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CRS 560: AFRICAN CHRISTIAN THEOLOGY (M.A.)

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UNIT INTRODUCTION

This is Unit CRS 560: African Christian Theology and you are most welcome to benefit from it together with other University of Nairobi Units from the Department of Philosophy and Religious Studies.

African Christian Theology (henceforth ACT) is basically triple-pronged namely: Inculturational; Liberational; and Inculturational intertwined with Liberational. In the light of this threefold item, the Unit- using thematic systematic approach- will identify, examine and critically expose outstanding African theological perspectives which are in vogue. You, as the student, will thus be initiated and exposed into following and benefiting from this ongoing process of realizing and actualizing ACT:

Take note

This Unit which assumes that you are acquainted with Unit CRS 404: African Christian Theology which provides a strong foundation for our current Course will, therefore, consist of twelve inter-related Lectures. The Unit also has affinity with Unit CRS 561: Modern Trends in Christianity, a Course you are cordially invited to register in too.

The Unit consists of twelve inter-related Lectures. Each Lecture has some in-text questions as a guide to deeper thinking and a considerable number of activities for your academic attention. You will be expected to handle selected activities for discussion and extra research and oral presentation from which you will be graded for your continuous assessment examination. The coursework will be graded out of 40/100 while the final exam will be out of 60/100. Each Lecture will also have a series of select bibliography for further self-erudition. You will notice that in the reference section, in some cases, I do not indicate the pages to refer to. This is a deliberate omission. As postgraduate students you already know how to get to the gist of respective relevant material you look for using table of contents and the index. So it is superfluous for me to do it for you except in some exceptional cases.

The goal of this Unit CRS 560: African Christian Theology is to help you identify, peruse, understand, and concretely interpret the Christian faith/Gospel/Good News in accordance with the needs, aspirations, thought-forms and mentality of the Africans as you investigate the works of the exponents of ACT. To this end, the Unit will provide you with TWELVE inter-dependent Lectures which will help to acquaint you with the knowledge and understanding of
the threefold lenses of ACT namely: Inculturational; Liberational; and Inculturational intertwined with Liberational.

This, it has to be reiterated, is in view of helping you to be knowledgeable in ACT and be intelligently involved with the research and finality of making your own reasonable contribution to this fascinating inexhaustible discipline.

**UNIT OBJECTIVES**

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LECTURE ONE:

MAIN AFRICAN WORLD-VIEW ITEMS THAT INFORM ACT

Lecture outline.

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1.2 Objectives

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1.4 Explanation of LIFE/VITALITY as Understood by the Africans.

1.5 Elaboration of DYNAMISM/POWER within the African Context.

1.6 Explication of SACREDNESS from the African Point of View.

1.7 Examining COMMUNITY as Understood by the Africans.

1.8 Explanation of ANTHROPO/CENTRISM as Perceived by the Africans.

1.9 The Invaluability of The Above Five Items in Creating and Understanding ACT.

1.10 Summary.

1.11 References.

1.1 Introduction

It is significant that we commence the Unit by reminding ourselves the fundamental foundation of ACT which acts as the springboard of this mode of doing theology. This Lecture will identify the five main items in the African world-view which provide the stance from which the exponents of ACT confront Christianity. The five are: Life/Vitality; Dynamism/Power; Sacredness; Community; and Anthropo/centrism.
Objectives 1.2

At the end of this Lecture you should be able to:

1. Identify the Main Factors in African World-view Critical in ACT.
2. Explain LIFE/VITALITY as Understood by the Africans.
4. Explicate SACREDNESS from the African Point of View.
5. Examine COMMUNITY as Understood by the Africans.
6. Explain ANTHROPO/CENTRISM as Perceived by the Africans.
7. Appreciate the Invaluability of the Above Five Items in Creating and Understanding ACT.

1.3 Identification of the Main Factors in African World-view Critical in ACT.

The following are the fundamental elements in African World-view that are generally and creatively used in ACT:

1. LIFE/VITALITY as Understood by the Africans.
2. DYNAMISM/POWER within the African Context.
3. SACREDNESS from the African Point of View.
4. COMMUNITY as Understood by the Africans.
5. ANTHROPO/CENTRISM as Perceived by the Africans.

Take note

As we identify and elaborate these African world-view items, bear in mind that the other Lectures will assume that you are well grounded in them. They run across the Lectures. That is the rationale behind tackling them here and profoundly so.

1.4 Explanation of LIFE/VITALITY as Understood by the Africans.

Life is the very core of African culture. You could rightly say that it is the greatest inspiration of Africanness. The rationale is that each and everything is centered and, indeed, judged by its
measure in the African concrete historical experience and vital functions like birth, marriage, death etc. This basic element has a hierarchical status namely: the Supreme Being-with the highest degree of life and Source of life; followed by the Divinities with higher status; then the Ancestors with high degree; the hierarchical status then descends to the Living Dead; followed by the Medicine Persons; then the Parents who are the begetters of children; then those with no children; then the Begotten; all the way to Animate and Inanimate beings.

**Take note**

Consequently, Africans have great respect and love for that which propagates, promotes and protects life- especially human life.

They also honor whatever is linked to or connected with life in a descending degree of intensity if starting from the Supreme Being downwards or in an ascending order if starting from below towards the Supreme Being.

**Activity 1.1**


In fact, African philosophy is essentially vitalistic. That is why Ancestors are highly regarded. They are approached and persuaded to perpetuate, guard, guide, guarantee and protect life here on earth due to their proximity to the Supreme Source of life. They are in turn venerated with the seriousness they deserve. No wonder scholars of ACT are excited by this item in their theologizing.

5 Elaboration of DYNAMISM/POWER Within the African Context.

This has a close affinity with Vitality. The two are so intertwined that they are essentially inseparable. The rationale of this inevitable connection is that LIFE is the highest POWER. Consequently, Life is correctly regarded as and termed VITAL FORCE/POWER.
Activity 1.2


Just as is the case with the life, Dynamism/Power has a close affinity with Sacredness. That is why you can talk of Sacred Force/Power.

1.6 Explication of SACREDNESS from the African Point of View.

This has a close affinity with both Life/Vitality and Dynamism/Power. It is imbued with what you may call Vitalistic Dynamism. This Sacred Life Power is both *tremendum et fascinosum* i.e., repulsive but nevertheless attractive. Owing to this repugnance because of its otherness, it has to be approached with extreme care. Consequently, it carries with it the issue of taboo and also its connection with magic and superstition. Like the other two items with which Sacredness has innate link, scholars of ACT assert that issues like birth, initiatic rites…and all connected with LIFE AND DEATH are normally considered Sacred, or rather Holy-best expressed in Community (both terrestrial and celestial).

Activity 1.3


1.7 Examining COMMUNITY as Understood by the Africans.

Among the Africans, the Sacred, Dynamic fullness of Life is lived in the community which extends from down here on earth to yonder life. On the bases of this conception, these four elements are closely related. They are, indeed, inseparable. Their binding tie is extremely strong. As such, you should never dichotomize them but take them in their essential inter-relatedness.
Intext Question


African assertion of abundance of life has the following essential characteristics:

1. The idea of Community among the Africans is essentially related to the issues of relationship, solidarity, totality, participation and openness. These characteristics are explicitly employed in Ancestral approach to Christology as well as other themes in ACT.

2. Within the same understanding, you have to bear in mind that human is radically disposed to the society of men/women, spiritual/Ancestral beings and Supernatural being. Without these characteristics, human is incomplete. On the other hand, with these three elements, he/she acquires VITAL PLENITUDE. In other words, he/she gets maturity in reference to life itself. These characteristics are again explicitly employed in Ancestral approach to Christology as well as other themes in ACT.

Take note

The above **vital plenitude** implies biological, psychological…and physiological maturity. It is also endowed with fecundity. In this regard, fecundity is understood as power to procreate as well as contribution to the society mainly in social life. These characteristics are again explicitly employed in Ancestral approach to Christology as well as other themes in ACT in issues like: Power; Sacrality/Sacredness; Wisdom in the sense of one who knows things like rituals and customs; Rights and Responsibility towards the community; and Liberation of oneself, of the others and of creation in general.
3. Drawing from the above, awareness is created that initiation rites introduce a person into the community. By this very fact, one becomes entitled to the accruing benefits of the community and vital plenitude.

4. This philosophy of the community influences individuals as follows:

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**Activity 1.4**


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1) Community interests dominate individual interests;

2) In groups, there is lack of clear cut differentiation of FUNCTIONS - for instance; a chief is Leader and Priest and Medicine-man and Cultivator;

3) Importance of RESPECT for Elders and ANCESTORAL tradition- the rationale being: we have to do this because our Ancestors did it;

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**Take note**

Ancestral veneration is the very centre of the community. It promotes and guarantees community life. It also acquires its benefits.

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4) Community is vast since it includes clans, communities …and Ancestors;

5) Exclusion from the community is equivalent to being extinct- the most unfortunate and gravest thing to happen to somebody;

6) A person is open to the cosmos.

**1.8 Explanation of ANTHROPO/CENTRISM as Perceived by the Africans.**

There is a vivid human-centeredness in African world-view. This is so even in the perception of God.
Activity 1.5


In this regard, you will find the following characteristics:

1. Religion and society are centered in men/women whose welfare in this world and next are meant to procure;
2. Stress on human dignity;
3. The universe and sacred beings and even God are anthropo/morphically conceived;
4. Approach to God and other spirits is functional.

Take note

Let it be reiterated that this very first Lecture has deliberately taken you through all these details regarding the major items in African worldview. The justification is that these characteristics run across all the Lectures in this Unit. You should then be well acquainted with the insights hereby since the current lecture and the Lectures that follow will assume that you are well rooted with this philosophy. Repeating the same will no doubt be superfluous.

With the above insights in mind, and for practical purposes, the Lecture will examine the indispensability of the above in ACT.

1.9 The Invaluability of The Above Five Items in Creating and Understanding ACT.

The FIVE main items in African worldview essentially influence the exponents of ACT. It is from this point of reference that scholars of ACT confront Christianity with what makes Africans be Africans. You do not require extra-ordinary mental acumen to notice this in respective monographs, periodicals...articles and sermons on ACT. The other Lectures in this Unit will
assume that you are well acquainted with these indispensable insights emanating from African philosophy of life and living.

1.10 Summary.

Summary

The Lecture welcomed you to Unit **CRS 560: AFRICAN CHRISTIAN THEOLOGY** making it clear that this Course is specifically for you.

Awareness was created that it is wise and, indeed, indispensable that we commence the Unit by initiating you into the fundamental foundation of ACT which acts as the springboard of this mode of doing theology. That is why this Lecture identified the FIVE main items in the African world-view which provide the stance from which the exponents of ACT confront Christianity. It was verified that the five elements are: Life/Vitality; Dynamism/Power; Sacredness; Community; and Anthropo/centrism.

At the end of this Lecture then you are now able to: Identify the main factors in African world-view critical in ACT; Explain LIFE/VITALITY as understood by the Africans; Elaborate DYNAMISM/POWER within the African context; Explicate SACREDNESS from the African point of view; Examine COMMUNITY as understood by the Africans; Explain ANTHROPO/CENTRISM as perceived by the Africans; Appreciate the invaluability of the above Five Items in creating and understanding ACT.

Concluding Activity 1.6

Identify and discuss the FIVE crucial items in African worldview that inspire ACT.
1.11 References


LECTURE TWO:

PERUSING THE NATURE, SCOPE AND RELEVANCE OF ACT

Lecture outline

2.1 Introduction.

2.2 Objectives.

2.3 Definition: African Theology and ACT.

2.4 Other Theologians’ Understanding of ACT.

2.5 Assessment of the Above Definitions.

2.6 Our Recommended/Proposed Working Definition.

2.7 Discussion As to Whether ACT Does Exist.

2.8 Our Business/Relevance of the Course.

2.9 Our Duties as African Christian Theologians.

2.11 Summary.

2.12 References.

2.1 Introduction

You were educated into main items that inform ACT in Lecture One. In this Lecture you will be enabled to handle the nature of African Theology (henceforth AT) and ACT as it discusses selected definitions from some renowned scholars. It also identifies and explicates the working definition for the Unit. The lecture, moreover, analyzes the indispensable duties of a good African Christian theologian- among the tasks being the requisite of endeavoring to be a good philosopher too.
2.2 Objectives

By the end of this lecture, you should be able to:

1. Define the terms AT and ACT and have the awareness that it is indispensable to complement your understanding of AT-ACT with those of renowned scholars for mutual enrichment.

2. Critically assess a pluriformity of conceptions of AT cum ACT in view of coming up with a worthy working definition.

3. Explain that it is a requisite of a good African Christian theologian to be a good philosopher.

4. Elaborate that an ACT must necessarily be pastoral.

2.3 Definition: African Theology (AT) and African Christian Theology (ACT).

You as someone who, as an African Christian, has discourse on the un-Originated Originator and your relationship with that Supreme Being and the rest of creation qualify as a theologian- and an African one at that.

Intext Question

With this setting then, what is your definition of AT and ACT?

2.4 Other Theologians’ Understanding of ACT.

2.4.1 Tharcisse Tshibangu Tshishiku: “African theology is a serious reflection on Christianity from the African context.”
Activity 2.1

With insights gained from John Paul II’s *Fides et Ratio* Encyclical, discuss the mutuality between theology/faith and philosophy/reason.

2.4.2 J.S. Mbiti: “AT is theological reflection and expression by African Christians…It has to do with the presence and experience of the Christian faith among the African people.”

2.4.3 A. Shorter: “AT is a theology suited to modern national cultures which are essentially poly-ethnic in character, striving to weld together into a variety of traditions.” It is important to note here emphasis on indigenized Christian theology.

2.4.4 E.E. Mshana: “AT is a theology which emerges from the life, culture, traditions and faith of the African peoples in their particular context.”

2.4.5 AACC (at Abidjan, in 1969): “By AT we mean a theology which is based on Biblical faith and speaks to the African soul (or is relevant to Africa). It is expressed in categories of thought which arise out of the philosophy of the African peoples.” Here, stress on Christian theology and creating of new person and community of Africa is worth noting.

2.4.6 J. Kurewa: “AT is the study that seeks to reflect upon and express the Christian faith in African thought-forms and idioms as it is experienced in the African Christian communities, and always in dialogue with the rest of Christendom.”

2.4.7 K. Appiah Kubi: “AT is contextual African Biblical theology…It is a theology that is situational, activist, dynamic and liberating.”

2.5 Assessment of the Above Definitions.

2.5.1 There is a tendency in some of these and other definitions to confine or limit or even equate the term AT to ACT. One can easily notice a narrowing conception as if African Traditional Religions are devoid of genuine AT. This, of course, is a distortion of the reality.

2.5.2 Some limit AT to that which is connected with “study” or erudition. In their biases towards schooling cum academic, they forget that our African elders and some other Traditional religious
leaders do theology as they participate on discourse on God and are thus *ipso facto* (by that very fact) theologians especially in their cosmotheandric perception of being and beingness.

2.5.3 *In their creditable effort to point out the elements* which are needed for the building up of ACT some definitions confine themselves to African thought forms, idioms and categories without taking into account the importance of the African problems, anxieties, worries and needs for this purpose. In other words, they are **not pastoral enough.**

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**Take note**

The rationale is that, it is indispensable for a good theology to be involved in pastoral aspects thereby giving hope and way-forward. Aspects like: the phenomenon of single motherhood within family solidarity; salvation and being saved; positive and negative euthanasia; ubiquitous deaths, dying and life hereafter; liberation and living authentically; African elderhood that penetrates the whole of the African life and living with the resulting dominance; basic oppressive and exploitative factors today’s African women are subjected to and how to curb these unfavorable factors; respect cum phobia for benevolent and malevolent ancestral spirits; together with curses and being cursed- among others.

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2.5.4 *In some definitions there is an over-accentuation on the Bible* as a major source of inspiration (which is good) but **hardly a mention of Tradition and traditions** as crucial illuminating sources too (which is bad).

2.6 **Our Recommended/Proposed Working Definition.**

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**Intext Question**

What kind of comprehensive working definition of ACT would you propose?
According to us, thanks to insights from Charles Nyamiti and self reflection, the recommended definition of AT is composed of the following:

2.6.1 AT in its broad/etymological sense may be defined as “discourse on God in accordance with the needs, aspirations, thought-forms and mentality of the people in the Black Continent i.e., Black Africa South of the Sahara/Sub-Sahara.” In this broad conception, AT comprises:

1) African Traditional Theology i.e. African non Christian Theology as found particularly in African Traditional Religions. This is thanks to general revelation hence it Theocentricism.
2) ACT thanks to special revelation brought about by Jesus Christ hence its Christocentricism.

2.6.2 AT in its narrow sense- a technical sense within the context imposed upon our Unit Comprises ACT.

2.6.3 This ACT in turn has a double understanding namely:

1) In its broad sense “ACT is the understanding, presentation and concrete interpretation of the Christian faith/Good News/Gospel in accordance with the needs, aspirations, thought-forms and mentality of the people in the Black Continent.”
2) In its narrow/strict sense “ACT is the systematic and scientific understanding, presentation and concrete interpretation/elaboration of Christian faith/Good News/Gospel in accordance with the needs, aspirations, thought-forms and mentality of the people in the Black Continent.”

Take note

The above understanding corresponds well with the anthropological and social realities in the Black Continent.
2.7 Discussion As to Whether ACT Does Exist.

**Intext Question**

Does ACT exist and if so how?

2.7.1 Understood merely in the broad sense, ACT has been in existence since long.

1) It must be appreciated that, despite their weaknesses as they brought Christianity to Africa, the early missionaries attempted, though in a humble inadequate manner, to make Christianity answer to the African people’s needs, aspirations etc. So did their invaluable helpers, the local Catechists. They would, for instance, explain the mystery of the Christian doctrine of the Trinity i.e., Three Persons in One God, using the analogy of the three African firestones and a cooking pot on them joining them together; also the shamrock’s three leaves linked by one stem in an effort to explain the divine circumincession (the absolute loving oneness of the Three Persons of the Trinity). Although rather materialistic in conception, nevertheless, this indicated and signified some aspects of ACT. It is a real effort towards or reflecting an African Christian theology.

2) On the part of the recipients of Christianity/African convertees, in their simple ways, they assimilated Christianity thereby digesting it and meaningfully reproducing it within their endowment of their experiential knowledge and way of life. They did so as they evangelized their fellow people in turn in keeping with their Africanness. This is apparently so among the African Independent Church members.

3) Moreover, as covering every African traditional theology- which obviously contains some Christian elements owing to general revelation- AT has been there prior to the advent of Christianity in Africa.
**Take note**

This positive reality should, however, not blind us to the fact that theology within the above conception is characteristically spontaneous, more experiential, basically oral/narrative, generally unscientific and, of course, superficial and somehow unsystematic.

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2.7.2 **Understood in the narrow technical sense**, ACT is emerging and vibrantly so. Though still in its youthful stage as compared to the Westerners’, it is coming out strongly. It is flourishing through scholars like C. Nyamiti, J.S. Mbiti, T.T. Tshishiku, P.N. Wachege, J.S. Pobee, J.N.K. Mugambi, L. Magesa, K.A. Dickson, M. Oduyoye, A. A. Boesak, J.M. Waliggo…related University academic theses cum projects… and Units like this one on Christian Theology in Africa. In this initial stage it is also remarkably coming up through seminars, conferences, international fora, symposia, mimeographs, monographs, periodicals, journals…and spontaneous inspirations.

2.8 **Our Business/Relevance of the Course.**

2.8.1 **Our concern is ACT in the narrow technical sense.** In short, it is ACT understood as “the **scientific and systematic** understanding, presentation and elaboration of the Christian faith/Good News/Gospel in accordance with African needs, aspirations, thought-forms and mentality of the peoples in the Black Continent.”

2.8.2 **Let it be understood forthwith that our course is on CHRISTIAN** (not Hindu or Taoist…but Christian) **THEOLOGY.** And again, it is not in Asia or Europe…but IN AFRICA. It is, therefore, ACT with accentuation or emphasis on African Christian- from African point of reference even when deliberately enriching the study with theologies from elsewhere. This gives us our specificity in our effort in coming up with our peculiar full-fledged ACT discipline.

2.8.3 **We take it as the normative one for our Unit.** We will approach this cautiously since ACT is still emerging imbued with diverse elements and diverging characteristics. As such there is no conclusive definition. That is why we are compelled to utilize the above as our working definition.
2.9 Our Duties as African Christian Theologians.

2.9.1 Introduction:

Tharcisse Tshibangu Tshishiku, one of the prolific pioneers in ACT, provides crucial requisites of an African Christian theologian. He spells out clearly and distinctly the obligations of a serious African Christian theologian as follow:

2.9.2 African Christian theologians must be fully aware of the fact that their theological work calls for real spiritual commitment i.e., being people of great faith. It also requires a real ability to ask fundamental questions i.e., being committed philosophers. Thus one has to be a person of deep faith and a solidly metaphysical life. In Summary, to be a good African Christian theologian, one must also be a good philosopher too who is prayerful and a role model at that.

Take note

This fundamental requirement was later explicated at a most comprehensive academic level in Pope John Paul II’s globally renowned Encyclical titled Fides et Ratio i.e. Faith and Reason.

2.9.3 They must be equally conscious of the intellectual demands imposed by theological work. One must strive to possess the deepest and most accurate scientific knowledge of humanity and the factors that condition it. One has to be able to dialogue meaningfully with other disciplines e.g. with medical experts through medical ethics’ issues of life like euthanasia, morality of the timing of organ transplant and abortion.

2.9.4 They must have a special commitment in being able to insert oneself into people’s situation in life otherwise one’s theology becomes irrelevant. They have also to be attentive to the questions raised and involving perception through emerging generations, changing situations in life, and new problems in living and changing values otherwise one’s theology is rendered obsolete. Above all, one has to be conversant with own people’s and other people’s CULTURES and to utilize their respective cultural values for authentic INCULTURATION/LIBERATION theologisation. Additionally, one has to be PASTORAL to answer people’s needs, anxieties, worries…and aspirations.
2.9.5 They are, moreover, obliged to have a genuine commitment to one’s Church— not being rebellious, arrogant and disturbing people’s peace. Here, one has to assist the Church to marry orthodoxy with orthopraxis. Do this always bearing in mind that the kernel of Christianity is the same BUT the mode /manner of explication is diverse. This calls for undertaking serious research and reflection but in reference to the Christian doctrine. Nevertheless, they must equally cultivate courage, as T.T. Tshibangu points out, and take risks in exploring, pondering and expressing the theological conclusions that derive from their authentic research.

2.9.6 Conclusion:

The above analysis of the crucial tasks of an African Christian theologian should be owned by each one of us so as to benefit from this Unit. We should take it as a challenge too in actually and factually coming up with our own pastorally worthy ACT. This is a kind of theology which can also stand academic rigor, touch our people in their very core and remain relevant even to the coming generations in their new situations in life and accompanying challenges.

2.10 Summary

In this lecture, you are expected to have learned that: diverse African Christian theologians have different yet complementally explanations of ACT; that African Theology is not confined to Christianity; that to qualify as a serious African Christian theologian one has the obligation of being open to other disciplines, be a good philosopher cum a prayerful/deeply spiritual person, have a social commitment, have the capability of responding fruitfully to people’s needs, concerns, worries, concerns, anxieties and aspirations for the welfare of all, maintain orthodoxy with regard to the kernel of Christianity/doctrine and challenge the Church creatively with due respect and prudence. You should also have been psyched to come up with an ACT that will not only withstand academic rigor but also touch the kernel of our people and coming generations too imbued with new situations in life and living cum innovative challenges.
Concluding Activity 2.3

Give and elaborate what Tharcisse T. Tshibangu considers to be the main tasks of an African Christian theologian.

2.11 References


8. A. Shorter, African Christian Theology: Adaptation or Incarnation?
LECTURE THREE:

HISTORICAL SETTING AND PLURIFORMITY OF ACT

Lecture Outline.

3.1 Introduction.

3.2 Objectives.

3.3 Christianity is Young in Africa.

3.4 A Critical Analyses of Early Missionaries’ Implantation Method of Evangelization.

3.5 Why they Used Implantation Method.

3.6 Factors That Gradually Transformed the Above Approach.

3.7 Divergences of ACT and What Triggers It.

3.7 Summary.

3.8 References.

3.1 Introduction.

In Lecture One you were made aware of the indispensability of African worldview as well as the importance of other disciplines, like philosophy, sociology, anthropology and history, for a deeper serious ACT. In Lecture Two we perusing the nature, scope and relevance of ACT. With this in mind, this Lecture will discuss the historical setting of the origin, emergence and growth of Christianity in Africa with emphasis on the mode of evangelization employed by the early Christian missionaries. We shall also explain the transforming factors that brought about a more acceptable proclamation and fruitful catechizing approach.

3.2 Objectives

At the end of this Lecture, you should be able to:

1. Explain the trends in historical development of Christianity in Africa.

2. Explain that early Christian missionaries utilized unacceptable,
implantation method in their missionary enterprise.

3. Explain the reasons that made the early missionaries use implantation method in their evangelization.

4. Explain the factors that transformed the unfavorable method of evangelization the early missionaries used.

5. Discuss the divergences in ACT.

### 3.3 Christianity is Young in Africa.

#### Intext Question

When we say Christianity is young in Africa, what is the justification for this assertion?

#### 3.3.1 Introduction:

With the exception of the Orthodox Church in Ethiopia and the Coptic Church in Egypt where Christianity has been for well over 1000 years, quality Christianity in Africa is a recent phenomenon. It is relatively young in Africa South of the Sahara. This is in the sense that out of the three millennia, Christianity in many parts of Africa is hardly 200 years old.

#### 3.3.2 Christianity in contemporary Africa is a tremendous force to reckon with:

One does not need statistical and demographic acumen to realize the rapidity of the growth and astonishing geographical spread of Christianity. While Western Churches are virtually empty, those in Africa are saturated with disciples and followers. A visit to any Church, especially on Sundays, will easily verify this assertion.

#### Take note

The increment, growth and spread of Christianity in Africa are just amazing. From the *World Christian Encyclopedia* edited by David Barret an awareness is created that: in 1912 in the whole of Africa there were 1,300,000 Christians;
3,750,000 in 1924; 14,000,000 in 1949; 53,000,000 in 1962; 97,000,000 in 1969; 203,000,000 in 1980. With this progression, the prediction was that of 350,000,000 in year 2000 - which actually was on the lower side. You can imagine the huge number there is today.

