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## *The Contemporary Theological Project*

# The Lutheran Theological Institute: A Non-racial Lutheran Educational Project which Abruptly Came to an End

Philippe Denis

### ABSTRACT

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This study tries to establish why the Lutheran Theological Institute (LTI), a flagship non-racial Lutheran theological institution which began to train candidates for the ministry in partnership with the University of Natal (later to be known as University of KwaZulu-Natal) in Scottsville, Pietermaritzburg, in 2003, was abruptly closed, at a great pastoral, educational and emotional cost, in 2015. It relies on documents held in the archives of ELCSA, NELCSA, ELCSA (Cape Church) and the LWF as well in private collections.<sup>1</sup> Conversations with former bishops, lecturers, students and other stakeholders completed the information. The history of LTI has never been written. The article is based on the principle that an open-minded enquiry into the past, relying on a broad variety of sources, may reduce the conflicts of interpretation and the misunderstandings surrounding a controversial issue such as the closure of LTI.<sup>2</sup>

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The Lutheran churches of South Africa, Namibia, Botswana, Swaziland and Lesotho, heirs of German, Norwegian, Swedish, Finnish and American mission societies, are divided up to this day into formerly white and formerly black churches with different constitutions, membership sizes, socio-economic profiles and means of income. Attempts to bring these different bodies together started in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century. They resulted in the establishment of the United Evangelical Lutheran Church in Southern Africa (UELCSA), an association of the German churches of South Africa and South-West Africa as they were called at the time, in 1964; the Federation of Evangelical Lutheran Churches of Southern Africa (FELCSA), a body coordinating joint projects of the white and black Lutheran

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1 I thank Bishop Emeritus Horst Müller, Pastor Emeritus Georg Scriba and Pastor Detlev Tonsing for kindly communicating documents for this study.

2 Philippe Denis, "Can history bring reconciliation in divided Christian communities?", *Studia Historiae Ecclesiasticae*, 50/2 (2024), 1-17.

## Research Articles

# Living with Hope in An Age of Anxiety: Toward a Christology of Hope in an African (Nigerian) Context

Hassan Musa

### ABSTRACT

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This article is a reflection on the theological-philosophical problem of anxiety from an African context. It explores the problems of anxiety, socio-political and religious terrorism from a Nigerian perspective as a quest for a new vision and hope beyond the experiences of evil in our time. The Christological question of Dietrich Bonhoeffer, “who is Jesus Christ for us today?” is taken seriously. In response to this question the contributions of Christian theologians of hope and solidarity are considered as useful guides in responding to the problem of evil and the experience of suffering in our time and context. The central argument of this article is to see and interpret Jesus Christ as hope in an age of anxiety. This is the theology of hope<sup>1</sup> that we need in this time of crises.

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### Introduction

The history and status of politics in Nigeria cannot be well understood without taking the question of religion seriously. Nigeria is known as the most populous country in Africa and it is also known as one of the leading countries on religious life. The status and quality of being religious in Nigeria can certainly be contested and at best it is open for further scrutiny, nevertheless, the religious factor remains central to the texture of life in Nigeria among other African countries. The history of politics in Nigeria is organized and guided by religious convictions up to the point that religion has now become a glorified ideology especially on the

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<sup>1</sup> For more on the theology of hope, see Jürgen Moltmann, *Theology of Hope* (London: SCM Press, 1964, ET 1967).

# The Dilemma of the Trinity: Trinitarian and Oneness Pentecostals

Marius Nel

## ABSTRACT

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In what ways do Trinitarian and Oneness Pentecostals differ in their views of divine essence and can their respective perspectives be reconciled? Academic and popular philosophy present significant questions about the logical consistency of traditional trinitarian doctrine that influences the contemporary Western view of the Christian religion. This includes many Pentecostals confused by the logical consistency of the conventional doctrinal view. It is argued that Pentecostals need to revisit the doctrine from their hermeneutical angle of charismatic encounters, given the inherent challenges, illustrated by the publications of a South African classical Pentecostalist and other African scholars. The research, by way of a comparative literature analysis, shows that Pentecostals from both Trinitarian and Oneness perspectives can benefit by visiting trinitarian challenges.

