Lecture series CRS 561: Modern Trends in Christianity

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General Introduction to the Unit

You are welcome to this Unit titled **CRS 561: Modern Trends in Christianity**. It is a Course that has a close affinity with Unit **CRS 560: Christian Theology in Africa**. For practical purposes, the Unit will give you a brief global setting with regard to Modern Trends in Christianity then pick and examine at least nine major Trends in African Christian Theology (henceforth ACT) which will assist you to adequately understand and benefit from the fundamental orientations in Christianity.

First and foremost, awareness will be created to the fact that Modern Trends in Christianity are global and local- i.e. universal and indigenous as well. They are found not only in non-African Christian Theologies in Latin America, Asia, Europe... and America. But we also find them in ACT too. For practical purposes, after a brief global rooting, the accentuation of this Unit will be on Modern Trends in Christianity in ACT. You need to be aware that in our contemporary Africa, ACT is no longer emerging. It is actually in vogue and is asserting itself with vivid Trends.

We have numerous orientations and a pluriformity of vibrant approaches. This is not merely in the general sense. It is also factually in the technical/ narrow understanding of it. If you visit Bookshops, College libraries, Higher Institutions of learning, African theologians’ private studies and even Seminaries you will no doubt find them somehow saturated with serious works on and about ACT imbued with interesting theological approaches. A good number of Private as well as Public Universities’ Archives have all kinds of serious related theses, dissertations, projects, periodicals ... and journals as well as related Units on the same.

Make an effort also to encounter African theologians of the triple levels namely **popular level**, **pastoral level** and **erudition/scholarly level** and you can expect to come up with remarkable orientations in ACT. A cross examination of these secondary sources and a reasonable perusal of primary sources manifests explicit Trends in ACT that illumine and inspire Christianity, and indeed, the Church in Africa which are indispensable for you to examine as a springboard into coming up with your own from such enrichment. With this finality, our Unit will educate you to focus on some of the most outstanding ones through the lenses of the following Ten Lectures:

**LECTURE ONE** which creates awareness with regard to Global Modern Trends in Christianity;
LECTURE TWO which discusses the Trend of approaching Christology through Ancestral perspective;

LECTURE THREE which examines the nature and worth of the Trend of African Christian theologies inspired by blessings and blessing, curses and cursing;

LECTURE FOUR which explores the Trend focusing on African ecclesiologies based on the model of the Church viewed as the Family of God;

LECTURE FIVE which discusses the Trend handling African Christian theologies imbued with sin as a critical moral item;

LECTURE SIX which examines the Trend geared towards marriage issues especially African single motherhood;

LECTURE SEVEN which peruses the Trend of African Feminist cum Women Liberation theologies;

LECTURE EIGHT which confronts the Trend handling taboo subjects like demonology;

LECTURE NINE which assesses the Trend inter-twinning African Christian theologies imbued with medical moral issues like euthanasia.

LECTURE TEN which discusses the Trend handling African Christian theologies imbued with grace and conversion as moral items.
Unit Objectives

The goal of this Unit **CRS 561: Modern Trends in Christianity** is to acquaint you with modern Trends in Christianity in both non-African Christian Theologies as well as in ACT in view of understanding fruitfully the most striking approaches especially in ACT, discuss the issues more meaningfully and strive to participate in related theologizing.

With the above in mind, at the end of this Unit, you should be able to:

- Have an awareness of Modern Trends in Christianity globally;
- Discuss the Trend of Approaching Christology through Ancestral Perspective;
- Examine the Nature and Worth of the Trend of African Theologies Inspired by Blessings and Blessing, Curses and Cursing;
- Explore the Trend Focusing on African Ecclessiologies Based on the Model of the Church Viewed As the **Family of God**;
- Discusses the Trend handling African Christian theologies imbued with sin as a critical moral item;
- Examine the Trend Geared Towards Marriage Issues Especially African Single Motherhood;
- Elaborate the Trend of African Feminist cum Women Liberation Theologies;
- Confront the Trend Handling Taboo Subjects Like Demonology;
- Examine the Trend Inter-twinning African Christian Theologies Imbued with Medical Moral Issues like Euthanasia;
- Discusses the Trend handling African Christian theologies imbued with grace and conversion as moral items.
LECTURE ONE

GLOBAL SETTING OF MODERN TRENDS IN CHRISTIANITY

1.1 Introduction.

Welcome to this first Lecture in our Unit which is intended to help you acquire an awareness of Modern Trends in Christianity globally. The fact of the matter is that, historically, Modern Trends in Christianity are neither a confine of Europe nor Asia nor Americas nor Australia not even Africa. The Lecture will help you understand that the Trends have a universal geographical spread. It will assist you to appreciate that each continent, nevertheless, selects and accentuates the selfsame Christian Doctrinal themes according to the historical needs, situations in life and living, aspirations and critical awareness of its own people with the disposition towards others from other regions for mutual enrichment and solidarity.

The Lecture will further conscientize you to know that among the agents that trigger such Trends are: Endeavor to define crucial doctrinal articles; Effort in making Christianity more meaningful and fruitful among respective communities; Emergence of Protestant Reformation; Great Church Councils from Trent to Second Vatican Council to Post Vatican Council’s Conciliar Documents and Encyclicals cum exhortations cum Synods; Catholic and Protestant giant Scholars like Karl Barth, Karl Rahner, Jurgen Moltmann (the list seems endless) from different schools of thought and philosophical socialization; and contemporary new challenges owing to changing generations, language growth, ecumenical cum inter-religious dialogue and improved scholarship.

Furthermore, thanks to this Lecture, you will realize that what is in vogue is to identify the striking vivid global Trends running across the continents while focusing on particular socio-cultural regions for both depth and mutual enrichment. Based on this assertion, this Lecture
identifies such contemporary global Trends in Christianity (among others) and opts to examine the Christological theme as a model of global Trends. It, moreover, brings to awareness the profound treatment of the above Trends in ACT in the following Nine Lectures to exemplify the Trends as found in particular socio-cultural regions for both depth and mutual enrichment and for practical purposes.

### 1.2 Objectives

The goal of this Lecture is to help you acquire an awareness of Modern Trends in Christianity globally and to assist you to appreciate that, historically, each continent selects and accentuates the selfsame Christian Doctrinal themes according to the historical needs, situations in life and living, aspirations and critical awareness of its own people with the disposition towards others from other regions for mutual enrichment and solidarity. With this finality, therefore, by the end of this Lecture, you should be able to:

1. Acquire an awareness of Modern Trends in Christianity globally.
2. Know that Modern Trends in Christianity are neither a confine of Europe nor Asia nor Americas nor Australia not even Africa but they have a universal geographical spread.
3. Appreciate that each continent selects and accentuates the selfsame Christian Doctrinal themes according to the historical needs, situations in life and living, aspirations and critical awareness of its own people with the disposition towards others from other regions for mutual enrichment and solidarity.
4. Identify some main agents that trigger such Trends and the rationale behind it.
5. Examine more profoundly the Christological theme as a model of global Trends and as a springboard to an intensive treatment of the above Trends in ACT in the following Nine Lectures to exemplify the Trends in particular socio-cultural regions.
1.3 Identification of Some Vivid Common Global Trends in Christianity and Our Pragmatic Choice

1.3.1 What is in vogue nowadays is to identify the striking vivid global Trends running across the continents while focusing on particular socio-cultural regions for mutual enrichment and solidarity.

Activity 1.1


1.3.2 Based on the above assertion, this Lecture identifies some such Trends.

Intext Question

Which, according to you are some Modern Trends in Christianity that have a global appeal?

The following are the contemporary global Trends in Christianity (among others):

- Approaching Christology Through Respective Socio-Cultural items Like Ancestorship;
- Theologies Inspired by Blessings and Blessing, Curses and Cursing;
- Ecclesiologies Based on the Model of the Church Viewed As the People of God/Family of God;
- Theologies Imbued With Sin as a Critical Moral Item;
- Trend Geared Towards Marriage Issues;
- Trend of Feminist cum Women Liberation Theologies;
- Trend Handling Taboo Subjects Like Demonology;
- Trend Inter-twinning African Christian Theologies Imbued with Medical Moral Issues Like Euthanasia;

1.3.3 Since it is not viable for us to handle each of the above global Trends in Christianity owing to the limitations imposed on our Unit, let us pick and choose the Christological Trend as a model for the global orientation.
Activity 1.2


Let us also postpone the other Trends to the other Nine Lectures whereby the focus will be on Modern Trends in ACT as we open ourselves to other non-Africans to avoid being parochial and narrow-minded.

1.4 A More Profound Examination of the Christological Theme as a Model of Global Trends

Christology is among the most vivid global Trends in Christianity and, indeed, the kernel of Christianity.

Take note

You should know that Christology has historically been taught by the Fathers, the Church Magisterium and theologians the world-over.

Each epoch has been coming up with own Christologies imbued with its peculiar needs and mentalities striving towards Christologies best for own people of God. This subsection of the Lecture will very briefly present you with:

- Christologies in the Patristic Epoch;
- Christologies in the Scholastic Period;
- Christologies in 20th and 21st Centuries.

1.4.1 Christologies in the Patristic Epoch

1) In the Apostolic age, Christology was mainly seen in its power to defend the persecuted Christians, to give heroism to the martyrs and to keep faith strong in the community of believers.

**Take note**

Tertullian was a Latin Father. Under the influence of Stoic materialism, he attempted to move from descriptive to explanatory Christology.

This emergence into theory brought him into the notion of distinction (emanation) and unity (non-separation) which enabled him to conclude that the Son is generated in time. As such then, the Son is not eternal i.e., not the perfect equal of the Father.

3) **Origen (d. 253 or 254)** was a Greek Alexandrian theologian - J.N.D. Kelly, *Early Christian Documents*, pp. 154-158 whose situation in this great City of speculation made him fall under the impact of Neo-platonic understanding of God thereby conceiving God by means of philosophical concepts. Consequently, he came up with his analogy of idea and participation to explain that the Father is the origin while the Son is inferior to the Father in His nature.

4) More Christological works within the Patristic epoch is made more explicit in the teaching of the First Council of Nicea, First and Third Councils of Constantinople, Council of Ephesus, Council of Chalcedon and other prominent theologians like **Athanasius** and **Augustine**.

**Take note**

The above Christologies laid a foundation for Christologies of the Scholastic period.
1.4.2 Christologies in the Scholastic Period

1) In this period, Christology was mainly in apologetical terms as a result of the provocation by the enemies of faith and was also renowned for developing a monarchical papacy and a strict hierarchical Church throughout the West - W. Ullman, *The Growth of the Papacy Government in the Middle Ages* (London: Methuen, 1955), p. 1972.

2) Under the influence of the Reformation from the mid 16th century, Christological emphasis was on the uniformity of belief.

   Take note
   Thus it took a more legalistic nature and explanation as a reaction to the Protestant Reformers.

3) Anselm of Canterbury (d. 1109) had three famous works, namely, *Monologion* (the Monologue on the rationale of Faith), *Proslogion* (Faith seeking understanding), and *Cur Deus Homo?* (Why did God Become man?). In this latter book, Anselm sought to understand and express Christ through the lenses of the deep inter-relationship between faith and reason. According to his theory of satisfaction, Anselm explained that Jesus Christ though innocent and hence the adequate representative of humankind deliberately accepted death to restore to the Father the dignity spoiled by our sins - R.P. McBrien, *Catholicism* (London: Geoffrey Chapman, 1984), p. 462.

   Take note
   This famous “satisfactory theory” had a great influence in latter Christologies.

4) Thomas Aquinas (d. 1274) is the other great contributor to Christological Trend of this period. He was so exemplary in Scholasticism that he was honored with the title Angelic Doctor owing to his “unparalleled” achievements. His Christological teachings have a monumental impact. He integrated his Christology into metaphysics in such a way that
he provides extremely useful rationale as to why God became human and the consequences of the Incarnation- R.P. McBrien, Catholicism, pp.462-463. Aquinas taught that in a concrete existing person, nature, personality and existence are really distinct and that in Christ, the human is terminated by the pre-existing Word, in such a way that there is one Person (the Word) and one existence (that of the Word). Hence the man Jesus is a person and exists in virtue of the Word.

Aquinas discusses other Christological themes also at the level of eruditions like freedom, holiness and sinlessness...which have some influence in 20\textsuperscript{th}/21\textsuperscript{st} centuries’ Christology.

1.4.3 Christologies in 20\textsuperscript{th} and 21\textsuperscript{st} Centuries

1) It is good to know forthwith that in this epoch, the theological and liturgical movements culminated in Vatican 11 and Post Vatican 11 ecclesial sources.

2) Here we notice Christologies sourcing from the Bible, the Church fathers and contemporary traditions and scholarship. They are remarkably more diversified.


3) It would be of great interest for you to know that we also have a diversification of Christological Trends. Among the SIX striking ones, together with some of their main exponents, are:

1. The Trend which commits itself to interpreting and adapting Christology to modern mentality and situations and which has five Christological perspectives namely:
1) The cosmological perspective basing itself on an evolutionary world-view giving the insights that Christ is evolution fully accomplished. It has exponents like Teilhard de Chardin and Karl Rahner;

2) The anthropological, existential and personalistic perspective that concerns itself with confronting modern atheistic tendencies and secularist humanism as it expresses Christology in terms of existential and personalistic philosophies which focus on human existence. It has exponents like R. Bultmann;

3) The historical perspective that emphasizes the historicity of Jesus and His redemptive work. It has exponents like Karl Barth, E. Schillebeeckx, P. Tillich and W. Pannenberg;

4) The secular perspective which propagates a Christology from below and endeavors to demythologize all that is divine or supernatural. It has exponents like P. Schoonenberg;

5) The political perspective which deals with concrete problems in socio-economic and political spheres presenting Christ as the answer to the liberation struggle. It has exponents like L. Boff and J. Sobrino.

2. The Trend geared exclusively to the historical Jesus:

1) It utilizes the modern, historical and scientific studies of the Bible.

2) Here, Christ’s divinity is somehow undermined.

3) Belief in the risen and exalted Christ is viewed as a function which confirms His earthly existence.

4) It has proponents like H. Kung, G. Bornkamm and E. Kasemann.

3. The Trend with Christology based on the proclaimed Christ and the historical Jesus:

1) It is distinctive from the previous Trend because it presents Jesus of history and Christ of faith as one and the same reality.

2) It elaborates that both the Jesus of history and the Christ of faith express the same mystery of Christ.

3) It shows that we truly follow the way of Christ by living the Kingdom of God and identifying ourselves, as Christ did, with the outcasts and the social rejects. Exponents like J. Moltmann and W. Kasper.
4. The Trend that conceives Christology as the upholding of Trinitarian theology:

1) It is mainly a reaction against modern secular Christologies.
2) By rooting itself in the Trinity, it attempts to bring back what is impoverished by extreme Christologies.
3) The eminent proponents are K. Barth and H.U. Balthasar.

5. The fifth Trend comprises the Asian Christologies of Inculturation and liberation:

1) They theologize from the point of view of their Asian situation in life and living.
2) On the Inculturational perspective we have Raimundo Panikkar

Activity 1.3

Intext Question

How does Raimundo Panikkar develop his Asian Inculturation Christology?

a) Panikkar endeavors to do Christology using the thought category, spiritual values and genuine truth of the Hindu community.

b) He integrates Hindu world-view in such a way that he comes up with the insights that the Indian cultural religiosity already contains Christian elements through which one can truly find Christ.

c) He is of the opinion that Christianity has a lot to learn from Hindu philosophy and vice versa.

d) Panikkar shows that the “Mystery” which the Christians call Christ has a living presence in Hinduism.
e) He, furthermore, explains Christ as the totality of human reality, divine reality and cosmic reality.

3) Still on the Inculturation realm we have Stanley J. Samartha
   a) He explicates the universal relevance of Christ.
   b) He explains that global relevance as beyond geographical, cultural and religious limits.

4) On liberation aspect we have theologians like Felix Wilfred.

Intext Question

How does Felix Wilfred elaborate his Asian liberation Christology?

a) Wilfred presents Jesus Christ, who by His unlimited love and compassion for sufferers and outcasts, is the exemplary liberator.

b) He explains Him as the Liberator who challenges the Church to get involved in the true liberating process.

c) This, Wilfred explains, is particularly so in His “aspect as God in the poor and the lowly (daridranarayan) and His identification with the suffering as symbolized by the Cross”- K. Wilfred, The Liberation Profession in India and Church’s Participation, India Theological Studies (Bangalore 25: St. Peters pontifical Institute of Theology, 1988), pp.312ff.

5) Still on liberation aspect we have Samuel Rayan.
   a) Rayan depicts Jesus as the one who provides the pressing challenge for today to either opt for God or for mammon.
How does Samuel Rayan explain Jesus?

b) He explains Him as the one who issues summons to the effect that “primacy be given to the quest for the justice of God’s Kingdom against the injustice, inequality, oppression and misery of the rule of Caesars and Herods and all powers which prove themselves Satanic by the deprivation, domination and wretchedness they administer;

c) Jesus does this as He invites us to love one another as He loved by providing the health, the bread, the rice, the liberty, the honor and the acceptance of the neglected people’s need to become fully themselves and know themselves and one another as God’s children”- S. Rayan, Asia and Justice Vidyajyoti Journal of Theological Reflection (S. Arakiasamy, New Delhi) 50(7), 1986, p., 360.