With this scientific growth analysis, one can roughly appreciate the overwhelming number of Christians today in Africa who, in view of our Unit, are in need of ACT. That is among the reasons why our Unit is of immense importance, timely and relevant at that.

3.3.3 Conclusion: It can rightly be asserted that we are having a shift in Christianity’s geographical, social and cultural centre of gravity. No wonder Western missionaries are rushing to Africa to “fish” followers to fill up the vivid gaps in Europe and America. This should, nevertheless, not blind us to the great need of deepening our catechesis- since many are still poorly liberated by the Good News and also the away of propagating and delivering the Gospel still leaves a lot to be desired- hence the significance of our Unit.

3.4 A Critical Analyses of Early Missionaries’ Implantation Method of Evangelization.

3.4.1 Preamble:

The Western missionaries credited for bringing Christianity to Africa were dedicated in their own ways. These agents no doubt sacrificed a lot. The fruits of their labor remain even today e.g., magnificent Church buildings, schools, colleges, hospitals, majestic well-managed hostels, homes for the poor… and beneficiaries of their scholarships among prominent people today. The invaluable traditions they set are still noticeable though in a rather transformed form. All this is commendable.

Intext Question

What method did the early Christian missionaries employ in propagating the Good News to Africa and how do you explain it?
Nevertheless, in their evangelization endeavor in their missionary enterprise, they utilized the unpopular **implantation** method which had a considerable number of shortcomings and limitations which we now examine below.

### 3.4.2 Meaning of implantation method:

It is transplanting Christianity coated with Western characteristics and foreign elements into Africa. This may analogically be likened to the implantation of the zygote from a foreign body into the uterus of a woman in the case of test-tube babies via *in vitro* fertilization in reference to homologous or heterologous artificial insemination. It is a manner of evangelization virtually void of concern for African world-view and existential context. This is a method of propagating the Gospel that is predominantly imbued with Western characteristics, interpretations, thought-forms, “civilization”, biased mentality and elements of paternalism as well as patronization.

### 3.5 Why they Used Implantation Method.

#### 3.5.1 Introduction:

There are a considerable number of reasons why the early Christian missionaries utilized the above method in their missionary enterprise. Let us indicate and explicate the main ones:

**Intext Question**

In what manner did the early missionaries bring Christianity in your home area and why?

#### 3.5.2 Their attitude towards anything African was that of contempt:

They had a mentality of *madharau* (contempt) with regard to African cultures, traditions, religiosity, history, philosophy of life and African cosmotheandric perception of being and beingness. To them anything African was saturated with paganism, Satanism, devilish superstitions, malevolent magical practices, repugnant primitive rituals and incongruent ancestor “worship”.

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Take note

To them the above were repulsive elements which the kind of Christianity they asserted and propagated could not lawfully accommodate. That is why they substituted African worship drums with harmonium cum pianos, African meaningful names with European strange names, African all-involving vibrant musical bit with Gregorian ones, African history with foreigners history, African matrimonial ongoing community involving rituals with their dry “individualistic” formula recited once for all rites…the list seems to be endless.

The basic mentality and issue was that, to them, the Africans were plain mission fields for the implantation of the Western theologies. For them, Africans were a kind of tabula lazar or virginal soil to be exploited and maneuvered.

Thus, the Africans were supposed to be dependent on the missionaries’ superior cultures. They glorified their Western cultures as being unpolluted by heathenism compared to the “unfortunate” African one.

3.5.3 They had a kind of conviction that their Western articulations and thought-categories were the fundamental universal means of evangelization, catechesis, and theologizing: Theirs was taken to be the norm or standard in Christianizing, the sole measure of right and wrong, developmental cum non-developmental and the only acceptable tool for Christianizing ministry. As such, anybody opposing these was ipso facto said to reject the kernel of Christianity.

The assumption was that, to be a Christian, one had to necessarily identify oneself with the missionaries’ cultural aspects, Western outlook and Western philosophy of life. This should remind us of the circumcision controversy at Antioch where St. Paul was ably engaged in the confrontation that resulted in the convocation of the First Council of Jerusalem as recorded in Acts 15.
Take note

With the above propagation mentality, African traditions, cultural heritage… and religiosity were, by missionary standards, Satanic, savage, primitive, non-developmental, embarrassingly degrading and below the dignity of a committed genuine Christian. As such, they had to be suppressed and denounced as incompatible with Christian faith.

By contrast, the missionaries’ ways were enforced as the ones that were really Christian- with virtually nothing to purify or correct. As such, theirs were to be imposed, adopted and venerated as exalted vital means of evangelizing, liberating, divinizing, civilizing, redemptive and salvific means or indispensable tools of Gospel proclamation and catechizing.

3.5.4 They ignored the fact that by its very essence/nature and due to distinctively peculiar concrete historical existential factors as well as human nature, Christianity is inculturational: That it requires diverging and diverse theologies to evolve towards ideal realization. That it is confined to neither European culture nor to American culture nor to Asian culture nor to African culture nor to any other culture at that- not even to the Jewish culture. Hence, not even a “superior culture” can rightly claim to be the absolute norm in Christianizing, theologizing and catechesis. As Vatican Two teaches, Christianity accommodates and embraces ALL cultures and yet goes beyond ALL cultures. The Kingdom that the Gospel proclaims is supposed to be lived by respective people deeply and critically bound in their cultures but, at the same time, it transcends all the cultures.

3.5.5 Applying double standards: This biased practice by the agents of Christianity depending on where their missionary duties took them to is another rationale behind implantation method. In German they made Christianity Germanic, in America American, in Italy Italian, in Greece Greco…in Ireland Irish BUT in Africa (not African but) Western.

Such issue of double standards is well captured by J. N. K. Mugambi in his book titled African Christian Theology pp39-40. This is how he puts it:
“Missionary activity in the early Church respected the religious and cultural backgrounds of the people to whom the Church spread. The New Testament presented a gospel in which Jesus Christ and His teaching were relevant. This positive approach was an important factor contributing to the great development of Christian theology during the first five centuries of Church history, and in particular to its influence by Greco-Roman philosophical and religious thought.

“In contrast, the modern missionaries who… introduced Christianity to the interior of East Africa were negative to the African cultural and religious heritage.”

**3.5.6 Consequences of their implantation approach:**

Such a tendency of equating theology with Western characteristics and elements thereby expressing, interpreting and imposing it on the Africans was quite unacceptable to many. As a result there was a multiplication of emerging denominations and all sorts of “Christian” sects.

Such general contempt and pious arrogance in disregard of African situation in life and worldview made some Africans be of the mentality that Christianity is a *Mzungu* (foreigner’s) religion. They even perceived it as a religion which has as its content the invasion of indigenous practices and Europeanizing of African-ness.

It actually brought a dichotomy between Christianity and the Africans. Such a rift, henceforth, has an impact of making even some of the convertees to Christianity practice double standards in their beliefs, life and living. In this way they now and then lean towards Christianity at their manipulative convenience while in other difficult or convivial situations they opt, with rigor, for their traditional norms and practices.

**3.6 Factors That Gradually Transformed the Above Approach.**

**3.6.1 Introduction:**

The above unpopular method of evangelization became a stumbling block in the realization of ACT. Its radical change was long-overdue. There then cropped up factors that transformed the scenario. Let us point out and explicate such striking factors that brought out the change:
Activity 3.1
Discuss the factors that transformed the improper mode of evangelization that the early Christian missionaries used.

3.6.2 The emergence of critical-questioning African Christian theologians:

As earlier pointed out, some Africans luckily became beneficiaries of missionary benevolent funds and scholarships. The chosen few were enabled to go for further studies in the missionaries’ renowned motherlands academic institutions. While there, they were struck by a strong emotion opening their minds to the phenomenon of how Christianity is Italian in Italy, Germanic in Germany, American in America, Greco in Greece…and Irish in Ireland BUT not so in Africa. This shocking reality of double standards and open bias towards the Africans hit them hard. They were compelled to rebel against this hypocrisy, bias, contempt, paternalism, distortion of the Good News…and “racism”.

Among such disturbed African scholars is Kofi Appiah Kubi of Ghana. His documented sentiments, which adequately capture the feelings of the African scholars, are self explanatory. To put you into the picture, this is how he puts it:

“How can I sing the Lord’s song in a strange land, in a strange language, in a strange thought, in a strange ideology? (cf. Ps.137:4). For more than a decade now the cry of the Psalmist has been the cry of many African Christians. We demand to serve the Lord in our own terms and without being turned into Euro-American or Semitic bastards before we do so. That the Gospel has come to remain in Africa cannot be denied, but now our theological reflections must be addressed to the real contextual African situations.

“Our question must not be what Karl Barth, Karl Rahner or any other Karl has to say, but rather what God would have us do in our living concrete condition. For too long African Christian theologians have been preoccupied with what missionary A or theologian B or scholar C has told us about God and the Lord Jesus Christ.
“The struggle of African theologians, scholars, and other Christians in ventures such as this consultation is to find a theology that speaks to our people where we are, to enable us to answer the critical question of our Lord Jesus Christ: Who do you (African Christians) say that I am?”

3.6.3 Favorable interest, honest concern and better/deeper understanding of the African cultures, philosophy and religions:

Our African-ness was taken more objectively and more seriously. This is quite explicit in disciplines like comparative religions, sociology, socio-cultural anthropology, history and sage philosophy. Such is further noticed and enhanced in our University Units like this one, in higher institutions, in secondary schools and in ecclesial seminaries.

3.6.4 The attainment of political independence and somehow Church relative autonomy in Africa:

A thorough scrutiny reveals that the changes in favor of African-ness have for their underlying philosophy the assertion and identity of the African and African-ness. The *utamaduni wa Mwafrika* (African customs/tradition) was set as developmental.

On the side of the Church, there emerged a better awareness that the Church in Africa must necessarily and appropriately be African just as that of Europe is European, that of America is American…and that of Asia is Asian.

Hence, more and more African hierarchical authorities i.e., Bishops, Priests/Pastors…took their respective leadership roles. They thus became a strengthening force in the effort to make the Church in Africa “truly African” and “truly Christian”. This helped a great deal in helping the Church to in striving to be more “self supporting/reliant”, “self propagating” and “self ministering”.

The establishment of theological centers cum departments in, for instance, Catholic University of Eastern Africa, Day Star University and Methodist University primarily for such endeavor further strengthened the above.

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3.6.5 Vatican Two and Post Vatican Two magisterial instructions and guidance:

The above encouraged a thorough study and appreciation of African cultural, social, philosophical and religious values. It spelt out clearly and distinctly the Africans’ obligation of duty to contextualize Christianity in respective cultures while remaining well disposed to mutual enrichment and dialogue with the others. The theologians and others in other academic spheres in Africa are thus constantly challenged to inculturate the Gospel message in accordance with the African needs, aspirations, thought-forms and mentality. They are conscientised to take it as their obligation of duty to create African Christian theologies. They are, furthermore, reminded that this is an unfinished task—an ongoing struggling process.

3.7 The Divergences of ACT.

3.7.1 Introduction.

ACT is not monolithic. It is imbued with pluriformity. We will, therefore, examine the divergence despite the convergence of ACT pointing out the elements that are responsible for the vivid pluriformity of ACT. We will, furthermore, identify the three main trends effecting diverse modes of ACT among individual African Christian theologians i.e. some African Christian theologians choose liberation trend, some opt for the Inculturation orientation, while some others intertwine the liberation trend and Inculturation orientation for their approach—hence the pluriformity of ACT.

**Intext Question**

How do you explain that even at its present initial stage ACT is neither monolithic nor uniform but diverse and constantly diverging?

3.7.2 There are several elements that are responsible for the pluriformity in ACT.

**Activity 3.2**

Identify the main characteristics that bring about differences in ACT.
These are: socio-political and cultural distinctiveness, diverse faith affiliations, individual choice and personalities, one’s initiation into peculiar schools of thought, diverging degrees of commitment to scholarship and doctrinal royalty, and options in engaging in the threefold pivotal approach in ACT namely: liberational perspective; inculturational orientation; and an implicit as well as explicit merger of these two approaches owing to their correlativity and necessary mutuality.

3.7.3 Socio-political and Cultural Divergences.

These affect the theologizing of the theologians. The rationale is that one normally does theology with an anchor to ones situation/circumstances in life, ethnic/cultural endowment, political affiliation and national background. It should be remembered that theology is fundamentally situational.

That is why we notice, for instance, outstanding distinctiveness between French speaking African Christian theologians and the English speaking ones. Generally, Francophone African Christian theologians tend to be more speculative, more creative (even in music) and better philosophers thanks also to French language which is friendlier in speculation and metaphysics. On the other hand, Anglophone African theologians are inclined to be less speculative, less creative and more pragmatic thanks to English language which is less friendly in metaphysics and speculations. While French may be said to be more abstract, English is more concrete/pragmatic. Thus, employing these languages as theologizing tools necessarily triggers divergences in ACT especially in depth, seriousness and creativity.

Take note

We also distinguish between South African Christian theologians (especially prior to their independence) from those of the rest of Independent African. The differences become more explicit especially in their mode of African liberation theology. Their South African Black Theology with Jesus viewed as “Black Messiah” is clearly different from liberation theologies from the rest of Africa. This is owing to the respective diverse socio-political realities.
3.7.4 Denominational Peculiarities.

Faith affiliation is another factor that contributes to the pluriformity in ACT. The issue here is that the religion or denomination or sects or membership in the ever-cropping up Christian splinter groups and ongoing mushrooming counter-splinter groups contribute heavily in influencing their respective members, directly or indirectly binding own theologians, in coming up with ACT they can own. In other words, royalty to their Churches compel the theologians to come up with ACT that complies to their respective Churches-hence the differences.

3.7.5 Individual Choice and Personality.

Among the African Christian theologians the above is explicit. They opt for different tools in their theologizing: Some employ Marxist social analyses in their ACT. Some utilize Thomistic philosophy. Some grapple with African music and dances in their inculturate Christian liturgy and worship. Many enrich their ACT with African cultural heritage…and some utilize the philosophies they are personally comfortable with like sage philosophy, existential philosophy propagated by exponents like Martin Heidegger/ Jean Paul Sartre, Psychological theories by proponents like Alfred Adler/Karl Rogers and transcendental philosophy by scholars like Otto Muck. We even have some who deliberately choose to dialogue with Western/Eastern theologies in their ACT while others ignore the Western/Eastern contribution all together-an omission which, in my view/opinion, is very impoverishing. All these issues of individual choice with regard to tools and personality contribute greatly in the diversities of ACT.

3.7.6 One’s School of Thought and Academic mentor

Where one takes studies, the educators one is confronted with and the academic tradition in that venue of erudition while schooling and getting educated have repercussions in ones mode of theologizing. One schooled or getting educated in: Tubingen University in German will encounter radicals like Jurgen Moltmann, Hans Kung and Karl Rahner (legacy) and get a heavy dose in political theology; in North American one will be confronted with scholars like James H. Conn and Gayraud S. Wilmore of Black Theology and Black Power; in Latin America one will be in touch with the influence of Latin American Liberation theology propagated by scholars like Gustavo Gutierrez Merino, Leonardo Boff…Jon Sobrino; in CUEA one will be influenced by the legacy of Charles Nyamiti of African Inculturation Theology and ancestral ACT; and in Asia one
will benefit from Asian Theologies of Ecumenism, religious pluralism and Interreligious dialogue with exponents like Jacques Dupuis, Virginia Fabella and Raymond Panikkar. These factors contribute a great deal in making ACT be multi-faceted.

3.7.7 Degree of Commitment and Authenticity- A Good Theologian Be a Good Philosopher: 
Ones seriousness or lack of seriousness in schooling and education and openness to other disciplines or lack of it results in different types of African Christian Theologies: Some deep; some superficial; some naïve and far-fetched. Thus, the degree of adherence, or lack of it, becomes a primordial cause of differences in ACT.

3.7.8 Different Approaches.

Owing to the above factors i.e. Socio-political and Cultural Divergences, Denominational Peculiarities, Individual Choice and Personality, One’s School of Thought and Academic Mentor, and Degree of Commitment and Authenticity, a triple-pronged main trend to ACT arises. These are: Liberation perspective; Inculturation orientation; and Liberation cum Inculturation aspect. Some African Christian theologians choose liberation one, some opt for the Inculturation orientation, while some others intertwine the liberation and Inculturation for their approach. These necessarily results in different types of ACT.

3.8 Summary

In this Lecture, you were reminded of the awareness created in Lecture One with regard to the indispensability of African worldview as well as the importance of other disciplines, like philosophy, sociology, anthropology and history, for a deeper serious ACT. With this in mind, the Lecture discussed the historical setting of the origin, emergence and growth of Christianity in Africa with emphasis on the mode of evangelization employed by the agents of Christianity, i.e., the early Christian missionaries and why they used this method. The unfortunate implantation method employed by early missionaries in the propagation of the Good News owing to their attitude of contempt towards anything African imbued with their paternalism cum patronization, and the fundamental factors that transformed the above into a more acceptable proclamation and fruitful catechizing approach thereby being the
springboard into real ongoing ACT. In addition to these, the lecture has, moreover, discussed the pluriformity of ACT and the rationale behind it.

**Concluding Activity 3.3**

Give and discuss the predominant unfavorable method the early Christian missionaries used in propagating and spreading the Good News in Africa as you examine also the factors that triggered this phenomenon and the transforming ones.

### 3.9 References


LECTURE FOUR:
ACT OF LIBERATION

Lecture Outline.

4.1 Introduction.

4.2 Objectives.

4.3 Explanation of the Term “Liberation Theology” (henceforth LT) by Gustavo Gutierrez and Leonardo Boff.

4.4 Relating LT to: Radical Social Revolution; Anthropocentrism; Theocentricity; Christology; Ecclesiology; and Eschatology.

4.5 Examining the Paradox of LT as One Though Many.

4.6 Analysis of Levels of Oppression by Peter Frostin that Trigger Pluriformity in LT.

4.7 Triple Inter-related Levels in which LT is Done.

4.8 Discussion of Leonardo Boff’s Exemplary Methodology of Mediations/Aspects/Moments.

4.9 Perusal of LT’s Geographical Spread: LT Found Wherever Christianity is since Jesus is the Liberator Par Excellence.

4.10 Summary.

4.11 References

4.1 Introduction

In Lecture Three you were initiated into the historical setting and pluriformity of ACT. You were also made aware of the two fundamental approaches to ACT namely, Liberation approach and Inculturation perspective in Lecture Three. In this Lecture Four, we will discuss LT dwelling mainly on Latin American Liberation theology. The main reason is that LT from Latin American not only has a global repute but it also influences African LT thereby having a close affinity in
this mode of doing theology. As such, background knowledge of Latin American’s is indispensable in grasping that of Africa. The affinity is just too strong to be ignored.

### 4.2 Objectives

At the end of this Lecture, you should be able to:

1. Explain the affinity between Latin American LT and that of Africa.
3. Relate LT to radical revolution, anthropocentrism, Theocentrism, Christology, Ecclesiology and Eschatology.
4. Discuss the paradoxical issue of LT being one yet imbued with pluriformity.
5. Explain the levels of oppression that trigger divergences in LT.
6. Identify and discuss the three levels at which LT is done.
7. Give and explain the methodological approach to LT.
8. Discuss the Geographical spread of LT.

### 4.3 Explanation of the Term “Liberation Theology” by Gustavo Gutierrez and Leonardo Boff.

#### 4.3.1 Gustavo Gutierrez Merino:

**Activity 4.1**

Give a brief biography of Gustavo Gutierrez Merino and a list of his publications noting what they have in common.
1) This Latin American scholar of international repute merits some attention since he is referred to as the “father of liberation theology”.

Intext Question
Why do you think Paulo Freire too merits the honorary title of the “father of liberation theology” and which monumental works of his do you know?

2) According to me, however, Gutierrez should share this enviable title with Paulo Freire for his commitment to education for all including “illiterate” adults. Also for his concretization of the concept “CONSCIENTIZATION” which is the very core of liberation theology in view of CREATING AWARENESS for authentic transformation, growth in freedom and self actualization cum orthodox fulfillment. This universally respected educator wrote monumental pedagogical books which are still very much used worldwide even after his demise on 2nd May, 1997 in Sao Paulo City of heart attack. He authored liberation educative scholarly publications which have influenced even African Christian Theologians.

4) He is a Mestizo, of Quechuan and Hispanic ancestry. He was born in Lima Peru in June 1929, in a family of three children. As a youth, Gutierrez was attacked by *osteomyelitis*. This made him spend most of his teenage years confined to bed. He had to use a wheelchair by then and even today he walks with a limp.

5) That suffering condition made him decide to study medicine in 1947 at San Marcos University Medical School in Lima for 4 years. Still wanting to serve a wider range of sufferers and the poor, he had a shift in his career. He quitted his medical studies and decided to become a Roman Catholic Priest in the Archdiocese of Lima.
Take note

Gutierrez studied philosophy at the Pontifical Seminary in Santiago Chile, then to the University of Louvain in Belgium in 1951 where he studied philosophy and psychology. He then did theology at the Catholic Institute in Lyons France and got licentiate in 1959. He was ordained Priest in 1959, taught at the Pontifical Catholic University, Lima (department of theology). Gutierrez was involved with the Catholic Action Movement and he was invited at CELAM as a member of its theological reflection team. Furthermore, he had an active role in Second General Conference of Latin American Bishops at Madeline Colombia in 1968—which was the main inspiration with regard to liberation theology.

6) Gutierrez felt that Western theology did not make the Gospel touch the daily life of the poor. It left them unchanged proving to be inadequate and not so relevant among them. Mingling with the poor in his pastoral duties, Gutierrez got the following three insights:
   a) “I discovered that poverty was destructive, something to be fought against and destroyed, not merely something that was the object of charity.
   b) Second, I discovered that poverty was not accidental. The fact that these people are poor and not rich is not just a matter of chance, but the result of a structure…
   c) Third, I discovered that poor people were a social class. When I discovered that poverty was something to be fought against, that poverty was structural, that poor people were a class and could organize, it became crystal clear that in order to serve the poor, one had to move into political action.”

That is why he became a kind of political activist living literally among the poor. That is why his approach to theology got transformed.

Intext Question

How does Gutierrez define Liberation theology?
7) This is how he defines Liberation theology:

“It is a theological reflection born of the experience of shared efforts to abolish the current unjust situation and to build a different society, freer and more human.”

8) He further qualifies it as:

“It is a theology which does not stop with reflecting on the world, but rather tries to be part of the process through which the world is transformed. It is a theology which is open- in the protest against trampled human dignity in the struggle against the plunder of the vast majority of people, in liberating love, and in the building of a new, just, and fraternal society- to the gift of the Kingdom of God.”

Take note

For Gutierrez then, the specificity/peculiarity/newness of LT is that it adheres to a critical reflection on existential praxis- intertwining orthodox with orthopraxis- for transformation in the light of faith. It is quite distinct from the traditional theology in the sense that while traditional theology stresses “reflection on”, LT accentuates “PRAXIS” for transformation.

9) This is how he explains the technical term “praxis”:

“What we understand by ‘praxis’ is ‘transforming action’, not simply any kind of action, but rather a historical transformation. Historical praxis means a transforming change, a transforming action of history”. He stresses the notion of a critical relationship between action and reflection –thus praxis is a reflective action that transforms.

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3 Ibid., p.15.
Intext Question

What are the three implications of the term “Liberation Theology” according to Gustavo Gutierrez?

A closer scrutiny of his epoch making book - *A Theology of Liberation* - reveals that the term or concept “LT” viewed from the framework of Latin America has **threefold connotations.** These implications are:

a) Emancipation from SIN and restoration/re-establishment of life in Christ. Here SIN is seen as the root-cause of un-freedom as explained by P.N. Wachege.\(^4\) Christ is understood from the point of view of being the Liberator *par excellence.*\(^5\)

b) Freedom from oppressive conditions e.g. socio-economic, political, cultural and religious ones.

c) Re-establishment of human AUTHENTICITY. This is well explained by the philosopher Martine Heidegger from the point of view of *Being in Time* - contingent and how we ought to live our lives and not to let others live our lives for us.

4.3.2 Leonardo Boff:

**Activity 4.2**

Give a brief biography of **Leonardo Boff** and a list of his publications.

1) L. Boff is another renowned Latin American liberation theologian whose numerous scholarly works influence African Christian theologians a great deal.

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Take note

Among the many publications by Leonardo Boff are:

1. *Introducing Liberation Theology* - Co-authored with his brother Clodovis Boff (Maryknoll, New York: Orbis books, 1987);
2. *Jesus Christ Liberator: A Critical Christology of Our Time* (London: SPCK, 1980);
3. *Cry of the Earth, Cry of the Poor* (Maryknoll, New York: Orbis Books, 1997);
4. *Church, Charism & Power: Liberation Theology and the Institutional Church* (London: SCM Press, 1985);
10. *Ecclesiogenesis: The Base Communities Reinvent the Church* (Maryknoll, New York: Orbis Books, 1986);
11. *Good News to the Poor: A New Evangelization* (London: Burns & Oates, 1992);

Intext Question

How does L. Boff define LT and what essential elements does he and G. Gutierrez agree on?
2) Boff gives a more comprehensive definition of LT. This is how he puts it:

“The theology of liberation is nothing other than the theological moment of the experience of Christian faith when it undertakes to consciously transform a world in a situation of dependence on the basis of the Gospel.” He sees it as FAITH seeking to TRANSFORM/REMAKE the world.

Take note
Two crucial elements are notable namely,
1. Faith and
2. Want to transform.

Intext Question
What is the point of departure and finality of LT?

3) The above definition gives an insight into the starting point and the specific goal of LT:
   a) The starting point for LT is situation of UNFREEDOM. This state is also called situation of alienation, degradation, marginalization, rejection…depersonalization. It is a condition noticed within the context of oppressive structures, attitudes, mentality and conduct. A situation resulting in too few people having excessive wealth while too many are imbued with abject poverty. All these are in the realm of un-freedom.
   b) The goal of LT is implied in the point of departure. The finality is FREEDOM. This aim is also called by other names like emancipation, liberty and authenticity. It implies a serious commitment to the struggle for emancipating the sufferers and the poor from the shackles of oppression and deprivation into integral freedom and wellbeing. One can further rightly refer to it as re-establishment of humankind as humankind ought to be i.e. human uplift to

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authenticity. Hence the emphasis on concepts likes “liberation”, “salvation” and “redemption”.

4.4 Relating LT to: Radical Social Revolution; Anthropocentrism; Theocentricity; Christology; Ecclesiology; and Eschatology.

