

Foreword

I HAVE READ THE TEXT with keen interest and, I must admit, with a good deal of pleasure as well. In my work in theological scholarship, only rarely do texts produced by ecclesio-centric scholars from our part of the world generate sustained interest and pleasure *at the same time*.

The audacity with which the contributors take up the task of reflecting on the theological self-understanding of the Church is quite remarkable. This book serves as a poignant reminder that the mission and identity of the church in Africa or the African Church remain open to a rich variety of theological interpretations, imaginations, and applications. *The church as Salt and Light* initiates an African theology of the Church that successfully connects ecclesiology with Christology to produce a rich flourish of possibilities for the church in Africa. No longer will the church imagined in this book be considered a merely abstract theological construct; it is a Church *of* the people, *by* the people, and *for* the people. Poised between the historic *Des prêtres noirs s'interrogent* and the Second African Synod, *The Church as Salt and Light* recalls and applies Vatican II's maxim *Ecclesia semper reformanda* in ways that are challenging, stimulating, and refreshing. With this book, we can confidently affirm that postcolonial theology has come of age—a new world-Church is possible!

A personal comment will be in order. In an age where the laity is rightly recognized as critical to the theological self-understanding of the church, and gender balance recalls the Church to its identity and mission of wholeness, the predominance of clergy-contributors is something to be addressed—and, perhaps, corrected—in subsequent editions.

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I offer my sincere congratulations to the editors and authors on the publication of *The church as Salt and Light*.

—Agbonkhianmeghe E. Orobator, SJ

Author of *Theology Brewed in an African Pot*,¹ and *From Crisis to Kairos: The Mission of the church in the Time of HIV/AIDS, Refugees and Poverty*.²

SAMPLE

1. Maryknoll, NY: Orbis, 2008.
2. Nairobi: Paulines Africa, 2005.