6) Again on the liberation realm we have Pearl Drego.

What are the main elements of Pearl Drego’s feminist liberation Christology?

a) Drego sees Jesus Christ as the supportive friend of women.

b) He explains Him as one who empowers women;

c) One who encourages them in their quest for freedom and dignified service within the Church in a male-dominated society in which women are manipulated in practically every existential aspect

**6. The Trend of African Christologies:**

This comprises mainly-

- African Christologies of Liberation.
- And Christologies of Inculturation.

**Activity 1.4**


**1) African Christologies of Liberation**

**Intext Question**

How do African Christologies of liberation relate to those of Latin America and what are the distinctive factors?

The African ones have a close affinity to those of Latin America since the latter influenced the former in methodological approach, generally common themes, related goals and points of departure. Yet those of Africa are more inclined to cultural and religious values and are less prone to secular and Marxist ideologies.

a) Jesus is presented not just as the Liberator from oppressive dehumanizing systems.

b) They present Him also as the Liberator from sin viewed as the root-cause of un-freedom i.e., alienation and oppression.
c) These Christologies also view Jesus Christ as having died fighting against oppression and by raising Him the Father confirmed that the Father was with Him in the cause for which He paid the ultimate price.

d) Based on this, Jesus’ followers and disciples are challenged to take after Him in this ministry.

e) A deeper analysis helps you to distinguish two further subdivisions namely:

- **South African Black Power Christology** and
- **Liberation Christologies in the rest of Africa**.

2) **And Christologies of Inculturation**

a) Here we have ancestral Christologies with exponents like **C. Nyamiti, B. Bujo and J. S. Pobee**.

b) We also have non–ancestral Christologies with exponents like **P.N. Wachege, A. Shorter, K. A. Dickson and J.S. Mbiti**.

Take note

The above will be handled in the appropriate Lectures.

What the Lecture has treated provides a crucial springboard to an intensive treatment of the above Trends in ACT.

1.5 **Summary**

This Lecture has helped you to acquire an awareness of Modern Trends in Christianity globally. It has assisted you to appreciate that, historically, each continent selects and accentuates the selfsame Christian Doctrinal themes according to the historical needs, situations in life and living, aspirations and critical awareness of its own people with the disposition towards others from other regions for mutual enrichment and solidarity.
Specifically, the Lecture has helped you to: Acquire an awareness of Modern Trends in Christianity globally; Know that Modern Trends in Christianity are not a confine of Europe nor Asia nor Americas nor Australia not even Africa but they have a universal geographical spread; Appreciate that each continent historically selects and accentuates the selfsame Christian Doctrinal themes according to the historical needs, situations in life and living, aspirations and critical awareness of its own people with the disposition towards others from other regions for mutual enrichment and solidarity; Identify some main agents that trigger such Trends and the rationale behind it; and to examine more profoundly the Christological theme as a model of global Trends and as a pointer to an intensive treatment of the above Trends in ACT in the following Nine Lectures to exemplify the Trends in particular socio-cultural regions.

Concluding Activity 1.5

Explain how Felix Wilfred develops his Asian Christology of liberation.

1.6 References


LECTURE TWO

THE TREND OF APPROACHING CHRISTOLOGY THROUGH ANCESTRAL PERSPECTIVE

2.1 Introduction.

2.2 Objectives.

2.3 Some Prominent Proponents of Ancestral Approach to Christology in ACT.

2.4 Main African World-view Items Ancestral Christologists Utilize.

2.5 Daniel Lwasa’s Christ as Source of Life-Community Fortune Governor-Inspiration to Good Conduct Ancestral Christology.

2.6 Charles Nyamiti’s Christ Our Ancestor Ancestral Christology.

2.7 Benezet Bujo’s Christ as Proto-Ancestor (i.e., the First Ancestor) Ancestral Christology.

2.8 John Mutiso Mbinda’s Christ the First Born of All Creation Ancestral Christology.

2.9 General Assessment of Some African Ancestral Christologies in the Trend.

2.10 Summary.

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2.1 Introduction.

After the global setting of Modern Trends in Christianity in Lecture One, this Lecture examines the Trend of approaching Christology through ancestral perspective.

As far as Christology is concerned, you encounter all kinds of images and titles attributed to Jesus Christ. This is done as an effort to own Him thereby making Him more relevant and at home in our respective homes, cultures, epochs and generations. The critical question is: “Who do you say that I am?” (Mk 8:27)- as interrogated by Jesus Christ Himself. In this regard, “There are often as many answers as people who choose to respond, and even those who refuse to respond often have their unspoken answers.”(J. F. O’Grady, Models of Jesus (New York: Doubleday, 1982), pp.13-206.
In this ongoing task, a pluriformity of Models of Jesus keep emerging making the investigation an unfinished fascinating business. You would do well to always keep in mind that: “Each model offers some insight into the meaning of the Church; each offers some understanding- but if viewed exclusively, each model breaks down and falls in its ability to represent the true reality in any complete or final fashion.”(Ibid., p.19).

Each epoch then has come up with its Christologies. Yet, since no Christology can be adequately equated with Jesus Christ, each and every Christology has been a striving towards the ideal Christology best for its own particular people of God in their contemporary situations in life and living accompanied with both short-comings and positive aspects.

In our contemporary Africa, what is apparently in vogue is Ancestral approach to the mysteries, works and redemptive cum salvific mission of Jesus Christ through the lenses of Inculturation and liberation. For the purpose of this interesting Trend, you will be initiated into the Ancestral Christologies of Daniel Lwasa, Charles Nyamiti, Benezet Bujo and John Mutiso Mbinda.

2.2 Objectives

The goal of this Lecture is to Discuss the Trend of Approaching Christology through Ancestral Approach among the scholars of ACT. With this finality, therefore, by the end of this Lecture, you should be able to:

1. Identify some prominent proponents of Ancestral Approach to Christology in ACT.
2. Identify and elaborate the five main African World-view Items Ancestral Christologists utilize.
3. Discuss Daniel Lwasa’s Christ as Source of Life-Community Fortune Governor-Inspiration to Good Conduct Ancestral Christology.
5. Discuss B. Bujo’s Proto-Ancestor (i.e., the First Ancestor) Ancestral Christology.
6. Explain J.M. Mbinda’s Christ the First Born of All Creation Ancestral Christology.
2.3 Some Prominent Proponents of Ancestral Approach to Christology in ACT.

You need to appreciate that, in ACT, there seems to be no other most developed Christian theme than Christology.

Activity 2.1


From the book titled, R.J. Schreiter (Ed.) *Faces of Jesus in Africa* (Maryknoll, New York: Orbis Books, 1991), you will get a good example of the diverse approaches to Christology in ACT namely:

1. “Christology in the Village” by E. Julien Penoukou, pp. 24-51;
2. “Who is Jesus Christ for Africans Today? Priest, Prophet Potentate” by Douglas, W. Waruta, pp.52-64;
3. “Jesus Master of Initiation” by Anselm T. Sanon, pp.85-102;
4. “Christ as Ancestor and Elder Brother” by Francois Kabase’le”, pp.116-127;
5. “Christology and an African Woman’s Experience” by Anne Nasimiyu Wasike, pp. 70-81.
Of the above, the theme of Ancestral Christology is emerging most forcefully in Africa today championed by scholars like C. Nyamiti.

Intext Question

Which published works on Ancestral approach to Christology are you aware of and what are their respective ideas and pastoral contributions?

Among the exponents of this Ancestral Christological Trend in ACT Are:

1. **C.G. Machoko**’s *Christ Our Muzimu Mukuru* (i.e. the Great Spirit or Ancestor) Ancestral Christology – *The Christological Debate for the Development of Christianity in Zimbabwe in the Context of African Traditional Religion* (Harare: University of Zimbabwe, 1997);

2. **E. J. Penoukou**’s *Christ Our Joto-Ancestor* (i.e., the Source of life and the fulfillment of the cosmotheandric relationship in the world) Ancestral Christology- *“Realite Africaine et Salut en Jesus Christ”*, Spiritus, no.88, vol.23 December, 1982, pp.374ff;

3. **Daniel Lwasa**’s *Christ as Source of Life-Community Fortune Governor-Inspiration to Good Conduct* Ancestral Christology;

4. **J.S. Pobee**’s *Nana-Christology* (i.e., the Great and Greatest Ancestor) Ancestral Christology- *Toward an African Theology* (Nashville, Tennessee: Abingdon, 1979), pp.81ff.;


6. **J.M. Mbinda’s Christ the First Born of All Creation** Ancestral Christology;

7. **B. Bujo’s Proto-Ancestor** (i.e., the First Ancestor) Ancestral Christology- *“La Christologie Africaine n’est elle qu’une Archaeologie Culturelle?”* in G. Colzani et al. (Eds.), *Cristologia e Missione Oggi. Atti del Congregasso Internazionale di Missiologia* (Rome: Urbaniana Pontifical University, 2001),pp. 361ff.

2.4 Main African World-view Items That Ancestral Christologists Utilize:
The following are the fundamental elements in African World-view that are generally and creatively used by ACT Ancestral Christologists:

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<td>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 since they are essentially guided by this selfsame African world-view.</td>
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2.4.1 Life/Vitality:

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.

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<td>Consequently, Africans have great respect and love for that which propagates, promotes and protects life—especially human life.</td>
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They also honor whatever is linked 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.

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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.

2.4.2 Dynamism/Power:

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 2.3


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.

2.4.3 Sacredness:

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 the earthly and yonder life Communities.

2.4.4 Community:
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**


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 man/woman is radically disposed to the society of men/women, spiritual/Ancestral beings and Supernatural Being. Without these characteristics, man/woman 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:

**Activity 2.4**


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 ancestral tradition - the rationale being: we have to do this because our Ancestors did it;

**Take note**

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

4) Community is vast since it includes clans, tribes … 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.

**2.4.5 Anthropo/centrism:**
There is a vivid man/woman-centeredness in African world-view. This is so even in the perception of God.

**Activity 2.5**


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.

With the above insights in mind, and for practical purposes, the Lecture will examine the Ancestral Christologies of four of the above Christologists. These are: Daniel Lwasa; Charles Nyamiti; John M. Mbinda; and Benezet Bujo.

**2.5 Daniel Lwasa’s Christ as Source of Life-Community Fortune Governor-Inspiration to Good Conduct Ancestral Christology:**

**Intext Question**

How does Daniel Lwasa develop his Ancestral Christology?

Lwasa develops his Ancestral Christology by explicating the deeds of the Ancestors. This is how he analyzes the Ancestral functions:

1. Ancestor is the source of life;
2. Ancestor governs the fortunes of the community of the living;
3. Ancestor is the source of inspiration for the conduct of the living.

From these African socio-religio-cultural characteristics, he seeks parallels from the Bible to find out whether Jesus qualifies as an Ancestor in an African sense. Below are the conclusions he draws:

1. Christ gives natural life through His blood/life and baptism;
2. Christ governs the Brethren;
3. Christ is the Head and the norm of the life conduct of the Christian community.

The triple conclusions enable Lwasa to assert that Christ accomplishes all the prerequisites of an Ancestor. This then is his Christology which he considers friendlier to the Africans.

2.6 Charles Nyamiti's Christ our Ancestor Ancestral Christology

Activity 2.6

2.6.1 C. Nyamiti is not only among the pioneers of ACT. He is also the champion of Ancestral approach to the Christian Mysteries. You need to refer to Lecture Three where Nyamiti scientifically and systematically tackles Ecclesiology employing African conception of Ancestors and Church doctrines.

2.6.2 To appreciate Nyamiti’s solid scholarship and why his Christology from Ancestral point of view is so profound, it is of immense importance to have a good understanding of his:

1. Life history;
2. Conception and articulation of African Theology;
3. Methodological approach;
4. Basic orientation;
5. Pedagogy in actualizing ACT;
6. And his publications.

**Activity 2.7**


2.6.3 He commences his Ancestral Christology by assessing other African Christologies like the ones examined in this Lecture. This he does in a very positive manner prudently pointing out that they are not profound enough as he challenges himself in coming up with a deeper one i.e. the one you are being initiated into.

2.6.4 Eventually Nyamiti identifies five fundamental characteristics of an African Ancestor namely:

1. **Consanguinity and non-consanguinity**: Natural or earthly relationships which have to do with Kin relationship;
2. **Sacred Status**: Supernatural being ness acquired through death;
3. **Mediation**: which is as a result of the above Items 1 and 2;
4. **Exemplarity**: This has to do with good human conduct;
5. **Title**: Rights to regular sacred communication with the living beings. An Ancestor demands such rights otherwise they become angry which has a serious repercussion on the living until they are propitiated. The title is fulfilled through **oblation**.

**Take note**

Oblation is that which is given as an expression of respect or homage to a sacred or divine Power in order to please that Power.
2.6.5 In reference to these Ancestral Items, Nyamiti is quick to bring to awareness two crucial elements i.e.

1. Natural earthly relationships like parenthood, brotherhood, sisterhood, clan-hood...and Ancestor-hood.
2. Supernatural/Sacred status acquired through death. To qualify for this, one should have led a good life, be of good conduct, and have nearness to God.

These two are examined also through the main pillars in African world-view previously elaborated i.e.:

1) Vitality;
2) Power;
3) Sacredness;
4) Community;
5) Anthropocentrism.

2.6.5 He uses these five Items to find out whether Christ accomplishes them.

He convincingly verifies that Jesus not only meets these requisites but He also surpasses them super-eminently. This he does basing himself on the main sources of Christianity - i.e., the Bible, Tradition and traditions. In this exercise, he draws out both the parallels and the differences involved.

2.6.6 He does the above employing ANALOGY to qualify Christ as Our Ancestor.

The rationale is that being both God and man, Jesus cannot be fully confined to anything human since He is the perfect model of human beings and at the same time He is Divine. As such, Nyamiti logically concludes that Jesus Christ is not just an ancestor but the Ancestor par excellence.

Intext Question

How does Nyamiti explain the term “analogy” in his books?
2.6.7 Nyamiti then identifies and explains the pastoral implications of his kind of Christology.

2.6.8 To his credit, Nyamiti goes beyond the other African Ancestral Christologists by creatively employing Christ’s Ancestor-ship to comprehensively explain other Christian Doctrines like Ecclesiology and Trinity.

2.6.9 What guides him in tackling other Christian Doctrines is the principle of the inter-connection of Christian Mysteries. In this regard, Nyamiti fills up a serious lacuna in the works of other exponents.

2.6.9 Conclusion:

If you examine Nyamiti’s published books in relation to Christ’s Ancestorship, you will be convinced that in Ancestral approach to Christology he is in a class of his own. In fact, his profound writings on the issue are un-paralleled. From his pioneer book titled: C. Nyamiti, Christ as Our Ancestor: Christology from an African Perspective (Zimbabwe: Mambo Press, 1984), he has written four other voluminous volumes on the same- which you can check in the section on the bibliography. In fact, the fifth volume is in the pipeline.

2.7 B. Bujo’s Proto-Ancestor (i.e., the First Ancestor) Ancestral Christology:

Activity 2.8


2.7.1 Bujo’s Ancestral Christology, like that of Nyamiti is deep though not at par with Nyamiti’s whose superiority in this sphere is still un-paralleled.
This great African Scholar from DRC in Francophone Africa has the advantage of encountering giant scholars of international repute. As J.I. Muya puts it: “Meeting, while in Germany, the great masters of contemporary exegesis like Rudolf Schnackenberg, and teachers of dogmatic theology like Karl Rahner, Edward Schillebeeckx, Johann-Baptist Metz and Walter Kasper has left its mark and influenced Bujo’s theological evolution.

“Chronologically, reading the works of St. Thomas and especially the Summa (with the help of important contributions like Marie Dominique Chenu’s, Max Seckler’s and Otto Hermann Pesch’s), convinced him the more that theology must be understood as a whole.


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<td>What steps does Bujo follow in developing his <em>Proto-Ancestor</em> Ancestral Christology?</td>
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The framework of Bujo’s theologizing is critical in comprehending his ideas. That is why following the sequence of his treatise below is of immense importance:

2.7.2 *Bujo commences by affirming that in Africa, the gesta of ancestor are constantly re-enacted through ritual:*

This enables the African to recall these gesta and to conform his conduct to them. Hence such rituals “become a life and dead rule of conduct, guarantors of salvation and a testament for posterity”. In other words this kind of ritual “becomes a commemorative- narrative soteriology”, which assures unity of the past, present and future community including the dead.

2.7.3 *Within this context, Bujo reflects on Christ’s mystery:*

This is the theologisation framework he follows:
1. In his setting, Bujo sees Christ as Proto-Ancestor—i.e. unique Ancestor: the Source of life and highest model of ancestor-ship.