**Activity 4.3**

Justify the following in relation to LT: radical social revolution; anthropocentrism; theocentricity; Christology; Ecclesiology; and eschatology.

It is important for you to have the awareness as to how LT relates to the above. Let us, therefore, briefly explain how:

**4.4.1 Radical Social Revolution:**

Since the actual situation in many people’s life is that of deprivation, dehumanization, exploitation, depersonalization, abject poverty…and immoral manipulations, LT propagates a radical social revolution. This is a basic shift from oppressive as well as exploitative structures and other injustices so as to restore a more meaningful humankind society as willed by the Father of Creation. Such a tedious undertaking is elaborated with Jesus Christ the Liberator as the norm. Such a Christocentricity perspective, i.e. getting inspiration, guidance, support and exemplarity from the Redeemer and Savior inevitably distinguishes the “social revolution” proposed by LT in the service (an instrument and not the end) of the realization of God’s Kingdom from Marxism. The Kingdom propagated by LT is ever against SIN and never against the INDIVIDUAL EXPLOITER/OPPRESSOR/SINNER. This is obviously different from the Marxist extreme notion of revolution which apparently tends to be an end in itself and in a way for the destruction (or even elimination) of the bourgeoisie in favor of the proletariats. That of LT honestly endeavors to emancipate both the oppressor and the oppressed.
Take note

Paulo Freire further explains this “radical social revolution” proposed by the exponents of LT as geared towards transformation of structures through PRAXIS (i.e. reflection and action = reflective action) implying honest dialogue, solidarity, sincere communication and healthy inter-personal relationships and interaction.  

4.4.2 Anthropocentrism:

Anthropocentrism in LT is basic and indispensable. Within the dynamics of LT is the HUMAN PERSON. It is human’s genuine integral development, respective responsibility, self-fulfillment/actualization and, above all, AUTHENTIC FREEDOM.

Thanks to this focus, LT aims at liberating human from the shackles of whatever undermines or blocks their self-responsibility/awareness/actualization/fulfillment. It endeavors to eliminate such impediments and stumbling blocks that hinder the above. Thus, LT strives for the annihilation of the exploitative and alienating factors and makes a determined effort in the re-establishment of continuous restoration of liberty and authenticity to all.

4.4.3 Theocentricity:

Since LT has for its finality/goal the annihilation of the exploitative and alienating factors and the re-establishment of continuous restoration of liberty and authenticity to all, nevertheless, you should know that these points at a Supreme Being called God. This is so because human is a creature and, by implication, a created being. Thus, to understand human, one must necessarily understand the Creator and the purpose for which the Un-originated Originator brought human into being. That is why the theocentricity perspective of LT is indispensable so as to know the WILL of God which is a necessary condition in LT. Such knowledge is acquired mainly from the Scriptures, Tradition and traditions.

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4.4.4 Christocentricity:

Be also aware that Christological aspect is essentially related to that of theocentricity. The underlying reason is that it is Jesus Christ who in His being and concrete historical existence as Jesus of Nazareth not only mediates but also reveals who God is in the most perfect manner. In His attitude, mentality, liberating conduct, words, deeds, miracles, parables, allegories, logia…passion, death, resurrection, ascension and establishment as Kyrios (Lord) and Christos (Christ) Jesus shows the way forward. Mind you this is particularly Jesus understood as the Liberator par excellence, and the very norm or criterion of liberation itself. That is why liberation theologians draw inspiration, guidance, support and exemplarity from Christological sources.

4.4.5 Ecclesiology:

The above understanding logically leads you to the Church aspect of LT. You should remember that the Christian Church is by its very nature the Body of Christ who is the Head and as such His Church MUST do what He did and commissioned and necessarily be who He is to many-and, indeed, to all.

The Church is thus conscientised as well as challenged to marry orthodox with orthopraxis in re-establishing freedom and authenticity among all. She is required to take with great concern the insights of Gustavo Gutierrez that there is no development without liberation. Since the promoters of development are more often than not the oppressors or agents of exploitative minority tycoons, LT puts it squarely on the Church to provide the impetus into the realization of genuine human development, respect of Godly human rights and authentic SOLIDARITY. She is obliged to help all to move from the realm of sin through the grace of Christ into the realm of salvation/redemption.

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4.4.6 Eschatological:

Since LB is an unfinished business owing to factors like new oppressive and exploitative factors that keep dropping up, and as a result of the fact that as long as we are down here on earth we remain sinners who are also sinned against, it has an eschatological element.

4.5 Examining the Paradox of LT as One Though Many.

Take note

Despite the diversities, be informed that LT has considerable uniting factors. The common unifying principle - the underlying philosophy - is in the specific point of departure and the specific point of arrival (goal/end). We treated this earlier. The content is the same. Only the accentuation and the manner/way differ.

So, while it is valid to talk of Liberation Theologies bearing in mind the context cum situations in life emphasized e.g. socio-economic, political, cultural and religious items as well as where it is done and at what level, yet we should understand that these accentuations do not make LT merely pluriform. A closer critical disinterested scrutiny brings to awareness that there is a kind of common denominator in the themes tackled by LT. We notice a real convergence. Some of these outstanding common themes are:

Intext Question

According to you, what are the common themes that run across liberation Theology?

1. Emphasis on justice and peace;
2. Hermeneutic suspicion on interpreting scriptures;
3. Liberation of theology from the ideological captivity of the powerful;
4. God’s preferential option for the poor;
5. Righteous anger at conditions of slavery, oppressive structures, systems of dehumanization and commitment to transform-realizing that things are not the way they ought to be.
6. Acknowledging/appreciating the capacity of the people to liberate themselves. The emphasis here is that people have the potentiality to free themselves.

All these verify that LT is one in its fundamental aspects though, owing to situations in life and context, it is multi-faceted.

4.6 Analysis of Levels of Oppression by Peter Frostin That Trigger Pluriformity in LT.

Peter Frostin deserves credit for enumerating and classifying the levels of oppression that bring about divergences in LT. Among those levels are:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Intext Question</th>
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<tr>
<td>What do you understand by the following levels of oppression as explained by Peter Frostin in his book titled- Liberation Theology in Tanzania and South Africa: A First World Interpretation (Lund University Press, 1988)?</td>
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1. Economic level- this has to do with rich and poor;
2. Classist level- this has to do with capitalists and proletariats;
3. Geographic level- this has to do with North and South;
4. Sexist level- this has to do with male and female;
5. Ethnic level- this has to do with whites and blacks;
6. Cultural level- this has to do with dominant and dominated culture.⁹

These levels of oppression and, of course, other diverse alienating factors give an invaluable insight into pluriformity of LT.

4.7 Triple Inter-related Levels in which LT is Done.

Activity 4.4

Identify and elaborate three inter-related levels at which LT is done.

There are three inter-related levels at which LT is done. These are:

4.7.1 Popular level:
Here stress is on LIFE. Observing their oppressive concrete existence, people become aware that the reality of their situation is contrary to the WILL of God. They become aware that things are not the way they are meant to be. So, they spontaneously CRY for liberation. They start working for emancipation in their humble yet powerful spontaneous ways.

4.7.2 Pastoral Level:
Here the emphasis is on ACTION. The Church Pastors hear the “cry of the poor” in the first level and react accordingly. They explicate the above yearning in their workshops, homilies, sermons, preaching, and catechesis. So the institutional Church concerns herself with the sufferers. She makes an option for the deliverance of the poor and the oppressed. She shepherds and guides and supports them to move from the realm of oppression into the realm of freedom.

4.7.3 Professional Level:
Here the stress is on erudition. This is the scholarly/academic stage. The undertaking in level one and level two is explicated in monographs, periodicals, journals, seminars…and symposia articulating the hopes and agonies basing themselves on Biblical texts through corresponding exegesis. They do so drawing inspiration from other disciplines of learning and sciences. So, liberation works is systematized, given reason and grounded on Biblical pericopes. The main thrust is apparently why things should change and the necessity for articulation.

These three fundamental levels are linked and bound together by faith that transforms history from dependence/un-freedom thereby effecting authenticity and freedom.

4.8 Discussion of Leonardo Boff’s Exemplary Methodology of Mediations/Aspects/Moments.

L. Boff remarkably provides us with an inspiration into the method of approach as far as LT is concerned. According to him, the method consists of the following moments/mediations/aspects/steps:
1. **The moment of insertion:** The experience of captivity and un-freedom becomes real when one is on the ground. Here one gains experiential knowledge. This is gained when one is on the ground.

2. **The moment of social analysis:** Having experienced the above, one asks oneself WHY things are the way they are. This is a daring bold step whose consequences can be extremely painful to the liberator but a worthy cause all the same.

3. **The moment of theological reflection:** After the above, one relates it to the WILL of God. The accentuation here is on the hermeneutics/interpretation: is it the will of God that things should be the way they are? What is the Word of God telling us about the phenomenon?

4. **The moment of praxis/Pastoral planning:** This has to do with the actualization thereby. It is actually changing the situation of un-freedom.

**4.9 Perusal of LT’s Geographical Spread:** LT Found Wherever Christianity is since Jesus is the Liberator *Par Excellence.*

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**Activity 4.5**

Verify or falsify the assertion that “wherever Christianity is, there you find liberation theology”.

Wherever Christianity is –since Jesus is the *Liberator par excellence* - there we find LT. The rationale is that: wherever Christianity is propagated, what Jesus Christ was and did must necessarily be fruitfully preached; also, whoever is incorporated into Christianity through the re-birth ritual of baptism cum confirmation thereby freely acquiring the indelible title “Christian” must take after Jesus Christ to remain His true disciples and followers. This is the essential justification of having LT wherever Christianity and Christians are.
4.10 Summary

This Lecture reminded you that there are two fundamental approaches to ACT namely, Liberation approach and Inculturation perspective. Focusing on and discussing the former i.e. LT, the Lecture has enabled you to see Liberation as propagated by Latin American theologians namely Gustavo Gutierrez and Leonardo Boff. We have also seen that LT relate to: Radical Social Revolution; Anthropocentrism; Theocentricity; Christology; Ecclesiology; and Eschatology. Moreover, the lecture explained that though LT is one paradoxically it has differences. The Lecture furthermore Elaborate the Triple Inter-related Levels in which LT is Done; Leonardo Boff’s Exemplary Methodology of Mediations involving the moment of insertion, social analysis, theological reflection and praxis; Wherever Christianity is there is LT since Jesus is the Liberator Par Excellence.

Concluding Activity 4.6

1. Discuss Leonardo Boff’s understanding of “liberation theology” indicating also its importance in ACT.

2. Explain Leonardo Boff’s mediations as exemplary in African liberational methodology.

4.11 References


LECTURE FIVE:
ACT OF FEMINISM/WOMEN LIBERATION THEOLOGY

Lecture outline

5.1 Introduction.
5.2 Objectives.
5.3 Preliminary Observations and Definition.
5.4 Biblical Rooting.
5.5 Main Objectives of feminist/women liberation theology.
5.6 Diverse Feminisms Triggering a Pluriformity of Christian Women Liberation.
5.7 How Men (And Women) Oppress and Exploit Women.
5.8 Sevenfold Basic Modes of Oppression and Exploitation of African women and How to Curb the Factors.
5.9 Jesus Christ as the Model and Mentor of African Christian Women Liberation.
5.10 Summary.
5.11 References.

5.1 Introduction.

Having dwelt on ACT of liberation in Lecture Four, this Lecture will give and explain to you the historical emergence of African Christian Women liberation theology and its affinity to the Western one. The Lecture will define “feminism” and “women oppression and exploitation.” It will also elaborate the biblical rooting of this mode of liberation theology. Moreover, the Lecture will help you to identify and analyze the main objectives of feminist theology. After that it will indicate and discuss diverse “feminisms” that trigger differences in African Christian women liberation theology. This will be followed by an explanation on how men oppress and exploit women and identification cum explication of the SEVEN main types of oppression and
exploitation women are generally subjected to. After that the Lecture will assist you to justify the fascination women have in Jesus owning Him as their exemplar and mentor in their kind of liberation endeavor. Then the Lecture will end by empowering you to give and explain some exciting Christological Biblical texts/pericopes that inspire and illuminate the Christian feminists to the extent of having and accepting Jesus as pro-them in their feminist liberational effort.

### 5.2 Objectives

At the end of this Lecture, you should be able to:

1. Describe the historical emergence of African Women liberation theology and its affinity to the Western one.

2. Define “feminism” and “women oppression and exploitation”.

3. Give and elaborate the Biblical rooting of feminist mode of liberation theology.

4. Analyze the main objectives of feminist theology.

5. Discuss diverse “feminisms” that trigger differences in African Christian women liberation theology.


7. Explicate the SEVEN main types of oppression and exploitation women are subjected to.

8. Justify the fascination women have in Jesus as their exemplar in their liberation endeavor.

9. Give and explain some exciting Christological Biblical texts that inspire and illuminate the feminists to the extent of owning Jesus as pro-them.
5.3 Preliminary Observations and Definition.

1. This mode of doing liberation theology in Africa emerged more explicitly in the last quarter of the Twentieth Century. At first it was extremely radical owing to the influence of the Western radical feminists’ revolutionary stance since by then there was a close rather spontaneous affinity between the Westerners and the Africans. This approach to liberation theology is mainly a protest against oppression and exploitation of women and a determined conscious effort to ensure women’s worth, authenticity and freedom. The “movement” demands a transformation or reform of the oppressive and exploitative structures of socio-economic political and cultural life and also ecclesial from the point of view of women.

**Intext Question**
What is your understanding of “feminism” and “women oppression and exploitation”?

2. **Teresa Hinga**, a feminist scholar, describes “feminism” in these terms:
   “It is essentially a critique of culture and society in the light of sexism, i.e. the oppression and injustices meted out against women on the grounds of their gender. Feminism is primarily concerned with the unmaking of injustices, and it aims at their elimination, thereby effecting women liberation.”

3. **P.N. Wachege** explains women “oppression and exploitation” in these terms:
   “Women oppression and exploitation is a distorted way of life in which women are dehumanized, marginalized and subjugated by being denied their rights as real persons, being treated and mistreated as inferior beings and deprived of growth into human authenticity and self-fulfillment.”

5.4 Biblical Rooting.

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1. **In Geneses Chapters 1-2**, we learn the narrative of how the Creator created man and woman in His “image and likeness” and as equal rational beings. Both are called in fellowship and discipleship to witness and evangelize. That is why Jesus empowered the Samaritan woman to minister unto fellow **Samaritans (Jn 4: 1-42)**. This was ruined by males’ dehumanizing hierarchical bias towards women. Men’s sexist attitude subjected to women together with their male-chauvinistic interpretation of the Bible with negative female images and gender insensitive language watered down the healthy inter-personal relationship the two genders were endowed with.

The above challenge triggered a **new agenda** of study, theological reflection, theological investigations and Biblical exegesis.

2. **According to H.M. Conn:**

   “This agenda increasingly focuses on hermeneutical questions. How do we interpret what is seen as male interpretation of the Bible? Is the experience of women more than merely a corrective for the Christian context? Is it not also a starting point and a norm? In what sense can liberationist feminism serve as part of a Biblical hermeneutic?”

**H.M. Conn cautions against proponents of negative rejectionism subjected to the Bible and Tradition by impatient radical feminists.** In her realistic approach to the Bible, Conn accentuates the following fundamental points in view of the above:

1) **The entire Biblical message**, including that about women, **revolves**, not around patriarchalism or egalitarianism, but **around God’s covenant**, His redemptive dealings with humanity and creation. The closest thing to Biblical definition of who we are, man or woman is our creation as ‘image of God’ (Gen. 1:27).

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2) **The Bible contains the record of the progressive unfolding of God’s will for humanity.** Its message develops progressively, and always the goal of the development is the consummation of all things, the restoration of creation to what it was intended to be. Man’s and woman’s covenant partnership is to be perfectly fulfilled in the final renewal of God’s original purpose (Gal. 3:28).

3) **Revelation is progressive because God reveals His covenant, redemptive purposes to men and women in divine accommodation to the cultural patterns** in existence at the time when He gives His word. Those patterns sometimes existed in violation of God’s explicit teaching, e.g. polygamous marriages, flagrant male chauvinism.

4) **This accommodation is always accompanied by a divine eschatological polemic against the culture, pointing to Christ as the transformer,** the re-possessor of our social settings. So when God calls us not to covet our neighbor’s ox or ass or wife (Ex. 20:17), it is not to be seen as an affirmation of women as an object of male property in a chauvinist culture; it is to provide a defense of her integrity and worth within such culture.

5) **Redemption’s purpose is the restoration of creation to be what it was intended to be.** Thus salvation can be described as ‘the new creation’ (2 Cor. 5:17), Jesus ‘the last Adam’ (1 Cor. 15:45), and Christians, those who now bear in Christ the (re)created image of God (Eph. 4:24)...Given this flashback intention of salvation to creation, the description of woman in Gen. 1-2 takes on new significance...Unlike the animals, she is endowed with those unique qualities that complement the man (Gen. 2:19-20). As ‘bone of his bone and flesh of his flesh’ (Gen. 2:23), woman bears the closest of kin sociality to man (Gen 29:14; Jdg. 9:2; 2 Sam. 5:1; 19:12-13). They are ‘one flesh’ (Gen. 2:24). As ‘the glory of man’ (1 Cor. 11:7), woman must pray and prophesy in public worship with covered head. Her glory (worth, importance, and honor) is so bright it will distract from the glory of God. The covering of the hair is not a sign of subservience but of authority (1 Cor. 11:10).

6) **Before the fall into sin, man and woman lived in covenant mutuality and solidarity before God.** In partnership they rebelled against God and rend that harmony...The battle of the sexes is begun, the woman’ desire to control the husband, the man’s to master her (cf. Gen. 4:7b). Mutuality turns to superiority and inferiority.
7) **In Christ the curse on marriage is lifted and complementarity restored (1 Cor. 11:11).** The husband’s role of headship (1 Cor. 11:3; Eph. 5:23) and the wife’s role of submission are reaffirmed but radically altered. Submission becomes a mutual calling (Eph. 5:21), transforming male headship from authoritative control to responsible care. Its paradigm is now modeled after the self-sacrificing death of Jesus for the Church (Eph. 5:25-33); and its purpose is not to crush but to liberate. Submission on the part of the wife is transformed from servility and subordination to respect (Eph. 5:33) voluntarily given, and to ‘the unfading beauty of a gentle and quiet spirit’ (1 Pet. 3:4)…In Christ-centered covenant mutuality, each complements the other in their transformed roles.\(^\text{12}\).

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**Intext Question**

What do you know about Elizabeth S. Fiorenza?

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3. **E. S. Fiorenza** is of the opinion that a feminist Biblical hermeneutics is able to contribute to the “advocacy approach” of liberation theology by uncovering and denouncing Biblical traditions which perpetuate violence, alienation and oppression and by affirming those Biblical traditions which enhance and inform the liberation experiences and visions of the People of God.\(^\text{13}\).

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**Take note**

The point here is that men have used even the Bible to exploit, harass and oppress women. They do this through the kind of chauvinistic exegesis they propagate making the Bible speak of God in exclusively male categories and characteristics leaving out women qualities and female elements all together or even “selling-out women” negatively with distorted images. Feminism,

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\(^{12}\) Ibid., pp.256-258.

therefore, calls for a determined radical hermeneutic and genuine conscious exegesis more sympathetic to women.

5.5 Main Objectives of feminist/women liberation theology.

Intext Question
What are the major objectives of feminist/women liberation theology?

There are a considerable number of aims of feminist or, rather, women liberation approach to theology. The following are among the main objectives:

1. To conscientize women to REBEL against patriarchal/anthropology/tradition that undermine women.
2. To transform the Jewish customs, mentality, attitude and traditions that are oppressive, discriminative, gender insensitive and that undermine women dignity, worth and authenticity.
3. To challenge women to endeavor to do their own EXEGESIS drawing inspiration from women’s experiences. Also to conscientize them to learn, understand and interpret the Bible from the point of view of women. In this regard, one would do well to take note of H.M. Conn’s cautious insights above.
4. To help women to emancipate themselves and others from distorted negative IMAGES they are subjected to.
5. To create an awareness in view of freedom from socio-political, economic, cultural and religious oppressive and exploitative factors.
6. To empower women to be their own liberators and to grow in freedom, fulfillment, self-actualization and AUTHENTICITY.
7. To create awareness on how MEN (and women) oppress and exploit women and what to do about it.
Intext Question

According to you, is it realistic or is it farfetched to assert that “in some cases and issues, women are worse oppressors and exploiters of fellow women than their male counterparts and why?

8. To provide a vision and mission geared towards equal rights, equal opportunities and equal duties—hence commensurate remunerations.

9. To take Jesus Christ as their model and exemplar in their liberational ongoing effort.

5.6 Diverse Feminisms Triggering a Pluriformity of Women Liberation.

Feminist theology or women liberation approach to theology is not monolithic. You should realize that it is not the same all over. Neither does it have a uniform outlook. The fact is that there is a pluriformity of it hence the multi-dimensional approach to it.

Take note

Among the crucial factors responsible for distinct women liberation theologies are different notions of “feminism”. Each perception of “feminism” necessarily triggers a diverse somehow autonomous approach to women liberation.

On the issue of diverse and diverging notions of “feminism”, Elizabeth S. Fiorenzza provides an invaluable documented articulation and critical analyses in her book titled Wisdom Ways: Introducing Feminist Biblical Interpretation as follows:\[14\]:

Intext Question

Which of these categories, according to you, would excite the Africans most and why?

1. **Equal Rights Feminism:** it fights for the rights of women in all social, cultural and religious institutions to improve women’s present situation.

2. **Complementary Feminism:** It assumes that women and men have essentially different natures. Like two halves of an apple, masculinity and femininity complement each other to make a whole which the female is either the “deficient” or the “better” half.

3. **Gynecentric/Radical Feminism:** It believes that there are essentially feminine modes of perception that create a special female culture. This type of feminism focuses on the roots of women’s oppression primarily in male domination and claims that all other forms of oppression are engendered by male supremacy.

4. **Lesbian Feminism:** It is one of the primary forces in radical women’s culture. The name “queer” or “lesbian-bisexual-gay-transsexual-transgendered” (LBFT) captures more recent struggles over sexuality and the array of sexual alternatives.

5. **Gender Feminism:** It focuses on cultural and social gender constitution asserting that sex/gender is a culturally constituted system of domination.

6. **Maternal Feminism:** it promotes all the virtues of nurturing, preservation, growth, acceptance and pacifism developed through child care and mothering available to all women whether they are mothers or not. It is a residual power accruing from women’s capacity to bear and nurture children.

7. **Relationality Feminism:** It develops a philosophical and/or social ontology of the self, an ethic of mutuality and complementarity.

8. **Marxist/Materialistic Feminism:** It seeks to describe the material bases of women’s subjugation and the relationship between the modes of productions and women’s status. It argues that an analysis of women’s oppression must include both reproduction and production.

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**Take note**

This does not necessarily make the exponents of this category Marxists.
9. **Eco-feminism**: It seeks to make connections between the destruction of the natural world and the oppression of women. The feminine is not strictly identified with the female but it is an energy or power in living things.

10. **Postmodern Feminism**: It throws into radical doubt beliefs derived from the European Enlightenment. It encourages us to tolerate ambivalence, ambiguity, multiplicity, instability and complexity.

11. **Third World feminism/Differences feminism**: It recognizes not only gender difference but the differences of race, class, ethnicity, culture, sexuality, and religion. It emphasizes that Euro-centric feminism has been mistaken in seeing the cultural and political experiences of white middle-class as describing the experience and situation of all women.

12. **Contextual Feminism/Global Feminism**: It emphasizes the liberationist adage that what we see depends on where we stand. It propagates that Knowledge is always situated, contextual and unfinished.

13. **Postcolonial Feminism**: It intensifies the arguments made by differences and contextual feminism by pointing to the impact of Western imperialism and colonialism on women’s self-identity and socio-cultural location.

**Intext Question**

What are the four popular United Nations Conferences on women?

14. **International Feminism**: This is embodied by the four United Nations Conferences on Women held in Mexico City (1975), Copenhagen (1980), Nairobi (1985), and Beijing (1995) together with the conference on population control in Cairo (1994) debate issues of women’s equality and well-being.

15. **Religious feminism (Jewish, Christian, Muslim, Goddess, Buddhist, American Indian, Hindu, Indigenous, Aborigine or Da lit Religious Feminism)**: It seeks to comprehend the interaction between “secular” and “religious” feminists as one of different location rather than one of binary in-difference. It focuses feminists’ attention and inter-religious dialogue on the positive and negative pressure of religion in women’s lives and argues that religion is
not only a force for maintaining societal and cultural domination but also a resource in women’s struggles for survival and liberation.

16. **Post-biblical feminism:** It rejects Biblical religions as totally sexist and oppressive and points to their violent and dehumanizing impact in history. Positively, it has rediscovered the goddess and Her spirituality that nourishes connectedness and ecological awareness.

17. **Critical Liberationist Feminism:** It is an offspring of the nineteenth century as well as the civil rights radical gay, socialist student, and anti-colonialist movements of the 1960s.

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**Take note**

The bottom-line is that these diverse and diverging categories of FEMINISM trigger a pluriformity of women liberation. They bring about a multidimensional approach to this mode of liberation theology. To be more pragmatic, for instance, if you base your women liberation theology on **Maternal Feminism** you will come up with a liberation theology distinct with its emphasis on the invaluability of being mother from the one who roots one’s theology on **Lesbian Feminism** with its ridicule and repugnance to motherhood…and so on. The above are among the critical characteristics and guiding elements that compel us to handle feminist theology/women liberation theology with a multi-faceted approach.

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**5.7 How Men (And Women) Oppress and Exploit Women.**

**Intext Question**

Can you give a vivid history on women oppression and exploitation in your community?

1. From time immemorial women in particular have been subjected to brutality, harassment, dehumanization, depersonalization, oppression and exploitation mainly by their male consorts (and occasionally by fellow women). Existentially, and in their concrete historical
situations in life and living, women have been undergoing these inhuman experiences which have become a kind of legacy handed over from one generation to the other. Although the same may not be said today without some qualification owing to outstanding achievements by women, nevertheless, the reality of oppression and exploitation directed mainly to women by men still remains conservative.

2. **Bonita Bennett** observes that: “All women, even those of ruling class, are oppressed and exploited as women in the sense that their worth is linked to their roles as girl-friends, wives or mothers. Women are generally regarded as docile, gentle, amiable and relatively attractive beings.”

