

ALTERNATION CALL FOR PAPERS 2020

Theme: The Church and the Coronavirus (COVID-19)

Issue guest editor: Prof Herbert Moyo

Chapels, Mosques, Sanctuaries, Shrines and Temples across the world are closed. Millions of Christians and other religious people are unable to congregate because of the necessary but disruptive social distancing measures that have forced people to stay at home. Responses to the coronavirus (COVID-19) have fundamentally changed the way of being church that may have effects on ecclesia beyond the pandemic. What are the possible responsible pastoral reactions to the corona-crisis?

The COVID-19 is a global pandemic that has decimated socio-economic, religious and political life of many systems, cultures, businesses, institutions, individuals and communities. It will only be possible to estimate and measure the impact of the COVID-19 on communities, businesses, systems and institutions at certain points in the future.

In instances of extreme distress, human beings need one another to strengthen their coping and surviving mechanisms. Religious organisations especially the church, in times of crises, offer opportunities for interpersonal relations to enhance coping by individuals and groups through pastoral encounters.

The novel coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic can easily spread using the common means used by the church and other faith communities especially congregating as a coping mechanism. The church is now forced by the COVID-19 situation to seek for other methods to continue doing pastoral ministry without congregating its members in face to face meetings.

Epidemiological evidence shows that extensive social distancing combined with general hygiene are effective ways of reducing the spread of the coronavirus. As a result, the COVID-19 has seen governments through medical advice bringing their countries to a total or partial lockdown to enhance social distancing where citizens are to remain in their homes to limit the spread of the coronavirus. This means that all forms of social gatherings are banned including congregating for church services during the period of the lock down.

Yet, the church has to continue conducting Sunday services through other means and the best option in this fifth industrial revolution is to go digital. The life of the church and other religious organisations have been negatively impacted to a point of failing to do pastoral ministry in the traditional sense. The large numbers of people who are suffering because of the COVID-19 pandemic means that as theologians we are invited in a special way – to reflect and explore the ways in which faith impacts upon the experience of this tragic denial of life to so many human beings.

There is need to examine honestly, critically and sensitively how theologians and the church can continue to talk about faith, life and hope in a context of a devastating pandemic like the COVID-19. The COVID-19 raises many questions for the contemporary church and about the church.

We therefore invite you to contribute to this project.

POSSIBLE QUESTIONS FOR TOPICS

Potential contributors may reflect on any of the problematising questions below, and then develop a topic, and abstract with research design accordingly.

- What are the challenges and opportunities of being church during COVID-19?
- What is the role of the church in this context of a pandemic that has affected congregating?
- What are the best practices of being church during lockdown?
- How does the church continue being church in a context of social distancing and isolation?
- What are the socio-economic, pastoral and political challenges faced by the church and the communities that it is serving during the time of COVID-19?
- What are the theological and economic issues in failing to gather for Easter celebrations?

- What does it mean to be a pastor during COVID-19? (How have you been communicating with your congregants?; What are some of their fears and concerns?)
- What are the fears of the pastors in your church and how is the church leadership responding to that?
- How is the church using the Bible in response to COVID-19?

- In as much there is a lockdown resulting in social isolation and physical distancing, how is the church making sure that people are not suffering and dying in loneliness?
- How are the congregations dealing with the absence of church gatherings?
- How are congregations organized to socialize outside regular, formal meetings?

- What is the message of the church about healing?
- What is the message of the church to people who die due to COVID-19?
- What are the plans of the church on funerals and sacraments?

- How are pastors continuing with the theology of the ministry of presence during the lockdown period?
- What are the possible pastoral preparations in case there will be many sick people in a congregation and also many who are passing on because of COVID-19?
- What are the ethical challenges that are likely to arise in the course of the church's response to COVID-19?
- What are the perceptions among pastors and congregants about faith healing and faith healers that are running such ministries?
- What is the role of faith healing, if any at this time of COVID-19?

Accordingly, this call for papers invites research which has been and are being done on COVID-19 and the life of the church from inter-, multi-, and transdisciplinary perspectives and approaches as long as it relates to faith communities, and faith-based organisations in general, and the church in particular. As indicated above, papers may span the socio-economic, political, religious, cultural and ethical realities of being church in the context of COVID-19. It would be informative if most of the papers would actively engage the

perspectives of church leaders and congregants themselves through the use of recognised research instruments.

Papers may also engage the issues concerning how faith communities are being prepared for, and responding to lockdowns, social isolation and physical distancing.

The experiences of faith communities on digital liturgy and worship during the lockdown.

The stories, fears, experiences, views, reflections, challenges, positives, hopes and aspirations

This special issue then seeks to deepen our intellectual engagements and scholarly understandings on how a pandemic like COVID-19 affect and impact the church and other faith communities.

INTERESTED CONTRIBUTORS

Interested contributors are encouraged to submit their abstracts to the *Alternation* guest editor of this special edition. Prof. Herbert Moyo (moyoh@ukzn.ac.za). The **SUBJECT** line of the email should read as: COVID-19 Abstract by... (Name of the corresponding author).