2. He then explains that through the incarnation Christ assumed the whole human history including the legitimate inspirations of our ancestors.

3. This enables him to make the assertion that the assumption of the future which the ancestors sought to guarantee is assured. The justification he gives is that our ancestors’ experiences have been made efficacious in Jesus crucified and risen.

4. Thus the Incarnation enables Christ to be the unique and privileged locus of total encounter with our ancestors and allows them to be the focus where we encounter God of salvation.

5. This, according to Bujo, leads to the idea of Christ as Ancestor which is more meaningful to the African than Logos or Kyrios and enables African anthropocentrism (prominent in ancestral thinking) to be the source for incarnating Christ. Here, Bujo is quick to reveal that this demands a Christology from below—i.e. functional/ascending Christology which does not, however, ignore ontological/descending/Christology but is a matter of emphasis.

6. He then explains that Christ as Proto-Ancestor is the foundation of a narrative ethic affirming that Christ is Proto-Ancestor—source of life and accomplishment and model of human conduct by assimilating the experiences of His Paschal Mystery.

7. Credit to him, Bujo is able to draw the conclusion that this Christocentricity ethic confirms the positive elements in African anthropocentrism (e.g. hospitality, family spirit, solicitude for parents, etc.) but corrects and completes African traditional and modern customs.

8. Furthermore, he reiterates that descending/ontological Christology (also called Christology from above) is required to present in African categories and to elaborate a relevant ethic for Africa.

9. Finally, he draws out some crucial pastoral consequences of his mode of Christology.

2.7.4 Pastoral Implications:

**Intext Question**

What are the pastoral values of Bujo’s Christology?
Benezet Bujo himself is quite elaborate and specific on the interesting issue of the implications of seeing Christ as *Proto-Ancestor*. This is how he puts it:

1. “From all this it follows that a reading of the Gospel shows that the positive elements in African anthropocentrism are thoroughly endorsed in the person of Jesus Christ. African hospitality and sense of family: all these things are **taken up by Jesus and brought to completion**.

2. “At the same time, **Jesus corrects and completes the traditional morality of Africa**. The *moral* perspective is no longer limited to my clan, my elders, my friends, but **extends to the whole human race**, in loving service of the Father.

3. “The **morality of the disciple** who accepts Jesus as Model and Proto-Ancestor is a **personal re-enactment** of the passion, death and resurrection of Jesus.

4. “The deeds and the moral stance of Jesus are resumed, to be **remembered down the generations**, giving new life to each today, and **opening onto a new and fruitful future**.

5. “Remembering and re-enacting the deeds of Christ constitute a **liberating**, ‘revolutionary’ dynamic which can breathe new life into a **dynamic tradition**.”

**2.8 John Mutiso Mbinda’s Christ the First Born of All Creation Ancestral Christology:**

J.M. Mbinda’s Ancestral Christology has the following sequence:

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**Intext Question**

What do you know about J.M. Mbinda and how does he develop his Ancestral Christology?

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1. Starting from Biblical sources, Mutiso Mbinda makes this assertion: That Christ is the first born of all creation who has passed over to the Father and has been lifted up so that He can draw all things to Himself.

2. Sourcing from African anthropology, he then draws out these items:
1) That in African religion, Ancestors are mediators and intermediaries;

2) They are guarantors of solidarity and community progress of the living who have a real communion of life with the Ancestors.

3. With these reflections, Mutiso concludes that Christ is our Ancestor for these reasons:
   1) He plays the role of mediation;
   2) He has preceded us in passing over to the father;
   3) He is the source of new life, the source and the end;
   4) He sustains all people in common destiny.

Mutiso considers this kind of Christology not only beneficial to his Akamba people but the Africans in general.

2.9 General Assessment of Some African Ancestral Christologies in the Trend.

An evaluation across the board with regard to Ancestral Christologies this Trend of ACT manifests the following common characteristics:

Intext Question

What assessment would you generally give concerning the above African Ancestral Christologies and the others you may have come across?

2.9.1 Positive aspects:

1. These and other related Christologies are indications on how seriously our Saviour and Redeemer Jesus Christ is taken in respective African cultures;

2. They manifest an appreciation of the indispensable good aspects in our God-given cultures more so our cosmotheandric perception of being and beingness;

3. They are a real effort in actually Doing ACT through the lenses of African understanding of Ancestors and not just a mere talk of methods, problems...and needs of doing such theology that remain at prolegomenon level;
4. The very bold fact of systematically and creatively employing intrinsic use of African elements and not merely giving parallels and differences is commendable.

5. Here we are talking about attributing to Jesus, critically identifying Him with, titles like Nana (i.e., the Great and Greatest Ancestor), Proto-Ancestor (i.e., the First Ancestor), Our Ancestor, Muzimu Mukuru (i.e. the Great Spirit or Ancestor) and Joto-Ancestor (i.e., the Source of life and the fulfillment of the cosmotheandric relationship in the world)

2.9.2 Shortcomings:

1. Some of them do not adequately manifest serious anthropological research of their respective ethnic groups they opt for;

2. Poor commitment to intellectual demands imposed on this kind of work, employing solid metaphysics- apart from scholars like Charles Nyamiti and Benezet Bujo -results in superficial Christologies;

3. There is a need for an inter-disciplinary approach to make some of this Christologies deeper and broader;

4. Judging by the measure that theology should be pastoral, as a result of the above limitations, some of this Christologies are not pastoral enough.

5. As a result, they risk equating Christ to the attributes they identify Him with, which He of course surpasses super-eminentally, thereby (though un-intended) resulting in unlawful mixture technically called syncretism.

2.10 Summary

This Lecture has enabled you to discuss the Trend of Approaching Christology through Ancestral Approach among the scholars of ACT. It revealed to you some prominent proponents of Ancestral Approach to Christology in ACT. You were made aware that these Ancestral Christologists and other theologians within the realm of ACT are influenced by, and actually theologize rooting themselves not only on Biblical cum Christian Tradition sources but also basing themselves in the main African World-view Items namely: life/vitality, dynamism/power,
sacredness, community/communality and anthropocentrism.

With this finality, you were further exposed to Daniel Lwasa’s Christ as Source of Life-Community Fortune Governor-Inspiration to Good Conduct Ancestral Christology, Nyamiti’s Christ Our Ancestor Ancestral Christology, Benezet Bujo’s Christ as Proto-Ancestor (i.e., the First Ancestor) Ancestral Christology and John Mutiso Mbinda’s Christ the First Born of All Creation Ancestral Christology. The Lecture enriched you too by providing general assessment of some African Ancestral Christologies in the Trend pointing out both the positive aspects and negative characteristics.

Concluding Activity: 2.9

Compare and contrast Nyamiti’s Christ Our Ancestor Ancestral Christology with Benezet Bujo’s Christ as Proto-Ancestor (i.e., the First Ancestor) Ancestral Christology

2.11 References

1. C.G. Machoko, The Christological Debate for the Development of Christianity in Zimbabwe in the Context of African Traditional Religion (Harare: University of Zimbabwe, 1997);
3. D. Lwasa, Christ as Source of Life-Community Fortune Governor-Inspiration to Good Conduct ;
5. C. Nyamiti, Christ as Our Ancestor: Christology from an African Perspective
(Zimbabwe: Mambo Press, 1984);


7. J.M. Mbinda, *Christ the First Born of All Creation*;

LECTURE THREE

THE TREND OF AFRICAN CHRISTIAN THEOLOGIES INSPIRED BY BLESSINGS AND BLESSING, CURSES AND CURSING

LECTURE Outline

3.1 Introduction.

3.2 Objectives.

3.3 Blessings and Blessing Among the Africans.

3.4 Analysis of Some African Blessings and Modes of Blessing.

3.5 Much Respected Outstanding African Elders’ Blessings and Their Modes.

3.6 Concluding Reflections on Blessings and Blessing.

3.7 Curses and Cursing Among the Africans.

3.8 Summary.

3.9 References.

3.1 Introduction.

Lecture Two enabled you to discuss the Trend of Approaching Christology through Ancestral perspective among the scholars of ACT. It revealed to you some prominent proponents of Ancestral Approach to Christology in ACT. In this Lecture, you will learn about the Trend of African Christian Theologies inspired by blessings and blessing, curses and cursing.

One of today’s vibrant Trends in ACT, which merits your attention is the one inspired and illumined by African perception of blessings and blessing as well as curses and cursing. Digging deep into this issue and examining some related theological works will not only persuade you into comprehending this Trend. It will also, hopefully, provoke you to theologize from the same major approach.
Take note

With the commencement of this Lecture on the Trend of ACT inspired and illumined by “blessings and blessing among the Africans” and “curses and cursing among the Africans,” I earnestly call to your attention the following most important prior awareness: That as an African prominent theologian, anthropologist cum philosophy scholar of international repute called Charles Nyamiti rightly puts it:

“With regard to the African traditional religions and cultures... care should be taken not to reject a cultural item too hastily as incompatible with Christian faith; for in spite of its superstitious and erroneous elements it might contain human or religious values often symbolically expressed. Therefore, in order to approach the African traditional cultures and use them properly in theology and philosophy, a thorough scientific knowledge of those cultures will be required on the part of the theologian. Fruitful results can also be obtained by holding careful dialogue with the gradually emerging ‘African narrative theologies’ presented chiefly in the form of traditional myths, fables, proverbs, plays etc”.

The above assertion is not only admissible but you should personally own it as among the guiding principles in our Lecture.

Take note

Within the context of the above, it is indispensable for you to dig deep into the rocks and stones of the elements of what is seemingly incongruent with the Gospel, purify and elevate the items to come up with invaluable characteristics. Aspects that would, when carefully handled, enrich the understanding and elaboration of Christianity in a manner more enriching and fruitful not only to the Africans but also to all the people of good will.

This is a pastoral cum academic tedious exercise some scholars of ACT engage themselves in not only in preaching sermons and teaching but also by publishing related invaluable monographs and articles. By so doing, an assurance of an African positive contribution remains

forthcoming and, indeed, guaranteed. My expectation is that, with this setting, you will reasonably follow this Lecture and handle the Trend with clarity of mind and credibility.

### 3.2 Objectives

The goal of this Lecture is to examine the nature, worth and consequence of the Trend of African theologies inspired by blessings and blessing, curses and cursing from the point of view of African philosophy of life and religiosity. With this finality, therefore, by the end of this Lecture, you should be able to:

1. Investigate Blessings and Blessing among the Africans.
3. Explore some African blessings and Modes of Blessing.
4. Draw out insights from blessings and blessing that are invaluable in “creating” ACT.
5. Investigate curses and cursing among the Africans.
6. Draw out the enrichment from the Lecture which is the springboard into one of today’s ACT vibrant Trends.

### 3.3 Blessings and Blessing Among the Africans:

1. Traditionally and customary, an authentic African yearns for blessings and to be blessed. A profound fieldwork research conducted across diverse African ethnic groups will confirm this assertion. That is why you will find Africans constantly and persistently asking for blessings in, for instance, vital occasions like those of initiatic rituals and other rites together with diverse convivial ceremonies. You will notice that they request blessings from respective fathers, mothers, uncles, aunts, grandparents, spiritual shepherds and benevolent spirits and, above all, from Nyene (Owner of all i.e., Almighty, Benevolent and Omnipresent God).

#### Intext Question

Whenever you tell somebody “be blessed”, what does that mean to you and what do you intend to communicate to the person?

2. Indeed, the African culture of blessings and blessing tends to be inborn. It penetrates into the whole concrete historical existence and everyday life of the Africans. That is why an
African will habitually tell you, “be blessed” whenever you give him/her anything or do something good or make any positive contribution for the welfare of the common good.

**Take note**

Among the Africans, there are blessings for almost everything and practically anything. These are accompanied by different modes of blessing, which includes “blessing curses” from many sources and agents virtually everywhere.

**Activity 3.1**

Find out areas and items that trigger blessings among the Africans and the rationale behind it.

3. Africans perceive blessings in the rains, rivers, Oceans, *matindiri* (marshy areas), bushy water catchments areas, religious caves and shrines, springs and lakes. They also perceive numerous blessings from sacred mountains, wonderful evergreen forests providing a conglomeration of therapeutic medicinal herbs, marvelous landscapes, valleys and hills, savannah of wild animals of a pluriformity of species, diverse minerals, *udongo wenyewe rotuba* (fertile soils) and the skies.

4. They perceive blessings too in drinks like *pombe* (local alcoholic brew), fecundity resorting in children and descendants and generations, dancing, African laughter, greetings, well-charactered people deservedly honored as exemplary heroes/sheroes thanks to their role model qualities, living and dying elders, benevolent ancestral spirits...and, most eminently, *Nyene* (Almighty God). There is an extremely strong socialization in this regard. Their worldview of cosmotheandric perception of being and beingness may reasonably be said to be saturated with blessings and blessing.

**Take note**

You need also to know that even the very act of pouring libation as homage to the “living dead” and ancestral spirits seeking favors or appeasement or “at-one-ment” or propitiation or pleading for intercession in mediatory issues is a major source of blessings and blessing too. So is the faithful obedience to the whole litany of taboos and adherence to the benevolent elders’ last will.
5. Mind you “pilgrimage” to ancestral shrines viewed as sacred localities for the blessed departed are realms of blessings and blessing also. This is the underlying rationale behind the Africans’ pronounced enthusiasm and excitement with sacred shrines.

6. It is among the justifications of perpetual dedication to visitation to arguable apparition center making pilgrimages to, for instance, Mũkūyū –i n ì in Mang’u Thika in Kiambu County of Kenya and Subukia Mountainous shrines of arguable mysterious blessing healing waters in Nakuru County of Kenya. These include the tranquil well landscaped Resurrection Gardens in the quiet peaceful Karen Slopes of Kĩambirũĩ (the Blue Black Mountain i.e., Ngong Hills) where Blessed Maurice Michael Cardinal Otunga’s shrine with his remains in it is located.

Take note

These, furthermore, include blessings accompanied with developmental aspects, waging a just war, achievers’ achievements, boons from family spiritualized beings or Ancestors, dispelling harmful mentality, chasing away *ngoma njũru* (malevolent spirits), restoring family solidarity or community harmony and reconciliation among the factious.

7. The issue of blessings and blessing among the Africans is so “ubiquitous” that it also penetrates into the very composition of diverse independent African civil States’ National Anthems. The factual reality is that underlying a considerable number of African National Anthems is the remarkable stress on blessings and blessing and, by implication, curses and cursing.

**Activity 3.2**

Find out and analyze various African countries’ National Anthems. See if you will not be deeply touched by the vital passion for the accentuation of blessings and blessing and, implicitly, curses and cursing in those Anthems.

3.4. Analysis and Explication of Some African Blessings and Modes of Blessing

For practical purposes, this very important sub-section concerns itself with much respected African Elders’ blessings and modes of blessing. You should appreciate that diverse anthropological and philosophical findings bring to awareness that the world of the Africans

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belongs to the Elders – both men and, somehow, women. Elderhood is deeply integrated in the African socio-cultural-religio-philosophical life and living. It penetrates the African crucial rituals, cultures, religiosity... blessings and curses.

Activity 3.3
Read at least one of the books indicated in the footnote for a better setting in view of our subject-matter.

This gives the book’s justification in opting for the Elders as adequately representative for the Lecturer’s shauri.

Take note
At this juncture, it is of immense importance to know and appreciate that though Elderhood is extremely invaluable and bestowed upon those worthy of it among the Africans yet, credit to the Africans, they are readily open and well disposed to incorporate even Westerners like Karol Wojtyla (Pope John Paul II) who prove their worth, dignity and extra-ordinary human concern, respect and religiosity into such an honored highly yearned for Elderhood status. This is an indication that African Elders are neither narrow minded nor parochial but reasonably universal in outlook and practice.

Intext Question
Do you think it is justifiable to affirm that such a mentality and attitude helps a great deal in dismantling inter-ethnic hostility, tribal animosity, racism and colour bar? Who according to your community qualifies for such honor?

Exploring and Elaborating Some African Blessings and Modes of Blessing

To appreciate the depth, solemnity, seriousness, passion, indispensability and Godliness of African Elders’ diverse and diverging pluriformity of blessings and manner of blessing, a crucial socio-cultural-religio-philosophical setting is necessary.

Activity 3.4
Since a conglomeration of African ethnic groups have a lot of similarities and parallels with regard to the perception, role and Godliness of the authentic Elders and their blessings cum modes of blessing, it would be wise to exchange notes on respective ethnic groups to help draw out the parallels and differences in this regard.