3. **Bernadette I. Mosala** stresses that: “It is necessary for the Church to realize that if Jesus is the Liberator of the oppressed, all of the oppressed must be liberated. But liberation does not fall into one’s lap. It must be claimed and protected. You cannot give me my liberty and I cannot give you yours. Unless we are willing to exercise our right to claim power and to do something about bringing about changes we believe are necessary we will remain the invisible creatures who are always on the outside looking in.”

4. **P.N. Wachege** is elaborate in explaining how men oppress and exploit women. This is how he puts it as a man:

“We men exploit women when we use, abuse and misuse them as our tools for cheap labor, objects of our sexual gratifications and the subsequent hedonism, things for self-aggrandizement and means for the promotion of our male ego, self prestige and assertion of our virility and fecundity. We also exploit women when we arrogantly sideline them from vital human activities thereby excluding them from participating in the making of vital decisions. We do this just because they are of another sex and another gender taking advantage over them in the state, in society, in life and ecclesiastically. We exploit them when we manipulate and take advantage of their physical weakness”.

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5.8 Sevenfold Basic Mode of Oppression & Exploitation of African women and How to Curb the Factors.

There are at least SEVEN basic oppressive and exploitative factors African women are subjected to. These are:

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<th>Intext Question</th>
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<td>What other modes can you add to the ones below?</td>
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1. Traditional oppression and exploitation of Women;
2. Social oppression and exploitation of Women;
3. Political oppression and exploitation of Women;
4. Economic oppression and exploitation of Women;
5. Sexual oppression and exploitation of Women;
6. Intellectual oppression and exploitation of women;
7. Ecclesial/Church oppression and exploitation of Women.

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<th>Take note</th>
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| All these are thoroughly explicated by P.N. Wachege in his book titled P.N. Wachege, *African Women Liberation: A Man’s Perspective* (Nairobi: P.N. Wachege, 1992), p.45-102. On how to liberate from these un-freedom factors, Dr. Wachege has critically given the way forward as a pragmatic model in the same monograph (pp. 109-138).

He has also given and verified that Jesus the Liberator *par excellence* is the best model for African Christian Women liberators (pp.143-169). He crowns the issue with a creatively proposed exemplary type of African Christian Women Liberation theology (pp.179-193). |
5.9 Jesus Christ as the Model and Mentor of African Christian Women Liberation

Jesus Christ as the Model and Mentor of African Christian Women Liberation can be illustrated by crucial insights and biblical texts.

The insights are as follows:

1. Feminist Christian theologians point to Jesus Christ as their norm in their liberation endeavor.

   Take note
   With diverse insights and inspirations, women liberationists like T. Souga and L. Tappa of Cameroon, M.A. Oduyoye and E. Amoah of Ghana…give a commendable reflection on Jesus Christ from a Woman’s perspective in view of liberation of women, in particular, and humans in general.\(^{18}\)

2. They assert Him, who having had an experiential knowledge in being weak and victimized, as the provider of the necessary parameter in their quest for authenticity and liberty. They present Him too as the main architect in improving people’s quality of life- and in particular that of women who are so much conditioned to disadvantaged situations.

3. They see Him as one who is strongly united with them mainly in as far as He liberates them from the shackles of oppressive subordination to restoring their dignity, freedom and self-assertion. As such, He becomes the true model in conducting the Church in accordance with God’s will thus perpetuating an attitude of equal dignity and worth for all persons. It is in Him that they see themselves-and want to be seen- as true and real disciples endowed with passion and compassion.

   Intext Question
   Can you identify and do exegesis of at least four Biblical pericopes that justify that Jesus Christ is the model of women liberation?

4. They Biblically verify that Jesus Christ was pro-women and, therefore, pro-them. There are **Biblical pericopes**, especially from Lukan Gospel which also referred to as “the feminist, social, Pneumatological cum universal Gospel”, that excite and fascinate them in this undertaking. Let it suffice to give the following four such Biblical passages:

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<th>Activity 5.1</th>
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<tr>
<td>In the light of Jesus Christ as the liberator <em>par excellence</em> and within the context of African Christian Feminist Theology, explain the following Biblical pericopes: Luke 10:38-42; John 8:3-11; Mark 14:3-9; John 4: 5-42.</td>
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The four biblical texts among other are as follows:

**Lk 10:38-42:** Jesus violated Rabbi’s expectations and etiquette. He had **Martha and Mary** as good friends, genuine companions and authentic followers. He dared allow Mary to sit beside Him in dialogue as elders do-something unimaginable among the Jewish Rabbis. It was also extremely scandalous for Him to frequent those women’s home and unaccompanied at that.

1) **John 8: 3-11:** In this dramatic highly emotive episode, Jesus effectively defended the adulterous woman. He shrewdly challenged the accusers to stone her if they were free of sin. One even wonders where the male consort was- or perhaps he too was armed with punishing stones for instant mob/male (in) justice!

2) **Mk 14: 3-9:** In the Old Testament, it was the prerogative of the High Priests to anoint the Kings. Here, Jesus defends a sinful woman in playing this anointing role. Moreover, Jesus goes to an extent of praising her to the amazement of his host who he challenged for ignoring to render Jesus such a generous customary ritual. Even more surprising was Jesus’ statement affirming that wherever the Gospel is preached, her deed cum action will be remembered-as her-story in His-story.

3) **John 4: 5-42:** Jesus deliberately broke a serious Jewish discriminating traditional taboo when He opted to respectively intimate with a Samaritan woman at the well. Worse still, He empowering the “unworthy” woman of a hated race to witness Him among the fellow despised Samaritans who segregated and excommunicated her for her misconduct. He even
went to an extent of openly and publicly accepting to spend the night with them thanks to the “bad” Samaritan woman’s initiative.

5.10 Summary
This Lecture has given and explained to you the historical emergence of African Christian Women liberation theology as……and its affinity to the Western one. The Lecture defined “feminism” and “women oppression and exploitation.” We have seen that women liberation has a strong biblical foundation. Moreover, the Lecture helped you to identify and analyze the following main objectives namely……. The diverse “feminisms” trigger differences in African Christian women liberation theology. You have also been exposed to seven types of oppression and exploitation of women by men. The Lecture has emphasized the fascination women have in Jesus owning Him as their exemplar and mentor in their kind of liberation endeavor. Then the Lecture ended by empowering you to give and explain some exciting Christological Biblical texts/pericopes that inspire and illuminate the Christian feminists to the extent of having and accepting Jesus as pro-them in their feminist liberational effort.

Concluding Activity 5.2
Guided by Christian principles, give and briefly analyze SEVEN modes in which African women are oppressed and exploited and how to emancipate them from such un-freedom factors.

6.11 References
2. V. Fabella, M. Oduyoye (eds.,) With Passion and Compassion: Third


LECTURE SIX

SOUTH AFRICAN BLACK THEOLOGY: JESUS THE BLACK MESSIAH/LIBERATOR

Lecture Outline

6.1 Introduction.
6.2 Objectives.
6.3 A Portrait of Liberation.
6.4 Historical Setting of South African Black Theology.
6.5 Black Consciousness As the Key Concept And Its Meaning.
6.6 Sources of South African Black theology.
6.7 Jesus the “Black Messiah.”
6.8 Summary.
6.9 References.

6.1 Introduction.

In Lecture five we focused our discussion on ACT of feminist/women liberation theology. In this Lecture, you will be introduced to South African kind of liberation theology- a distinctive approach called South African Black Theology (henceforth SABT). The Lecture will discuss its nature and assess the peculiarity of this mode of theologizing as compared to other liberation approaches. You will also be made to understand how SABT has a close affinity to that of North America. The Lecture will give and explain the historical rooting thereby elaborating the term “Black Consciousness” as the kernel of this theologizing too. It will further identify and explicate six main sources of SABT. This will be followed by a crucial Christological discussion in which Jesus is qualified as the “Black Messiah” and the justification thereby.
6.2 Objectives

At the end of this Lecture, you should be able to:

1. Assess the specificity of SABT as compared to other liberation theology approaches.
2. Discuss the nature of SABT,
3. Explain the historical setting of SABT showing also the Affinity with North American Black Power Theology (henceforth NABPT)
4. Discuss the term “Black Consciousness” as the key concept in SABT.
5. Elaborate the six main sources of SABT.
6. Discuss the significance of the title “Black Messiah” as attributed to Jesus Christ the Liberator par excellence within the context of South Africans.

6.3 A Portrait of Liberation.

6.3.1 Specificity of SABT:

South Africa is famous for a brand of liberation theology called South African Black Theology (SABT). This peculiar theological approach concerns itself with the struggle and reaction against APARTHEID and the after effects of it. That is why it is famous for its struggle for justice, equality, self-assertion, alleviation of oppression based on race, emancipation from color-bar and freedom from exploitation emanating from apartheid structures of segregation and socio-political economic bias cum prejudices.

6.3.2 Explanation of SABT:

1. According to Allan Abbrey Boesak:
Intext Question

How does Allan Abbrey Boesak define Black Theology?

“Black Theology is the theological reflection of Black Christians on the situation in which they live and on their struggle for liberation. Blacks ask: What does it mean to believe in Jesus Christ when one is black and living in a world controlled by white racists? And what if these racists call themselves Christians also?”

In this connection, Boesak says:

“The search for true and authentic human identity and liberation is also to acknowledge that one’s Africanness is a God-given blessing to delight in rather than a fate to be lamented. Moreover, African theology wishes to be no more than the reflection of African Christians in the light of the Word of God, on the African situation, on African culture and traditions, on the African past and the African present.”

2. National Committee of Black Churchmen in June 1969 explains it in this manner:

“Black Theology is a theology of black liberation. It seeks to plumb the black condition in the light of God’s revelation in Jesus Christ, so that the Black community can see that the Gospel is commensurate with the achievement of black humanity. Black Theology is a theology of ‘blackness’. It is the affirmation of black humanity that emancipates black people from white racism, thus providing authentic freedom for both white and black people.”

3. According to Bonganjalo Goba:

“Black Theological Reflection is a critical reflection on the praxis of Christian Faith, one which participates in the ongoing process of liberation with the black Christian community.”

6.4 Historical Setting of SABT.

6.4.1 SABT of liberation emerged more explicitly and in a more startling manner in the late 1960s. This was mainly through the efforts of South African Black scholars like A.A. Boesak, B. Moore, M. Buthelezi, D. Tutu, L. Sebidi, M. Motlhabi, I. J. Mosala, B. Tlhagale… and B. Goba.

It sprung up in reaction to the APARTHEID situation in life. On this account, James H. Conn says: “In South Africa, to be black is to lose one’s land, suffer economic exploitation and racism, and be denied one’s culture and humanity”. It is from such un-freedom factors that South African Black Theology endeavors to liberate the South Africans. That is why it is a type of liberation theology imbued with themes like:

Intext Question

What fundamental themes do you find in SABT publications?

1. Biblical insights into the struggle against Apartheid i.e. the use of the Bible passages or pericopes for liberation purposes;
2. Employment of African Traditional Religions, philosophy, cultures, black consciousness and “Marxism”;
3. Black feminist responses;
4. Racism and black solidarity;
5. Christocentricity whereby Jesus Christ is seen as the “Black Messiah”.

6.4.2 At the beginning, in its infancy, SABT had militant and aggressive elements. This was basically because of its affinity with the radical NABPT as propagated by scholars like James H.

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22 Ibid., p.60.
Conn especially in his three books titled, *A Black Theology of Liberation; For My People: Black Theology and the Black Church; Black Theology and Black Power* and Gayraud S. Wilmore works.

Under the above influence, exponents of SABT took “blackness” as symbolizing the oppressed and “whiteness” as signifying the oppressors. This, of course, was both a dangerous caricature and unrealistic categorization.

Later, however, the above exaggerated approach was transformed. It became more moderate, more objective, more accommodating and, indeed, more Christian. This shift happened under the influence of drawing insights from African Traditional Religions and philosophy of life which is saturated with Godly elements and humanitarian characteristics.

**6.4.3 Theirs is a theological approach which emerges from the awareness of the suffering, exploited, oppressed, segregated people owing to their race. It is a liberation theology of black people as they struggle to regain their human dignity, personal worth, cultural respect, own history and identity and, above all, FREEDOM/LIBERTY.**

In this regard, as Itumeleng J. Mosala and Buti Tlhagale put it:

“Black theology is the product of concrete struggles that were being waged by black people in the late 1960s and early 1970s”

It is also of great interest to note the following remarks by Lebamang Sebidi:

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“As long as the black people in this country suffer a double bondage-racial oppression and economic exploitation- the task of Black Theology will always be double-pronged. Racial capitalism is the name of the game. This is the sin that Black Theology wants to uncover and eradicate in God’s name. The term ‘black’ must perforce remain prefixed to ‘theology’ because for the past 117 years ‘blackness’ in this country has been the symbol of economic, class exploitation. That prefix emphasizes this crucial point, which no black can forget in a hurry.”

You should note how Lebamang Sebidi accentuates the twofold areas of oppression in the above namely: race/color (bar) and class/economic. This points to the mission of a liberator as that of merging the two for an authentic liberation. One would do well to reflect deeply in this regard to appreciate better the weight of SABT.

6.4.4 South African liberation theological approach was, furthermore, provoked by the negative manipulations of the employed workers. This was done through: the unjust capitalist structures especially on issues of poor wages for the blacks compared to that of the whites; corresponding outrageous racism; and sexism.

It is valid then to assert that SABT operates within the life situation of economic/class exploitation and racism- in the context of Apartheid imposed by Dutch reformists. This is an oppressive system making Africans fugitives, aliens and miserable wanderers in their own motherland. Consequently, the concept BLACKNESS is seen as concrete term of race hate, economic exploitation and un-freedom. Owing to this, as A.A. Boesak puts it: “Blackness is a reality that embraces the totality of black existence.”

6.5 Black Consciousness As the Key Concept and Its Meaning.

What we have seen above makes BLACK CONSCIOUSNESS become the key concept in SABT. That is why it is of immense importance to understand this core concept. It is actually indispensable to know this term and its implications so as to comprehend the kernel of SABT.

6.5.1 Bonganjalo Goba defines the term “Black Consciousness” as follows:

“Black Consciousness is a kind of political philosophy whose goal is to forge and promote the struggle for black liberation in a world of white domination.

“It is a program of black political self-awareness, a quest for black pride- hence the slogan ‘black is beautiful’.

“It is an attitude of mind or a way of life…an ontological concept, one which pertains to the meaning of being black in the world.”

6.5.2 Allan A. Boasak indicates that: Black Consciousness and Black Power are not to be dichotomized. They are inter-related concepts- each shedding light to the other. With this in mind, Boesak gives the following explanation:

How are the concepts “Black Consciousness” and “Black Power” essentially inter-related?

“Black Consciousness may be described as the awareness of black people that their humanity is constituted by their blackness. It means that black people are no longer ashamed that they are black, that they have a black history and a black culture distinct from the history and culture of white people. It means that blacks are determined to be judged no longer by, and to adhere no longer to white values. It is an attitude, a way of life…Viewed thus, Black Consciousness is an integral part of Black Power. But Power is also a clear critique of and a force for fundamental change in systems and patterns in society which oppress or which give rise to the oppression of black people.”

In this connection, Black Consciousness strives to eliminate the mental slavery implanted in the minds of the blacks. The destruction of such shackles provides Black Power i.e. power to assert oneself and affirm one’s personality as a black human being- and being proud of it.

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6.5.3 Black Consciousness is, therefore explained as the acceptance of blacks’ blackness. It is an appreciation of one’s black beingness.

Take note
In other words, accepting and being proud of OWN identity, OWN blackness, OWN black history and culture and world-view…and philosophy of life as distinct from that of the whites.

Intext Question
What is the specificity of “Blackness” in reference to South Africans’ situation in life?

Blackness, therefore, becomes the sign of blacks’ humanity which is the reverse side of white supremacy. It is thus used not as an ideology. It is used functionally/symbolically. As such, it is limited to South African context because of this South African peculiarity. It is, moreover, against structures or evil forces of SIN. Consequently, it is no longer an embarrassment or a shame to be black.

6.5.4 Steve Biko:

Intext Question
Why is Steve Biko incorporated into SABT and yet he was not a theologian but a political activist?

Although Steve Biko was more of a political activist than a theologian, nevertheless, he is honored as the “father of Black Consciousness.” The rationale behind this is that it is him, more than anybody else, who propagated, explicated, concretized and accentuated the belief that all races are equal and, therefore, there should be freedom for all. This was a cause for which he
gave up his vibrant youthful life through the internationally renowned brutal murder which shook South Africa.  

6.6 Sources of SABT.

Activity 6.1
Discuss the six main sources of South African Black Theology.

SABT did not just emerge. It was triggered by some crucial factors. In this Lecture we will identify and explain at least six main sources of SABT.

Intext Question
What are the main sources of SABT?

6.6.1 Black people in the USA:

SABT has its roots in the black people in the USA. In other words, the South Africans borrowed and adopted their theological perspective from the North American Black scholars. The North Americans also influenced even the emergence of South African Black Consciousness- their very core or key concept in their theologizing. This is a concept triggered by Negro spirituals, blacks’ identity in their defiant assertion of “Black is Black”, “Black is Beautiful” and “Black Power”. It is a concept also provoked by blacks’ “ontological” music cum soul music with exponents like the legendary James Brown of “I am Black and I am Proud”, Martin Luther King Jr of “I have a dream” and Marcom X- among others.

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Mokgethi Motlhabi acknowledges and appreciates the affinity and borrowing in these words: “There is general agreement that Black Theology originated in the USA when, in 1969, James Cone produced his pioneering work on the topic, titled *Black Theology and Black Power*.” It should, however, be noted that the South Africans did not copy that of North America blindly. They borrowed creatively and utilized it critically.

**Contrasting SABT with NABPT:**

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<td>How do you distinguish SABT from NABPT?</td>
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SABT has many similarities with that of North America. Nevertheless, despite the profound affinity, there are apparent differences namely:

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<th>Activity 6.2</th>
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1. Whereas NABPT is based on Black Power Movement, SABT starts from Black Consciousness.
2. NABPT is, as a result of the above, fundamentally secular while SABT is basically religious.

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<tr>
<td>It should be remembered that SABT is essentially religious since it is rooted in the African culture which is imbued with traditional religiosity.</td>
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3. While NABPT is one of revolution hence its militancy cum aggressiveness, that of South Africa is not. It is, indeed, generally opposed to the use of violent means-unless as a last resort.

4. NABPT hardly integrates African traditional elements whereas the South African one tends more and more to integrate African traditional characteristics in its very core.

5. Unlike the North American Black Power theologians like James H. Cone and Gayraud S. Wilmore with who the South Africans have an explicit affinity, the South Africans are not reluctant to borrow Marxist social analyses in their theologizing. They critically employ Marxist tools thereby enriching their methodology. They freely, but critically, utilize Marxist social analysis as means/tools for deeper theologizing. One should, however, not be quick to call them Marxists.

6.2 South African Theologians themselves:

The other main source of SABT is South African theologians themselves in their exegetical sermons and preaching, academic endeavor, symposia, monographs, periodicals…and pastoral implications and applications thereby.

1) Scholars like Dr. Manas Buthelezi-an exemplary thinker.

2) Scholars like Dr. Basil Moore- a white theologian much respected by South Africans for being genuinely supportive and sympathetic with Africans. A reputable scholar who played a major role in organizing and engaging black theologians with regard to the focus on this new way of theological reflection.

3) Scholars like Allan Abbrey Boesak who is of international repute in this regard and thus meriting more introductions:

Allan Abbrey Boesak:

a) He is sometimes referred to as the “father of SABT.” One of the main reasons is that he is the very first person to publish a major scholarly book on SABT. The monumental monograph is titled- A.A. Boesak, Farewell to Innocence: A Social-Ethical Study on Black Theology and Black Power, (Maryknoll, New York: Orbis Books, 1977).
Boesak is of the strong opinion that a strict dichotomizing and categorizing of Liberation theology as- Black theology in South Africa, Black theology in the USA, Latin American theology of liberation, and African theology is rather artificial. He endeavors to treat them as Liberation Theologies.

b) This is how he puts it:

“While we acknowledge that all expressions of liberation theology are not identical, we must protest very strongly against the total division (and contrast) some make between Black Theology in South Africa and Black Theology in the United States; between Black Theology and African Theology; between Black Theology and the Latin American theology of liberation. As a matter of principle, we have therefore treated these different expressions within the framework where they belong: the framework of theology of liberation.”\(^{31}\)

c) For Boesak, SABT, indeed like any other liberation theology, aims at **restoring human authenticity**. It does this by contextualizing the Gospel. It gives hope to the oppressed as it reminds them of the **Father Principle** (that we are all brothers and sisters since we have ONE FATHER) (Eph. 4:5-6). It puts squarely on the Church to concern Herself with the realities of the tension between the whites and the blacks; the oppressors and the oppressed; the haves (the rich) and the have-nots (the poor).

For Boesak, Black Theology awakens the Church to the awareness that remaining **“innocent”** and un-involved is un-Christian. He accentuates that the Church has no option but to side with the oppressed/poor as exemplified by Jesus Christ and Yahweh God. Failure to take this challenge of making a fundamental option for the oppressed cum poor will render the Church irrelevant, out-dated, un-orthodox and redundant.

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d) So, for Boesak, it is FAREWELL to that kind of INNOCENCE- i.e. the self-induced harmlessness in embracing history as it comes i.e. the PSEUDO-INNOCENCE (naivety with a bad connotation).

e) Boesak sees his book as a genuine attempt at interpreting authentically the Black people’s experience within South African situation in life in the light of the Gospel as his contribution to the Christian ministry of liberation.

f) Inserting himself in his South African rooting, Boesak is a bitter man. In this milieu context, he manifests his bitterness as follows:
   “This book was born of the black experience in South Africa- out of anguish and deep concern; out of the inevitability of commitment; out of anger and a fragile but living hope; out of an explicable joy through faith in Jesus the Messiah, whose refusal to let go of me has been my liberation.”

32

g) He sees this as an attempt to take black situation seriously- an element ignored by Christian theology.33

6.6.3 African Independent Churches:

The third fundamental source of SABT is that of African Independent Churches. These Churches have a tremendous impact on and attraction of the Africans. This is mainly due to their real effort in inserting themselves in their people’s situation in life making the Gospel more significant- notwithstanding their fanatical fundamentalist inclinations and spontaneity in approach.

Intext Question

With characteristic rebellious character wherever they are, what do you think triggered Independent Churches’ revolt against the Mainstream Churches in South Africa?

They revolted from the mainstream Churches because of Inculturation deprivation (by then), spiritual hunger, poor liturgy that hardly touched the kernel of their being and beingness, and suppression of healing and prophecy and vision(ary) gifts and Gospel of prosperity.

33 Ibid., p.10.
6.6.4 African Traditional Religions and Culture:

The fourth crucial source of SABT is African religions and culture. This is basically important for black consciousness - the key concept for their kind of liberation as explained earlier.

1) **Desmond Tutu**, one of the champions in dismantling apartheid, discloses that far from being antagonistic, African Traditional Religions and Black Theology are inter-related, intertwined and inter-dependent. He convincingly asserts that African theology has done a wonderful service in rehabilitating the African religious consciousness. It is his conviction that African religious heritage and culture was and still is a basic source of Black Theology.

2) **Itumeleng J. Mosala** makes the following observations in view of the above source:

“The point must be made unequivocally, therefore, without creating the impression that all elements of African traditional culture are progressive and relevant for contemporary society that without a creative reappropriation of traditional African religions and societies both African and Black Theologians will build their houses in the sand. A Black Theology of Liberation must draw its cultural hermeneutics of struggle from a critical reappropriation of black culture just as an African Theology must arm itself with the political hermeneutics that arise from the contemporary social struggle of black people under apartheid capitalism.”

6.6.5 The Holy Scriptures:

The Bible is another invaluable source of SABT.

1) **Itumeleng J. Mosala observes**: “There can be no Black Theology of Liberation and no corresponding Biblical hermeneutics of liberation outside of the black struggle for both

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survival and liberation. Such a struggle, however, requires being as clear about issues in the black community as possible.”

2) Still on the indispensability of the Bible, Mosala emphasizes that: “Black Theology’s exegetical starting point expresses itself in the notion that the Bible is the revealed ‘Word of God’. The task of a black theologian is to recognize ‘God’s Word’ and help illuminate it to those who are oppressed and humiliated in this world.”

3) Among the limitations of SABT is that its exponents rely heavily on Western exegetes. It is a fact that any exegesis is imbued with the exegete’s situation in life, cultural background, and personal bias as well as own people’s world-view. That is why Africans are challenged to do their own genuine exegesis to come up with a serious relevant authentic theology or theologies.

6.6.6 Christological Source:

Activity 6.3

Within the context of South African Black Theology explain:

1. Jesus as “Black Messiah”.

2. The unfinished business of South African Theology.

The sixth extremely important source of SABT is Christological source. In their kind of liberation theology, the South Africans enrich themselves with insights, guidance and support of Jesus Christ. Mind you it is mainly Jesus Christ seen not only as Liberator par excellence but also as “the Black Messiah”.

Among the Christological ideas South Africans borrowed from James H. Cone reads:

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37 Ibid., p.177.
“The Bible is the witness to God’s self-disclosure in Jesus Christ. Thus the black experience requires that Scripture be a source of Black Theology. For it was Scripture that enabled slaves to affirm a view of God that differed radically from that of the slave masters. The slave master’s intention was to present a ‘Jesus’ who would make the slave obedient and docile. Jesus was supposed to make black people better slaves, that is, faithful servants of white masters. But many blacks rejected that view of Jesus, not because it contradicted their African heritage, but because it contradicted the witness of Scripture.”

With the foregoing in mind, SABT opts for its unique Christology i.e., that of the “Black Messiah.”

6.7 Jesus the “Black Messiah.”

The specificity of SABT’s Christology in which Jesus is understood as the “Black Messiah” is quite interesting. It has the following main characteristics:

6.7.1 It is basically Ascending Christology: This approach is also called functional Christology or Christology from below. This does not mean that the South Africans ignore Christology from above also called ontological Christology or Christology from above. It is a question of accentuation! As such, their starting point is Jesus of Nazareth who entered into our concrete historical existence to free, save and redeem all.

6.7.2 Stress is made on the historical background of the texts on Jesus of Nazareth:

1. Jesus lived in a society which was oppressed and exploited by the Romans. This reminds them of the oppression and exploitation by the Dutch colonizers.