ABSTRACTS FOR PAPERS SHOULD INCLUDE:

- A succinct title
- A brief abstract (± 200 words)
- Author/s name/s
- Author/s institutional affiliation
- Contact details

TIME FRAME (03 APRIL – 30 OCTOBER 2020)

- Friday 17 April 2020 Deadline for submission of abstracts
- Friday 24 April 2020 Final date for decisions on abstract
- Friday 03 July 2020 Final date for submission of paper
- Friday 03 July to Friday 28 August Peer review process
- Friday 25 September 2020 Submission of final edited paper
- Friday 30 October 2020 Publication

ALTERNATION

Alternation is a fully accredited, peer-reviewed South African Department of Higher Education and Training journal. It is edited by Prof J.A. Smit, former Dean and Head of School, School of Religion, Philosophy and Classics, and published at the University of KwaZulu-Natal, on an Open Access platform. All articles are subject to peer-review by at least two independent peer reviewers. All articles that pass the review process, and that are accepted for publication, will be published online, at: <http://alternation.ukzn.ac.za/archive.aspx>

The *Alternation* homepage is available at: <http://alternation.ukzn.ac.za/Homepage.aspx>

ACADEMIC MERIT

Please note that the academic merit of the abstracts and articles will be the primary value in terms of which submissions are reviewed and considered.

As such, each article is expected to contribute to the excellence and quality of research published in *Alternation*. Cf. <http://alternation.ukzn.ac.za/archive.aspx>

All submissions will be strictly reviewed and assessed according to DHET protocols and requirements.

Alternation has over more than 25 years, become a vital and essential transdisciplinary knowledge production resource to researchers and students in both the Humanities and Sciences.

We want to sincerely thank you for making a constructive and contextually-relevant knowledge production contribution via *Alternation*, during these challenging times of COVID-19.

ALTERNATION GUIDELINES FOR CONTRIBUTORS, AND ALTERNATION STYLE

Full author guidelines are available at: <http://alternation.ukzn.ac.za/submissions.aspx>

Guidelines for Contributors

Manuscripts must be submitted in English (UK). If quotations from other languages appear in the manuscript, place the original in a footnote and a dynamic-equivalent translation in the body of the text or both in the text.

Contributors must submit one computer-generated copy of the manuscript to the editor(s). The computer-generated copy must be in Word for Windows, and must have an Abstract and Keywords. It must also be submitted in the *Alternation* style.

Manuscripts should range between 5000-10000 and book reviews between 800-1200 words. However, longer articles may be considered for publication.

Attach a cover page containing the following information: The corresponding author's full name, address, e-mail address, position, department, university/ institution, and telephone/ fax numbers. A brief summary of the biobate of all authors must be attached too.

Maps, diagrams and posters must be presented in print-ready form. Clear black and white or colour digitised photos (postcard size) or diagrams in pdf or jpeg may also be submitted.

Use footnotes sparingly. In order to enhance the value of the interaction between notes and text, we use footnotes and not endnotes.

Authors may use their own numbering systems in the manuscript.

Except for bibliographical references, abbreviations must include fullstops. The abbreviations (e.a.) = 'emphasis added'; (e.i.o.) = 'emphasis in original'; (i.a.) or [...] = 'insertion added' may be used.

The full bibliographical details of sources are provided only once at the end of the manuscript under **References**. References in the body of the manuscript should follow the

following convention: Mkhize (2017:14) argues or, at the end of a reference/quotation: (Ngwenya 2017:20f).

The surname and initials of authors as these appears in the source must be used in the **References** section.

Review articles and book reviews must include a title as well as the following information concerning the book reviewed: title, author, place of publication, publisher, date of publication, number of pages and the ISBN number.

In the text as well as the **References**, all book, journal, newspaper and magazine titles must be in italics.

The format for the References section is as follows:

Journal article by one author

Fulela, B. 2008. Checking the Post: Derrida and the Apartheid Debate. *Alternation* 15,2: 11 – 37. Available at: <http://alternation.ukzn.ac.za/Files/docs/15.2/02%20Fulela.pdf>. (Accessed on 08 May 2017.)

Journal article by two authors

Mkhize, N. & N. Ndimande-Hlongwa 2014. African Languages, Indigenous Knowledge Systems (IKS), and the Transformation of the Humanities and Social Sciences in Higher Education. *Alternation* 21,2: 10 – 37. Available at: <http://alternation.ukzn.ac.za/Files/docs/21.2/02%20Mkh.pdf>. (Accessed on 08 May 2017.)

Book by one author

Moran, S. 2009. *Representing Bushmen: South Africa and the Origin of Language*. Rochester: University of Rochester Press. (Rochester Studies in African History and the Diaspora, Book 38.)

Book by one editor

Smit, J.A. (ed.) 1999. *Body, Identity, Sub-cultures and Repression in Texts from Africa*. Durban: CSSALL.

Book by two editors

Dhunpath, R. & R. Vithal (eds.) 2012. *Alternative Access to Higher Education: Underprepared Students or Underprepared Institutions?* Cape Town: Pearson Publishers.

Chapter in an edited book

Smit, J.A. & J. van Wyk 2001. Literary Studies in Post-apartheid South Africa. In Zegeye, A. & R. Kriger (eds.): *Culture in the New South Africa after Apartheid*. Volume 2. Cape Town: Kwela Books & History on Line.

Translated book

Foucault, M. 1977. *Discipline and Punish*. Sheridan, A. (trans.). New York: Pantheon.

Online resource

Jansen, J. & P. Vale (Co-chairs.) 2011. *Consensus Study on the State of the Humanities in South Africa: Status, Prospects and Strategies*. Pretoria: Academy of Science of South Africa (ASSAf). Available at: <https://www.assaf.org.za/files/2011/09/2011-Humanity-final-proof-11-August-2011.pdf>. (Accessed on 08 May 2017.)