1. As such, and to be more pragmatic, suffice it to handle the Agĩkũyũ Elders in view of their remarkable types of blessings and manner of blessing which are virtually neither unique to them nor a confine of the Agĩkũyũ but run across numerous different African ethnic groups.
2. You can easily do the same with ethnic groups of yours choice. As you engage yourself in this exercise, you have to always bear in mind that any value from a particular ethnic group can and ought to be borrowed for the benefit of other ethnic groups that do not seem to have it. The good aspects in a particular ethnic group that are missing in the others will hopefully fill up the lacuna in those others. Actually, none is so self-satisfied that it does not need to borrow from the others for mutual correction and enrichment. Conversely, none is so impoverished that it has nothing to offer as it receives.
3. Agĩkũyũ Elderhood is, moreover, deeply integrated in the Agĩkũyũ religion and philosophy of life which is saturated with blessings (as well as curses). I personally was accordingly instructed into this issue prior to my incorporation into this crucial status of Elderhood.
4. In this connection, the concept of God is quite clear. The Agĩkũyũ conceive God as Ngai (the Greatest Divider), Ngai Mũmbi (God the Creator), Mwathani (the Eminent Ruler of All), Ngai Baba (God the Father), Mwene-Nyaga (Owner of Brightness and Mysteries), Ngai/Mũgai (Greatest Divider or Delegator), Nyene (Owner of All), Gĩthuuri (Greatest Elder) and Mũrathimani (the Blessing One).
5. These concepts of God help the Elders in the sense that conceiving Him through such attributes enables them to accept and appreciate that whatever sacrality and blessing powers (as well as cursing characteristics) they may possess are rooted in God as the
primordial source. In this regard there is no controversy at all. Hence the solemnity and focus Elders manifest when blessing and being blessed (also cursing and being cursed).

6. Indeed one would be deeply touched to observe the presence, solemnity and focus of an Elder blessing while, among others, sprinkling waters upon the people or articles or animals or other properties using a blessing flywhisk talking with solemn silence or using well articulated Godly proclamations.

Take note
For the Elders then, when blessing, it is *Ngai* blessing in and through them. For them, it is *Ngai* who divides powers including procreative powers and, for the Lecture’s subject matter, blessing (and cursing) powers to them and among them. The belief is that *Ngai* bestows this power upon them in trust that is. They trust that *Ngai* endows them with such unparalleled powers among themselves for the welfare of all and the common good of everyone. It is commonly believed that God does this gratuitously to them since *Ngai* is the *Mūgai* (Greatest Divider or Delegator) *par excellence*.

7. That is why the Agĩkũyũ Elderhood, and the blessings (together with curses) thereby, is necessarily imbued with Godliness in practically everything. You can easily observe this fact by inserting yourself among the Elders in their everyday life, gatherings, Council ceremonies, meat-eating meetings, family offerings, sacrifices, reconciliatory duties, propitiatory rituals, burials cum funerals and even while dying and resulting prolonged memorial rituals.

8. It is also very important to note from the above that the Elders play a Priestly role in sacrificial rituals, prayers and blessing. It can rightly be asserted that they accomplish these ministries as the ordinary officials in the sense of being set apart, empowered and commissioned to do so.

9. Such conceptions challenge the Elders to remain upright community role models. It, furthermore, obliges them to maintain a high degree of exemplarity in adhering to traditional norms of morality, customary laws, family ethics, family life and ancestral solidarity. It, moreover, challenges them to guide and be guardians of African philosophy of family cum family hood, religion cum religiosity and people’s welfare as a whole.
Take note
All these items rich with “seeds of Christianity” dispose us well in consciously accepting our African traditional incorporation into Elderhood as a gift from God rich in the realization of ACT.

10. Next in importance on Agĩkũyũ shauri of Elderhood in view of blessings and blessing in Agĩkũyũ religion which is safeguarded as a crucial blessing to the whole community by renowned highly reputed Elders are the Ancestors. These have a higher status and more sacrality than people-and, indeed, even the Elders themselves- still living on earth. This is owing to the Ancestors’ proximity to Ngai.

11. By virtue of entering into the spiritual realm, the ancestral spirits are believed to be nearer to God who is the Blessing par excellence. Consequently, they are more sacred, more powerful and most greatly empowered in blessings and blessing- and most devastating curses and cursing.

12. That is why they command overwhelming respect: they expect adequate propitiation, demand ongoing remembrance and constant ritual offerings such as pouring libation to them- all in honor, respect, homage and gratitude to them. It has to be asserted that the Agĩkũyũ ancestral veneration, not worship, affects deeply the attitude of the Elders in blessings and blessing as well as curses and cursing affairs.

Activity 3.5

13. On account of the Ancestors’ proximity to God, the Elders, with great respect and humility, consider the Ancestors stronger and more sacred than themselves. That is why the Elders cannot ignore them in fulfilling their roles as reconcilers, leaders and rulers, family establishers, promoters of healthy interpersonal relationships and their prerogative duties of blessing and cursing and being blessings themselves.

14. The underlying principle is that you cannot gain a deeper understanding of Agĩkũyũ Elders’ blessings and blessing - and, indeed, curses and cursing too – without taking into account the intimate link with Agĩkũyũ social-cultural-religio-philosophical life the Lecture has grounded you in. I suppose the same case applies to other African ethnic groups.
15. It is with the above in mind that I now feel properly and adequately grounded to present some of the Agikuyu Elders’ blessings and modes of blessing—among others. I challenge you to compliment this effort by coming up with a whole wealth of other African numerous blessings and a pluriformity of ways of blessing—since, for practical purposes I am compelled to pick and choose a few unsurpassable characteristics as follows:

Activity 3.6
I would like you to find out how they did the above using the following modes:

1. Kūrathima na Iria (Blessing With Milk).
2. Kūrathima na Gwītīhīra Mata Gĩthūri (Blessing as One Spits On One’s Chest).
3. Kūrathima na Mata Akamaganyania Indo (Blessing With Saliva While Apportioning Property).
5. Kūrathima na Njohi: (Blessing Using Alcoholic brew)
6. Kūrathima na ngoima (Sacrificial and Offering’s Blessings).
7. Kūrathima na Ŭkī Na Ŭgīmbī (Blessing With Honey and Millet).
9. Kūrathima na Mahoya ma Mwanya ma Kuuganīra Ŭhoro (Blessing With Special Farewell Prayers).

3.6 Concluding Reflections on Blessings and Blessing

From the foregoing, I like to think that, you as a critical observer will occasionally be hit by a strong passion of the reversal of the common double pronged categorization of people into: “The blessed ones;” and “the cursed ones”.

Activity 3.7
Indicate the qualities of those you categorize as “the blessed ones” and the characteristics of those you opt to refer to as “the cursed ones” justifying the rationale behind those elements.
1. You will have the disturbing awareness that: there are blessed people yet they manifest curses; and cursed people who reveal elements of blessings. This should caution you not to be of the habit of being quick or careless in judging or dichotomizing people into “the blessed ones” and “the cursed ones” in our diaspora situation here on earth.

2. It would actually be as unwise as, analogically, caricaturing some people as absolute oppressors and others as the innocent (which is more often than not pseudo-innocence or naive innocence) oppressed ones. Never should you ignore the fact that, so long as we are in this world, we are often and practically as well as existentially a mixture of the two i.e., being oppressors and oppressed.

3. Hence the insistence on the fact that everyone, you and I and the others including the poor and the oppressed, is an oppressor-first of himself/herself and then of the others; insistence on conversion of all i.e. the oppressor and the oppressed as we grapple with freeing ourselves from the curses of sin(s) depending or relying on Christ Our Liberator and Savior; insistence on genuine conversion as a crucial preparation for the accomplishment of blessedness in the eschaton. On the same note, in our diaspora here on earth, we are both blessed and cursed struggling to be fully blessed in life after this earthly life.

4. Pragmatically, it is analogically the philosophical principle of nemo dat quod non habet (none can give what one does not have). This may also be paraphrased to: you have to be a blessing so as to bless. Such a person is so highly regarded by the Africans. The exemplarity and role model in this regard, among others, made the Africans incorporate Pope John Paul II alias Karol Wojtyla (b.1920-d.2005) into African Elderhood when he visited Kenya a record three times.

5. It is thus most significant, that when one sincerely and lawfully blesses- thanks to being gratuitously endowed with blessings since one cannot give what one does not have as philosophers say- by that very good act and deed, one blesses oneself too thereby being the blessing and its beneficiary also. You must realize that there is reciprocity of blessings in our healthy interpersonal relationships. As explained earlier, one’s blessings are for the others as they are for oneself. Your blessings are for the others who too are blessings to you.

6. In my life and living, I can no doubt confirm this solidarity of blessedness. I believe that you too can do the same. In other words, you have the capacity to be and remain in the

Take note

It is not enough to be blessed. One needs also to allow oneself to be blessed thereby sincerely acknowledging the blessings and utilizing them positively and generously.

3.7 Curses and Cursing Among the Africans

A true African fears curses and is afraid of being cursed. A curse is a disturbing anguish in life and living.

Intext Question

Do you fear curses and why?

1. It does not matter whether one is a ruler or a leader, schooled or uneducated, a restless youth or a re-tired Elder, medicine man or a soothsayer, sorcerer or witch, polygamist or monogamist or even celibate, man endowed with virility and fecundity or woman blessed with femininity cum fruitfulness, laity or clergy, a pauper or a billionaire, a peace-maker or a peace-breaker, a Christian or a traditional/indigenous religionist, one who utters curses or one who blesses...the underlying factor is that of curse and cursing phobia.

2. Reality has it that there is a strong ongoing awesome fear of curses and being cursed. It is a fear which is so indispensable among the Africans’ life and living that even the Western or Eastern mainstream World religions\(^3\) have not managed to annihilate. It is such an incredible phenomenon whose anxiety and wonder remains.

It can be established that there is a pluriformity of curses and cursing among diverse African ethnic groups. You can easily verify this assertion.

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Activity 3.8
Pick any African ethnic group and explain: Its perception of curses and cursing; Who curses and why; Different modes of cursing; The most feared curse and why; The demands for curse revocation, victim’s disposition and reparation; Utility of curses in maintaining morality and authentic living which African Christian Theologians of Ethics and Moral theology utilize.

3. Within the African worldview, curses are really existential and somehow “Godly”. It is from this point of reference that curses have the tendency of not only being deeply rooted within the African attitude and socio-religio-cultural and philosophical mentality. They are also-thanks to various research findings-concretized, actualized and explicitly manifested in the crucial African customs, traditions, taboos, religiosity, judicial matters, lineal history and cyclic more elaborate history and historiography.

Intext Question
To what extent is the religiosity or irreligiosity in curses within the realm of African spirituality?

4. It is on this ground or basis that you can establish that an African would easily cheat and lie in law court under oath even after publicly swearing to “tell the truth, the whole truth and nothing but the truth”- actually often telling everything but the truth! But summoning the same African before a properly constituted Council of genuine Elders and being challenged by the Mündū Mūgo or Mūkūrīrī Ngai (sacrificing sacred community representative) who mediates among people and intermediates between people, the Ancestors and the Nyene (the Creator/God) to symbolically and solemnly swear the traditional way. Such a suspect would spontaneously tell nothing but the whole truth-and very fast at that!

5. The mode of traditional swearing would be, in some cases, so frightening. They would, for instance, take a piece of raw meat, insert it into a menstruating woman’s private part and demand that the suspect eats and completely swallows the meat bit. The belief is that, under such severe oath, if she or he is dishonest, one would curse oneself to death.

6. A considerable number of African ethnic groups, like the Ag;kúyú, administer the feared-and indeed, dreaded- kûrînga thenge (hitting a he-goat) swearing/oath. The seriousness involved in this kind of swearing imbued with fatal consequences ensures and guarantees
veracity and fidelity in life and living. This is an issue African Christian moral theologians draw inspiration from among other sources.

7. Such traditional spirituality aspects contained in blessings and curses still command attention and extreme respect even among the staunch and committed Christians who are socialized in African way of life. It is also of great interest how animals were, and still are, of immense importance in blessing and cursing shauri. Moreover, it is crucial in confession of one’s evil deeds cum omissions, reconciliatory matters, home re-turns, re-incorporation into the community, restitution and convivial affairs.

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**Take note**

I have noticed the persistent fascination and explicit excitement Africans have with the Christian doctrine of Jesus Christ as Redeemer and Savior. Jesus qualified in the Johannine Gospel as “the Lamb of God who takes away the sin(s) of the world” (John 1:29) referring directly to Isaiah (Isaiah 53), the Song of the suffering Servant of Yahweh (Isaiah 42:1-4; 49:1-7; 50:11; 52:13-53:12). These are texts that confirm the understanding of the Servant as one who is faithful to God.

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8. They also point to the Royal One carrying **God’s will** at all cost even if that means His own death. No wonder African Christian theologians borrow such insights for their ACT.

9. That is why, I suppose, St. James cautions us on the words we use or talk or rumor-monger with or defame with or self-aggrandize ourselves with owing to their double pronged impact (James 3:6-10).

10. The observation of St. James here is very African. Admittedly, you will discover that an African finds it extremely easy to comprehend the above pericope and vehemently own it. Mind you, occasionally, there are unwise crooked people who, out of their folly, inflict serious curses upon themselves with their own mūgambo (words) with which they falsely swear. They oath themselves with their own mūgambo- magekaranga na mao (roasting themselves with their own fats) as the African sage philosophers say⁴ by violating the solemn words and the improvised spontaneous gestures they use.

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Take note

A curse is not an end in itself. It is in a way an affirmation of blessings. It is a pointer or a challenge, inspiring someone to both the restoration and re-establishment of blessings as well as disturbing the blessed to guard oneself properly from the curse of losing, abusing, misusing and undermining one’s blessings. This, as profoundly explained, is thanks to the African philosophy of perceiving curses positively as imbued with elements or characteristics of blessings—a worldview that the Lecture earlier analogically likened to the African cosmotheandric perception of being and beingness.

11. Consequently, refusal to be forgiven accompanied by denial of sin is, from the insights derived from the above, the gravest curse one can inflict upon oneself. It is a sure way of running away from blessings towards a cursed life and living. Perhaps this may analogically be likened to what Jesus Christ called “sin against the Holy Spirit”. Mind you from an African perspective and, indeed, from the Christian standpoint too, sin is the root cause and epitome of curses.

Intext Question

Why do you think some people are of the opinion that curses, in some cases and situations, can and do backfire?

12. While we pity the cursed, we should also be merciful to those who utter curses since occasionally, as elaborated to you earlier, curses occasionally backfire more so to the unforgiving. That is why it is wise to forgive unconditionally or unreservedly and prudently so as to wipe out the burden of ill feelings— as a considerable number of African Christian theologians explain in their theological works.

13. After all, thanks to the Our Father prayer model, we are challenged to be forgiven as we too forgive others. Also in this regard, the beautiful dramatic parable of the prodigal child remains exemplary and monumental. More so in its unparalleled liberating, restoration of human worth, emancipation from the root-cause of curses called sin and re-establishment of authentic family solidarity thanks to God’s undeserved gratuitous grace.
14. Thus, within the African worldview, you may now intelligently be able to assert that both blessings and curses embrace the totality of an African integrated spirituality that inspires a considerable number of scholars in ACT; they may be validly viewed as the twofold pillars of African wholistic spirituality which is the envy of many races. One which is integral and wholistic in the sense that it incorporates: the spiritual as well as the corporial; the personalistic/individualistic as well as the communal; the present as well as the past cum future; the terrestrial as well as the celestial; and, most importantly for this Lecture, blessings as well as curses. Its deep personalistic, communal, relationality and vitalistic perspectives refrains from dichotomizing reality or splitting life and living into, for instance, sacred and secular, individual and communal, spirit and matter, mundane and heavenly, life and death, blessings and curses.

15. No wonder some curses are in taboo form which tends to be more positive prohibitions than coercive negative elements if and when properly understood and genuinely implemented.

The above triggers an emerging trend in today’s ACT at the popular level, pastoral level and the level of erudition i.e. scholarly level.
3.8 Summary

In this Lecture you were empowered to examine the nature, worth and consequence of the Trend of African theologies inspired by blessings and blessing, curses and cursing from the point of view of African philosophy of life and religiosity. The Lecture helped you to investigate Blessings and Blessing among the Africans as well as making an analysis of African blessings and modes of blessing and exploring some African blessings and Modes of Blessing. You were further enabled to draw out insights from blessings and blessing that are invaluable in “creating” ACT, investigate curses and cursing among the Africans coming up with elements that are unique in African spirituality and characteristics that are a kind of springboard into today’s ACT vibrant Trends.

Concluding Activity 3.9

In the light of what the Lecture has explicated, choose and peruse any of the two books below indicating and explaining areas where the Lecture has inspired and illumined.


3.9 References

LECTURE FOUR

THE TREND FOCUSING ON AFRICAN ECCLESSIOLOGIES BASED ON THE MODEL OF THE CHURCH VIEWED AS THE FAMILY OF GOD

LECTURE Outline

4.1 Introduction.

4.2 Objectives.

4.3 The Nature of the Church as a Prior Requisite of Our Lecture.

4.4 Today’s Outstanding Preferred Church Model by Scholars of ACT Bringing About a Significant Trend in the Church in Africa.

4.5 Other Related Global/Universal Church Models.

4.6 Exemplarity of Charles Nyamiti’s Ancestral Ecclesiology Focusing on the Church as the Family of God.

4.7 Summary.

4.8 References.

4.1 Introduction.

In Lecture Three, you learned about the Trend of African Christian Theologies inspired by blessings and blessing, curses and cursing. In this Lecture you will be confronted with the Trend focusing on African ecclesiology based on the model of the Church viewed as the Family of God.