2. Jesus was poor mainly owing to the Roman exploitation and oppression just as they are poor not because South Africa—with gold and other precious minerals and resources—is poor but thanks to oppression and exploitation by the colonizers. With these parallels and interesting similarities they find a common denominator that makes them own Him. Hence He was “Black” (a Black Liberator).

3. It was His mission to fight against this poverty, oppression, exploitation and lack of freedom. Hence Biblical texts like Lk 4:16-30—a central pericope of Black Christology and others—are interpreted in this sense.

4. Jesus died in this liberation fight against oppression, exploitation and un-freedom. But by raising Him God has shown God was for Him and with Him in His struggle against the above un-freedom factors.

6.7.3 Consequently, the Christians—as followers and disciples of Jesus Christ the Liberator—who fight their own oppression, exploitation and other factors effecting un-freedom participate in Jesus’ liberational/salvific/redemptive fight: they carry on His work of liberation. Thanks to this engagement, they ipso facto identify themselves with the “Black Jesus.” They also identify themselves with God’s will for whose cause Jesus the “Black Messiah” died.

6.7.4 So, just as God was with Jesus, God is also on the side of the oppressed and exploited agents fighting for their liberation. Furthermore, just as Jesus was raised to fullness of blissful life after He was eliminated accomplishing the will of God which is freedom for all and authentic solidarity as brothers and sisters of the same loving Father, so also will those who die for this Godly cause be eternally rewarded.

6.8 Summary

In this Lecture, you were introduced to South African kind of liberation theology—a distinctive approach called South African Black Theology. This approach concerns itself with the struggle and reaction against APARTHEID and the after effects of it. This was mainly through the efforts of South African Black scholars like A.A. Boesak, B. Moore, M. Buthelezi, D. Tutu, L. Sebidi, M. Motlhabi, I. J. Mosala, B. Tlhagale… and B. Goba and others from North America like James
H. Conn. It emphasized black consciousness using related slogans like “Black is Black”, “Black is Beautiful” and “Black Power”. It is a concept also provoked by blacks’ “ontological” music with exponents like the legendary James Brown of “I am Black and I am Proud”, Martin Luther King Jr of “I have a dream” and Marcom X- among others. This was further founded on religious belief that Jesus is the Black Messiah.

Concluding Activity 6.4
Discuss how Allan A. Boesak explains the terms “Black Theology” and “Black Consciousness”.

6.10 References


LECTURE SEVEN

A MODEL OF ACT OF LIBERATION-TAKATSO A. MOFOKENG

Lecture outline

7.1 Introduction.

7.2 Objectives.

7.3 A Brief Biography of Takatso A. Mofokeng.

7.4 The Path His Kind of Liberation Christology Follows.

7.5 His Methodological Approach.

7.6 Some Highlights With Regard to His Liberation Christology.

7.7 An Assessment of His Liberation Christology.

7.7 Summary.

7.8 Concluding Activity.

7.9 References.

7.1 Introduction.

Lecture Six empowered you with a critical examination of SABT with Jesus viewed as the Black Messiah. In this Lecture, you will be made to realize that more and more serious liberational publications are emerging in the domain of ACT. If you visit a considerable number of University libraries, you will be hit by the strong passion for this mode of doing ACT. Owing to the limitations imposed upon our Unit, we will confine ourselves to one such works as a model. This is Takatso A. Mofokeng’s PhD Thesis titled - *The Crucified Among the Crossbearers: Towards a Black Christology (Kampen, 1983).*
7.2 Objectives.

At the end of this Lecture, you should be able to:

1. Give a brief biography of Takatso A. Mofokeng.
2. Discuss the path his kind of Liberation Christology follows.
3. Explain his methodological approach.
4. Give some highlights with regard to his Liberation Christology.
5. Assess his Liberation Christology.

7.3 A Brief Biography of Takatso A. Mofokeng

Activity 7.1
Give a brief bibliography of Takatso A. Mofokeng using the internet and other related sources.

1. Takatso A. Mofokeng is one of the exponents of South African Black Theology (SABT). He was born in Johannesburg, South Africa in 1942. This means that he grew squarely in the notorious era of apartheid. He witnessed the structures of injustice, race hate and color-bar propagated by the Dutch colonizers. He felt that the best way to help liberate his people was to become a preacher and a moderate activist at that. He thus became a preacher in Mamelody 17km. to the East of Pretoria.

2. As a Pastor, he was confronted with miserable dehumanized and depersonalized blacks and this triggered his interest in South African kind of liberation theology. By divine providence, Mofokeng got a chance to go for further studies. Unbelievably, this was in Kampen (Holland).

3. The deep question that bogged his inquisitive mind was: “How can faith in Jesus Christ empower black people who are involved in the struggle for their liberation?” (p.x). With the scholarship he got, he was able to research and reflect on this path of African theologizing in John Calvin theological Academy where he defended his PhD thesis on 14th October 1983.. The outcome is his renowned Doctoral theses which we are now focusing on. It is titled: The Crucified Among the Crossbearers: Towards a Black Christology (Kampen, 1983).
Intext Question
Where did Mofokeng get inspirations to come up with his kind of ACT of liberation?


5. Moreover, the fascinating philosophy and theology of Black theology and Black consciousness as propagated by fellow South African scholars excited him too. Among the most outstanding was Allan Abbey Boesak especially his book titled- *Farewell to innocence: A Social Ethical Study on Black Theology and Black Power* (Maryknoll, New York: Orbis books, 1990) and Manas Buthelezi.

7.4 The Path His Kind of Liberation Christology Follows.

1. Benefiting from the already existing South African Black Consciousness perception as the key concept in SABT as well as his experiential knowledge, Mofokeng reflects on his people’s un-authentic situation in life in the light of relevant Biblical passages.

Take note
He wonders how to come up with a Christology that will liberate and empower his people to live as they ought to in the spirit of Jesus Christ the Liberator *par excellence.* He realizes and explains that Jesus had so much in common with South Africans such that they can usefully own Him as their Black Messiah.

2. No wonder he accentuates functional Christology (Christology from below/ ascending Christology) without ignoring ontological Christology (Christology from above/ descending Christology).
3. Through dialogue with Latin American liberation theologians like J. Sobrino, he gets some response to his concerns which he, nevertheless, finds inadequate to South African situation in life.

4. He then borrows ideas from European Scholars like Karl Barth and others of political theology who had reflected from the point of view of the World War with devastating genocide, injustice, stumbling block to human autonomy and un-freedom.

5. Mofokeng furthermore sharpens his mind and solidifies his liberation stance by opting for more insights from North American Black Power scholars more specifically James H. Cone. On the bases of these factors, he now creates his kind of Christology.

### 7.5 His Methodological Approach

1. As earlier indicated, and like many other SABT scholars, Mofokeng focuses more on Christology from below. The historical Jesus comes out handy. He inserts himself into his people’s apartheid situation of life. He then makes social analyses using other disciplines like sociology and philosophy. After that he relates this to Biblical passages drawing more from Genesis creation and fall story in the light of liberating Exodus event, Prophets etc highlighting the will of God for all to live fully as taught by Jesus.

2. Mofokeng then handles the praxis aspect whereby he provides pastoral transforming indications. On this you can easily notice a lot of influence from L. Boff’s methodological approach with his sequences which Boff calls mediations or aspects.

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**Take note**

Mofokeng gives more light with regard to his methodology with the following articulations: “Engagement in the struggle for liberation poses questions that reflect the crisis of this engagement, to the text, thereby opening the text for those engaged. These questions are taken up, rephrased and answered. The story of this God, who is engaged in the struggle of the poor, in turn criticizes and enlightens their engagement and thereby invokes a new engagement creating new possibilities and a new self-understanding and appreciation and cause for new questioning. This is the so called hermeneutical circulation (Althusser) that has praxis of liberation as its point of entry and is kept open by the hope that is implied in it (the hope that the new society and new subjectivity of the people will become a reality) (Ibid., p.50).

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3. With the finality of coming up with a Black Christology that transforms his alienated people into freedom and living fully as willed by Jesus, Mofokeng sources also from own
experience, fellow South African scholars bound together in this liberating mission, the victims themselves, relevant Biblical pericopes and findings from global liberationists like L. Boff, J, Sobrino, G. Gutierrez, James H. Cone..and those of political theology like J. Metz and K. Barth.

4. Reading this book you will become aware that he also employs dialectic philosophy in analyzing historical situations- Biblical and post-Biblical. This is how he puts it: “There is a fruitful dialectical movement or interplay between the text (Scripture) and the context which is the liberation project. We have a double grounded hermeneutic of praxis” (Ibid., p.21).

Take note

The bottom-line is that he does not find metaphysics friendly in his South African theology. The impression is that he has contempt of it perceiving it as “abstract and therefore alienating to the poor and the oppressed who are in need of a concrete solution” (Ibid., p.101. Also pp. 55-57).

5. The above should not make you forget the finality of Mofokeng’s Christology. Its goal according to him is to endeavor to take a definite step towards responding to the critical question namely: How can faith in Jesus Christ empower black people who are involved in the struggle for their liberation? This, according to him, is owing to the fact that in South Africa the black person has been alienated from own history, culture, social values and land. As such, his theology seeks to make him/her acquire a revolutionary and critical consciousness and activity thereby making an effort in creating a black subject as an event in liberation.

7.6 Some Highlights With Regard to His Liberation Christology

Intext Question

What are the fundamental issues in Mofokeng’s Christology?

The following are some of the fundamental aspects in his Christology:

1. His is mainly Christology from below also called ascending /functional Christology;
2. The Jesus who got involved in redemptive/salvific ministry in His entire life had the gumption to challenge the sinful powers that be. He encountered opposition even from powerful religious discriminating leaders. He encountering crisis after crisis culminating in His crucifixion. This Jesus is the model of liberation to the oppressed in South African and elsewhere who encounter related injustices showing how to live in freedom and human worth;

3. In His commitment to establish the Kingdom of God, He showed solidarity with the poor, the dehumanized and the rejects sinful ones as He embraced hostility for His salvific cause readily accepting crucifixion and death (Ibid., pp.32ff.);

4. This God-man uplifts the downtrodden with whom He identified transforming them into liberated liberating people of God as He empowered them to take after Him as liberators and redeemers too (Ibid., p.34, 245f, 263);

5. The hopelessness of His death by crucifixion was, through resurrection event, transformed into triumph proving to all that God was for Him and with Him (pp. 13, also M. Buthelezi, Violence and the Cross in South Africa, in T.A. Mofokeng, op. cit. p.39). This resurrection and glorification phenomenon becomes a proof that God is on the side of those committed to liberation task and that they too will be rewarded;

6. His life, death, resurrection, glorification and establishment as Lord as the One sent by the Father in the Holy Spirit provides the best model of Black Theology more fruitful to the downtrodden (Ibid., pp.234ff.).

### 7.7 A Brief Assessment of His Liberation Christology

#### Activity 7.2

Assess Mofokeng’s Black Theology Christology pointing out clearly and distinctly its strengths and limitations.

#### Positive Aspects of Mofokeng’s Christology:

**Intext Question**

What are some of the strong points in Mofokeng’s Liberation Christology?

1. It is a good attempt in making Jesus more relevant to South Africans and the others faced with related life situations of oppression and exploitation;
2. He does well to enrich his ACT by disposing himself to enrichment also from non-African scholars like K. Barth, J. Sobrino, J.H. Cone thereby showing that he is not a victim of false particularism and parochial-mindedness;

3. He reasonably responds to Jesus’ interrogation as to who Jesus is to South Africans in their concrete historical existence. As Mofokeng himself puts it: “this question is Jesus Christ’s question as the One who is already creatively and provocatively and critically operative in the world of oppressed black human kind. This question is, therefore, contained or enclosed in His question about His own identity’ (Ibid., p.228);

4. He, furthermore, presents Jesus as an exemplary fulfillment of the Pentateuch Exodus experience and challenge to the oppressed to even use forceful means as a last resort if need be for their liberation (pp.229ff);

5. Mofokeng, moreover, draws interesting anthropological implications of Christ Event in view of relevance to his people; “Anthropologically, in the entire incarnation unto death, or the entire history of the Cross of the Son of God, God creates and empowers the poor and the weak to become active subjects of their own history.”(Ibid., p. 258).

**Shortcomings of his Christology:**

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Activity 7.3</th>
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<tr>
<td>Indicate with reasons what you learn from the limitations of Mofokeng’s ACT through the lenses of his Christology.</td>
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1. First and foremost, the over-emphasis on functional approach at the expense of ontological orientation as well as his “contempt” for metaphysics impoverishes His Christology. He should have learned from Karl Barth who he uses here and there the invaluability of metaphysics in any theology for the purposes of deeper analyses and more systematic approach;

2. Though he admittedly acknowledges that the North American scholars of Black Power Theology do influence him, nevertheless, he does not seem to guard himself adequately in some issues from their militancy;

3. The issue of Jesus being the Liberator of ALL i.e., not just of the oppressed but also of the oppressors does not come out well. Mofokeng seems to be victim of the unlawful generalization. The impression he gives is that Blacks are the innocent oppressed sinned against and the whites are the evil guilty ones. This, of course is a dangerous categorization Jesus aimed at dismantling. The rationale is that: since we all are both oppressors and oppressed, both sinners and sinned against so long as we are in this sinful world- all of us
are in need of redemption and salvation as John reminds us (1Jn 1: 8,10). On this note, Jesus demands that we forgive always (Mt 18: 21-22; 18: 23-35; Lk 23: 39-43);

4. One also gets an impression that Mofokeng is so much swallowed up in liberation from socio-political economic factors that the crucial aspect of personal sin is sidelined in his Christology. This is a serious lacuna since liberation ought to start from within us through the spiritual exercise of genuine self-examination;

5. There is also a narrowing of oppressive factor making his Christology less comprehensive since issues like liberation from hunger, superstitions, revenge, exaggerated clanism, negative ethnicity, illiteracy and disease are virtually ignored.

| 7.7 Summary |

This Lecture has made you realize that there are numerous serious liberational publications that are emerging in the domain of ACT by the likes of Takatso A. Mofokeng. Takatso A. Mofokeng is one of the exponents of SABT. He was born in Johannesburg, South Africa in 1942. As a Pastor, he was confronted with miserable dehumanized and depersonalized blacks. Moreover, his academic exposure in Western Universities thanks to the scholarship exposed him further to the double standards of the Dutch missionaries. It was also explained that his was functional Christology that borrowed from L. Boff’s mediation methodology. In his approach he made Jesus more relevant to South Africans. However, his over-emphasis on functional approach at the expense of ontological orientation as well as his “contempt” for metaphysics impoverishes His Christology.

You are now able to:

- Give a brief biography of Takatso A. Mofokeng;
- Discuss the path his kind of Liberation Christology follows;
- Explain his methodological approach;
- Give some highlights with regard to his Liberation Christology;
- Assess his Liberation Christology.
Concluding Activity 7.4


7.9 References

1. T.A. Mofokeng *The Crucified Among the Crossbearers: Towards a Black Christology* (Kampen, 1983).


5. Karl Barth’s Christological works like those found in his *Church Dogmatics*, Vol.1V.


LECTURE EIGHT
ACT OF INCULTURATION

Lecture Outline.

8.1 Introduction.

8.2 Objectives.

8.3 Explanation of the Term “Inculturation”.

8.4 Explaining Terms Related to the Concept “Inculturation”.

8.5 Elaborating Six Main Undertakings in Inculturation Approach to ACT.

8.6 Summary.

8.7 References.

8.1 Introduction.

In Lecture Seven, we perused T.A. Mofokeng’s Theology as a model of ACT of liberation. This Lecture will explain to you the term “Inculturation”. It will also present some representative definitions from renowned scholars. The Lecture will also expose you to concepts related to the term “Inculturation” and assess their weight in conveying the meaning of this basic approach to ACT arguing which of them is more adequate for this finality. It will also explain what you have to be weary of when involved in this mode of theologizing. The Lecture will, furthermore, educate you on the issue of identifying and discussing SIX items which you always have to keep in mind with regard to the emergence, growth and spread of African Inculturation theology.
8.2 Objectives

By the end of this lecture, you should be able to:

1. Identify and explain some definitions of the term “Inculturation”.

2. Assess some related terms to the concept “Inculturation”.

3. Explain why a considerable number of renowned African Christian scholars opt for the term “Inculturation”.

4. Discuss the caution Pope John Paul II gives in view of coming up with authentic Inculturation theology free from unlawful mixture technically called syncretism.

5. Elaborate SIX invaluable items that one has to keep in mind with regard to this fundamental approach to ACT namely, Inculturation approach.

8.3 Explanation of the Nature of Inculturation.

Inculturation, as discussed earlier, is one of the main approaches in ACT. It is a fundamental orientation employed by many prominent African Christian theologians of international repute. It thus merits an explanation. Let us, therefore, identify and explain some profound definitions of the term “Inculturation” by some selected scholars:

Intext Question

What is your understanding of “Inculturation” and how do you compare your perception of this concept with the way other scholars explain it?

8.3.1 John M. Waliggo:

“Inculturation means the honest and serious attempt to make Christ and His message of salvation evermore understood by people of every culture, locality and time. It means the reformulation of Christian life and doctrine into the very thought-patterns of each people. It is the
conviction that Christ and His Good News are even dynamic and challenging to all times and cultures as they become better understood and lived by each people. It is the continuous endeavor to make Christianity truly ‘feel at home’ in the cultures of each people.”

8.3.2 Marcello C. Azevedo:

“Inculturation is a process of evangelization by which the Christian life and message are assimilated by a culture in such a way that not only are this life and message expressed through the elements proper to this culture, but they come to constitute a principle of inspiration as well, and eventually a norm and power of unification that transforms, re-creates, and revitalizes that culture. Inculturation, therefore, always implies and connotes a relationship between faith and culture(s), which are realities that reach and embrace the totality of the human life and person, on the individual and communitarian plane alike.”

8.3.3 Aylward Shorter:

“Inculturation is the ongoing dialogue between faith and cultures…It is the creative and dynamic relationship between the Christian message and a culture or cultures.”

8.3.4 Pontifical Council for Culture:

“Inculturation can be defined as the effort by the Church to bring the message of Christ into a particular socio-cultural setting, while calling upon the latter to grow in accordance with all its own values, provided these are reconcilable with the Gospel”.

8.3.5 Herve Carrier:

“Inculturation is a concept used to describe the cultural changes brought about by the entrance of the Gospel into a human environment…It is related to ‘acculturation’, a term used by anthropologists …to describe the cultural changes produced when two human groups come to live in direct contact with each other”.

8.3.6 Laurenti Magesa:

“Inculturation is understood to be the process whereby the faith already embodied in one culture encounters another culture. In this encounter, the faith becomes part and parcel of this
new culture. It fuses with the new culture and simultaneously transforms it into a novel religious-cultural reality.”

8.3.7 Pedro Arrupe:

“Inculturation is the incarnation of Christian life and of the Christian message in a particular cultural context, in such a way that this experience not only finds expression through elements proper to the culture in question (this alone would be no more than a superficial adaptation) but becomes a principle that animates, directs and unifies the culture, transforming it and remaking it so as to bring about a ‘new creation’.”

Take note

The above amounts to an authentic process of confronting Christianity/Gospel/Good News with our African cultures for mutual enrichment—with Christianity polishing, purifying and elevating our cultures for more fruitfulness.

8.4 Related Terms and Their explanation.

The concept “Inculturation” is quite problematic. Different intellectuals give diverse concepts which normally have a lot in common. As we read different monographs, articles…and lecture notes on Inculturation theology, we encounter scholars who prefer to substitute the term “Inculturation” with diverse terms.

Activity 8.1

Find out and explain the terms different scholars of ACT prefer to substitute the concept “Inculturation” with.

Among the terms, we identify the ones below as more outstanding:

1. INDIGENIZATION: implying the localization and promotion of local Church personnel.
2. CONTEXTUALIZATION: theologizing within a particular context or situation in life.
3. **INCARNATION**: pointing at the concretization of Christianity among us in our pluriformity of respective God-given cultures. In other words, it implies taking the monumental Incarnation phenomenon of Jesus of Nazareth as our perfect model in realizing and actualizing Christianity in every milieu, every single culture and all times and changing generations. It is figuratively speaking-if we can use a materialistic conception-putting flesh on Christian message making it thoroughly concrete so that we may not just understand it but also hear it, smell it, touch it, taste it, chew it…and, indeed, digest and LIVE it in order to be of transforming salvific value to us.

4. **REFORMULATION**: understanding and interpreting the Christian doctrine in the thought-forms, mentality and language that is more comprehensible.

5. **ADAPTATION**: connoting a kind of intelligent copying. It has to do with owning the message creatively. The main concern here is not just Christianizing the indigenous cultural values and elements. It has to do with the Africanisation of Christianity too- hence the mutual enrichment between the two namely, African items and Christianity- with Christianity as the point of reference that takes the priority.

6. **INTERCULTURATION**: implying a vital exchange between and among the cultures. It is an essential dialogue between cultures in doing and living theology as an after-effect of our world becoming a global village and, indeed, the essence of Christianity as both missionary and cultural. As such, the inter-relatedness, the inter-dependence and mutuality of cultures in the continuous endeavor of Inculturation is demanded.

Without ignoring these concepts, since each of them has its own contribution and limitations, we give preference to the term INCULTURATION. We appreciate it as the one that conveys best the process and effect of presenting, interpreting, explicating and putting the Christian message/Gospel/Good News in such a way that it germinates thereby maturing and flourishing in our African people’s culture(s). In other words, according to us, the term

![Take note]

**INCULTURATION contains and expresses best and most coherently our contemporary African trend of understanding, presenting and concretely interpreting Christianity in accordance with our African people’s**
aspirations, needs, thought-forms and mentality. We find it more explicit in our approach and effort of confronting the Gospel with our African culture(s) for mutual enrichment, fruitfulness -and correction cum elevation on the side of our cultures.

8.5 The Six Main Undertakings in This African Theological Approach.

At least SIX items are identified that one has to always keep in mind with regard to the emergence, growth and spread of African Inculturation theology. These are:

8.5.1 Involvement In Methodological Discussions Only:

Here, concern is given to such issues as the NEED of Inculturation, what METHOD to follow, the problems involved…and the most appropriate way forward. It is unfortunate, however, that some theologians bury themselves so much in such methodological and related affairs that they forget to actually do theology. Instead of actually inculturating, they stop at prolegomenon level.

8.5.2 Actually Inculturating But In A Non-Speculative Manner:

Some actualize this mode of theologizing in a pragmatic, or rather functional, manner. Here stress is put on the direct dialogue between the Biblical message and the African traditional teachings. To this category also belong those who propagate narrative forms of theology focusing more on the Bible as they tend to ignore the teachings of Church Tradition.

8.5.3 Actually Inculturating from a Philosophical and Speculative Stance:

While doing this kind of theology, the exponents approach the Christian mysteries ontologically and analytically. They theologize in a systematic and scientific manner employing metaphysics and other related academic disciplines thereby coming up with a serious scholarly, systematic and comprehensive ACT.
8.5.4 Actually Inculturating Within the Sphere of Pastoral Problems in African Way of Life:

In their Inculturation effort, the proponents tend to focus more on pastoral issues. They are pastoral-minded. Such African Christian theologians do a commendable job in handling people’s needs, crisis, worries, anxieties and concerns thereby strengthening their faith as they give them solutions and hope in life and living. The kind of practical problems they concern themselves with are, for instance, single motherhood as another peculiar mode of parenting, salvation and being saved, African women liberation, elderhood, living to die and dying to live fully, polygamy, healing, funeral rites, blessings and curses, initiatic rituals in relation to Christian sacraments...and ancestor-ship.

8.5.5 Commitment in Bearing in Mind Theology’s Originality and Authenticity:

While inculturating, as is the case in other approaches to ACT, one has to be aware that originality is not in the content. The kernel of Christianity is the same. The Christian Doctrines must necessarily remain intact! Awareness has to be created to realize that originality is in the manner of presenting, interpreting and explicating the very Christian Doctrines. The theologian does not come up with a new Christianity since one handles the very selfsame Christian
faith. It is the way of explaining and making those selfsame Doctrines at home among respective homes and situations in life that is diverse, diverging and constantly changing.

Take note

The main elements contributing to cultural originality are:

1. Each culture SELECTS some elements and emphasizes/stresses/accentuates them differently.

2. Cultural INTEGRATION: the particular way in which the ELEMENTS of culture are related to one another, their INTERPENETRATION, varies from culture to culture.

8.5.6 Proper Disposition To Dialogue With Others:

Since reality is not monolithic but multi-dimensional, there is a great need for a proper disposition to the others’ contributions. Without openness to others with a multifaceted outlook one tends to be parochial-minded making one’s theology narrow and superficial. Moreover, since we are in the era of ecumenism, inter-religious dialogue…and religious pluralism it is paramount to dialogue with the others for mutual enrichment—a genuine dialogue that does not compromise ones faith. That is why some African Christian theologians do a commendable job in having dialogue with Western and Eastern theologians and their theologies for complementarity in view of mutual enrichment.

Take note

Having identified and explained these SIX items, it is important to approach or come up with African Christian theologies assessing them with the above standards.
One has to critically evaluate them with the above measure to be on the right track with regard to solid scholarship, authenticity or genuine adherence to Christian Doctrines and the resulting originality.

### 8.6 Summary

This Lecture has explained to you the term “Inculturation” to mean confronting African cultures with Christianity/Gospel to make the Good News more understandable to the Africans. It has also disclosed to you some representative definitions from renowned scholars like J. M. Waliggo and T. T. Tshibangu. The Lecture has, moreover, exposed you to concepts related to the term “Inculturation” and assessed their weight in conveying the meaning of this basic approach to ACT arguing which of them is more adequate for this finality. These terms are: indigenization, incarnation, contextualization, reincarnation, adaptation and interculturation. It has, furthermore, pointed out and explained what you have to be weary of when you are engaged in this mode of theologizing. Additionally, the Lecture has educated you on the issue of identifying and discussing SIX items which you always have to keep in mind with regard to the emergence, growth and spread of African Inculturation theology.

### Concluding Activity 8.2

Identify and explain the main shortcomings of African Inculturation Theology as given by Laurenti Magesa in his book titled- *Anatomy of Inculturation: Transforming the Church in Africa.*
8.7 References


LECTURE NINE
DISTINCTIVE INCULTURATIONAL WORKS IN WEST AFRICA

Lecture Outline.