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## Introduction

The article asks how the differences between Trinitarian and Oneness Pentecostals can be reconciled. The research utilises a comparative study of relevant literature, concentrating on classical Pentecostalism. It finds the two main reasons are philosophical and pastoral. In the first place, popular philosophy presents difficult questions about the doctrine of the logical consistency of the Trinity, which influences how contemporary Western people view the church and its task. The traditional trinitarian doctrine confronts one with logical challenges, forcing curious people to face its ostensible inconsistencies. Second, from the angle of pastoral care, many educated Pentecostals experience difficulties reconciling some of their beliefs regarding Trinitarianism with what they understand of reality, and the logical consistency required of thought about facts exposed to a scientific way of thinking based on logical principles.<sup>1</sup> Many Pentecostals become confused when confronted with an analysis of the logical consistency of the conventional doctrinal view.<sup>2</sup> The submission is that Oneness and Trinitarian Pentecostals will

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1 Matthew Davidson, "The Logical Space of Social Trinitarianism," *Faith and Philosophy* vol. 33, no. 3 (Jan. 2016), 333-57 (348). doi:10.5840/faithphil201661663

2 For instance, J.N. Kanyua Mugambi, *From Liberation to Reconstruction: African Christian Theology after the Cold War* (Nairobi: East African Educational Publishers, 1995) argues that the notion of "person" in the Trinity is misleading to an African and should rather be discarded.

## *African Translation Notes*

# Bible Translation in Minority Cultures in Sweden

Anders Göranzon

### ABSTRACT

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The article gives two examples where Bible translation to minority language in Sweden are examples of the contextual aspect of Bible translation. In both a Sámi context and in the deaf community new aspects of Christian theology comes to the fore when the Bible texts are being translated for the first time.

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### Introduction

More than seven years in South Africa has transformed me in many ways. One important aspect is that I have been exposed to South Africa/Afrika Borwa/Suid-Afrika as a multilingual context. This experience has helped me to understand that my home country – Sweden – also is a multilingual country. In my role as the leader of the Swedish Bible Society this is an important resource.

### *Orre testamente* – the New Testament in South Sámi

When I enter the church in Staare (Östersund) in the north of Sweden I am astonished by all the colours. The Sámi people are dressed in their traditional clothes. Blue, symbolising water but also the moon. Red as in fire and love. Green which stands for plants and nature. And of course, yellow, the sun. We are gathered to celebrate the completion of the first translation of the New Testament into South Sámi– *Orre testamente*.

The gospel reading takes place in the aisle. One of the translators, Bierna Leine Bientie, reads from the Gospel of John. It is about the Word that was with God,

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## Book Reviews

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Reddie, Anthony G. and Troupe, Carol (eds), *Deconstructing Whiteness, Empire and Mission*

London: SCM, 2023. ISBN: 978-0-334-05593-8

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Tengatenga, James and Burns (eds), *Anglican Theology Postcolonial Perspectives*

London: SCM Press, 2024. ISBN: 98 7-0-334-06623-1

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Spencer, *SCM Studyguide to Anglicanism* Second Edition

London: SCM Press, 2021. ISBN: 978-0-334-06017-8

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Frank England, *University of Cape Town, South Africa*

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Battle, Michael (ed.) *Conversations in Global Anglican Theology: Faith* New York. Seabury. 2024. ISBN 9781-640657427 (paperback) ISBN 9781-640657434 (hardback) ISBN 9781-640657441 (eBook) Table of Contents included. 216 pages.

Janet Trisk *Anglican Church of Southern Africa*

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Enns, Elaine and Meyers, Ched, *Healing Haunted Histories: A Settler Discipleship of Decolonization.*

Eugene, OR: Cascade Books 2021. (The Centre and Library for the Bible and Social Justice Series) ISBN: 9781725255371 (eBook), 420 pp.

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Curtis Love *University of South Africa, South Africa*

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Charles Villa-Vicencio, *Living between Science and Belief: The Modern Dilemma*

Stellenbosch: SUN MeDIA, Stellenbosch, 2021, ISBN 9781928314851 Paperback, and Cascade Books, Eugene, Oregon, 2021, ISBN 9781725265004.

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JPT Savage, *Nova Southeastern University, United States of America*

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