A thorough perusal of monographs, periodicals, journals, articles...and symposia on and about the Church will easily bring to your awareness that there are numerous models of the Church through which ecclesiology is tackled by a pluriformity of theologians. Each model has its own positive aspects to contribute. On the other hand, each has own shortcomings and limitations to pay attention to and learn from. The bottom-line is that the diverse types of ecclesiology are complementary. They have to be understood in their respective historical settings, situations in life, pastoral needs and academic requirements.
The Lecture moreover creates awareness that Scholars of ACT too are not left out either. It will not take a peculiar mental acumen for you to be quick in realizing that, in our contemporary Africa, there is a curious emergence of a vibrant ecclesiological paradigm towards the IMAGE of the Church as the FAMILY OF GOD with critical consequences on ecumenism, inter-religious dialogue, religious pluralism and religious inclusivism. John Paul’s Ecclesial in Africa and somehow Jacques Dupuis’ Christianity and Religions: From Confrontation to Dialogue (2002) and Toward a Christian Theology of Religious Pluralism (1997) are remarkable pointers to the phenomenon. This exciting Trend is the subject-matter of our Lecture. It will be tackled also taking into account other ecclesiologies by scholars of ACT.

4.2 Objectives

The main goal of our Lecture is to examine the Trend focusing on African ecclesiologies based on the Model of the Church viewed as the Family of God also taking into account other ecclesiologies by different African scholars. With this finality, therefore, by the end of this Lecture, you should be able to:

1. Define what the term “Church” means as a necessary requisite for understanding the Models attributed to the Church.

2. Identify today’s preferred Church Model which is in vogue among the African scholars of ACT with their distinctive peculiarities.

3. Analyze other outstanding global Models of the Church thanks to Avery Dulles.

4. Discuss Charles Nyamiti and his inter-nationally renowned Ancestral Ecclesiology as an excellent example of the Trend of the African contribution of the image of the Church as the Family of God.

4.3 The Nature of the Church as A Prior Requisite of Our Lecture.

4.3.1 To understand any Church model adequately, it is indispensable for you to have a clear and sufficient perception of the Church. You cannot follow and appreciate this Lecture without a prior notion and meaning of the Church.
Activity 4.1
Give your own understanding of the term “Church” using the following guiding questions; What does the Church mean to you? Does it simply mean sacred concrete magnificent structures? Is it the hierarchy with the categorization of people of God as “clergy” and “lay people”? Is it the mainstream faith affiliation and loyalty like Roman Catholics, Anglicans…or Denominations like Akorino…or Splinter groups like Logio Maria, Dini ya Msambwa…or somehow syncretistic ones like Mũngĩki? Is it the prerogative Institution of the “saved ones” in comparison and reference to the “damned ones” within the context of salvation and being saved and redemption and being redeemed? What is the Church to you anyway?

For clarity sake let us learn about the nature of the “Church” from two internationally renowned ecclesiologists namely- Tony Bellagamba and Hans Kung.

Intext Question
How do Tony Bellagamba and Hans Kung explicate the concept “Church”?

4.3.2 Tony Bellagamba defines the Church as:

“A divine reality and a human institution: it is mystery and history: it has its origin in the Trinity, and its life in the world; it deals with supernatural realities, using natural signs and symbols; it has a mysterious existence, and a human face: it is holy and sinful: it exists beyond the visible, and within it: it is constituted of a vertical dimension, and a horizontal one: it is part of the kingdom, and it is called to epitomize it: it is a community to promote communion: it is servant at times dressed up in regal clothes: it opts for the poor, and it is imbued with many values of the rich: it is synthesis of opposites and, at times, a contradiction.” (African Christian Studies, CUEA, Vol.6. No.3, September, 1990, p.28).
4.3.3 For Hans Kung:

The Church “is the community of those who have committed themselves to the Person and cause of Jesus Christ and who bear witness to it as hope of all men and women. Substantially linked with the Redeemer and Savior, the Church is no isolated, self-satisfied religious association, but a community which forms a comprehensive community with others.” (H. Kung, *The Religious Situation of Our Time* (London: SCM Press, 1995), p.78.

4.4 Today’s Outstanding Preferred Church Model by Scholars of ACT Bringing About A Significant Trend in the Church in Africa.

It does not need a lot of effort for you to have awareness that, in our contemporary African Church, we are happily witnessing a phenomenon of diverse and diverging ecclesiology contributing towards a theological Trend.

4.4.1 This, as you may know, is as a result of individual theologians of ACT being under the influence of the following factors:

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<th>Intext Question</th>
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<td>What factors do you think bring about divergences in African Christian ecclesiology?</td>
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1) Socio-political and Cultural Divergences:

These affect the theologizing of our theologians since one normally does theology with an anchor to ones situation/circumstances in life, ethnic/cultural endowment, political affiliation and national background. The rationale is that theology is fundamentally situational. You will, therefore, 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. 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 and pragmatic. Thus, employing these languages as tools for doing theology necessarily triggers divergences in African ecclessiologies especially in depth, seriousness and creativity. You will 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, South African Black Theology, with Jesus the Church Founder viewed as “Black Messiah” resulting in ecclessiologies distinctive from those of the rest of Africa owing to respective diverse socio-political realities.

2) Denominational Peculiarities:

Faith affiliation is another factor that contributes to the pluriformity of ecclessiologies 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 ecclessiologies they can own. Such royalty to their respective Churches compel the theologians to come up with ecclessiologies that comply to their respective Churches—hence the differences. This peculiarity becomes explicit if you contrast African Christian ecclessiologies by Roman Catholic scholars exemplified by Charles Nyamiti with those of the Protestant Church(es) with John S. Mbiti as the model.

Take note

In his ACT then, Charles Nyamiti actually Inculturates Christian Doctrines from a philosophical and speculative stance intertwined with African cosmotheandric world-view. He does ecclesiology by approaching these Christian mysteries ontologically and anthropologically within the principle of “inter-connection of Christian mysteries”. He does this in a systematic and scientific manner resulting in a comprehensive model of the Church as a Family of God that triggers a real Trend in African Christian Ecclesiology that is in vogue.

In contrast, John S. Mbiti is a committed Protestant. By implication, he does his ACT from the point of view of his Church. He theologizes within the principles and framework of
Protestantism. So, if you read his theological works, you will easily notice elements of Pneumatological involvements, the supremacy of the Bible (sometimes ignoring Tradition as a crucial source too), God-for-me clique cum I/me and my God characteristics (sometimes impoverishing the communal perspective) and exciting issue of incorporated witness and personal confessions. You will find more emphasis on “being saved” and less on “conversion” in his works. You will also notice less metaphysics and more materialistic conceptions with no phobia of censorship since Protestants are free from *imprimatur* and *nihil obstat* the Roman Catholics are subjected to. With the above and more, Mbiti’s ACT is freer, more reader friendly, reasonably spontaneous, more easily flowing but not as deep.

**Take note**

In his ACT then, you will realize that John S. Mbiti actually inculcates Christian Doctrine from a non-speculative manner. He does ACT by approaching the Christian mysteries functionally, or in other words, pragmatically. He accentuates the direct dialogue between the Biblical message and the African traditional items. He tends more towards narrative forms of theology in the light of the Bible. Hence his distinctive ecclesiology.

3) **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 analyzes in their ecclesiologies. Some utilize Thomistic philosophy. Some grapple with African music and dances in their inculturate Christian liturgy and worship.

**Take note**

Many enrich their ACT with African cultural heritage…and some utilize the philosophies they are personally comfortable with like sage philosophy, existential philosophy, personalistic philosophy and transcendental philosophy.

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 and personality contribute greatly in the diversities of African ecclesiology.

4) **One’s School of Thought and Academic Mentor:**

**Intext Question**

Explain how one’s school of thought and academic mentor are among the factors that bring about differences in ACT

As you know, the educators one is confronted with and the academic tradition in that venue of erudition while schooling and getting educated have repercussions in one's 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 and Jon Sobrino; in CUEA one will be influenced by the likes of Charles Nyamiti of African Inculturation Theology and ancestral Family ecclesiology; 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 African ecclesiology be multi-faceted.

**Take note**

Perhaps this is among the underlying principle behind African theologians having liberational ecclessiologies, Inculturational ecclessiologies and liberational cum liberational ecclessiologies.

5) **Degree of Commitment and Authenticity- A Good Theologian Being 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: Consequently you will encounter some deep African ecclesiologies; some superficial African ecclesiologies; some naïve and far-fetched African ecclesiologies.

6) **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 African ecclesiology arises. These are: Liberation perspective; Inculturation orientation; and Liberation cum Inculturation aspect. You notice that some African Christian theologians choose liberation one, some opt for the Inculturation orientation, while some others intertwine the liberation and Inculturation for their approach to ecclesiology. These necessarily results in different types of interesting ecclesiologies.

**Intext Question**

Which one of the above items, according to you, has contributed most to the realization of the Trend of the Church as **Family of God** Model and why?

With the above, some African Christian theologians dialogue intelligently with other viable Church models. Some deliberately choose to blend theirs with renowned models like the ones we will see later documented by Avery Dulles. Others, like C. Nyamiti, have critically perused and analyzed diverse models of ecclesiology, dag deep into African cosmotheandric perception of being and beingness, more so the interesting item of ancestor-ship, coming up with a comprehensive rather unparalleled model of the **Church as the Family of God** through the lenses of African understanding of ancestors and Christian doctrines.

**Activity 4.2**

4.4.2 An Analysis of Inculturation and liberation Ecclesiologies.

It will be of great interest and value for you to be aware of the following analysis of diverse African ecclesiology. The huge literature will no doubt persuade you to appreciate the enormous concern contemporary African theologians have on the monumental issue of the Church whose study is never exhaustive.

Activity 4.3

Find out some African Ecclesiologies of Inculturation bearing in mind the kind of titles they have and their respective authors.

Below are some of them:

**African Ecclesiologies of Inculturation:**

2. B. Bujo: Christological-Eucharistic Ecclesiology;
3. S. Wachira: A Kenyan “Harambee” Ecclesiology;
4. E. Uzukwu: A Listening Church Ecclesiology;
5. O.A. Onwubiko: The Church as “Ujamaa” Community;
6. A.R. Bishwende: The Church as **Family of God**;
7. J. Healey and D. Sybertz: An African Narrative **Family Ecclesiology**;
9. Ecclesiology in the African Independent Ecclesial Communities: Emphasize the model of community for the Church, and use the idioms of “fellowship”, “mutuality”, “celebration”, and “proclamation of God’s Word”;
10. N. Fogliacco: The **Family**- An African Metaphor for Trinity and Church;
11. C. Nyamiti: Ancestral and Initiatory **Family** Models.
African Ecclesiologies of Liberation:

Intext Question

What African Ecclesiologies of Liberation are you aware of and what do you learn from their respective titles?

Among the African ecclesiologies of liberation are:

1. M. Buthelezi: A creational and Existential Black Ecclesiology;

Take note


The one by John Mary Waliggo titled “The African Clan as the True Model of the African Church” (Ibid., pp.111-127) is particularly interesting in view of our Lecture. Nevertheless, you should not be blind to the reality that, like any other Model, this Model of the Church has its shortcomings too.

Activity 4.4

Take note


4.5 Other Related Global/Universal Church Models.

It should be clear to you that the Church is both global and dynamic in that it covers the universal geographical spread and it deliberately provokes growth and creative innovations. It is also conservative in the sense that it seriously conserves monumental values both for the contemporaries and posterity. This is thanks to the principle of the Church’s main sources i.e. the Bible, Tradition and traditions.

1. The above results in all kinds of models, like the ones we have just encountered, some bringing about paradigm shifts in respective historical settings and sit im leben (situation in life).

2. Avery Dulles documents some important Church models which are admittedly not exhaustive at all. He also explains them with a lot of passion giving their limitations and shortcomings as well. This is how Dulles, after a painstaking research and study on both Roman Catholic and Protestant ecclesiologies, indicates and explains some of them making it clear that some of these models bring about Trends in Church affairs:

Activity 4.5

You need to know the following models, which are actually paradigms dictating intended approaches, since the African exponents of the Church as the Family of God borrow them but critically use them as tools for their theologisation. Read them carefully in- A. Dulles, Models of the Church (New York: Doubleday, 1987), pp.9-102.
3. These models are as follows:
   1) The Church as Institution;
   2) The Church as Mystical Communion;
   3) The Church as Sacrament;
   4) The Church as Herald;
   5) The Church as Servant.

**Take note**

These days, the model that tends to fascinate and excite the Church in Africa is that of the Church perceived as **The Family of God**. You notice that Avery Dulles does not include this. The reason is that it is new and is actually a **contribution of the Africa Church** to the others.

4. These, and other emerging models, are not to be dichotomized. They are not to be perceived in isolation or separately. The fact remains that they are complementary. They share in common the effort geared towards a deeper understanding of the Church *ipso facto* assisting the faithful to be the Church in their life and living.

4.6 Exemplarity of Charles Nyamiti’s Ancestral Ecclesiology Focusing on the Church as the Family of God.

One of the giant exponents of ACT is **Charles Nyamiti**. He is actually **among the pioneers** of ACT together with scholars like T.T. Tshibangu (DRC), V. Mulago (DRC), A.T. Sanon (Burkina Faso), E. Mveng (Cameroon), J.E. Penoukou (Benin), J.S. Pobee (Ghana) and A.A. Boesack (South Africa).

**Intext Question**

How does Charles Nyamiti develop his Ancestral ecclesiology?

This is how he goes about doing his kind of ecclesiology:
1. Nyamiti does his Family ecclesiology from the narrow technical approach. That is why his is so remarkably profound.

2. He relates it, at the scholarly level, with other Christian mysteries thereby manifesting his royalty to the principle of inter-connection of Christian mysteries.

   **Take note**


3. Charles Nyamiti actually commences his Ecclesiology of *CHURCH AS THE FAMILY OF GOD* by constructively criticizing other African Ecclesiologists. He does this by pointing out their positive aspects and assessing their shortcomings as well as pointing out their limitations.

   **Activity 4.6**


4. It is after this that he presents his Ecclesiology which he rightly considers to be not only exemplary in ACT but also comprehensive, most orthodox and authentic. This highly original African Ecclesiology is well documented in his voluminous extremely scholarly monograph of 392 pages. It is indeed, a book that provides the best way of doing ACT from the technical systematic scientific manner which should be emulated by African Christian scholars.

   **Activity 4.7**

4.7 Summary

In this Lecture, you were enabled to examine the Trend focusing on African ecclessiologies based on the Model of the Church viewed as the Family of God also taking into account other ecclessiologies by different African scholars. The Lecture has helped you to understand what the term “Church” means together with global images of the Church thanks to insights from T. Bellagamba, H. Kung and A. Dulles as a necessary requisite for understanding the Models attributed to the Church. You were further assisted to Identify and elaborate today’s preferred Church Model which is in vogue among the African scholars of ACT with their distinctive peculiarities namely that of the Church as the Family of God. This was exemplified by Charles Nyamiti and his inter-nationally renowned “Ancestral Ecclesiology” as an excellent example of the Trend of the African contribution of the image of the Church as the Family of God.

Concluding Activity 4.8

Read how Clement Majawa explains the nature of the Church and its role in defining genuine democracy in Africa showing also the relevance of this interesting exposition to your respective motherlands- in AFER, February/April, 2000, Vol.42, Nos 1 & 2, pp.80.

4.8 References

4. C. Nyamiti, Christ’s Ancestral Mediation Through the Church Understood as

LECTURE FIVE

THE TREND HANDLING AFRICAN CHRISTIAN THEOLOGIES IMBUED WITH SIN AS A CRITICAL MORAL ITEM

LECTURE Outline

5.1 Introduction.

5.2 Objectives.

5.3 Sin as the Root-Cause of Un-freedom and Death.

5.4 What Sin Means.

5.5 Categories of Sin.

5.6 Freedom to Sin.

5.7 Sinner and Sinfulness.

5.8 The Crucial Impact of Sin.

5.11 Summary.

5.12 References.

5.1 Introduction.

Lecture Four confronted you with the Trend focusing on African ecclesiologies based on the model of the Church viewed as the Family of God. This Lecture will enable you to discuss the Trend handling African Christian theologies imbued with Sin as a critical moral item. It will make it possible for you to explicate the nature of the concept “sin” as the kernel of un-freedom and servitude, identify the categories of sin in reference to our Lecture and to discuss the issue of “freedom to sin” thanks to our personally God-given indispensable freedom of choice. The Lecture will also help you to understand the perception of “sinner and sinfulness” acknowledging the Church as an incorporation of members who accept that they are sinners and as such needing one another’s supporting in their realm of redemption and salvation.
5.2 Objectives

The goal of this Lecture is to discuss the Trend handling African Christian Theologies imbued with Sin as a critical moral item. With this finality, therefore, by the end of this Lecture, you should be able to:

1. Explicate the nature of the concept “sin” as the kernel of un-freedom and servitude.
2. Identify the categories of sin in reference to our subject-matter.
3. Discuss the issue of “freedom to sin” thanks to our personally God-given indispensable freedom of choice.
4. Explicate the perception of “sinner and sinfulness” acknowledging the Church as an incorporation of members who accept that they are sinners supporting one another in their realm of redemption and salvation.
5. Identify the vital effects of sin.