9.1 Introduction.

9.2 Objectives.

9.3 Some Prominent African Christian Theologians From West Africa, Their Specialties and Where They Come From.


9.5 John S. Pobee: Nana Christology.

9.6 Summary.

9.8 References.

9.1 Introduction.

Lecture Eight examined the term “Inculturation” and what appertains to it. This Lecture will help you understand that in West Africa, there are a considerable number of prominent African Christian theologians who are engaged in Inculturational approach to ACT. The Lecture will, for a wider reading, not only assist you to identify some of the renowned scholars in this Anglophone region. It will also indicate their specialties and the countries they come from. Then, for practical purposes, it will choose two of the theologians and discuss their respective African Christian Inculturation theologies. These are Kwesi A. Dickson and John S. Pobee.

9.2 Objectives

At the end of this Lecture, you should be able to:

1. Identify some of the prominent African Christian theologians from West Africa, point out their specialties and indicate the countries they come from.
2. Discuss Kwesi A. Dickson’s African Theology of the Cross.

3. Examine John S. Pobee’s Nana Christology.

9.3 Some Prominent African Christian Theologians From West Africa, Their Specialties and Where They Come From.

Intext Question
Which of these West African scholars of ACT are you aware of and what touches you most from them and why?

1. Harry Sawyer - Pastoral/Systematic Theology - from Sierra Leone.
2. A.M. Oduyoye - Feminist Theology - from Ghana.
5. C.B. Okolo - Liberation Theology - from Nigeria.


Activity 9.1
Bearing in mind the cultural emphasis in ACT, discuss Theology of the Cross
9.4.1 Kwesi A. Dickson, after presenting New Testament teaching and understanding of the Cross especially from St. Paul’s Documents begins by criticizing Western theology. This is a theology in which “the Cross gets to be overshadowed in significance; it becomes a disaster, a regrettable prelude to Easter”. Hence their theology of the Cross, from Kwesi’s observation, becomes rather negative and pessimistic. It also waters down the concept of sacrifice and life.

9.4.2 Kwesi maintains that the above may be due to the fact that “with the growing complexity of life in the West, death is fast ceasing to be a public event”, an event which involves the community as a whole. Hence death is seen as “an embarrassment to be passed over as quickly as possible…” He confirms this assertion on the bases of a German scholar called Haselbarth who points out that:

“Until recently, death in a German village used to be an affair that affected all the inhabitants. Work had to stop; people came together for condolences and thereafter formed the procession from the dead man’s home to the Church. Bells rang and the choir sang. In the local inn people ate and drank together. The deceased was laid to rest in the centre of the village, that is in the graveyard surrounding the Church…today “commercial burial-institutes” do for the family what formally relatives, neighbors and brotherhood used to do. They relieve the gravity of death by camouflaging it with flowers, wreaths, taped music, lighting-effects, expensive dress and caskets.”(Ibid., p.191).

9.4.3 Kwesi then presents various points connected with the African traditional understanding of death as follows:

Intext Question

How do people in your ethnic group traditionally understand death and why?
1. **Death is caused by evil:** It is always purposively caused by someone. So to an African, death does not just happen. One must have done something wrong. If not the victim, a family member must have violated a taboo. If not, then the community must have gone astray or committed an evil which is not compatible with the uprightness in life and living.

2. **Death does not end life:** “The dead are believed to be going on a journey…” They are, to use John S. Mbiti’s coined term, “the living dead”. That is the rationale behind the African usage of living terms when referring to death.

3. **Death does not sever the bond between the living and the dead:** In some cases death rituals may take weeks, or months or even years (e.g. in case of second burial). In some communities, if an elder passes on, the seat the elder used to sit on is left there as a living memory reminding the family members of the elder’s continues presence.

4. **Death is an occasion for seeking more life:** “The dead are believed to be in a position to grant boons to have supernatural powers”. This is so owing to their proximity to the Source of life i.e. the Supreme Being.

5. **Death does not negate natural self-expression:** That is why death rituals are sometimes accompanied by “discreet feasting and circumspect conviviality”. This implies the strong belief “that life must go on”.

6. **Death affects the whole community:** It “affects a much wider social group than the deceased’s immediate family”. That demise of someone and burial issues is not just the nuclear family or extended family affair. It, indeed, is the concern of all. The attendance is by the whole community.
9.4.4 In the light of the above and the New Testament teaching on the Cross, the author presents a theology of the Cross in keeping with the African understanding of death as follows:

1. The Cross should be presented in “glorious affirmation of it as that which is the basis of Christian hope”. Thus, “the Cross demonstrates human degradation and evil, but it also demonstrates triumph”. The Cross, therefore, signifies not just death. It also points to resurrection/life.

2. Stress on the fact that eating and drinking at the Lord’s Table is sharing in Christ’s death on the Cross and also sharing in Life with one another.

3. Just as in Africa death is the door to beneficial Ancestral status, by His death Christ “merits to be looked upon as Ancestor, the greatest of ancestors, who never ceases to be one of the ‘living-dead’. Thus: He becomes the one with whom the African Christian lives with intimately”.

4. Just as for the African, death does not negate natural self-expression (“one’s own identity”), so also is the theology of the Cross not basically opposed to its interpretation in African cultural terms.

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Take note

1. That is how Kwesi A. Dickson presents his Theology of the Cross in a Christian Inculturation manner. P.N. Wachege develops this more comprehensively in his book titled Living to Die, Dying to Live: African Christian Insights, which admittedly was not inspired by Kwesi’s ideas but by a proliferation of numerous deaths on land, in the air, in the sea even underground imbued with the tremendous pressure to LIVE FULLY the contemporary person is subjected to that tends to be overwhelming. The book is titled P.N. Wachege, Living to Die, Dying to Live: African Christian Insights (Nairobi: P.N. Wachege, 2002), pp.224-262.
9.5 John S. Pobee: Nana Christology.

Activity 9.2

Read John S. Pobee’s book titled, Toward an African Theology (Tennessee: Abingdon, 1979), pp.81-98 pointing out and elaborating some African religio-cultural characteristics which he utilizes in his Nana Christology.

9.5.1 There are two fundamental approaches to Christology:

One is called “ontological Christology”. This approach is also called “Christology from above” as well as “descending Christology” as we saw previously. The other approach is called “Functional Christology”. As you may remember the other names for it are “Christology from below” and “ascending Christology”. It is mainly through the latter approach, i.e. functional Christology, that John S. Pobee develops his Nana Christology.

9.5.2 J.S. Pobee pleads for a functional Christology as fit for the Akan mentality:

Intext Question

What other books by John S. Pobee are you aware of?

The Akan is a large, very assertive ethnic group in Ghana. He commences his Christology by citing the Nicene/Constantinople Creed. The section of the Credo ( Creed) he picks is the one which reads: “Christ is true God and true man”. With this as his point of reference, Pobee attempts to express Christ’s humanity (since He is true man) and Christ’s divinity (since He is true God) in Akan form.

With the finality of elaborating Christ’s humanity and His divinity in a manner better comprehensible to the Akan people in particular and the Africans in general, Pobee analyses and explains the qualities that qualify one as a person on the one hand and characteristics that are mandatory for one to be considered divine. The issues he grapples with are: to the Akan people...
what items constitute a man/humanity? And what elements or characteristics must one have, according to the Akan people, to be considered God/Divine? Does Jesus Christ meet these requisites? This is how he goes about it:

9.5.3 Humanity as expressed by the Akan thought and in relation to Christ:

1. **Man fully realizes himself in society**: One has to belong to a family and a clan and a tribe. That is why there has to be an accentuation on Christ’s Kinship as Son of Joseph belonging to the Davidic clan of the root of Jesse, circumcision, and baptism as rites of incorporation into a group. Jesus underwent these incorporation rituals into the community.

2. **Dread of death**: Gethsemane episode expresses this adequately. Jesus visibly feared death. In Lukan Gospel, the phobia of impending death made Him not just sweat but also perspire blood.

3. **Finitude of knowledge**: Jesus manifests this lack of omniscience e.g. Mk 13:32.

4. **Dependence on Superior Power**: Jesus accomplishes this reliance, as a man, on a Supreme Being in His continues praying habit.

From the above observations, Pobee concludes that Jesus has what it takes to qualify as a man with humanity. He also concludes that the Akan and Biblical ways of expressing humanity have similarities.

9.5.4 Divinity as expressed by the Akan thought and in relation to Christ:

Intext Question

How does your ethnic group understand divinity?

1. **Perfect state of sinlessness since sin is an anti-social fact**: On the Biblical bases, Christ was like us in all things but sin. On Biblical evidence, He actually strove to protect individual personality and to liberate all from oppression and exploitation.
2. **Authority and power:** He showed this in His miracles, exorcizing ministry and the way He taught which impressed even the police who were sent by the Pharisees and the Herodians to arrest Him.

3. **Healer:** Christ is recorded in the Scriptures as not just performing numerous authentic cures but also resurrecting the dead and spiritual healings of those whose sins He forgave.

4. **Creator:** Johannine Gospel confirms this of Christ as follows—“Through Him God made all things; not one thing in all creation was made without Him” (John 1:13).

5. **Pre-existent agent in Creation:** This attribute to Christ is a new idea to the Akan people confirming how pre-eminently His divinity is. Indeed, “Jesus Christ was pre-existent because he had pre-creational glory in the fellowship of the Father (John 17:5; 1:3, 18; Phil.2:5-6; Col.1:15-16). He is before Abraham, the great Patriarch of the Jews (John 8:58).”

### 9.5.5 Christ as the Great Ancestor and Chief (connected with Christ as Great-Ancestor-Nana):

**Activity 9.3**


1. **Christ accomplishes the following qualities of a chief** as understood by the Akan—and in a most perfect manner:

   1) Judge, legislator, religious leader, head of community, fire extinguisher (fire being the symbol of all pain and disaster).
   2) One who does not break his oath.
   3) One who saves in battles, Prince of peace (new idea).
4) One who settles differences.

2. **Dangers of “chief” analogy:**

Pobee warns that we have to be cautious of chief’s attributes despite their parallel aspects attributable to Christ. They tend to lead to “Theologia Glorae” somehow lacking “Theologia Crucis”. Nevertheless, he convincingly concludes that Royal-Priestly Christology (as one among many) is fit for the Akan. He also gives the pastoral implication that Christ’s chief-ship, as the Great and Greatest Nana, demands effective engagement on our part, including sharing in the struggles for liberation.

9.5.6 **Conclusion:**

Thus, in his *Nana Christology*, John S. Pobee has the following crucial points:

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<td>The following are very important pastoral implications in his <em>Nana</em> Christology.</td>
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1. He **calls Christ the Great and Greatest Ancestor = Nana** in Akan language.

2. He calls **Him Nana because:**
   
   1) As Ancestor Christ has power and authority to judge, reward…and punish.
   2) He has authority on people and on the world of spiritual beings i.e. cosmic and spiritual.

3. To acknowledge **Christ as Nana**, according to Pobee, is **to let His standards reign supreme:**
   
   1) In personal orientation and conduct;
   2) In structures of society;
   3) In the cosmic process and economic affairs;
   4) In the political process i.e. personal and social justice and even recreation.
9.6 Summary

This Lecture has helped you to understand that in West Africa, there are a considerable number of prominent African Christian theologians who are engaged in Inculturational approach to ACT. The Lecture has, for a wider reading, not only assisted you to identify some of the renowned scholars in this Anglophone region but has also indicated their specialties and the countries they come from. Then, for practical purposes, the Lecture chose two of the theologians thereby exposing and discussing their respective African Christian Inculturation theologies. These are Kwesi A. Dickson known for his Christology of the Cross and John S. Pobee renowned for his Nana Christology.

Concluding Activity 9.4

Give and explain some African cultural elements which Kwesi A. Dickson employs in his African Theology of the Cross.

9.8 References

LECTURE TEN
DISTINCTIVE INCULTURAL WORKS IN EAST AFRICA

Lecture outline

10.1 Introduction

10.2 Objectives

10.3 Some Prominent African Christian Theologians From East Africa, Their Specialties and Where They Come From.

10.4 Discuss P.N. Wachege’s Mũthamaki Christology.

10.5 Examine John S. Mbiti’s Christus Victor Christology especially through his African traditional religious beliefs and practices.

10.6 Summary.

10.7 Concluding Activity.

10.8 References.

10.1 Introduction

Lecture Nine assisted you to understand that in West Africa, there are a considerable number of prominent African Christian theologians who are engaged in Inculturational approach to ACT. This Lecture will create the awareness that East Africa too is blessed with several serious African Christian theologians of international repute. In this Lecture, and for a wider reading, we will identify some of the prominent scholars from this region including some missionaries famous for the emergence, growth, actualization and development of ACT. We will also indicate their specialties and give the countries they come from. Then, as case studies, we will choose two of the theologians and discuss their African Christian Inculturation theology-more specifically, P.N. Wachege’s “Mũthamaki” (Ideal Elder) Christology and John S. Mbiti’s Christus Victor Christology.
10.2 Objectives

At the end of this Lecture, you should be able to:

1. Identify some of the prominent African Christian theologians from East Africa, point out their specialties and indicate the countries they come from.

2. Discuss P.N. Wachege’s “Muthamaki Christology.”

3. Examine and assess John S. Mbiti’s Christus Victor Christology especially through his African traditional religious beliefs and practices.

10.3 Some Prominent African Christian Theologians From East Africa, Their Specialties and Where They Come From.

**Intext Question**

Apart from the ones indicated below, what other prominent East African scholars that are engaged in Inculturational approach to ACT are you aware of?

1. **C. Nyamiti** - Systematic Theology/Anthropology/Music - from Tanzania.
4. **P.N. Wachege** - Systematic Theology/Philosophy - from Kenya.
8. **P. Kalilombe** - Pastoral Theology - from Malawi.
9. **C. Mwoleka** - Pastoral Theology - from Tanzania.

We also have the following Western missionaries doing ACT in this region:

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<tr>
<td>Are you surprised to learn that some prominent scholars of ACT are non-Africans and why?</td>
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1. **A. Shorter**-Social Anthropology/ Missiology.
2. **Hastings**-History/Sociology.
3. **E. Hillman**-Pastoral Theology.
4. **B. Hearne**-Dogmatic Theology.
5. **D. Barret**-Religious Sociology.

### 10.4 Discuss P.N. Wachege’s “Mũthamaki Christology.”

**Introduction**

Since Christology is such a rich theme in ACT and owing to its centrality in Christianity globally, you will be initiated into P.N. Wachege’s *Agĩkũyũ “Mũthamaki” Christology*.

**1. Wachege’s Mũthamaki Christology**

**Activity 10.1**


**2. The crucial base of his Christology:**

Wachege endeavored to come up with an African Christology based on the Agĩkũyũ understanding of elder. In order to achieve this desired inculturational goal, he was obliged to be both anthropological and theological: anthropological in the sense that he investigates from oral, written and experiential material the traditional Agĩkũyũ understanding of elder;
theological in that he examines the meaning and relevance of the Christ event from a new Agĩkũyũ perspective.

3. Factors that provoked him into this African theologizing:

Intext Question

What inspired him to come up with his kind of Christology?

Various reasons motivated Wachege’s subject matter namely:

1) Vatican 11 and other Post Vatican 11 magisterial directives which are quite emphatic in making theological Inculturation a reality triggered Wachege’s orientation in theologizing as an African. One such Documents is Ad Gentes article 22 (A. Flannery, Vatican Council 11, The Conciliar and Post Conciliar Documents (Dublin: Costello Publishing Company Inc., 1975) which informs that no culture is totally Satanic, and that every culture is imbued with some valuable elements which can be exploited in propagating and deepening the Gospel.

Take note

Hence the document teaches that all cultures, including the Agĩkũyũ one, have their potential contribution to Christianity.

This Document does not merely ask us to utilize our respective cultures for the purpose of being Church. It also maintains that the task of Inculturation is an obligation stirring up theological investigation in each major socio-cultural area;

2) Wachege is also inspired by his strong urge to elaborate an Agĩkũyũ “Mũthamaki” Christology in response to his people’s needs, aspirations, thought forms and mentality, thereby hoping to contribute to African Christology in particular and to global Christology in general;

3) Another factor is that, since Christology is a central theme in ACT and theology in general, he is convinced that his choice is a good point of departure for further and deeper treatment of theological subjects and themes from a similar African perspective;

4) His excitement by insights from the giant European scholar, Edward Schillebeeckx, where this renowned scholar explicitly supports the legitimacy of the endeavor and the basic approach in Wachege’s intended theologizing is another inspirational factor.
Take note

In his book entitled E. Schillebeeckx, *Interim Report on the Books Jesus and Christ* (pp. 21-27), Schillebeeckx provides very interesting reflections in which he spells out the theological legitimacy of looking for New Titles for Jesus and the conditions for doing so.

5) Also his ambition to come up with an African Christology that would **dialogue with** most advanced/developed Western Christologies like Karl Rahner’s for mutual enrichment, support and growth breaking parochial mindedness motivated him too.

Activity 10.2


4. How Wachege Develops His African Christology:

Take note

How does the author use elderhood values as found in the Agĩkũyũ tradition to develop an *Agĩkũyũ Mũthaki (Ideal Elder) Christology*, to establish how these values could be used as preparatory roads for the Gospel message?

When you read Wachege’s Christological monograph, you will appreciate that he divides his treatise into two main parts: the first, which is anthropological, exposes and elaborates the Agĩkũyũ socio-cultural and religious life; the second, which is theological, explicates Christ as *Mũthamaki* (Ideal Elder) with the resulting pastoral contribution namely, spiritual, catechetical and liturgical implications thereby.

Part One:

1) This part is anthropological in that it is an explication of the subject of Agĩkũyũ elderhood.
Take note
It is important for you to know how this necessitates an investigation of the traditional culture, beliefs and practices linked with elderhood among the Agĩkũyũ.

2) The part also shows that the Agĩkũyũ elderhood involves various qualities and elements which are indispensable for anyone to qualify as a Mũthamaki (i.e. Ideal Elder).

3) Together with these observations a re-evaluation of the role and function of Agĩkũyũ elderhood is made by verifying that the traditional Agĩkũyũ elderhood is still relevant for today and the future.

4) The analysis in the section further shows that the Agĩkũyũ elderhood is deeply integrated in the social and religious ways of living.

Take note
This is accomplished in the following three steps:

5) **The first step** deals with the preliminary subjects (i.e. historical and social contexts of the Agĩkũyũ) useful for a better understanding of the Agĩkũyũ elderhood. Here the author describes the origin of the Agĩkũyũ, analyses some fundamental aspects of their social organization, and finally discusses the major divisions among them and the characteristics which unite and differentiate them.

6) **The second step** (which takes into account step one) endeavors to visualize elderhood and social life, elderhood and religious life and the notion and requisites of ideal elder.

Take note
According to the author, the main thrust here is the question: to the Agĩkũyũ, what makes an elder an elder?

He thus examines and verifies this by investigating the historical and social contexts of the Agĩkũyũ elderhood within this ethnic group’s world-view as follows:
Intext Question

How does the author examine and explicate the requisites of an elder among the Agĩkũyũ?

a) In view of the Agĩkũyũ social structure and religion, the author creates an awareness that the term *mũthuri* (elder) comes from the verb *gũthura* (to choose). So, *Mũthuri* is one who chooses. *Mũthamaki* (ideal elder) is derived from the verb *gũthamaka* to choose, reign and rule distinctively well). As such, talking of a *Mũthamaki* signifies that one is beyond a *Mũthuri*, i.e., one is not only an elector but also a distinctive ruler and one who reigns prominently.

Take note

This shows that the basic role of a *Mũthamaki* is *gũthamaka* (to reign, to rule distinctively).

*b) Mwathani or Mwathi* (the great reigner and ruler) comes from the verb gwatha (to reign, to rule authoritatively). The Agĩkũyũ, according to the author, attribute this to God since God is the unique one in this aspect.

c) As for the roles of Agĩkũyũ elders, the author explains that, as basically servants, elders play the roles of reconciling and unifying among people and with God. He explains that they do this by being liberating messengers, reconcilers, and guardians of religion, leaders and rulers, family establishers and stabilizers, and promoters of healthy relationship within the community.

d) With regard to their powers, Wachege explains that they manifest it in various ways e.g., in shepherding their people, reconciliatory and uniting power, judicial powers, teaching power, power in elevating *marigithathi* (their first born sons) and commanding respect in their last will, and power to be remembered and to be re-lived after death.
Take note

Wachege is also quick to show that the elders’ powers have limitations e.g. if an elder misbehaves he has no power to escape facing the consequences; with all the authority conferred on them still an elder cannot rule in other people’s homes uninvited; it is required of them to keep handing over their elderhood powers from generation to generation; ultimately then, God is the primary limitation to their powers.

As for the source of their powers, the author explains that, in the last resort, God Himself is the ultimate source.

e) On the issue of elderhood and religious life, the role of the Agĩkũyũ elders as religious leaders is explained. In this connection, the Agĩkũyũ concept of God, the sacrificial trees, the sacred mountains, sacrifices and offerings, prayers, blessings and cursing are expounded to verify that the Agĩkũyũ elders are deeply religious and highly Godly.

f) In connection with ideal elder (Mũthamaki) Wachege brings to awareness that one should dwell on the characteristics of a Mũthamaki and what is expected of him. These, as should be noticed, implies being a remarkable guardian of moral life like being pro-life, hoping to establish healthy relationship and moral life, exemplarity in morality, and ensuring socio-religious uprightness in an excellent manner.

g) He draws further reflections to establish that the Agĩkũyũ elderhood is deeply integrated in the Agĩkũyũ religion. Such analysis in the section enables Wachege to conclude that it is impossible to gain a proper and deeper understanding of the Agĩkũyũ if one does not take into account the intimate link it bears to the social and religious ways of living among the Agĩkũyũ. Thus, the Agĩkũyũ elderhood is interpreted as not only deeply integrated in these factors, but also as serving somehow for their existence and consolidation.

7) The third step dwells on the relevance of the traditional Agĩkũyũ elderhood for today and the future.

Take note

Here, the author endeavors to show the relevance of the traditional Agĩkũyũ elderhood by verifying that traditional Agĩkũyũ elderhood within the Agĩkũyũ world-view is still relevant for the contemporaries and those of the future.
a) He brings to awareness that this traditional world-view has obviously undergone significant changes due to factors like colonialism, modern education, and modern economy, foreign system of governmental administration as well as creation of inter-ethnic community- the nation.

b) Despite this, Wachege not only indicates that the traditional elderhood values are still retained but he also argues how the attitude of the people to elderhood still controls our life.

c) Additionally, he makes a re-evaluation of the role and function of Agĩkũyũ elderhood by verifying that the traditional Agĩkũyũ elderhood is still relevant for today and the future.

Part Two:

This is the theological section

Take note

It is important for you to understand how Wachege actually inculturates thereby coming up with an African Christology making this section the most important.

1) In this vital part, which is primarily theological in intent, he makes an effort to scrutinize the Christian teaching on the Redeemer and Savior in the light of the Agĩkũyũ understanding of Mũthamaki (ideal elder). The crucial question Wachege grapples with is: CAN JESUS CHRIST BE KNOWN AS MũGĩKũYũ ELDER according to the Agĩkũyũ understanding of elderhood explained in Part One AND HOW?

Intext Question

What are the four fundamental steps used for the purpose of handling the above issue?

2) The first step for the above goal is that of examining the Biblical notion of elder and the study of Biblical understanding of Christ within the perspective of elder. An explanation is reached and indeed a conclusion is drawn from this study that, basing ourselves on our perception of the Agĩkũyũ notion of elder, it is justifiable -according to both the O.T. and N.T. concept of elderhood plus the Agĩkũyũ characteristics connected with elderhood (e.g.
Shepherd, judge, reconciler etc.), which have their parallels in the Biblical understanding of Christ to call Jesus a Mũthamaki, but in a higher and eminent sense.

3) In the second step, he examines Inculturation in the Church mainly from the point of view of the magisterial documents for guidance and support in his Christology. He expounds and analyses the magisterial documents and directives which give guidance and support in creating an Agĩkũyũ Mũthamaki Christology

Take note

Among such vital documents Wachege consults are: Ad Gentes art.22; Optatam Totius, art.16; Africae Terrarum; Kampala Address, Message to Africa; Address to the Bishops of Zaire in 1980 and 1983; and Address at the opening of CHIEA in 1984.

4) In this connection, Wachege illustrates that his kind of Inculturation is not only supported but it is also prescribed and given guidance in and by the Church authority thus legitimizing him to elaborate a Christology from the perspective of Agĩkũyũ understanding of Mũthamaki.

5) Moreover, he gives an elaboration of Christologies in the Church. By analyzing diverse Christologies within the Church history (especially those of liberation), he shows that each Church epoch understands, presents and concretely interprets the same Jesus Christ according to its needs, aspirations, thought forms and mentality.

6) He, indeed, explicates that each epoch stresses elements more essential to it in the light of the realities in its relevant situations in the Church.

Intext Question

Why do you think Wachege makes this assertion?

This he does so as bring to awareness that Inculturation is not particular to the Africans but it has been there throughout Church history.

7) In the third step Wachege provides the kernel of his Christology. It’s worth emanates from the understanding that it is here that he makes an effort to create an Agĩkũyũ “Mũthamaki”
Christology. He endeavors to reflect systematically on Christ’s mystery from the perspective of Agĩkũyũ sense of elderhood.

Intext Question

What is Wachege’s working hypothesis in this regard?

8) In this connection his working **hypothesis is that Jesus Christ can be called a Mũthamaki but a Mũthamaki par excellence.**

9) Accordingly following the directives given by Vatican 1 (DS 3016), and Vatican 11 especially *Optatam Totius*, art. 16 and *Ad Gentes*, art.22, on the theological elaboration and Inculturation, Wachege begins with a comparative analysis between the Agĩkũyũ elderhood and that of Christ so as to find out the analogies between the two types of elderhood. He ends this with further interpretation of the similarities and differences. Then he tackles Christ’s elderhood in the light of other Christian mysteries.

10) Eventually, he arrives at an explanation that, in view of the **principle of interconnection of Christian mysteries**, his Agĩkũyũ “Mũthamaki” Christology has implications for the understanding of the Trinity, Incarnation, redemption and Ecclesiology.

11) After that, he strives to show the goal or finality of his Christology.

