In 1976, Franciscan missionary and theologian, Walbert Bühlmann, alerted Western Christians of the shift of the centre of Christianity to the southern hemisphere—*The Coming of the Third Church*. Since then the issue has become a fundamental assumption of missiological discourse. Bühlmann and colleagues (B. Krokosz and A.P. Doran) published in 1979 a journalistic account of life amidst Asian religions: *All Have the Same God: An Encounter with the Peoples and Religions of Asia*. In their view, theologians argue over the nature and focus of the worship of deity, but in daily life people appear to be worshipping the same God.

The ‘catholic’ historical insight has tended towards what Adolphe Gesché characterized as the preservation of the paganness of peoples encountered by Christianity. The Graeco-Roman world, while recognising the foundational value of the Bible narrative, nevertheless thought it important to adopt Cicero’s moral inspiration and Plato’s and Aristotle’s philosophical insights. This practice is perhaps in continuity with the missionary insight of Saint Paul in Athens (Acts 17: 22-23).

Hitherto it has been acknowledged that missionaries in Africa confidently welcomed the ‘unknown God’ in the various cultures and among various peoples they encountered. Indeed Church historian, Lamin Sanneh, made the connection between rapid Christian expansion in postcolonial Africa as related to the preservation of the indigenous name of God.

Some African theologians and some Churches (especially new African Pentecostalism) are ill at ease with the genius of Catholicism, and the missiological insight of Paul on the question of God. In the shift of Christianity to the southern hemisphere, precisely to the African region, one is encountering peoples for whom the God of African Traditional Religions (ATR) is not ‘dead’, but has adepts practicing the religion and living side by side with Christians and influencing Christian practice. Theologians wonder about the sameness of the God worshiped by ATR adherents and Christians. The lingering theological question in
African theology is, does the God of ATR truly survive in the image of the God of Jesus Christ?

This issue of Bulletin addresses aspects of this question. New generation African theologians insist that the approach to God in African Christianity must totally embrace the historical sufferings of Africans and the present crisis Africans are passing through in the globalised world. Benoît Awazi Kungua therefore makes a strong presentation of the Crucified Triune God in Jesus Christ for the holistic liberation of Africans and all suffering peoples of the world.

The lingering debate that one still faces is that of methodology. Are the efforts of pioneer African theologians, who made strong commitment to the continuity between ATR and Christianity still defensible? Uzukwu, in conversation with three new generation African theologians highlights the critical approach of these theologians, the strong focus on the dogmatic responsibility of theology, and the ecumenical trend of their thinking.

Africa is passing through crisis, has been in crisis before and since the advent of modernity; there are numerous wars, pogroms and genocides. What God do they pray to in crisis? Omenka historically evaluates the role of God during the Nigeria-Biafra war (1967-1970). Malu assembles the best position of the Kinshasa school on the relevance of ATR as way for effective reconciliation in Africa.

In this volume of the Bulletin, many more questions are raised than answers. However, the volume endeavours to address the spiritualities that take the limelight in the Africa of today as a result of distress and as a result of the globalisation of culture.

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