

The Reformation Legacies in Africa and Europe?

Bedford-Strohm; Tharcisse Gatwa; Traugott Jähnichen & Elisee Musemakweli. Zurich: Lit Verlag, 2017- 452 pages. ISBN 987-3-643-90820-9

This volume, a treasury of 37 scholarly papers, is far the finest joint work of African and European theologians experts on the Reformation legacy in Africa. The Reformation of the 16th century created a major awareness of what was central and constant in the plan of God for human kind, and for human community within and outside the church: the justification of the believer by faith through the grace of God, not by works, as according to Rom 1.17 and 3.16.

The important impulse of the Reformers lies in their teaching that it cannot be human works – far less the payment of indulgence money, as was widespread in the middle Ages – that set us right with God. It is faith alone – reliance on God alone and on his grace alone – that gives Christians freedom and happiness. Martin Luther's huge success was to bring Christian faith home to all nations, through encouraging the translation, the reading and the dissemination of the Bible for the people of all nations to read the Word of God in their language, to talk to God through Jesus Christ without intermediaries. Luther's intention was that people should be taught to understand: it is a question of understanding the Bible, the shape and sequel of worship and, as a result, faith itself.

In the wake of the 2017 Protestant churches celebration of the 500th anniversary of the Reformation, the Protestant University of Rwanda in co-operation with the Ruhr-University Bochum, organised an international symposium on African Christian theologies and the Reformation legacies, Karongi, Rwanda 18-23 February 2016. Contributions were organised around ten topics: *African theologies, past and present; Christianity and Reformation in Today Germany and Europe; Sola Scriptura. Translating and Interpretating the Bible in Europe and African contexts; Cultures Encountering Christianity versus Traditional Religions and Philosophies; Diversity and Pluralism. Christianity in a changing landscape; Sola gratia. Sola Fide. Faith, Love and Men's works; Leadership, Discipleship and Priesthood for All; Creation Theology and Ethics of Sustainability; Ecclesiology, Theologies and Gender Parity; Future Perspectives.*

Participants were scholars from universities in Africa: Rwanda; DRC, Burundi, Tanzania, Kenya, Zambia, South Africa, Angola, Cameroun, Central Africa Republic, Tchad, Ghana, Uganda; in Europe: Germany, Switzerland; Netherlands; North America: USA; Canada.

The editors: Heinrich Bedford-Strohm is the head of the Evangelical Church in Germany [EKD] and Bishop of the Evangelical Lutheran church in Bavaria; Tharcisse Gatwa is Research Director, and professor of Ethics and the Protestant University of Rwanda; Traugott Jähnichen is Professor for Christian Social Ethics at the Ruhr-University Bochum; Elisee Musemakweli is Rector of the Protestant University of Rwanda, Huye, Rwanda.