Take note

Here, basing himself on two points of departure namely: from theocentric perspective and from the anthropocentric standpoint, he is enabled to draw the conclusion that **Christ’s elderhood has for its goal the glory of God and the bodily and spiritual salvation of not only the Agĩkũyũ but of all the human beings.**

12) He once more accentuates that the method he follows is based on the teachings of Vatican 1 (DS 3016) and Vatican 11 (*Optatam Totius*, art. 16 and *Ad Gentes*, art.22) as he indicated earlier.

13) He follows the above with pastoral relevance in his **fourth (final) step.**
In reference to the above methodological sequence, how does Wachege conclude his Christology and why?

14) The author focuses on emerging pastoral contribution namely, spiritual, catechetical and liturgical relevance of his Agĩkũyũ “Mũthamaki” Christology.

Take note

As indicated, his kind of Christology should have invaluable implications in the above triple realms. He thus endeavors to show that since his theological reflections have revealed Christ as the Mũthamaki par excellence, these facts have important implications for catechetical and theological purposes.

15) It is apparent that the utility of his Christology becomes most vivid in this last step (i.e. fourth step). On account of this, Wachege lets it be thoroughly understood and appreciated that Christ’s elderhood as explicated in his Christology is relevant not only for the Agĩkũyũ but for all humankind.

Why do you think the author is of the strong opinion that Christ’s elderhood as explicated in his Christology is relevant not only for the Agĩkũyũ but for all humankind?

16) This is because, as the author explains, most of the Agĩkũyũ values in their traditional beliefs and practice on the issue have universal validity, and Christ’s divine-human eldership is certainly a gift for all those who have analogous elderly functions in the secular society. Thus, the spiritual, the catechetical and the liturgical implications from his Agĩkũyũ “Mũthamaki” Christology are not confined to the Agĩkũyũ, but are open to the enrichment of the people of God and all those of good will and unbiased attitude.
Intext Question

After the critical analysis between the Agĩkūyũ and Christian conceptions of elderhood what most striking inferences does Wachege make?

17) After the critical analysis Wachege makes between the Agĩkūyũ and Christian conceptions of elderhood, he is able to assert that one of the most striking inferences which should come to mind is that the many parallels between the Agĩkūyũ and Christian understanding of eldership are indications that the Agĩkūyũ tribal customs on this issue are basically good and contain many positive values which are certainly a gift from God Himself.

18) As such, they are excellent preparatory roads for the Gospel message not only on the mystery of Christ, but on Christian social life as well. He goes on to point out that if this is the case, then one should once more stress that these Agĩkūyũ elderhood customs deserve even to be adopted into the Church.

Take note

This as he indicated will, of course, necessitate some purification from the superstitious and erroneous elements in them that are repugnant as well incompatible with the Gospel; and that one would also have to give them a Christian dimension.

19) For this purpose Wachege is inspired by the above theologizing to further suggest that the positive invaluable rituals connected with Agĩkūyũ elderhood should be elevated to the level of the sacramentals of the Church.

Activity 10.3

Using theological dictionaries find out the difference between sacraments and sacramentals

This will enable them to signify the social and spiritual effects of the elderly status and functions among the Agĩkūyũ.

20) As he comes to the end of his proposed Agĩkūyũ “Mūthamaki” Christology, he brings to the attention of the reader to realize that his approach to Christ’s mystery from the Agĩkūyũ
understanding of elderhood will have obliged us to reflect upon, and-to a certain extent- to deepen, some Biblical themes connected with the mystery of our Savior. In this way, he hopes to have made some modest contribution to African Christology- and, perhaps to Christology at large.

10.5 Examine and assess John S. Mbiti’s *Christus Victor* Christology especially through his African traditional religious beliefs and practices.

**Intext Question**

How does John S. Mbiti develop his *Christus Victor* Christology?

10.5.1 In his *Christus Victor* Christology, John S. Mbiti is concerned with two main issues namely:

1. The Christological subjects that are of interest to the Africans.

10.5.2 The Christological subjects that interest especially the African Christological concerns (desires) in African Christians:

1. *Christus Victor* (miracle worker, resurrected Christ). Hence Conqueror of evil powers feared by the African (spirits, magic, disease, death) and guarantor of immorality.
2. His birth, baptism and death correspond to the life crises ritually stressed by the Africans. They are hence relevant subjects for Africa.

10.5.3 Confrontation of the New Testament with the African Traditional Views- Christ and the African World-View:

**Intext Question**

How does John S. Mbiti’s methodological approach differ from that of P. N. Wacheghe?
1. Mbiti’s method is essentially Comparative. He seeks parallels and differences, similarities and dissimilarities. In other words, he draws comparison between Christianity and African traditional religious beliefs and practices. In his “adaptation” (Inculturation) Mbiti stresses the themes of Christianity parallel to African traditional themes or expectations. Among such examples are:
   1) **God’s Son**-idea found in some African tribes like Shona, Ndebele, Shilluk and Dogan;
   2) **Servant of God**, found in some tribes;
   3) **Redeemer**,
   4) **Conqueror**,
   5) **Lord (chief)**;
   6) His birth, baptism, death and resurrection correspond to life crisis and initiations rites.

2. Sometimes (but rarely) John S. Mbiti stresses also elements whose pendants are not in African tradition but, nevertheless, important for Christian life; The **Last Supper** is the best example in this regard.

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**Activity 10.4**

Compare and contrast John S. Mbiti’s methodological approach to ACT with that of P.N. Wachege.

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**10.6 Summary**

In this Lecture, you were made aware that in East Africa, there are several serious African Christian theologians of international repute. For a wider reading, the Lecture identified some of the prominent ones from this region including some missionaries famous for the emergence, actualization, growth and development of ACT. The Lecture also indicated their specialties and gave the countries they come from. Then, for practical purposes, we chose two of the theologians, discussed their methodological approach to their respective African
Christian theologies examined their respective works including their renowned effects in actualizing ACT. These scholars are P. N. Wachege known for his Mũthamaki Christology and John S. Mbiti renowned for Christus Victor Christology.

Concluding Activity 10.4.

Discuss how P.N. Wachege develops his Mũthamaki Christology in the light of Biblical and Church Teaching.

10.8 References


LECTURE ELEVEN
DISTINCTIVE INCULTURATIONAL WORKS IN FRANCOPHONE AFRICA

Lecture Outline.

11.1 Introduction.

11.2 Objectives.

11.3 Some Prominent African Christian Theologians From Francophone Africa, Their Specialties and Where They Come From.

11.4 Tharcisse TShibangu Tshishiku: Reality, Methodological Approach and Commitment Requisites.

11.5 A.T. Sanon: Jesus Head (Chief) and Master of Initiation.

11.6 Summary.

11.7 References.

11.1 Introduction.

Lecture Ten made you aware that in East Africa, there are several serious African Christian theologians of international repute. This Lecture empowers you to know that in Francophone Africa, there are a considerable number of outstanding African Christian theologians who dwell on Inculturational perspective in their ACT. In this Lecture and for a wider reading, you will not only be enabled to identify some of the renowned scholars from this French speaking region. You will also be assisted to indicate their specialties and give the countries they come from. Then, for practical purposes, the Lecture will choose and focus on two of the theologians and discuss their respective African Christian Inculturation theologies. These are Tharcisse TShibangu Tshishiku and A.T. Sanon.
11.2 Objectives

At the end of this Lecture, you should be able to:

1. Identify some of the prominent African Christian theologians engaged in Inculturational approach to ACT from French speaking Africa, point out their specialties and indicate the countries they come from.

2. Examine Tharcisse TShibangu Tshishiku’s Methodological Approach in ACT.

3. Discuss A.T. Sanon’s Jesus Head (Chief) and Master of Initiation Christology.

11.3 Some Prominent African Christian Theologians From Francophone Africa, Their Specialties and Where They Come From.

Intext Question

Who are the renowned scholars of Inculturation approach to ACT in French speaking Africa?

2. B. Bujo - Moral Theology/Liberation Theology-from DRC.
3. V. Mulago - Pastoral Theology-from DRC.
4. N. Mushete - Systematic Theology-from DRC.
5. A.T. Sanon - Dogmatic Theology-from Burkina Faso.
6. O. Bimwenyi - Dogmatic Theology-from DRC.
7. E. Mveng - Pastoral Anthropology-from Cameroun.
8. B. Adoukonou - Dogmatic Theology-from Cameroun.
10. **J. Zoa**-Pastoral Theology-from Cameroun.
11. **J.E. Penoukou**-Moral Theology-from Benin.
12. **F. Boulaga**-Dogmatic Theology/Philosophy-from Cameroun.

**Some Western Missionaries famous for ACT from Francophone Africa Are:**

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Like in Anglophone African, you should know that there are, though fewer, Non- Africans who are exemplary in ACT in Francophone Africa.

1. **R. Luneau**-African Anthropology.
2. **M. Hebga**-Pastoral Anthropology.
3. **H. Maurier**-Missiology.

**11.4 Tharcisse TShibangu Tshishiku: Reality, Methodological Approach & Commitment Requisites.**

**11.4.1 Introductory reflections:**

Tharcisse TShibangu Tshishiku is one of the pioneers of ACT in Francophone Africa. Theologians from this region have distinctive elements from those of the Anglophone Africa in thinking, theological methods and ecclesial behavior. This is mainly because of the influence of the respective colonizers and the language thereby. It is also because of the fact that while the English speaking region is basically Protestant, that of Francophone is fundamentally Catholic.

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French is friendlier in speculation and philosophizing than English which tends to be rather pragmatic and concrete. Hence the upper hand of Francophone thinkers in music, philosophy and systematic theology as compared to the Anglophone ones.
As documented by Emmanuel Ntakarutimana: “Tharcisse Tshibangu Tshishiku was born at Kipushi, near Lubumbashi, present Democratic Republic of the Congo, on 24th April 1933. He studied at Lovanium from 1957-61. From 1961 to 1965 he went for further studies at Louvain in Belgium. In 1965 he came back to Lovanium (Kinshasa), where he secured an appointment as a full-time professor until 1966. He was appointed Vice-rector of Lovanium in 1966 and rector in 1967. After the merging of the various universities in Zaire into the National University of Zaire (UNAZA) in 1971, Tshishiku became its rector until a decentralizing policy restored autonomy to the various universities. From 1981 to date he has been Chancellor and President of the Board of Directors of the Universities of the Congo.

“As a student at the Faculty of Catholic Theology of Kinshasa, he took part in creating and organizing the ‘Lovanium Theological Circle’. Within that setting, there took place the first debate that would launch the scientific research into African theology. This trend would spread to the rest of the continent beginning in 1960. He obtained a doctorate from the University of Louvain in Belgium.”

The following factors, which influenced Tshishiku a great deal, may be said to have provided the background to ACT:

1) Placid Tempels through his influential book titled *Bantu Philosophy*. This scholarly book inspired scholars like A. Kagame, B.J. Fouda, V. Mulago, A. Makarakiza…and J. Bahoken to strive towards the realization of authentic African philosophy. The challenge to people like T.T. Tshishiku was that since this verification that Africans actually have African philosophy distinctive from the Western one, it follows that they must have and develop their own ACT.

**Take note**

A good theologian must also be a good philosopher.

2) The insights of Seumois and Jean Faure.


5) Debate on the “African Theology” with Tharcisse TShibangu Tshishiku and Alfred Vanneste as the main exponents.

### 11.4.2 Real Discussions on ACT in 1960s:

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<td>Read about the fascinating debates between <strong>Fr. T.T. Tshishiku</strong> and <strong>Prof. A. Vanneste</strong> as documented in B. Bujo &amp; J.I. Muya (Eds,) <em>African Theology: The contribution of the Pioneers</em>, pp. 179-199.</td>
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This commenced with the exciting debates between **Fr. T.T. Tshishiku** and **Prof. A. Vanneste**. It was a most creative and edifying monumental discussion. The venue was the faculty of Kinshasa in Zaire (today’s DRC).
Intext Question

What is the core of the great debate on African Theology between Tharcisse Tshibangu Tshishiku and Prof. Alfred Vanneste as documented by Benezet Bujo.

While the former earnestly pleaded for local theology with African color, the latter was apologetic on “universal theology”. This controversy provoked more enthusiasm in the realization of ACT through conferences, lectures, meetings…and publications. The most remarkable thing was that such an effort was interestingly backed by hierarchy members like Cardinal J.A. Malula, Mgr. A. Sanon … and P. Zoungrana.

11.4.3 Contrasting stances between Fr. T.T. Tshibangu and Prof. A. Vanneste:

Take note

Since this monumental discussion between Fr. T.T. Tshishiku and Prof. A. Vanneste is well documented in B. Bujo & J.I. Muya (Eds,) African Theology: The Contribution of the Pioneers, pp. 179-199, it will be idle to give the details which one can easily read for oneself. Let it, therefore, suffice to indicate their respective stands as follows:

1) The position of T.T. Tshishiku is:

“If it is possible to speak of a Judeo-Christian theology or of an Oriental and Western theology, there is no reason why in Africa there should not be specific traits for theological reflections.”

He, therefore, pleaded for a theology “OF AFRICAN COLOR”.

2) The stance of Prof. A. Vanneste reads:

There cannot be an African theology, but African theologians must make an effort to attain the universal truth, object of theology, with no more to be said. Such an effort should not be exerted on elements borrowed from African culture. This is only a show of primitive and magic
character. **African theologians should try to construct a theology for their local needs starting from Western philosophy**, lest they condemn themselves to remain second-rate theologians.” He, therefore, undermined the “futile” effort of coming up with an ACT- with a heavy dose of Western paternalism and patronization. The impression is that the West has the absolute monopoly of **his so called “Universal truth”**. For him, the norm or standards or measure or even **criterion of theologizing is a monopoly of the Western scholars.**

11.4.4 T.T. Tshishiku’s of the nature of ACT:

*Tshishiku* is one of the forthright African theologians who are proponents of ACT in the narrow/technical sense. He propagates ACT understood in its systematic and scientific manner. Among his related definitions is that:”African theology is a serious reflection of Christianity from the African context”.

**Take note**

I strongly recommend to you that you take these requisites with the seriousness they deserve.

**Activity 11.2**

Give and discuss the main tasks of an African Christian Theologian according to Tharcisse Tshibangu Tshishiku.

11.4.5 As a serious African thinker, he has no time for superficial and naïve African “scholars”. This grave concern compelled Tharcisse Tshibangu Tshishiku to strongly recommend the following as **condition sine qua non** (necessary condition) for a serious African theologian:

**Take note**

This fundamental requirement was later explicated at a most academic level in Pope John Paul 11’s globally renowned Encyclical titled- *Fides et Ratio i.e. Faith*
1) African theologians must be fully aware of the fact that their theological work calls for real spiritual commitment i.e., being people of great faith. It also requires a real ability to ask fundamental questions i.e., being committed philosophers. Thus one has to be a person of deep faith and a solidly metaphysical life. In Summary, to be a good African Christian theologian, one must also be a good philosopher too who is prayerful.

2) One has to necessarily be equally conscious of the intellectual demands imposed by theological work. One must strive to possess the deepest and most accurate scientific knowledge of humanity and the factors that condition it. One has to be able to dialogue meaningfully with other disciplines e.g. with medical experts through medical ethics’ issues of life like euthanasia, morality of the timing of organ transplant and abortion.

3) One has to have a special commitment in being able to insert oneself into people’s situation in life otherwise one’s theology becomes irrelevant. He/she has also to be attentive to the questions raised and involving perception through emerging generations, changing situations in life, new problems in living and changing values. Above all, one has to be conversant with own people’s and other people’s CULTURES and to utilize the cultural values for authentic INCULTURATION/LIBERATION theologizing. Additionally, one has to be PASTORAL to answer people’s needs, concerns, anxieties, worries…and aspirations.

4) Furthermore, according to Tshishiku, one is required to have a genuine commitment to one’s Church- not being rebellious, arrogant and disturbing people’s peace. Here, one has to assist the Church to marry orthodoxy with orthopraxis and help in developing sensitivity to the “signs of the times”. Do this always bearing in mind that the kernel of Christianity is the same BUT the mode /manner of explication is diverse. This calls for undertaking serious research and reflection but in reference to the Christian doctrine. Nevertheless, they must equally cultivate courage and take risks in exploring, pondering and expressing the theological conclusions that derive from their authentic research.
11.4.6 Tshishiku’s international repute as a serious orthodox ACT:

**Intext Question**

Why do you think Tshishiku is of international repute with regard to ACT-especially in the area of methodology and Inculturation?

This is how Emmanuel Ntakarutimana articulates Tshishiku’s outstanding local and international recognition:


**Take note**

“Msgr Tshishiku has formed part of many learned societies and commissions. Besides the ones already mentioned, he has been a member of the Thomas Aquinas International Society in Rome, contributor to the International Association of Third World Theologians, founding member of the Ecumenical Association of African Theologians, guest professor at the University of Kyoto in Japan, consultant of UNESCO and member of the International Scientific Committee for the writing of the General History of Africa sponsored by UNESCO.”

11.5 A.T. Sanon: Jesus Head (Chief) and Master of Initiation.

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Intext Question
Can you give a brief biography of A.T. Sanon?

11.5.1 Sanon starts his Christology by detailed explanation of African initiation rituals:

Activity 11.3
Discuss how A.T. Sanon presents Jesus Christ as Head (Chief) and Master of initiation rituals and what you learn from him as an African.

According to him, these rituals comprise various elements namely:

1) Initiation accompanies various stages of life, birth, growth, puberty and marriage.

2) Initiation, especially tribal initiation, involves two elements:
   a) Passage from a lower condition to a higher status- with new rights and duties;
   b) Introduction into community membership- family, tribe, particular society etc.

3) Initiation involves various rites and other items namely:
   a) Separation from one’s own company to a separate place- In other words, seclusion;
   b) Instructions to acquire traditional wisdom- these are usually accompanied by initiatic secrecy;
   c) Ordeals;
   d) Various prayers and rituals like purification;
   e) Imposition of new name;
   f) Use of Symbols;
   g) Death and resurrection- symbolically manifested.
11.5.2 Application to Christ:

**Intext Question**

How does A.T. Sanon employ the above African items to Christ in his initiatic Christology?

1) **Basing himself on NT teaching**- especially Hebrews, Philippians and the Synoptics- **Sanon interprets various stages of Christ’s life in the light of the African sense of initiation.** In the NT teaching, he sees in Christ’s life a gradual movement/passage towards a goal, i.e. perfection (cf. Hebrews 2, 10:7; 28:5, 9).

2) Jesus was even initiated according to His Jewish tradition, e.g:

   a) At His birth (new name, circumcision, presentation into the Temple: to enter ritually into His Jewish family and community);

   b) Even Jesus’ remaining in Jerusalem at 12 years is interpreted initiatically:
      
      i. This implies separation from His family;

      ii. Receiving instructions from Jewish Rabbis;

      iii. Instructing His father and Mother- since an initiate is to instruct others.

   c) Even Luke 13: 31-32 (Tell Herod that today, tomorrow and on the third day I remain here) is seen in connection with the “Paschal triduum mortis”;

   d) Even the washing of His disciples at His Last Supper is seen as an initiate gesture in the sense that Jesus the Master (Chief) of His disciples instructs them to do the same (love, pardon);

   e) But the **climax** of His initiation is found in **His death and resurrection.** These imply the initiatic ordeal and transformation to a higher stage. These two events are also familiar themes in African initiation rites.

11.5.3 Other initiatic elements:

1) His Messianic secret (Mark 1:44; 3:12);

2) Use of symbols and signs (parables, etc);
3) Cross signifying the initiatic tree;

4) Church perceived as place of initiation;

5) Time of initiation signifying time of grace;

6) Global act of initiation symbolizing the Sacraments.

11.5.4 Practical consequences/implications:

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<td>Any theology that has no pastoral implications is empty and of no use.</td>
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From the above, Sanon manages to come up with very interesting implications which are of immense importance in ACT. This is how he articulates them:

1) As initiated Christ is the Head (Chief) and Master of our initiation: Having been made perfect He becomes Chief (Head) of those who obey Him (Hebrews 5:9).

2) Sharing His initiation involves following His initiatic steps to the Cross for motives of charity.

3) Through Baptism we share in Christ’s initiation by sharing in His initiatic death and resurrection.

4) Christ is the unique Master of Christian initiation. He was initiated once for all, and thus created a new initiatic Community whose tradition is that of Christ Himself. Thus through His initiation He introduced in all initiatic traditions radical newness which will never expire.

11.6 Summary

This Lecture has empowered you to know that in Francophone Africa, there are a considerable number of outstanding African Christian theologians who dwell on Inculturational perspective in their ACT. The Lecture, and for a wider reading,
has not only enabled you to identify some of the renowned scholars from this French speaking region. It has also assisted you to indicate their specialties and give the countries they come from. Then, for practical purposes, the Lecture chose and focused on two of the theologians and discussed their respective African Christian Inculturation theologies. These are Tharcisse TShibangu Tshishiku famous for his Reality, Methodological Approach & Commitment Requisites. and A.T. Sanon renowned for his Jesus Head (Chief) and Master of Initiation Christology.

**Concluding Activity 11.4**
Discuss the contrasting stances between Fr. T.T. Tshibangu and Prof. A. Vanneste also verifying that the above debate (together with Placide Temple’s Bantu Philosophy book) triggered the emergence and growth of ACT in Francophone Africa.

**11.7 References**


LECTURE TWELVE
EXEMPLARY MISSIONARIES ACTIVELY INVOLVED IN ACT

Lecture outline

12.1 Introduction

12.2 Objectives

12.3 Some Prominent Missionary Scholars of ACT.

12.4 Aylward Shorter - A brief Biography:

12.5 Aylward Shorter’s ACT Publications.

12.6 How Shorter Inculturates in the Realm of ACT

12.7 Assessment of Shorter’s Jesus and the Witchdoctor Monograph.

12.8 Summary.

12.9 References.

12.1 Introduction

Lecture Eleven empowered you to know that in Francophone Africa, there are a considerable number of outstanding African Christian theologians who dwell on Inculturational perspective in their ACT. This Lecture will help you to realize that ACT is not a monopoly of the Africans just as women liberation/feminist theology is not a confine of females. There are a considerable number of non-Africans who excel in ACT. Some of them like Aylward Shorter even qualify as among the pioneers of ACT. You need to realize that such a participation in this endeavor is not an impoverishment in ACT but enrichment. That is why you should never limit yourself to only African scholars otherwise you put yourself in the fix of false-particularism technically referred to as parochial mindedness.

12.2 Objectives

At the end of this Lecture, you should be able to:

1. Justify that ACT is not a Monopoly of the Africans;
2. Indicate Some Prominent Missionary Scholars of ACT;
3. Examine Aylward Shorter Biography;
4. Provide Aylward Shorter’s ACT Publications;
5. Discuss How Shorter Inculturates in the Realm of ACT;
6. Assess Shorter’s *Jesus and the Witchdoctor* Monograph.

### 12.3 Some Prominent Missionary Scholars of ACT:

**Intext Question**

Which Christian missionaries are you aware of who have helped in the emergence, growth and realization of ACT?

Among a considerable number of such non-African theologians are:

1. **A. Shorter** - Social Anthropology/Missiology.
2. **Hastings** - History/Sociology.
3. **E. Hillman** - Pastoral Theology.
4. **B. Hearne** - Dogmatic Theology.
5. **John Baur** - Church History.
8. **Basil Moore** - South African Black Theology
9. **Placide Tempels** - Bantu Philosophy.
11. **M. Hebga** - Pastoral Anthropology.

These should be an indicator for you that ACT is not a monopoly of the Africans. It is not only the Africans who are involved in ACT. There are such other Scholars who are exemplary in this regard and this is as it should be.

**Take note**

For practical purposes and in view of our Lecture, we opt for the one who has
contributed profoundly towards ACT in East Africa. This is Aylward Shorter.

12.4 Aylward Shorter- A Brief Biography:

Activity 12.1

Apart from Aylward Shorter, identify any other Western scholar reputable in ACT justifying why he or she merits our attention.

Take note

ACT is not a monopoly of the Africans. We do have some Western theologians who qualify as African Christian theologians thanks to their actual theologizing from an African perspective. Among the prominent ones is Aylward Shorter.

1. Aylward Shorter was born in England. He joined the British army after his High School studies and was later posted to Kenya as an officer. Nevertheless, God had a different plan for him thereby endowing him with a call to Priesthood.

Activity 12.2

Like is the case with other scholars, it is indispensable to know the biography of the scholars of ACT. On this ground, identify and present a short biography of Aylward Shorter using the internet and related sources.

2. He thus quitted military after serving in Malaya in 1955 to commence his priestly studies with the White Fathers Missionaries- who were among the agents of Christianity in Africa. He was given an opportunity to study Modern History and Missiology at Queens College Oxford and Rome and was eventually ordained Priest in 1962.

3. After his ordination, Shorter returned to Oxford to pursue his doctoral studies in Social anthropology. His love for the Africans compelled him to focus on the Africans for his PhD- more specifically, the Ukimbu of Tanzania. He thus lived among the Ukimbu people of South Western Tanzania from 1965-1970 for research purposes. In 1968, Shorter
successfully presented his Doctoral thesis to Oxford which reads: “Ukimbu and the Kimbu Chiefdoms of Southern Unyamwezi”.

4. This great Inculturation theologian Priest lectured in African Pastoral Anthropology at the Gaba Pastoral Institute in Uganda and was also among the academic staff when it relocated to Kenya.

**Intext Question**
What are the famous publications from this institute which is renowned for ACT enterprise?

**Take note**
Among Gaba’s main publications which are invaluable in ACT are: AFER (African Ecclesial Review) and Spearhead (focused monographs on topical issues) which have been ongoing for over thirty five years. You should make it a point not only to make academic visit to Gaba’s library but you should make an effort to contribute to these long running ACT publications.

5. He served this Institute from 1968-1977. He was appointed to Kipalapala Major Seminary in Tanzania where he taught African Theology to the senior seminarians who were the future Catholic Priests while also lecturing as a visiting lecturer at Bristol University in Britain in the Department of Theology and Religious studies. In addition to these, he also taught at Makerere University in Uganda and at the Catholic University of eastern Africa.

**Take note**
Shorter was among the founding members of Catholic Higher Institute of Eastern Africa (CHIEA) which evolved to Catholic University of Eastern Africa where he and other scholars like Charles Nyamiti founded CUEA’s renowned journal titled African Christian Studies which has an international repute in ACT.

6. Owing to his deep ACT and vast knowledge of the Africans, he has been not only a member of the World Council of Churches on family issues but also a consultant of the Vatican Secretariat for Non-Christians.
12.5 Aylward Shorter’s ACT Publications

**Take note**

The academic principle of “publish or perish” holds true for ACT and that is why you should make it a point to venture into publishing commencing with your M.A. Thesis/Project.