5.3 Sin as the Root-Cause of Un-freedom and Death.

If you critically examine yourself and observe the other people too, you will be hit by a strong passion with regard to how we subject ourselves to servitude and, as a last resort, inflict death upon ourselves by sinning and being sinned against.

1. The fact remains that sin is the kernel of ruining our liberty, veracity and fidelity as well as destroying our gift of life prematurely.
2. This is among the fundamental justifications as to why those who propagate ACT are compelled to come up with a powerful Trend imbued with moral items like sin, grace and conversion.

Take note

First and foremost, you need to know “that ‘sin’ depicts a structural existence which characterizes the fallen human existence; it describes the reality which includes both personal sins and the collective sins of my
people, my class and my race” (S. Maimela, “Current Themes and Emphasis in Black Theology”, in I.J. Mosala and B. Tlhagale (Eds.), The Unquestionable Right to be Free: Black Theology from South Africa (Maryknoll, New York: Orbis Books, 1986), p.109. As such, sin inculcates a disturbing apathy toward the sisterhood and the brotherhood emanating from the Our Father prayer taught by Jesus the Teacher.

3. Reflections like these should compel you, therefore, to peruse the liberty/freedom involved with regard to sinning, to tackle the issue of sinners and sinfulness and dwell on the crucial impact of sin with (untimely) death as the very core.

5.4 What Sin Means.

Diverse concepts convey the meaning, weight and impact of “sin”.

5.4.1 You need to familiarize yourself with diverse perceptions of concept “sin”.

Among such notions that you ought to be aware of are: “alienation” in the sense of deviation; “harmatia” (a Greek term for “to miss the mark”); “iniquity” connoting distortion with guilt as the consequence; “straying” in the sense of missing the right path thus wandering aimlessly, as one who strays, towards the peril of one’s life; “rebellion” implying violating a covenant or, rather, a breach of agreement by infidelity to the covenant; “disobedience” (Gen.3:3ff); “a lie” in the sense of corruption and deceitfulness; “lawlessness” (1Jn 3:4); “unrighteousness” (1Jn 5:17); and “enslavement” within the Pauline conception of sin as an ACT, as a STATE, and as a POWER or FORCE leading to death.

Activity 5.1
Find out why some renowned scholars speak of SIN as not only “disobedience” but also “substituting the One True God with false/self-gods”?
5.4.2 You will find the dramatic story of the Fall quite indicative.

From the brilliant Fall Narrative, that dramatic story through which we are informed how death came into being, a paramount kind of intricate sin technically referred to as “the sin of Adam (and Eve)” in the Book of Genesis (3:1ff), sin is further described as not only “disobedience”. It is also explained as substituting the One True God with self-gods i.e. the false gods. In other words, it is a deliberate refusal to acknowledge God as God thereby making oneself a god (Gen.3:5). This, as you should know, amounts to creatures “dethroning” (though unsuccessfully) the Creator. You, perhaps, also know that underlying this transgression is selfishness, pride and egocentrism. The sad fact of history, as I believe you are aware, is that human beings in their respective motherlands, today more than ever before, keep substituting the One True God with self-gods, things-gods, political party-gods, pleasure-gods, leisure-gods, pecunia-gods and the devil-gods in Devil worship and Satanic diabolical cults.

Activity 5.2

5.4.3 Consequently, you and I are almost subdued and overwhelmed with the phenomenon of Devil-worship, Satanic cults and malevolent rituals- whereby brutal acts of severing of victim’s private parts for devol-ratory acts is no longer news – leading not only to spiritual deaths but also, occasionally, to actual physical deaths.

Intext Question

What are your personal gods that act as stumbling blocks in relating to God and impediments to genuine inter-personal relationship with the people you encounter and what is your definition of “sin” according to the cultural values you are socialized in?
5.4.4 Our respective socialization provides us with useful perceptions of sin.

For me, in my capacity as a Mũgĩkũyũ Karĩng’a (pure Gĩkũyũ person), my understanding of “sin” is as follows: It is whatever blocks people from dancing together, sharing foods together, shaking hands violently but with human warmth and drinking in unison within the context of family-nuclear, extended, or incorporated sometimes through blood-pact. It is that force or act or self-inflicted unfortunate state that compels somebody to seclude oneself as a sorcerer or witch. It is what injures healthy inter-personal relationship between a human being and fellow humans, and the departed, and creation, and the ancestors and- ultimately God.

5.5 Categories of Sin.

Sin is one and yet a complex. You need to dispose yourself well and follow the following critical analysis drawing out and conveying the pluriformity of sin explicated within the intricate umbrella of our Lecture:

5.5.1 Peripheral Sins/Venial Sins and Mortal Sins/Grave Sins.

There are light sins which do not cause serious damage to anyone. The ones that are inconsequential with regard to our fundamental option. Others are serious evils that have grave effects and actually have a terrible impact on our fundamental option.

Intext Question

How do you distinguish “venial sins” from “mortal sins”?

1) **Peripheral sins** are those which do not seriously affect one’s fundamental option. They are generally referred to as “venial sins”.

2) **Mortal sins** are those which one commits with full knowledge and consent in serious matters. They fall within the category of “grave sins”.

3) This perception generates a **heated debate**. It triggers a controversial dialogue among African theologians, secular ethicists, personalistic psychologists, existential philosophers, liberal anthropologists, sociologists endowed with Marxist social analyzes,
enlightened denominations/sects resource people, humanists and you University students. Admittedly, the battle is ongoing.

4) Nevertheless, to be pragmatic, from your personal experiential knowledge in your respective existence cum living and relation, I believe that you have the capacity to distinguish between grave sins/sin unto death and less serious sin like that of jocose lies.

5.5.2 Sin of the World.

You should also be aware of another awkward category of sin namely; “sin of the world”.

Intext Question

What do you understand by “sin of the world”? Do you think it is reasonable to talk in terms of “sin of the world” and on what grounds?

1) This strangely enigmatic kind of sin is a type whereby sin is conceived as a powerful force in the universe.

2) Piet Schoonenberg articulates it in this manner: “Sin remains a power in the world, and the ‘world’ remains a fellowship of sin. This fits in with our experience of the ‘contamination’ of evil and, in general, the infectiousness of moral action.”(P. Schoonenberg, “Sin” in K. Rahner (Ed.), Encyclopedia of Theology, p.1584).

3) It has also to do with numerous temptations to sin which you and I are confronted with. The evil inducements we occasionally encounter and are more often than not vulnerable to owing to our human frailty and delicate exposure.

4) Basically, “sin of the world” is the malevolent trial we are constantly subjected to in our environs in our concrete historical existence notwithstanding the abundant God-give gratuitous accompanying grace.

5.5.3 Sin of Proud Self-satisfaction.

This category of sin is the one for which the hasidians (the pious ones) namely the Pharisees and the ultra-rigid observers of the Torah (Mosaic Law) called the Essenes of Qumran who lived on the Western shore of the Dead Sea with their Qumranic Manual of Discipline generally fell victim to.
Activity 5.3


1) The **Pharisees** in particular proudly referred to as the “separatists” or the “separated ones” owing to their segregation tendency not to mingle with sinners thereby defiling themselves were great culprits in **agape** (disinterested genuine love) accomplishment. This life-style, mentality and attitude put their charity into serious scrutiny.

2) Despite the **Pharisees’** remarkable resistance to Hellenisation, their publicly renown strict observance of the Law of Moses plus the appended six hundred and thirteen (613) precepts later contained in the **Mishnah**, their exemplary scrupulous adherence to rituals of purity, their exaggerated fanatic observance of the Sabbath, their painstaking casuistry approach to moral issues and their pronounced commitment in honoring Temple dues and respective tithes, they, nevertheless, became vulnerable to the “sin of self-righteousness” intertwined with the “sin of hypocrisy”.

3) You should recall from your Unit CRS 202: *Introduction to The New Testament* that this type of sin not only became the major cause of rivalry between the Pharisees and Jesus (Mt 23: 13-32; 5:20; 9:14ff., 32-34; 15:12; 16:6, 11; Lk 6: 6-11; 11: 37-44; Mk 2: 15-17, 18-22; Jn 7:32; 11:45-54). It also became a favorable occasion for Jesus to expound the Good News of blissful eternal life to all which He convincingly verified by resurrection from death.

4) Despite the historical recording of some Pharisees like Paul, Simon the Pharisee, Gamaliel and Nicodemus as friendly to Jesus yet, the Pharisees are generally regarded as the **embodiment of “hypocrisy”** and “self-righteousness” category of sin.

5.5.4 Sin of Character Assassination/defamation.

The sin of **character assassination** also referred to as **defamation** is a most neglected evil. The omission and the commission of it causes untold amount of suffering and terrible havoc among us.
1) And still, you and I - if we care to enter into the core of our being and beingness honestly self-examining ourselves- are more often than not guilty of it. We casually **ruin others’ good name**. We do this without caring a straw about the scenario.

2) Often times you hear of “important” people of “special repute” suing others for character assassination some mining a whole wealth of money in legal courts as reparation and restoration of their “good name”. You should know that ruining somebody’s good name is a serious matter in civil law and even before God though some go about it with a lot of impunity.

**Intext Question**

How would you reasonable verify or falsify that those who focus on sex-sin of the sixth commandment in the Decalogue commit worse sin of character assassination ruining genuine friendship, families, professional careers, youth and homes through dangerous highly provocative and extremely sensational rumor mongering?

3) Charity and prudence demand that we refrain from speaking or talking evil of the others. Even where they are wrong, it is required of us to correct our brothers and sisters knowing very well that we too are not perfect. Do so with the awareness that if we were in their shoes in their situations in life, perhaps we would fair terribly. This is an issue moral theologians of ACT take with seriousness it deserves.

4) You will be thoroughly overwhelmed in your everyday interactions with people to find out how freely and effortlessly some allegedly “committed saved Christians” and some arguably “staunch Catholics” speak ill and talk evil of other people belonging to other denominations, sectarian loyalties, devotional groups and ethnic affiliations and with impunity. Worse still, they sometimes do this in the midst of innocent children who look upon them as role models.

**Take note**

Interestingly, as they pour out venom of their disgusting utterances on such “kafiri” (“irreligious savages”), their psyched, highly tuned, thoroughly
electrified and “spiritualized” congregations respond with thunderous “Amens” and “praise the Lord” and “God is good all the time- and it is His nature to be so” and “Bwana asifiwe saana” (may the Almighty be highly gloried) and, of course, “Hallelujah” accompanied with thunderous violent hand clapping and innumerable number of rhythmic up and down jumping.

5.5.5 Sin of despair and Denial of Sin.

Another type of sin which merits serious consideration, and which you and I often ignore, is that of despair and denial of sin.

1) You may be persuaded that among the worst sins in our society is that of despair of constant effort to remain faithful in discipleship and fellowship with Jesus Christ imbued with the sin of denial and rationalizing thereby deliberately watering down and “killing” sin-which is an exercise in futility.

2) Such giving up on God’s loving mercy and forgiveness is what Judas Iscariot who, for pecuniary remuneration/incentive, betrayed his innocent Master Jesus (Mt 10:4; Mk 3:19; Lk 6:16; Jn 6:71; 13:2ff.) fell victim to.

Activity 5.4

In view of this sub-title, and as an ACT student, do an exegesis of that episode concerning the end of Judas in Matthean pericope (Mt 27:1-9) drawing out its relevance to you and your motherland.

3) I personally admire the courageous Judas Iscariot for openly acknowledging his sinfulness and witnessing plainly to those with whom he manipulatively co-operated in the sin of cooperation in evil that the Victim he betrayed and sold, like- as you know- many do nowadays, was absolutely innocent thus deserving nothing short of total acquittal (Mt 27:3-4).

4) You should also credit Judas for returning the whole bribe-or the kick back dirty money- and not taking even a single bloody shekel (Mt 27:5). This is something many corrupt thieves,
and their list is endless, in our society would not do even when they publicly proclaim that they have seen the light thereby publicly witnessing that they are saved – instead of returning what they should, they preach how they are so blessed using their gospel of prosperity.

5) This act of Judas should teach you and I about reparation. According to me he scores very high for his practical aspect of the theory of restitution.

6) Nevertheless, we really pity Judas for adding sin upon sin by hanging himself to death (Mt 27:5). This he did not do just because of severe remorse. It was mainly on account of giving up on God’s loving and forgiving mercy.

7) Judas refused to be like Simon Peter who having denied his Rabbi and Master thrice (Mt 26:69-74), he did not hang himself. He refused to commit the sin of giving up on God’s mercy! Instead, recalling Jesus’ counsel, the Jesus of the parable of the prodigal son/daughter (Lk 15: 11-32), he “went out and wept” (Mt 26:75) in repentant sorrow.

Take note

Acknowledging his sin and accepting forgiveness, Peter was transformed. Having undergone metanoia (radical conversion), he even gained the courage and inner peace to humbly confess three times his unreserved love for Jesus thereby embracing the demanding role of shepherding Jesus’ flock (Jn 21:15-19).

8) Judas has a lot to teach us concerning the ethics of owning up our sinfulness- and publicly at that. You often hear people coining denial rationalizing terms to excuse themselves from their evils e.g. “misappropriation” instead of “stealing”, “sex commercial work” instead of “prostitution”, “mercy killing/ positive Euthanasia” instead of murder… the list is ongoing!

Intext Question

Drawing insights from the episode of the encounter between Zacchaeus and Jesus as recorded in Luke 19:1-10, what lessons do you think Zacchaeus would teach Judas Iscaliot, our corrupt leaders, your colleagues who have suicide tendency, and you?
5.5.6 Sin of Rape:

Another serious category of sin, which liberationists especially African feminists/women liberation theologians passionately fight against is that of rape. It is amazing that, unlike many other animals, human beings, despite their rationality and personal dignity, rape-sometimes with impunity!

Intext Question

Would you say that rape is the highest order of repulsive and repugnant sadism—an extremely naughty and brutal misconduct stripping the victim of his/her dignity and why?

1) Male brutes barbarously and in their weird frustrations or wild desperation forcefully violate women mercilessly coercing them into violent sexual abuse.

2) Some lesbians do the same too to their fellow women. So do the mhadhara (aged loose normally wealthy women) to delicate young boys some young enough to qualify as their grand children.

3) Some gay homosexuals also sadistically sodomize underage boys and drugged or physically subdued adults as well.

Take note

This is an outright sin of depersonalization of the helpless victims’ worth, dignity and self-esteem. In a way, you could say that it is inflicting death to the victim.

4) It is lamentable that this mode of grave sin is so rampant in our era of liberal promiscuity, extreme consumerism, radical violation of our cultural values cum taboos, economic hardships, retrenchment cum joblessness, complex “ubiquitous” media cum information technology, exaggerated globalization rendering some culturally rootless, rationalized sexual deviations, depressing diabolical hedonism…the list seems endless!
Intext Question
What would you say about the assertion that there are women who invite rape and how do you justify your stand as a student of ACT?

5) Cool sympathetic and empathetic reasoning may un-earth the unfortunate truth that, some women knowingly or unconsciously invite rape!

6) Take, for instance, the case of a semi-nude woman deliberately dating a guy whose drug addiction and immoral life-style are common knowledge. They verily go out to odd joints/merriment venues at night. Both allow alcoholic drinks to hit them hard thus getting extremely high. She persuades this drunken guy hooked in drugs to be intimate with her. She directs him into fondling her sexual erotic organs making herself a willing recipient of **heavy necking** and **petting romantically**.

7) But when the extremely aroused and thoroughly electrified partner/companion is burning, she demands that they stop just short of complete sexual intercourse! She demands that they refrain from going all the way. What is the implication of this behavior? What does that mean to you?

8) There are people who would reasonably reason that the man is not the sole agitator.

9) If a man “rapes” her in such a situation, some African moral theologians contend that she is mainly to blame and, as such, she should take the responsibility. They say that she too is squarely to blame- that she is culpable and, indeed, answerable. There are even some of the view that, in conditions like this, it is the woman who is the rapist.

Take note
The above reasoning should not, however, make you recant our previous affirmation that rape is among the worst kinds of sins that many scholars of ACT keep grappled with aiming at giving guidance, counseling and the way forward.

10) You should always remember that rapists subject their victims to long-term overwhelming psychosomatic problems with the consequent existential traumatic memories, which, as history witnesses, make some inflict death upon themselves through suicide.
Take note

As you know, occasionally, the victims of this notorious sin are actually infected with sexually transmitted diseases (STDs). They are made to suffer disturbing ailments like gonorrhea and syphilis. They are disposed and become vulnerable to the dreaded deadly HIV (Human Immune Virus) Aids (Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome) whose infections often lead to premature death.

