

Editorial

Welcome to Issue 4.3 of the *Global South Theological Journal*. In this issue, we present four compelling articles that, while distinct in subject matter, converge on a powerful, unifying theme: Indigenous Agency and Contextual Resilience in African Christianity. Moving beyond historical narratives of missionary imposition or passive reception, these contributions explore how African believers actively construct their ecclesial identity, negotiate theological ethics, and adapt to rapidly shifting realities—whether ancient, modern, or digital.

First, Tibebe Teklu Senbetu invites us to re-examine the roots of the faith in "The Beauty of the Ethiopian Christian Tradition." Tibebe provides a fascinating exploration of the Ethiopian Orthodox Tewahedo Church (EOTC), arguing that it represents a unique "non-Hellenized Christianity" that has synthesized the Gospel with Hebraic traditions for millennia. By detailing the EOTC's preservation of Jewish rituals—such as the observance of the Sabbath, dietary laws, and the centrality of the Ark of the Covenant—Tibebe illustrates a vibrant model of indigenous Christianity that predates Western colonialism. This piece is essential reading for those interested in how the "beauty of the Ethiopian Christian tradition" offers a distinct appropriation of black spirituality.

Shifting from ancient roots to modern adoption, Ibrahim S. Bitrus challenges the persistent label of Christianity as a "white man's religion" in "How Christianity Became Africans' Own Traditional Religion." Bitrus contends that through the translation of Scripture into vernacular languages and the internalization of the faith, Christianity has been effectively "de-foreignized". He offers "theo-anthropological proofs" of this transformation, noting how the African church's robust belief in the supernatural and dynamic prayer life has turned the faith into a genuine African tradition. This article provides a vital framework for understanding the demographic explosion of the church in the Global South.

However, resilience is also tested by crisis. In "On this Rock: Charting the Future of African Virtual Churches," Julius Kithinji tackles the ecclesiological disruption caused by the COVID-19 pandemic. Kithinji investigates how the rapid migration to digital platforms challenged the core African value of *communality*. He argues that while virtuality was a necessary survival mechanism, the church must now critically evaluate these "inchoate" forms of worship to ensure they do not erode the embodied connection essential to African ecclesiology. This piece is a must-read for ministry leaders navigating the intersection of technology and sacramental theology.

Finally, we turn to the ethics of survival in the face of violence. In "Turn the Other Cheek," Ibrahim S. Bitrus and Seth Mbusa Atiko address the harrowing context of religious persecution in Northern Nigeria. The authors critique the "misleading Christian response" of passive acquiescence often derived from a literal interpretation of Matthew 5:39. Instead, they propose a hermeneutic of non-violent legal defense and vocal opposition to injustice, drawing on the examples of Jesus and Paul. This courageous article calls for a theology that protects human dignity without resorting to retaliation.

We invite you to engage deeply with these texts, which together testify to a church that is ancient, adaptive, and courageously resilient.

The Editors