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Editorial

Nothing would be done at all
if a man waited till he could do it so well
that no one could find fault with it

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“Everywhere in the world there is exchange – exchange of money, of goods, of thoughts, of experience. Our focus is exchange of literature (...). And in this exchange of literature we want to involve especially the Third World Literature, often too little known and too little taken into account and quoted in western thinking.”

These were the opening sentences of the very first issue of *Exchange*, now exactly fifty years ago. Over the years, the vocabulary has changed, but the sentiment and mission have remained the same: *Exchange* wants to offer a platform to scholars from around the world to share research and exchange ideas. During these fifty years, our journal has often addressed topics from the margins of the big stories. Young scholars have published their first articles in *Exchange* and would become great thinkers, while more established scholars have found *Exchange* to share their ideas with a global audience. In the meantime, *Exchange* has become a high-ranking peer-reviewed journal that finds its way to libraries worldwide. It is in this spirit of sharing and exchanging ideas, that *Exchange* has chosen to mark its 50th anniversary by providing free access to a selection of articles from the past decades. Our editors' choice illustrates the wide range of topics that were discussed in *Exchange* and is simultaneously intended as tribute to the hundreds of scholars who have contributed to the journal over the last fifty years. The articles are accessible via the journal's jubilee page at <http://www2.brill.com/EXCH>. We hope you will enjoy reading our jubilee anthology.

Indicative of *Exchange's* focus on developments in Christianity worldwide, this issue of *Exchange* takes us to places as far apart as Benin, Palestine, Nigeria, and Serbia.

In an interesting article on Jesus films and their reception in Benin, Johannes Merz investigates how people watch Jesus films and how this affects them. Working with viewers in Benin, West Africa, Merz observed that viewers watch films as an embodied practice that goes beyond the explanatory power of meaning-based communication models. For the viewers, Merz noticed, the filmic portrayal of Jesus was not an image or representation but a mode of revealing Christ's presence in a veracious and immediate way. Merz argues that anthropological theory, due to its primary focus on 'meaning', fails to appreciate this experience of 'presence'. By introducing what he calls an 'ontonic semiotics', Merz develops an approach that accounts for how people make sense of, and interact with, the world around them.

Mari Parkkinen examines denominational mobility among Palestinian Christians in Palestine. With her research Parkkinen interrogates two biases of much research into religious mobility. Most theory, Parkkinen observes, has been developed based on research in highly individualized contexts in Europe and the United States. By choosing to investigate denominational mobility in Palestine, Parkkinen opts for a locus of research that is different – historically, socially and culturally – from Western societies, a context where kinship and family codetermine religious belonging. By opting for a qualitative research methodology, she also addresses the fact that most research into religious mobility relies on quantitative surveys, which limit the ability to illuminate motives for mobility. Based on a content-driven analysis of interviews, Parkkinen concludes that denominational mobility is most prevalent among young adults and women, and mainly motivated by personal belief, marriage and family, and socio/economic reasons. Based on her findings, she hypothesizes that also in Palestine the traditionally strong influence of family and community on choice of religious belonging seems to be in decline.

Wouter van Veelen investigates the contribution of the Nigerian evangelical theologian and church leader Byang H. Kato (1936–1975) to the salvation debate in the early 1970s. Van Veelen argues that though Kato's ideas on soteriology have often been dismissed as a reproduction of western theology, they should rather be read as a contextual evangelical response to the ongoing theological debates of his time. Van Veelen convincingly shows how the revaluation of African traditional religion by African inculturation theologians, the debate on salvation within the World Council of Churches, the call within both WCC and AACC to support the armed struggle against apartheid as well as the effect of the "politics of authenticity" of certain political regimes on religious freedom, all shaped Kato's ideas on soteriology.

In the final article, Neven Vukic reflects on 'saintsavaism', a phenomenon within the Serbian Orthodox Church. The controversy that accompanies the

term is due to its association with varieties of Serbian nationalism during the Yugoslav Wars of the 1990s. Vukic shows that limiting saintsavaism to this trajectory would do no justice to this phenomenon. He asks attention for the contributions of Justin Popovic (1894–1979), who envisioned saintsavaism as a totalizing worldview with a national significance but without reducing it to ‘nationalism’. Because Popovic’s work is only available in Serbian, this article is an important contribution to the international debate on Serbian nationalism and orthodoxy.

The issue concludes with a number of book reviews.

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