Editorial

It is with great pleasure that I introduce this journal issue, which assembles a variety of contributions stemming from general submissions. Most of them emerge from the study of missiologically relevant themes in various African contexts, while one essay provides a window into circumstances for Christians in Iran.

Benjamin ALDOUS and Michael MOYNAGH outline a mission methodology which engages the “loving-first cycle” as a contextual model for starting new faith communities and as potentially one of the lessons of “fresh expressions” church communities from Cape Town, South Africa. John Garah NENGEL† and Chigemezi Nnadozie WOGU study the reasons for the late arrival of Seventh-Day Adventism (S.D.A.) in Northern Nigeria from the 1930s onward, offering us insights into the contested relationship with other mission bodies and “spheres of influence” established by colonial governments. Ndidi Justice GBULE and Chigozie Samuel NWAKA focus on the influence of Igbo traditional worldviews and healing liturgies in the Sabbath Church in Nigeria. They explore how the Sabbath Church valorized Igbo traditional symbols and religious categories in mediating healing. Nicoletta GATTI, familiar with the West African context, takes up the worrisome growth of nationalism and ethnicism through a biblical lens on ancient Israel’s tensions in nation-building. Her paper explores the relationship between identity construction and nation-building through an intercultural reading of Isaiah 56–66, applying it to contemporary Ghanaian society where ethnic divisions seem to compromise nation-building and development. Finally, Sara AFSHARI engages the question of how Armenians in Iran negotiate their space with the state and with their own communities, drawing on an interview with Archbishop Sebouh Sarkissian, the prelate of the Armenian Church in Iran. Obviously, the state sets the structural framework for the space of marginalized groups; yet minority groups do influence and redefine it.

In sum, the gathered essays of this issue offer a rich and fascinating Afro-Iran interlude across the ecumenical spectrum and within contested spaces of Christian presence.

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