

STILL IN THE RACE!

An AJET Editorial

Like a runner recovering from a disastrous fall in a long distance race, AJET 2009 still trails the pack. The remarkable thing is not that we are so far behind in our publication schedule, but that AJET is still in the race at all!

We are off to a good re-start with this issue of AJET. In the lead article, Paul Bowers, in the first of two 2008 Byang Kato Memorial Lectures at the ECWA Theological Seminary in Jos, Nigeria, (JETS), offers his perspectives on Kato's life and contributions, especially the unrecognized ones and the contributions that have been distorted. He also urges Christians in Africa to build upon Kato's commitment to the continued growth and maturity of an evangelical Christianity that is both biblical faithful and contextually sensitive. Bowers sees the need for expanding "Kato Studies", but also believes Christians in Africa should go beyond Kato (in a sense) in a number of ways. Any of the six ways he lists as examples could serve as the basis for future AJET articles.

In the second article, *Divine Providence or Good Luck?*, Dr. Matthew Michael continues the interest shown by other Africa Christian scholars in comparing Greco-Roman worldviews and African traditional thinking with biblical Christianity, in this case contrasting fate, luck, chance and coincidence with the Christian doctrine of God's providence. Michael notes that it is not by chance that President Goodluck Johnathan of Nigeria was named "Goodluck"! From Michael's foundation, others could build on the many ways that divine providence needs to be better integrated into modern African Christian thinking. There also is plenty of room for more research and writing on other popular misconceptions in the worldviews of modern African Christians.

Prosperity theology is more than a misconception and Judith Hill's article, *Theology of Prosperity: A New Testament Perspective*, presents some biblical principles to help give us a better perspective on this wide-spread phenomenon. AJET has tackled aspects of this issue before, including Hill's previous AJET article on *Health, Sickness and Healing in the New Testament: A Brief Theology* (26.2, 2007). Also useful in this area are James Ndyabahika's *The Attitude of the Historical Churches to Poverty and Wealth: A Challenge for African Christianity*, in AJET 23.2, 2004, and Peter R. Young's *Prosperity Teaching in an African Context*, AJET 15.1, 1996. We invite future submissions that, like these articles, could shed more light on how to help Christians in modern Africa deal with these real life issues at the

worldview level. This could include extensive field research on how African Christians in local churches understand (and perhaps misunderstand) Biblical concepts of poverty and suffering, wealth and health. The “Health and Wealth Gospel” will not go away overnight, and neither will the problems it claims to solve.

There are direct links between prosperity and poverty, between health and sickness, between life and death and the last article in this issue, C. O. Ogunkunle’s *An African Perspective on the Concept of Salvation in the Psalter*. He contends that there is a difference in the definition of salvation between the Old and New Testaments, and that the Psalms paint the concept with a broader brush than Western Christians usually use. There certainly is a difference in emphasis, and clearly the suffering in Africa demands and requires more than a truncated spiritual salvation that fails to touch the huge problems facing the continent. How can the people of God using the Word of God and empowered by the Spirit of God bring the Good News of salvation to their neighbours in a way that is both biblically faithful to the whole counsel of God and truly relevant to the entire African context?

Please note that we have added a new section to AJET, Books Received. Though we can’t review every book received from publishers, we do want you to know some of the resources being produced for ministry. Whenever we have books received but not reviewed, they will appear in this section.

In future issues we will be doing our best to run the race the Lord has laid out for us, and to catch up as quickly as we can. We would be greatly helped by your submissions - articles and book reviews that are truly ready for publication because you have laboured over them, checked and re-checked the sources, the spelling and the grammar. You have done your research, honed your arguments and displayed your passion for God’s truth in the kind of writing that honours God and edifies His people.