11) This is not to forget other involuntary extensions of the aggressors’/rapists’ enormous repercussions. After-effects like unwanted pregnancies, enhancement of socio-economic impoverishment, psychological/mental strains, schizophrenic attacks, and acute tension among the consorts perpetual mistrust and ill feelings towards fiends.

12) With all these in mind, one may be compelled to agree with moral theologians in ACT who equate this kind of sin with murder. It could, in some extreme circumstances, be even worse than putting somebody to death.

5.5.7 Varied Sins:

The aforementioned and analyzed are not the only eminent categories of sin. I trust that you are able to come up with other types to complement the ones we have cited and a explicated.

Activity 5.5
Discuss the following other types of sin within the setting we have established: Pedophilia, drug trafficking and pushing, promoting ethnic clashes and genocide, excruciating greed, unlawful malevolent hedonism, deliberate destructive interference with the environment, willful ruining of ecological balance, participation and being member of the clique of the “Lords of Poverty” reducing the “wretched of the earth” to abject poverty resulting in untold number of premature deaths, milking one’s motherland dry in partnership with merciless multinationals and ulterior-motivated capitalistic neo-liberalism.
5.6 Freedom to Sin.

God is so generous and liberating to an extent of endowing each one of us with freewill. We are at liberty to even reject God and go after pseudo-gods of our own making to our own destruction!

5.6.1 As Richard P. McBrien puts it:

“Freedom is the capacity to say either ‘Yes’ or ‘No’ to God, i.e. to see ourselves either as having ultimate worth because we are alive by principle which transcends us, or, on the other hand, to see ourselves as merely a constellation and network of biological responses and psychological and sociological conditioning.”(R.P. McBrien, Catholicism, Study Edition, p.957).

Take note

Thus God honors and respects our choice to be for Him or to turn against Him. That is why you and I are answerable and solely accountable for our sins. You can legitimately assert that the decision to sin or not to sin is ours to utilize.

This is notwithstanding the upsurge of the sin of the denial of sin or the complacency of rationalizing it as merely human frailty.

5.6.2 God, it should, nevertheless, be accentuated, does not interfere with our business if we insist on sinning:

If you choose to fornicate or commit adultery, God will not pull you out of your high-grade passion bed of “having a good time” or “pushing” or “having companionship” or “having a one night stand” with someone on the “green carpet” (grassland); if you pull the trigger to shoot to murder, which is in vogue in our society these days, God will not neutralize the bullet; if you decide to commit suicide by drinking lethal liquids, God will not turn the poisonous liquids into massala (spiced) tea for your survival.
Take note

Nevertheless, in God’s wisdom, God endows us with the necessary means to enable us to follow the authentic Way to True Life (Jn 14:6) as propagated and personalized in our Savior and Redeemer thanks especially to the Easter Mystery and Pentecost empowerment.

5.6.3 That all are endowed with FREEWILL is not an assumption.

It is neither a myth nor a fairy tale. It is a God-given inalienable right. It is a fundamental option that enables us to turn even against God as we saw earlier. It is an empowerment to sin if we so choose and deliberately reject God’s mercy and refuse to be forgiven. And to what end?

Take note

Ultimately, we have the God-send option to either accept or reject grace or sin, good or evil, heaven or hell, God or Devil Satan. God cannot hinder us from our voluntary orientations.

5.6.4 Through Jesus Christ the Liberator, we are liberated from selfishness, egoism, pride, dangerous ideologies and enslavement.

1) Nevertheless, it is unfortunate but true that, in our God-given freewill, as long as we are in this world, we are persistently confronted with vigorous tension between the forces of evil/sin and the power of enabling goodness/grace.

2) In other words, so long as we are down here on earth, we encounter a battle between sins championed by devil Satan as well as efficacious grace the resurrected Jesus endows us with.

3) In this painstaking struggle, St. Paul, who converted from Saul the persecutor of the Church to one of the strongest pillars of the Church, encourages us to fight on and not to yield to sterile contingent deadly enslavement(Rom. 5:12ff.).

5.6.5 The image of God is that of a tender loving Father who forgives completely:
The image of God which Jesus reveals to us is that of a loving Father who is always ready to forgive us as long as we are sorry for our sins and ready to convert and persevere in the realm of salvation.

1) It is a God who, moreover, empowers us to return to Him in repentance. It is for this cause that God sent to us His only begotten Son as our Savior and Redeemer.

2) We have it on the authority of His Son Jesus Christ, the One who resurrected from death, who provides the image of God as the abundantly loving, merciful and forgiving Father of the prodigal sons (because He had to lovingly go out for the two lost sons) (Lk 15:11ff.).

3) The tender loving Father who leaves the ninety nine to search for the lost sheep (Lk 15: 4-7) and the lost drachma (Lk15:8-10).

4) A better image of the loving and completely concerned caring Father who is so much committed to our plight and well-being cannot be imagined.

5.6.6 Admittedly, our uprightness is consistently put under severe pressure and enormous test by unorthodox maneuvers:
Our environment is virtually saturated with evil. The kingdom of Satan which is the kingdom of darkness, sickness, death and sin seems to be flourishing just as the Kingdom of God which is the Kingdom of light, health, life and grace is so much undermined and compromised.

1) You and I are put in a fix and enormous tension with regard to living uprightly as we ought to. To our disadvantage, we encounter all kinds of juicy temptations. We witness numerous temptations in vulgar video tapes, irreligious Western and Oriental blue movies and horrifying CDs and DVDs. We encounter numerous pornographic magazines, manipulative internet-ing, and innovative gadgets cum satellite satanic products (the list is unending).

2) These and others threaten to regenerate and transform us into slaves of sin, puppets of hedonism and robots of wadosi (tycoons) as well as dependent servants of domineering multinationals. Some are actually reduced to a state of abject poverty which creates undermining dependence and severe challenges in life and living.

Intext Question

Does poverty excuse us from living uprightly and why?

3) There is no doubt that the condition of abject poverty pragmatically exposes many people to sin and pressures them to succumb to false gods of destruction and death. Nevertheless, while appreciating all these, the theory of freedom of choice still dictates against such mitigating justifications.

4) Poverty could and has in various circumstances been an occasion for grace. Mother Teresa of Calcutta has verified this beyond reasonable doubt to an extent of receiving the internationally renowned Nobel Price.

5) This Saint dedicated the whole of her life for the cause of the down-trodden to an extent of giving all the accruing Nobel Award money to charity. She was exemplary in uplifting the poorest of the poor giving them hope and restoring human authenticity among them to the admiration of many. Her poverty was wealth to many-includeing the materially rich ones. No wonder the Roman Catholic Church has elevated her to the enviable status of a Saint challenging all to take after her as their ancestress.
Take note

As such, to claim that the situation of deprivation necessarily affects sin among us could as well be a conduct of apology which is a kind of rationalization and escapism.

6) It is good for you to remember that God sincerely wills us to opt for a happy death which is, as Jacques Dupuis puts it: “at once the absolute passivity imposed on nature and the supreme action of the person: disintegration and integration, determinism and self-determinism, break and union” (Towards a Christian Theology of Religious Pluralism, p. 118).

7) All these issues are of great interest to African Christian theologians belonging to the discipline of moral theology/social ethics.

5.7 Sinner and Sinfulness.

All of us sin! Quite often, we are more victims of “sins of omission” than “sins of commission”. Just examine yourself critically and see whether we agree.

5.7.1 You should always be aware of the “sin of omission” and “sin of commission”:

Activity 5.7

Explain the difference between “sin of omission” and “sin of commission” from both the Christian and African views.

When you refuse to do a good you are able to do, that is a sin of omission. In other words, withholding a common good you are capable of. When you actually commit evil, you are guilty of accomplishing evil. In other words, being liable to sin- sin of commission.

5.7.2 The Bible, however, makes it explicit that all as sinners benefit from God’s abundant mercy:
This is particularly documented in a pericope of the positive aspect of faith and the justice of God (Romans 3: 23-26).

5.7.3 There is a tendency among Africans to rationalize wrongdoing:

They usually do this by appealing to *uchawi* (witchcraft) and *ngoma njũru* (malevolent spirits/evil forces). If you do some field work among African ethnic groups, it will become apparent to you that a considerable number of Africans including some “devout” Christians deny with ease both being sinners and their sinfulness. They become apologetic in their culpability by squarely laying blame on *wachawi* (witches/sorcerers) who they offensively put to death with impunity, *caitani* (Devil Satan) and malevolent herbalists for their shortcomings.

This reflects the need, for you, to be realistic while engaging yourself on mutual encounter and dialogue between your African cultural issues and Christianity.

Take note

The mission of finding out why the repulsive characteristics in African philosophy of life still influence even some well-schooled Africans existentially and pragmatically by some scholars is commendable and is actually long overdue. This is more so with regard to the perception of sinners and sinfulness.

5.7.4 You and I are no doubt sinners and are, therefore, in sinful state.

We are in a disadvantaged situation in life from which we should do something to come out of. All are thus in dire need of, and are capable of, conversion thanks to God’s universally applicable gratuitous grace. For you then, to adopt a holier than thou attitude and look at public sinners as those who have and do commit unforgivable sins is to miss the mark. It amounts to going astray.

Intext Question

Would you justify or falsify that such belabored mentality is a manifestation of serious pharisaism thus qualifying it as a grave sin of crushing the hope of
salvation in ones neighbors which is contrary to the spirit of the risen Lord and how?

Among the hindrances you should reckon with is that of denominational bias and proclivity towards prejudices.

**5.7.5 Blissful everlasting life after death is for all.**

You should, therefore, know that each and every person is entitled to have a claim to it. One should do so by appealing for assistance, cooperation and solidarity particularly from people’s ordained ministers. Thus, the witnessing and transmitting of the Good News of life, more so to the “lost sheep” or the alienated whose faith crisis makes them wander away, especially in this millennium is imperative. It is both a favor and a serious obligation of duty that you should accomplish with utmost fervor.

**Take note**

We should reflect on Christ’s soothing yet awfully sincere summon which reads: “Come to me, all you that are weary and are carrying heavy burdens and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you, and learn from me; for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light.” (Mt 11: 28-30).

I hope you will agree with me that a more consoling, inviting and illuminating welcome cannot be imagined.

**5.8 The Crucial Impact of Sin.**

It is sad and pitiable that many of us are not aware that, when we are in a state of sin, particularly mortal/grave sin, we suffer not only from sinfulness but also from the compelling consequences of sin.
5.8.1 You should realize that our sins are not only infliction of injuries and death unto ourselves but also harmful to our neighbors, insulting to the Creator, detrimental to our living and malevolent to creation and environment:

The roots of sin namely, pride inter-twinned with selfishness, have inter-related characteristics of negation, rebellion, opposition, slavery, self-diminishing elements, and destruction as we profoundly explicated earlier..

Activity 5.8
Discuss the sentiments of the Second Vatican Council that: “although he was made in a state of justice, from the very dawn of history, man abused his liberty, at the urging of the Evil One. Man set himself against God and sought to find fulfillment apart from God.” (Gadium et Spes, 13).

5.8.2 You should be aware that this unfortunate state of being not only crushes the enormous dynamism of hope. It is also, as a final resort, a tragic final self-abuse.

Its far-reaching repercussion is that of making us refugees of hopelessness and restlessness rather than pilgrims of trust and informed faith. Our limitations and shortcomings which are still in vogue can, nevertheless, be viewed as transforming occasions and challenges to steer us forward by rising as we fall if and when acknowledged as they truly are.

5.8.3 You should also appreciate that the noble inter-confessional Christian agape which sin destroys is so complete, liberating and fulfilling that even laws and casuistry are rendered superfluous.

1) The impact of St, Augustine’s “ama et fac quo vis” (loves and do what you will) weighty assertion is quite indicative.

2) More so is St. Paul’s pericope which reads: “Owe no one anything except to love one another; for the one who loves has fulfilled the law. The commandments, ‘You shall not commit adultery…’ are summed up in this word, ‘love your neighbor as yourself.’ Love does no wrong to a neighbor; therefore, love is fulfilling of the law.” (Rom. 13: 8-10).
Activity 5.9
Comment on Paul’s greeting formula which reads: “The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God, and the fellowship/communion of the Holy spirit be with you” (2 Cor. 13: 13) showing its significance that makes some mainstream Churches adopt it in their respective Service/Worship and Mass?

3) The above should not blind you to the Anselmian citation of theology as “faith seeking understanding.” Neither should you forget the deep insights into the necessary inter-relationship between faith and reason we read from John Paul II’s monumental Encyclical titled - Fides et Ratio (Faith and Reason).

5.8.4 Another consequence of sin is that of inflicting injustice and injury to the Family of God.

This is how the Catechism of the Roman Catholic Church puts it:

“In this solidarity with all people, living and dead, which is founded on the communion of Saints, the least of our acts done in charity redound to the profit of all. Every sin harms this communion.” (The Catechism of the Catholic Church (Nairobi: Paulines Publications Africa), n.953).

Related to this is the disintegration of the Church which you must have witnessed where you come from.

Intext Question
Do you agree or disagree with the way Origen puts i.e. “where there are sins, there are also divisions, schisms, heresies, and disputes. Where there is virtue, however, there also are harmony and unity, from which arises the one heart and one soul of all believers” and why?

5.8.5 Another impact of sin is the hurtful “punishment of sin”.
In Karl Rahner’s words: “The punishments of sin are the persistent objectivations of the bad moral decision, being themselves hurtful because contrary to the true nature of the free subject, and being also the means through which the resistance of the due order of the world (of men and things around the subject) likewise operates as harmful.” - K. Rahner, “Punishment of Sins”, in K. Rahner (Ed.), Encyclopedia of Theology: A Concise Sacramentum Mundi (London: Burns and Oates, 1975), p.1587.

5.8.6 Another disturbing repercussion of sin is that it makes some Christians be bi-theistic in the practical everyday life.

On this score, they worship both the One True God and also “worship” creation (their ego included) and what appertains to it. In their confusion, they “worship” God while also being devil-worshippers. They are thus in great need of liberation to be genuinely monotheistic. And who are they if not you and I?

The bottom-line is that our sins make us worship God and creation (ourselves included) which, obviously is an unlawful mixture technically called syncretism!

Activity 5.10
As a student of ACT, seeing how often we apply the law of talion- an eye for an eye, a tooth for a tooth, back scratching for back scratching, a life for a life and death for death-explain how you would liberate your motherland from potential ethnic animosity and genocide.

5.8.7 Sin, furthermore, blinds you and me from seeing to what extent we “should sin”.

YES. God in His divine wisdom and benevolence gives us freedom to sin as well as power to do good and avoid sinning and uncalled for death.

1) To reiterate what we elaborated previously, going to the brothel, in no way can God pull you back saying “NO WAY!” You won’t see God blocking you from going in or from exiting. Neither will God apply remote control to out-maneuver you like a robot or a puppet or a subdued slave or an impoverished nation kneeling with a begging bowl before IMF and World Bank gods.
2) Such is the option guaranteed by our knowing and willing and, indeed, our doing capacities. Hence, the culpability, answerability and, above all, responsibility involved.

3) All these point to how sin blurs our vision and decisions making us live un-authentically and in the shadow of death claiming that God is merciful yet we abuse or undermine His mercy.

5.8.8 Sins also scar the purity of our humanity making us live a lie:

1) They make us drift from the liberating power of true life.

2) We are reduced to dirty liars and miserable people saturated with useless anxieties and insatiable craving for “having more” in the world of material “more-ness”. They make us stop at having intentions of remaining good.

3) Think carefully about what C. Nyamiti asserts that: “In order to fight more effectively against any form of oppression, sin should be taken as the point of departure and perspective from which the process of theologizing should be seen as outer manifestation or consequences of sin, understood as the basic source of all evils against life and its inherent dynamism.” - C. Nyamiti, “The Problem of Evil in African Traditional Culture and Today’s African Inculturation and Liberation Theologies”, in L. Namwera (Ed.) African Christian Studies (Nairobi: CUEA Publication, Vol.11, No.1, March 1995), p.54.

Activity 5.11
Explain how your community members guard themselves from falsehood/lies which the Africans take most seriously. Find out and give their different modes of swearing to guarantee and verify veracity and falsification of lies.

5.8.9 It should, furthermore, be reiterated that when one sins, one excommunicates oneself from God.

1) Such turning away is already hell even while still down here on earth.

2) It amounts to self-destruction, restlessness, biting depression, acute loneliness and folly.

3) This dangerous separation pains and saddens God to an extent of lamenting through Prophet Jeremiah as follows: “Has a nation changed its gods, even though they are no
gods? But my people have changed their glory for something that does not profit. Be appalled, O heavens, at this, be shocked, be utterly desolate,…for my people have committed two evils: they have forsaken me, the fountain of living water, and dug out cisterns for themselves, cracked cisterns that can hold no water.” (Jer. 2: 11-13).

