africa. Annually, New Testament scholars from Africa are invited to participate in the collection by submitting articles that have contextual issues as focus. This year, numerous articles were submitted, of which six were published after the rigorous peer review process.

As can be seen from the discussion of the articles that were published in this year's collection, the focus indeed was on contextual issues, demonstrating the continued vitality and relevance of African biblical scholarship. The contributions span diverse geographical contexts across the continent, addressing pressing contemporary challenges through biblical hermeneutics.

Chabata (2025), in his article 'Cyclone Idai Disaster in Zimbabwe: A New Testament ethical analysis of Matthew 24:37–39', examines the devastating impact of Cyclone Idai on Zimbabwe through a New Testament ethical lens. He argues that the story of Noah's ark in Matthew 24:37–39 provides a disaster response framework that can inform contemporary disaster management strategies. Chabata demonstrates how biblical ethics of love, selfless service, charity, social responsibility, justice, sharing, care ministry and good neighbourliness can constitute effective ways of controlling, managing and reducing disaster risks. The article contributes significantly to the ongoing debate on how biblical ethics can be deployed in disaster management and risk reduction strategies in Zimbabwe and beyond.

Kuwornu-Adjaottor and Quaye (2025), in their contribution 'Double negatives in New Testament Greek texts and their translations in the Dangme Bible', address crucial translation challenges in vernacular Bible translations. They examine how Greek double negatives (οὐ μὴ) are rendered in the Dangme Bible, arguing that these emphatic constructions carry significant exegetical and theological weight that must be preserved in local language translations. Their research employs mother tongue biblical hermeneutics methodology to analyse translation approaches, identifying instances where the emphatic force is maintained, mildly translated or entirely ignored. The article advocates for greater attention to preserving the emphatic force of Greek double negatives to maintain their theological and syntactical significance for local readers.

Achunike, Asadu and Omeke (2025), in their article 'Assessing the phenomenon of market evangelism in Nigeria and its impact on traders' ethics', examine the integration of Christian faith with business practices in Nigerian markets. They argue that market evangelism plays a key role in fostering integrity and ethics among traders, with far-reaching implications for economic and social growth. The research documents how this practice, rooted in Nigeria's missionary history, has transformed traders' behaviour by promoting biblical principles of honesty, transparency and social responsibility. However, the authors identify significant challenges, noting that current approaches often overlook the need for sustainable behavioural change and lack contextualised teaching that addresses specific business ethics challenges.

Oyeniya (2025), in his contribution 'Righteousness in Luke 1:6: Considering marital stability amid barrenness in Nigerian societies', examines how righteousness contributed to marital stability for Zechariah and Elizabeth in Luke 1:6, particularly addressing infertility challenges faced by Nigerian couples. He argues that their righteousness [δικαιοσύνη] involved genuine faithfulness to God rather than mere external compliance, and their 'blameless' [ἄμεμπτοι] status demonstrated consistent adherence to God's commandments despite their childlessness. Through interviews with 72 participants across Osun State, Oyeniya reveals how infertility carries severe social stigma in Yoruba Christian communities, particularly for women who face accusations of witchcraft or divine punishment. The biblical couple's example challenges cultural assumptions linking

Note: The manuscript is a contribution to the themed collection titled 'Africa Platform for NT Scholars,' under the expert guidance of guest editor Prof. Ernest van Eck.

childlessness to divine disapproval, demonstrating how marriage can remain stable through shared faith and mutual support rather than focusing solely on procreation.

Sakitey and Van Eck (2025), in their article 'Christian gathering and the digital ecclesia: A post-COVID-19 reading of Hebrews 10:25', examine how the coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) pandemic challenged traditional interpretations of Hebrews 10:25 within Ewe-Ghanaian Christian communities. They reveal translation complexities in Ewe Bibles, where ἐπισυναγωγή [the act of gathering] was rendered as terms referring to places of gathering, reinforcing traditional understanding of physical worship spaces rather than the act of assembling. The pandemic dramatically disrupted Ewe-Ghanaian worship practices, with Ghana banning church activities for 20 out of 52 liturgical weeks in 2020, forcing rapid adaptation to virtual worship through social media platforms. The authors conclude that natural phenomena can legitimately impact Christian gathering, challenging rigid interpretations of Hebrews 10:25 and necessitating flexible ecclesiological frameworks that accommodate both physical and virtual worship spaces.

Mundenda (2025), in his study 'Intersectional hermeneutics in Zimbabwe's Anglican Church, Diocese of Harare (2008–2025)', examines how the Anglican Diocese of Harare adapted its biblical interpretation practices in response to Zimbabwe's socio-economic crisis and the rise of Pentecostal churches. He documents how the traditionally sacramental Anglican Church began adopting Pentecostal practices through what he terms 'intersectional hermeneutics', producing significant changes including clergy-centred services replacing community-focused worship, individual prayers supplanting liturgical forms and prosperity themes overshadowing heavenly focus. Using socio-historical methodology, Mundenda reveals that Pentecostal preachers effectively 'pentecostalised' Anglican clergy, undermining traditional Anglican identity as the church compromised its prophetic role by assimilating popular trends rather than addressing structural issues such as corruption and human rights abuses.

These six substantial contributions demonstrate the continued relevance and sophistication of African New Testament scholarship. Each article addresses pressing contemporary issues – disaster management, Bible translation challenges and ethical business practices – through rigorous engagement with New Testament texts and traditions.

The geographical scope of this collection is notable, spanning West Africa (Nigeria and Ghana) and Southern Africa (Zimbabwe), reflecting the pan-African character of the platform. The diversity of authors and institutional affiliations further enriches the collection, with contributions from both established and emerging scholars addressing local contexts while contributing to broader theological discourse. The methodological approaches employed are equally diverse, ranging from New Testament ethical analysis and translation

studies to empirical research on contemporary religious practices.

What emerges from these contributions is the distinctive character of African biblical scholarship: its commitment to contextual relevance, its integration of traditional exegetical methods with contemporary challenges and its concern for practical application in African societies. These scholars demonstrate how New Testament texts can illuminate and address contemporary African realities, whether natural hazards, linguistic preservation, economic ethics, marital challenges amid cultural pressures, worship adaptations during global crises or ecclesiastical identity preservation in changing religious landscapes.

The articles also reveal the ongoing challenges facing African communities and how biblical scholarship can contribute to addressing these challenges. From disaster preparedness and response to preserving linguistic heritage in Bible translations, from promoting ethical business practices to fostering economic development, from supporting marital stability amid cultural stigma to adapting worship practices during global crises and from maintaining ecclesiastical identity to addressing religious competition, these contributions show how New Testament scholarship remains vitally engaged with the pressing issues of African societies.

This collection continues to establish a significant platform for African voices in New Testament studies, emphasising contextual interpretation that bridges ancient texts and contemporary African experiences. The diversity of topics, methodological approaches and geographical representation showcases the richness of African biblical scholarship and its important contributions to global theological discourse.

As we look towards future collections, these contributions set a high standard for African New Testament scholarship that is both academically rigorous and contextually engaged, demonstrating the unique perspectives and valuable insights that African scholars bring to the broader field of biblical studies.

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