Shorter has numerous monumental publications especially in ACT. His refereed articles are so numerous that it is better to document the books only to avoid making the Lecture too loaded.

**Activity 12.3**

Find out some of A. Shorter’s publications on ACT

Among his numerous publications which are invaluable in ACT are:

1. *African Christian Marriage* (1977);
3. *African Christian Theology-Adaptation of Incarnation* (1977);
4. *Songs and Symbols of Initiation* (1987);
5. *A Theology of Inculturation* (1986);
6. *Towards a Theology of Inculturation* (1988);
7. Priest in the Village (1979);
8. Church and Marriage in East Africa (1975);
9. *African Culture and Christian Church- An Introduction to Social and pastoral Anthropology* (1973);
10. Missionaries to Yourself (1972);
11. Towards An African Christian Maturity (1987);
12. Chieftainship in Western Tanzania (1972);
13. Theology of Mission (1972);
14. *La Revelation* (1986);
15. Revelation and Its Interpretation (1983);
16. Theology of Mission (1966);
17. East African Societies (1974);
12.6 How Shorter Inculturates Within the Context of ACT:

Take note

For practical purposes, we are going to focus on one of his books titled - Aylward Shorter, *Jesus and the Witchdoctor: An Approach to Healing and Wholeness* (Maryknoll New York: Orbis Books, 1985) pp.3-236.

This well-known prolific author in ACT has authored and co-authored a huge number of related books and articles. To my knowledge, few if any scholars in ACT can much his publications and the passion involved.

Intext Question

How does Shorter develop his Jesus and the Witchdoctor Christology?

Shorter ANALOGICALLY identifies Jesus with a medicine man who unlike the African medicine men catered for spiritual, intellectual, physical, moral, social...and mental aspects. His is integral healing devoid of magic and superstitious elements. As such healing should confront all aspects of human beings and it should never be ignored in ministry: “One of the arguments of this book is that the Christian Church should adopt an integrated approach to healing, and a consequence of this is that such an approach should be reflected in the celebration of the Sacraments”(p.169).

The book is subdivided into two main parts: Part One which he calls “The Darkness of God” and Part Two which he refers to as “Light shines in the Dark.

Take note

In this Unit you are made aware that one of the reasons why the African Independent Churches split from the mainstream Churches was their thirst for healing aspect which was either ignored or handled superficially. That is why Shorter’ book comes in handy.
The implication of his book is that the World and Human are sick with the following as pointers:

- Abuse of the world’s resources;
- Sickness of the body;
- Mental anguish;
- Psychic disorders;
- Social inadequacies and disharmony;
- Death and fear of death;
- Hurtful memories;
- Barriers in human relations;
- Inability to identify sin;
- Reality of sin.

“The darkness of God” deals with environmental pollution and the above characteristics which blindens a human being. Elements which make him/her fail to see the presence of God when things get rough.

**Intext Question**

What do you think inspired Shorter to come up with this kind of monograph?


**Chapter 1** gives you the understanding of who a witchdoctor is.

**Intext Question**

How does Shorter define a Witchdoctor?
For the author, witchdoctor is the one involved in anti-social activities or a witch himself. He is a traditional divine-doctor practicing divination which is a form of revelation. He sees Jesus as a healer-exorcist, although He did not carry medicine with Him or examine patients. He used mud, saliva, laying hands upon the victim and words imbued with a mysterious knowledge of the people He healed and cured. His kind of healing was that of reconciliation and forgiveness. It was that of restoration of health and wholeness. Above all, it was a healing marking the inauguration of the Kingdom of God.

The author is quick to bring to attention that in traditional Africa, the Witchdoctor tried to restore health to his community of affliction relying on his environment to get herbs, roots, fruits and leaves. To accentuate that healing in traditional Africa does not leave out the social nature of sickness, Shorter say:” In the modern community of affliction,...sickness is viewed as being inseparable from a condition afflicting society as a whole, and in treating them, the community is carrying out a social therapy” (P.62).

According to the author, suffering brings salvation; hence people are called to accept it.

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**Intext Question**

Basing yourself on insights from Liberation theology, should you be indifferent in eradicating sufferings excusing yourself that suffering is redemptive and salvific?

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**Chapter 2 Brings** to your awareness that: the physical world speaks to us of a divine order; Medicine is the produce of the earth and healing necessarily includes being at peace with the physical environment; Jesus used the whole of nature as a parable of the transcendent wholeness; Jesus proclaimed and revealed that physical world shares in this same destiny of positiveness and goodness, growing towards it in the power of the Spirit.

In an interesting manner, Shorter discloses to you that “Jesus used the techniques of popular healers and exorcists of His time, and to that extent, at least, He was like a traditional divine-healer or witchdoctor...Jesus shared the integrated approach to healing which characterizes the so-called witchdoctor, but carried it infinitely further in every dimension” (pp.11,13). He goes on to inform that “In His own life Jesus offered a comprehensive redemption from the world’s sickness, and in His own person He offered a release for the sick, the sinful, the sad, the aliens, the outcasts, the poor and the ritually unclean.”(p. 13).

**Chapter 3** makes you realize that suffering which is irrelevant to a cause, meaningless, is hardest to bear when it persists. If the cause of suffering is not discovered, sickness becomes a
scandal, a stumbling block, because it serves no constructive purpose. It becomes purely a destruction of life. As such it needs to be removed.

Chapter 4 explains that death is a consummation of life, a summing up of physical life. As such it should be accepted with faith, hope and love.

Chapter 5 discloses to you that sickness has social causes and social consequences. It brings to awareness that social healing takes several forms. There is social healing of physical sickness, its social causes and consequences. There is the problem of a sick society, a society unable to comprehend the changes of structure and scale to which it is being subjected. There is the problem of anti-social activities and class conflict. All these point to the great demand of reconciliation and healing. The author emphasizes that: “Traditional healing in Africa includes the social dimension, and the restoration of social harmony is the goal of a great deal of social medicine.” (p. 62).

Chapter 6 explains that psychic disorders induce fear in those who experience them and these disorders are far more common. You also learn that dying people often experience emotional distress and depression mainly because of the aloofness of their fellow people. This calls for an empathetic listening to the dying. The author does not forget to remind you that emotions can be vehicles of prayers on condition that such feelings are not an end in themselves. Prayer should lead to commitment and not to withdrawal. He thus pleads that emotions should be given room in liturgy or group prayer or contact, as Jesus did with Lazarus and the beloved disciple.

Chapter 7 elaborates that sin is the sickness of the soul for it attacks the divine order. It is a disorder in the ultimate sense. He goes on to explain that in traditional Africa, sin is associated with shame before others. Sin can never be a private affair; it has always an anti-social dimension. Social sin brings into existence flawed social structures and institutions which are objectively wrong in themselves and which encourage immoral attitudes and actions by those who subscribe to them and who operate their systems.

Chapter 8 teaches that witchcraft is a kind of penumbra of human wickedness, an inborn preter-natural power to harm and kill, enjoyed for its own sake. It creates an illusion of control over forces, but ultimately it is not credible and, worse than that, it entails unjust judgments and the rendering of real or imagined evil.

Take note

For Shorter, the Witchdoctor heals, but he does not give whole healing because he believes in sorcery, spirits and magic. He asks: “How does one heal society suffering from its own self-inflicted wounds of witchcraft and
He goes on to answer: “My own inclination in these matters is to refuse to enter into any discussion of the objectivity of the beliefs, for that is what they are, beliefs which do not rest on empirical, scientific evidence...If people bring secret fears of this kind out into the open, one must be very careful indeed not to enter into their mental world. Instead, they must be encouraged to take positive action in other directions.” (p. 104).

Chapter 9 explains that physical evil is attributed to non-human sources, personalized misfortunes and psychological realities. This tendency to personalize experience helps people to come to grips with the unfamiliar or fear-inspiring in their experience, or even to humanize it. This demonization must be limited in order not to endanger God’s victory in Christ.

**Intext Question**

What are the five major levels of health that Shorter identifies?

Shorter identifies the following levels namely: physical environment, physical well-being, social well-being, psychiatric and emotional level and moral and spiritual level. He holds that African traditional Witchdoctor cannot, fully, satisfy these five major levels of health for a human being, even though he operates at all those levels.

**Take note**

To be authentically freed from this utter darkness, the African needs light. It is this light Shorter talks about in the Second Part of this book i.e. from Chapter 10 onwards.

In a remarkable manner as an expert in African Inculturation theology, he explains that Jesus is the Light. He is the Healer *par excellence* because it is only Him who ensures transcendent wholeness. Shorter explicates that without Jesus a society facing all the evils with its own traditional healers still live in darkness. He justifies that Jesus exercised His soteriological powers through His healing of diseases, raising the dead and exorcism.
Activity 12.4
Identify some Biblical passages on Jesus healing sickness and diseases, raising the dead and casting out demons and explain them briefly.

Some of the Biblical pericopes are, for instance, Jesus healing Peter’s mother-in-law (Mt 8:14); the man with a withered hand (Mt 12:9-43); the Centurion’s Servant (Lk 7:1-10); the ten lepers (Lk 17: 2-9); the possessed at Capernaum 9mk 1:23-27). The most significant is Christ’s resurrection that enabled Him to transcend His humanity, time, space, His own Culture and the boundaries of His nation. It is in Christ’s resurrection that our suffering and death is, now a means to sharing into unending wholeness. He communicates His new existence to all through His disciples (Mt 10:1; Lk 1:10; Mk 16: 18; Acts 3:7, 9:34, 14:7).

Biblical sources indicate that evil has been swallowed up in Christ’s victorious death. This revelatory insight makes Shorter assert that if we approach an evil situation with a strong belief that it has already been defeated (by the Calvary incident)) then we have already won and that the future lies with God and not with Satan (p.116). In the darkness of human suffering shines the light of God revealed in Christ, Source of all healing and the ultimate of wholeness. Whatever we suffer in our own lives and through our own human nature cannot be more of a paradox than the mystery of a suffering God (p.117).

Intext Question
Is the Church duty bound to perform the ministry of healing is it an optional service and why?

Shorter emphasizes that healing is one of the crucial mission of the Church. The Church is bound to follow the footsteps of Jesus who committed Himself to healing among other duties. He even commissioned His disciples to render this important pastoral duty. That is why Shorter stresses that the sacraments should be celebrated in such a way that they become the high points of grace. He even suggests that the Sacrament of the anointing of the sick should take place in the context of Eucharistic celebration.

Chapter 10 discloses that medicine is an agent of divine power but it has got some limitations. Prayer is related to medicine but does not have a powerful influence in healing. Healing prayer has to take account of medical practice and of the saving value of suffering.
**Chapter 11** has it that magic is anti-Church for it thrives on secrecy and superstitious self-help. It has some irreligious and irrational characteristics. Magic works psychologically and through coincidence.

**Chapter 12** creates the awareness that dreams are sometimes healing and problem solving. Sometimes God may be revealing His purpose to us, as He did through Paul’s vision of the Macedonian (Acts 16:9).

**Chapter 13** explains that belief in a millennium (future reign of Saints on earth, a perfect society that is imminent or already attainable in this world) can lead to a number of religious deviations. It may also lead to quietism and the passive acceptance of the evils one is seeking to escape. It may further lead to unreality and irrelevance. It is an attitude for a sick society, but also an attitude of worshipping faith, a dependence on God.

**Chapter 14** elaborates that there is an obligation to evangelize sufferers, to give them a new understanding of the world which is Christ-centered. It is demanded of a Christian healer to proclaim the Gospel and offer the sufferer a direct experience of God’s healing love revealed in Jesus Christ since, properly taken, sickness brings us closer to God.

**Chapter 15** informs you that Devil exorcism brings a pessimistic view of religion. It strengthens rather than eliminates popular fears and manipulates the powers of mental dissociation.

**Chapter 16** has it that the celebration of Sacraments plays a healing role, especially spiritual healing. It is Christ Himself who plays this role through a minister, binding together every level of healing.

**Chapter 17** informs that in the Church there are people with healing power (charisms). But such charisms should not be used in an abusive way.

**Chapter 18** is rich in ideas and examples on the pastoral care of the sick and disabled. The cure of sickness and disability together with the removal of oppressive evil forces is a sign that the Kingdom of God has overtaken us.

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<td>He pastorally concludes his book thus: “We are all of us healers...we are called to participate in the healing ministry of Christ, to heal ourselves and others. With Christ we are healers and that means that we are wounded healers like Him. After the Resurrection Christ showed the wounds in His hands and His side to the Apostles. It was a proof of the continuity of His</td>
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identity, but it was also a sign that He had drawn victory and glory from those wounds. For us, too, God is able to draw good out of evil and glory from our wounds, even the wounds that are self-inflicted.” (P.236).

**Intext Question**

How can we commit ourselves to this commission of Jesus of being wounded healers?

To take after Jesus the role of being wounded healers in our kind of society is hard but not impossible. Thanks to insights from Shorter’s Jesus and the Witchdoctor monograph we have the capacity to participate in the above. This we can do by, for instance:

1. Visiting hospitals to encourage the sick as individuals or as University community members;
2. Promoting primary health care in our respective areas;
3. Providing schools and institutions for the challenged ones;
4. Setting up refugee camps and centers for humanitarian concern;
5. Establishing nutrition centers;
6. Helping in providing well-prepared doctors and nurses to provide a holistic treatment;
7. Encouraging pilgrimages to healing Christian shrines.

**12.7 Assessment of Shorter’s Jesus and the Witchdoctor Monograph:**

**Intext Question**

How would you appraise the above ACT by Shorter?

**1. Shortcomings:**

Like any other publication, Shorter’s book too has some limitations. Among the shortcomings are:
1. The title “Jesus and the Witchdoctor” may be suspect. It could as well be confusing. A superficial reader may be quick to assume that he equates Jesus and the Witchdoctor which would amount to unlawful mixture technically called syncretism;

**Intext Question**

What would you be comfortable with: to compare Jesus with “a traditional healer/divine-healer” OR with “traditional Witchdoctor” and why?

-A simple Christian may be tempted to lead a life of double standards i.e. that of the Bible in hand and a charm in ones chest or waist or around the neck;

2. The way he draws parallels without coming out strongly on the differences can be misleading not only to non-Christian believers but also to Christians in difficult situations in life. As he explains, a Witchdoctor as a medicine-man uses paraphernalia like leaves, roots, spittle, laying of hands on the recipients…and invocations. Jesus too used related articles like saliva, spittle etc. In this aspect one may not comprehend the distinctiveness consequently finding oneself consulting both.

3. There is a tendency by the author to highlight witchcraft and witchdoctors among the Africans while giving an impression that the Westerners are exonerated from this reality. Nevertheless, reality has it that the above is not a confine of the Africans. Even Shakespeare verifies how the Westerners indulge in such practices. This one-sidedness can water down his invaluable contribution for such paternalistic maybe unintended paternalism.

4. A superficial parallelism between witchcraft-eradication cults with Black liberation Theology- almost equating the two- is rather superficial.

**2. Pastoral Implications:**

Apart from the indicated negative aspects, Shorter’s book is imbued with invaluable pastoral contributions. He has no doubt succeeded in providing very useful good pastoral issues.

**Activity 12.5**

Draw out some positive aspects in Shorter’s book which you feel they are helpful in the realization of ACT.
Some of the enriching elements are:

1. Qualifying Jesus, not LIKE A WITCHDOCTOR, but actually IDENTIFYING HIM with the Witchdoctors though surpassing them all- hence the attribute JESUS THE WIRCHDOCTOR PAR EXCELLENCE is commendable;

Take note

On the Legitimacy of coming up with other titles for Jesus and not just “Son of David”, “Messiah”etc. ,P.N. Wachege notes in his book titled Jesus Christ Our Muthamaki (Ideal Elder) spells out clearly that even the renown scholar of international repute called Edward Schillebeeckx supports this Inculturation endeavor of looking attributing new titles for Jesus. He explicates this in his book titled Interim Report on the books Jesus and Christ (Schilebeeckx 1980:21-27).

Intext Question

According to you, what do the two have in common- namely: Aylward Shorter’ Jesus the Witchdoctor AND P.N. Wachege’s Jesus Our “Muthamaki” (Ideal Elder)?

2. The parallels he draws between Jesus and the traditional witchdoctors shows that, in our pastoral mission, we should never ignore the healing role of our Africans. We should lean their wholistic approach and elevate them to Christian level. As such, to degrade or attack them wholesale may as well be un-Christian;

3. He points out that Witchdoctors are not afraid to handle mental “cases” in their service. Priests/pastors who find themselves uncomfortable with mentally challenged people in their ministry to all should learn how to get more involved from the witchdoctors remembering that Jesus was exemplary in rendering service even to the possessed and others with mental disorders..

4. The book provokes the reawakening of the neglected healing aspect of the Sacraments.

5. By giving us another title, i.e., Jesus the Healer, Shorter advocates an Inculturation in the light of our traditional healers and Jesus for a better impact on our ministry unto our contemporary SICK society;
6. Since so many Christian splinter groups like African Independent Groups dichotomize themselves from the mainstream Churches for lack of actual healing cum miracle service, Shorter’s book could as well be part of the answer to such deprivation and hunger.

7. The profound knowledge of the Africans by a Mzungu (a non-African white person) and the convincing way in which he is not afraid to inculturate using an African “repugnant” category many take with contempt as superstitious, i.e. the healing witchdoctor, is a challenge to the Africans not to be quick in undermining their general revelation gifts in strengthening their Christianity making it more relevant to many.

8. The traditional healer’s rich understanding of the environment just as Jesus too was knowledgeable with nature and the social aspects of sin is a challenge for we of ACT to take environmental issues most seriously and come up with ACT from the point of reference of creation and environment

Take note

We could also learn from Leonardo Boff’s books titled- Cry of the Earth, Cry of the Poor (Orbis Books: Maryknoll, New York, 1997); Ecology and Liberation: A New Paradigm (Maryknoll, New York, 1995).

9. The issue of dreams which many scholars of ACT ignore comes out clearly in Shorter’s theologizing from an African point of reference. The author reminds us that the OT has all kinds of dreams with regard to religiosity but that even Jesus took them seriously just as out African Witchdoctors do. He reminds us that: “Christian healing must not merely be tolerant of dreams…Dreams must be recognized and used for what They are, powerful aids for healing and wholeness at many levels” (p.160).

10. Like a good theologian, Shorter also cautions us that belief in an imminent millennium typical of many Pentecostal Churches may make people indifferent to the evils they are sent to confront. He also reminds us to be weary of un-biblical fatalistic tendencies among those who reject scientific medicine and those with exaggerated emphases on healing as is the case with Legio Maria Church.

11. While rightly referring to Jesus as Healer par excellence, Shorter also correctly qualifies Him as Divine, Creator and Sustainer whose Sacraments “should always be open to healing dimension” (p.222). As such Small Christian Communities, Charismatic groups and such Christian devotional Groups should not only be encouraged. They should also be properly educated and guided thereby checking their excesses.

12. He remarkably highlights that the apostles are duty-bound to continue witnessing to the light of Christ shining in darkness (LK 9). Through his “Jesus and the Witchdoctor” Shorter
succeeds bringing to awareness that healing is one of the vital duties and mission of the Church of Christ who was the Healer par excellence.

### Concluding Activity 12.6

Choose any non-African Christian theologian who impresses you in his/her effort towards ACT and explain one of his/her books the way the Lecture has done with Shorter’s Book.

### 12.8 Summary.

This Lecture has created awareness that ACT is not a monopoly of the Africans just as women liberation/feminist theology is not a confine of females. It has helped you appreciate that there are a considerable number of non-Africans who excel in ACT and that some of them, like Aylward Shorter famous particularly for his Jesus and the Witchdoctor, even qualify as among the pioneers of ACT. You were able then to realize that such a participation in this endeavor is not an impoverishment in ACT but enrichment. Consequently, you are now empowered by the Lecture to:

- Justify that ACT is not a Monopoly of the Africans;
- Indicate Some Prominent Missionary Scholars of ACT;
- Examine Aylward Shorter Biography;
- Provide Aylward Shorter’s ACT Publications;
- Discuss How Shorter Inculturates in the Realm of ACT;
- Assess Shorter’s Jesus and the Witchdoctor Monograph.

### 12.9 References.

**References**

2. L. Boff, Cry of the Earth, Cry of the Poor (Orbis Books: Maryknoll, New York, 1997).
3. L. Boff, Ecology and Liberation: A New Paradigm (Maryknoll, New York,
UNIT CONCLUSION

Awareness was created for you that this Unit is basically triple-pronged namely: Inculturational; Liberational; and Inculturational intertwined with Liberational. In the light of this threefold item, the Unit- used thematic systematic approach- to identify, examine and critically expose outstanding African theological perspectives which are in vogue. You, as the student, were thus initiated and exposed to the following very important Topics in view of later finding out more on your own and even coming up with yours in this ongoing process of realizing and actualizing ACT:

- Identification and Explanation of the Five Main Items in African World-view that Greatly Influence the Emergence and Growth of ACT;
- Perusing the Nature, Scope and Relevance of the Unit;
- Historical Setting and Pluriformity of ACT;
- ACT of Liberation;
- ACT of Feminism/Women Liberation Theology;
- South African Black Theology;
- A Model of ACT of Liberation- A.T. Mofokeng;
- ACT of Inculturation;
- Distinctive Inculturational Works in West Africa;
- Distinctive Inculturational Works in East Africa;
- Distinctive Inculturational Works in Francophone Africa;
- Exemplary Missionaries Actively Involved in ACT.

The goal of this Unit was to help you identify, peruse, understand, and concretely interpret the Christian faith/Gospel/Good News in accordance with the needs, aspirations, thought-forms and mentality of the Africans as you investigate the works of the exponents of ACT. To this end, the Unit provided you with TWELVE inter-dependent Lectures which helped you to acquaint yourself with the knowledge and understanding of the threefold lenses of ACT namely: Inculturational; Liberational; and Inculturational intertwined with Liberational.

This, as was reiterated, was in view of helping you to be knowledgeable in ACT and be intelligently involved with the research and finality of making your own reasonable contribution to this fascinating inexhaustible discipline.

I can only hope that you have benefitted from this Unit. My strong recommendation is that you also register for Unit CRS 561: Modern Trends in Christianity since, as pointed out earlier, the two have a close affinity and are, moreover, mutually enriching.

Be blessed.
BIBLIOGRAPHY/REFERENCES


**APPENDIX FOR MODEL QUESTIONS**
1. Give and elaborate what Tharcisse T. Tshibangu considers to be the main tasks of an African Christian theologian.

2. Explain the meaning of “African theology” and “African Christian Theology”

3. Discuss the main sources of ACT.

4. Comment critically on the different labels of ACT.

5. With insights gained from John Paul II’s *Fides et Ratio* Encyclical, discuss the mutuality between theology/faith and philosophy/reason.

6. Discuss at least four factors that helped in transforming the unfortunate implantation method of evangelization employed by early missionaries.

7. Indicate and explain the challenge Vatican Two and Post-Vatican Two magisterial documents subject African Christian Theologians to with regard to Christianity.

8. Identify and critically evaluate the three main orientations/trends in ACT indicating also their intrinsic inter-relatedness.

9. Discuss how the following factors trigger a pluriformity in ACT:
   
   a) Denominational peculiarities/varieties.
   
   b) Socio-political and cultural differences.
   
   c) One’s school of thought.
   
   d) Individual choice.
   
   e) Theologian’s degree of commitment.
   
   f) Own option for a fundamental approach.

10. Give and analyze P. Frostin’s aspects of levels of oppression that bring about a pluriformity in African liberation theology.
11. Discuss Leonardo Boff’s understanding of “liberation theology” indicating also its importance in ACT.

12. Verify or falsify the assertion that “wherever Christianity is, there you find liberation theology”.

13. Discuss:

   a) The assertion that: “Gustavo Gutierrez and Paulo Freire ought, or ought not, to share the reputable honorary title of “father of LT”.
   b) Gustavo Gutierrez’s triple connotations of the term “liberation theology”.

14. Justify the following in relation to LT: radical social revolution; anthropocentrism; theocentricity; Christology; Ecclesiology; and eschatology.

15. Elaborate how Bonganjalo Goba explains the term “black consciousness”.

16. Identify and discuss at least SIX main factors that contributed to the emergence and growth of SABT.


18. Discuss how Allan A. Boesak explains the terms “Black Theology” and “Black Consciousness”.

19. Within the context of South African Black Theology explain:

   a) Jesus as “Black Messiah”.
   b) The unfinished business of South African Theology.

20. Discuss the nature of “feminist/women liberation theology” in Africa also indicating the objectives of this mode of theologizing.

21. Give and explain at least FOUR types of feminisms that trigger divergences in women liberation theology.
22. Explain the traditional and Church oppression and exploitation of African women and how to liberate them from such factors.

23. In the light of Jesus Christ as the liberator par excellence and within the context of African Christian Feminist Theology, explain the following Biblical pericopes:

   a) Mark 14:3-9.
   c) John 8:3-11.
   d) John 4:5-52.

24. Identify and discuss SIX undertakings/involvements in Inculturation approach to ACT.

25. Give and explain the main shortcomings of African Inculturation Theology as given by Laurenti Magesa in his book titled- Anatomy of Inculturation: Transforming the Church in Africa.

26. Within the insights from the Pontifical Council for Culture, explain the term “Inculturation” as you briefly explain the following concepts in reference to the Theology of Inculturation: Adaptation; Reformulation; Contextualization; inter-culturation; and indigenization.

27. Point out and elaborate some African religio-cultural characteristics which John S. Pobee utilizes critically in his Nana Christology.

28. Bearing in mind the cultural emphasis in modern trends on Christian thought, discuss one of the following: Royal-Priestly Christology/Nana Christology by John S. Pobee; Theology of the Cross by Kwesi A. Dickson.

29. Discuss the contrasting stances between Fr. T.T. Tshibangu and Prof. A. Vanneste also verifying that the above debate (together with Placide Temple’s Bantu Philosophy book) triggered the emergence and growth of ACT in Francophone Africa.

30. Discuss how A.T. Sanon presents Jesus Christ as Head (Chief) and Master of initiation rituals and what you learn from him as an African.
31. Give and briefly discuss P.N. Wachege’s *Christ Our Mùthamaki (Ideal Elder) Christology*.

32. Give and briefly discuss A. Shorter’s *Jesus and the Witchdoctor* Christology.