5.11 Summary

This Lecture has enabled you to discuss the Trend handling African Christian theologies imbued with Sin as a critical moral item. It has made it possible for you to explicate the nature of the concept “sin” as the kernel of un-freedom and servitude, identify the categories of sin in reference to our subject-matter and to discuss the issue of “freedom to sin” thanks to our personally God-given indispensable freedom of choice. The Lecture also helped you to understand the perception of “sinner and sinfulness” acknowledging the Church as an incorporation of members who accept that they are sinners and as such needing one another’s supporting in their realm of redemption and salvation.

Concluding Activity 5.12

Within the context of “sin of defamation/ruining others’ good name”, discuss those who caricature others by picking selectively, choosing and exaggerating the shortcomings of others without helping them in any way to transform.

5.12 References

LECTURE SIX

THE TREND GEARED TOWARDS FAMILY ISSUES ESPECIALLY AFRICAN SINGLE MOTHERS’ AND WIDOWED MOTHERS’ FAMILIES

LECTURE Outline

6.1 Introduction.

6.2 Objectives.


6.4 Discussing Who Single Mothers Are Using Socio-Religio-Cultural and Philosophical Analysis.

6.5 Examining Causes of Single Motherhood Phenomenon.

6.6 Perusal of Traditional Perspective, Treatment and Mistreatment of Single Mothers.

6.7 Analyzing Third Millennium Challenges to Traditional Perspectives, Perception, Treatment and Mistreatment of Single Mothers.

6.8 Summary.

6.9 References.

6.1 Introduction.

In Lecture Five you were enabled to discuss the Trend handling African Christian Theologies imbued with Sin as a critical moral item. Moreover, as Lecture Three elaborated, the issue of family is indispensable among the Africans. You were made to understand that it is the very core of Africanness in their cosmotheandric perception of being and beingness. The vitality, communality, relationality and dynamism with which African family is endowed are of great interest to serious scholars of ACT. No wonder Africans are credited with generously contributing the monumental image of the Church as “The Family of God”. In this Lecture the Trend geared towards family issues especially African single mothers’ and widowed mothers’ families will be tackled.
From your own disinterested observation, you easily notice that this “Family of God” is confronted with a peculiar strongly emerging type of family. Here I am referring to the single mothers’ cum widowed mothers’ family set up.

**Take note:**

A perusal of the following works, among others, will orient you well toward the above:

- J.S. Mbiti, *Love and Marriage in Africa* (London: Longman, 1973);
- P.N. Wachege, *Third Millennium African Single Mothers and Mother Widows: Ethno-religio-Philosophical Touch* (Nairobi: P.N. Wachege, 2003);
- B. Bujo, *Plea for Change of Models for Marriage* (Nairobi: Paulines Publications, 2009);

Factually, this mode of family is such a strong phenomenon that chances are that sooner not later, more families will be in this strange mode of parenthood than in the normal married one. What is encouraging is that there are now theologians of ACT who, through their academic and pastoral contributions, have come up with this family Trend in their theologizing. Bookshops, libraries…and private studies are reasonably stocked with related monographs, periodicals, magazines…and CDs cum DVDs. Christian preachers employ the above theme as a recurring theme in their preaching, sermons, homilies and diocesan synods. In fact, to ignore this kind of family in our African theology- of course not encouraging it as its exponents- would *ipso facto* lead us to the category of sin we explained in Lecture Three i.e., *sin of omission*. Consequently, our current Lecture concerns itself with this controversial issue.

### 6.2 Objectives

The goal of this Lecture is to examine the Trend geared towards family issues especially **African Single Mothers’ and Widowed Mothers’ families**. With this finality, therefore, by the end of this Lecture, you should be able to:

1. Acquaint yourself with the invaluability of today’s Trend geared towards family issues especially African Single Mothers’ and Widowed Mothers’ families.
2. Profoundly explain the nature of single mothers using socio-religio-cultural
and philosophical analysis.

3. Identify the main causes of single motherhood phenomenon.
4. Explain the traditional treatment and mistreatment of single mothers.
5. Examine Third Millennium challenges to traditional perspectives, perception, treatment and mistreatment of single mothers.
6. Identify the positive elements and negative aspects of single motherhood.
7. Assess some single mothers’ advices to the Church concerning them.
8. Draw out some recommendations on the way forward to enrich this Trend of family theology to make it more fruitful.

6.3 A Setting into the Trend Geared Towards Family Issues Especially African Single Mothers’ and Widowed Mothers’ Families

The phenomenon of African Single Mothers’ and Widowed Mothers’ Families is so powerful that scholars of ACT have taken upon themselves to tackle it with the seriousness it deserves. You too should be involved in this undertaking to remain relevant to our contemporary society.

6.3.1 You should critic those who perceive the above as a family-style saturated with negative elements and Satanism.

Whatever we may say against single mothers and mother widows and however negatively we may portray them, we cannot rightly and realistically affirm that theirs is a family-style saturated with negative elements and Satanism. Neither can we be taken seriously if we portray single motherhood as an empty mode of parenthood full of existential boredom, acute loneliness and absolute vice.

6.3.2 The Church is challenged to emulate Jesus Christ, Her founder, in giving a shepherd’s care to all Her flock without discriminating against single mothers:

1) As members of the Church, your moral appraisal should credit single mothers for their virtues and counsel them for their vices.
2) At this early stage, you would do well to spell out and cultivate intelligently a realization that to undermine single mothers threatening to silence them as they strive to speak, talk and share in improvised groups is unfortunate indeed!
3) In fact you could say that structures that harm their genuine supportive groups and movements blocking them from authentic self-actualization, human fulfillment and personalistic aspirations for Christian integral liberation ought to be discouraged forthwith as utterly oppressive, sadistically insensitive and virtually un-Christian.

6.3.3 Something else you should pay attention to so as to appreciate this Lecture is that Single motherhood <i>per se</i> is not a heinous crime or, in most cases a consequence of sin.

1) For the solidarity of the Family of God which we handle in Lecture Two, it is indispensable that you strive soberly to understand and appreciate single mothers’ worries, needs, problems, anxieties, yearning for mutual support, loneliness cum solitude.

2) There is also a need to pay attention to the plight, aspirations, concerns, and desire for actualization of their potentialities, fears, inter-personal relationships, ideals and their diverse and diverging categories imbued with specific peculiarities.

6.4 Discussing Who Single Mothers Are from Socio-Religio-Cultural and Philosophical Analysis.

As you know very well, this new century, in the Third Millennium demands innovative vision, transformed mission, relevant ministry and up-to-date perception and approach to contemporary changed and swiftly changing single motherhood phenomenon.

6.4.1 It is required of you to know their nature and identify their rich and enriching factors appreciating their poor and impoverished aspects and doing something about the scenario for the well being and welfare of authentic Family of God.

1) From your own observation, you are able to see that our new Millennium is already visibly inclined to new vision, new concerns, new ideals and new perception.

2) It is also geared towards new challenges, new anguish, new critical awareness, new achievements, new problems to family solidarity and well being with regard to single mothers.

3) All these are within the essential umbrella of originating and parenting families.

6.4.2 No extraordinary mental acumen is required of you to comprehend that nature has it that each one of us is an offspring of two parents namely, a mother and a father.
1) The two are gratuitously endowed with fecundity by God to be co-creators thanks to their gift of parenthood and the Godly empowerment to establish homes and families

2) Owing to this natural endowment and God’s primordial plan as vividly and Biblically described in the Priestly Cosmocentric tradition as well as Yahweistic Anthropocentric tradition in the Genesis creation narrative (Genesis 1 and 2), a nuclear family is perceived as consisting of two parents and fruit(s) of their matrimonial bond. In other words, it has a mother, a father and their child or children as the basic component of their conjugal love.

**Take note**

The above family and home set-up within the realm of parenthood has been ruthlessly tested and still continue to be severely tested in this Third Millennium by a strong wave, euphoria and trend namely, the phenomenon of single motherhood which theologians of ACT are gladly handling.

3) You may be astonished to encounter numerous single mothers of multi-faceted modes owning up mum-status and with pride!

**Intext Question**

What are your comments on the following assertion that, today in the dawn of the Third Millennium, it is almost “fashionable” to be a single mother.

4) Single motherhood tends to be in vogue. The inhibition on one’s such marital status seems to have virtually disappeared. Seemingly the anti- singleness family-hood taboo is being de-tabooed and very rapidly at that. They own and are proud of their status being openly satisfied of their designation.

**Take note**

Like the exponents and adherents of the basically secular, militant, revolutionary North American Black Power Movements -where some acquired
their parenthood status thanks to foreign scholarship- aggressively asserting black consciousness and black spirituals of “black is beautiful; black is black” or soul music consciousness of “I am black and I am proud” our contemporary single mothers’ assertion is apparently that of: “I am single-Mum and I am proud of my being-ness!”

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**Activity 6.1**


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5) Reflecting on this contemporary shift from traditional shame, guilt and embarrassment actually owning up to one’s identity and reality of one’s beingness as a single mother and proudly revealing one’s single motherhood tends to enforce another parental paradigm which scholars of ACT are doing well to address. In fact, the growth, openness, “normalcy”, and pride in this mode of family-thood-even some from staunch Roman Catholic homes and committed Protestant families- may no longer be taken for granted or be dismissed as inconsequential craze.

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**Take note**

What is, nevertheless, encouraging is that ecclesial shepherds and scholars are already addressing this crucial issue.
6) Nevertheless, some laxity of the Church as being the light of the world and the salt of the earth unto single mothers is put into question. Perhaps you are aware that the human face of the Church- especially as the **Family of God** is blurred by Her poor commitment to the cry of the single mothers- something you are expected to assist in after this Unit.

7) The Good Shepherd Parable concerning leaving the ninety nine good ones in a painful risky search, loving concern and tender care for the stray odd one- as documented by Evangelist Luke (Lk 15: 4-7) - weighs heavily on today’s Church **crying** for more dedicated option and a new approach in catecheses intertwined with relevant more effective pastoral care. It is your responsibility to cheap in here after this Lecture.

6.4.3 You have to have the awareness from the outset that the complexity of single motherhood demands that you handle the phenomenon with the reasonable sophistication.

1) This is how you will be able to understand adequately the Trend of theologizing from the point of reference of the family- more so that of single mothers.

2) The significance of this assertion ought not to be downplayed.

**Intext Question**

To you, who exactly are single mothers? How do they acquire or inherit or achieve or earn single motherhood? What is the implication of such families in the Third Millennium and the repercussion of their respective homes? How do they relate, inter-relate or intertwine with married mothers? How have the Church, State and society perceived, shepherded, alienated, involved or segregated them?

3) Even at this stage you should have a critical awareness of today’s more pronounced interchange of motherhood status i.e., **married mothers drifting to single motherhood on the one hand and single mothers actually getting married** in lawful weddings on the other hand.
Activity 6.2
Go out and meet married mothers who are now “widowed single mothers” and former single mothers who are now “married single mothers” and find out the challenges and the benefits of the two.

6.4.4 Various and varying prior and pertinent questions and concern on and about single mothers should by now linger on in your mind, for instance

1. What does it mean to be a single woman and a mother at that? Does single motherhood mean the same if one is a single mother through, for example, rape, or through incest, or through individual choice, or via being widowed? What mother or which mother adequately qualifies as a single mother? Are-and how are- single mothers involved in the Third Millennium Church evangelization ministry, catecheses role, proclamation mission and pastoral administrative councils?

2. There are Scriptural prophetic proof-texts and Biblical proof-texts that falsify minimization or alienation of single mothers in the ministry and service.

**Intext Question**

Which are these Biblical texts justifying single mothers’ participation in the spreading of the Good News in their capacity as common priests? What would you say of Mother Mary of Nazareth in the New Testament? What about some other single mothers in the Old Testament famous for their redemptive roles among the Israelites?

3. It is verifiable from Scriptural pericopes that single mothers too are important agents of the Gospel. The image one has on and about single mothers has a tremendous effect on how one involves, understands and relates to them.
Intext Question

Has it ever occurred to you that Mother Mary of Nazareth was actually a single mother after the demise of her husband Joseph of the House of David? Is it too disturbing for you to accommodate the Biblical text that in heaven there will neither be marriage nor marrying thereby appreciating that exemplary single mothers are already pointers to that eschatological Family and why?

6.4.5 This Lecture is of great relevance to all!

By divine providence, the Unit accommodates all kinds of students- and you are one of them! To psyche you properly for a more fruitful outcome of the Lecture for you, the following searching cum guiding questions are critical:

6.4.6 In case you student happens to be a single mother this Lecture is highly invaluable to you.

Intext Question

What do you stand to gain from this Lecture as a single mother?

An honest self-reflection guided by the following questions within the context of our Lecture will help you benefit:

1. How do you define yourself? Are you consciously aware of the overwhelming dignity, worth, value, responsibility and respect being a mother entails? How do you relate to married mothers and inter-relate with fellow single mothers and why? Do you single mother have the courage to be yourself asserting yourself as a mother and a parent you ought to be?

2. Are you guided and inspired by the principles of being mother and being parent at that letting motherhood “ineffable” norms and family-thood standards illuminate you in the realm of salvation? What category of single mothers do you identify yourself with and to
what end? Do you open yourself adequately to the other categories of co-single mothers disposing yourself prudently for mutual support, healthy inter-motherly/parental relationship and redemption? In your concrete historical existential life situation as such a mother and parent in this era, who is your distinguished role model or ideal mentor or inspiring exemplar?

3. Do you dispose yourself properly for a possible shift of your status from being a single mother to being a married/wedded mother as is becoming more pronounced in this era? As you sincerely respond to these queries, what do you expect from our Lecture that will enhance and meet your plight? How vulnerable are you to the defamatory stereotypes you single mothers are subjected to? Are you enslaved in the vices or do you struggle to emancipate yourself from them? How literate or illiterate are you and what are you doing about your schooling and education?

4. What about in matters of religion? Are you aware that, thanks to your experiential knowledge, you are naturally empowered to “minister” and witness to fellow single mothers and your respective Church? What have you been doing with this enormous gratuitous power and talents and charisms for the welfare and, well being of all?

6.4.7 In case you happen to be a male student this Lecture is of great relevance to you too. That is why you should respond to the following questions to benefit more:

**Intext Question**

What is the relevance of this Lecture to male students?

An honest self-reflection guided by the following questions within the context of our Lecture will help you benefit as a male student:

1. In your adventurous endeavor to male dominance, promotion of virility ego, craving for hedonistic accomplishment, “quenching” yourself cum existential frustrations imbued with brutality as well as fecundity esteem, which category- or categories- of single mothers are you responsible for? What are you doing or not doing about it?
2. How willing would you be to marry or- where applicable- allow your son to marry a woman with another man’s child or children and why? Are you directly or indirectly, implicitly or explicitly betraying single mothers socially, sexually, economically, verbally or even spiritually? Do you reduce them to erotic commodities, frustration punching bags, and, to use Frantz Fanon’s term, “wretched of the earth” status?

3. Has it ever occurred to you that your own mother and sister(s), and girl friend(s) and- where applicable - your daughter(s) are potential single mothers if at all they already are not? How would you like them to be treated as single mothers?

4. Do you extend the same treatment to other single mothers more so those- where applicable- you have put into single motherhood? Who do you prefer to work with, single mothers or married mothers, and what is the rationale behind it? Do you realize that the issue of single mothers is also your shauri and consequently, this Lecture is yours too?

6.4.8 In case you happen to be a student who is a married mother, there is reasons for you to own this Lecture too. That is why some questions demanding your reaction to benefit well from the Lecture are called for.

**Intext Question**

What is the relevance of this Lecture to married mother students?

An honest self-reflection guided by the following questions within the context of our Lecture will help you benefit as a married mother student:

1. Are you aware that you are co-mothers in relation to single mothers? As such do you know that you are subjected to values and dis-values of your identity that is terribly challenged in our contemporary society?

2. Do you appreciate that as far as mothering and being mother are concerned, you have a binding tie with single mothers? Do you positively manifest the solidarity in relation to single mothers in your concrete historical existential life and living?
3. What image does the term “single mother” evoke in your mind as a married mother? With what do you sincerely and honestly associate single mothers? What are your negative, positive, existential and relational expectations of single mothers? Are these expectations idealistic or optimistic or pragmatic or realistic or a mixture of all these? Would you yourself like to be measured by the same standards?

4. Do you actually accomplish or fulfill the above expectations? Has it ever crossed your mind that you too are a potential single mother thus letting yourself be led by the Christological principle of doing unto others what you would like others to do you?

5. Does it scandalize you that Mother Mary of Nazareth was one betrothed to Joseph of the house of David (Mt 1:18; Lk 1:27; 2:5) only later to drift to single motherhood as a widow thereby being promoted by none other than Her Son Jesus Christ as Our Mother notwithstanding Her singleness?

6.5 A Deeper Examination of Who Single Mothers Are.

After the above crucial setting in view of our Lecture explicating how it is indispensable for all, you are now in a position to discuss intelligently and at the level of erudition the nature of single mothers.

6.5.1 Setting reflections.

1) It is of immense importance that you insert yourself adequately into the subject the Lecture opted for.

2) They are of different categories each of which is somehow autonomous revealing specific facets of the self-same single motherhood within the framework of family and in relation to the multi-faceted causes.
6.5.2 Among the crucial underlying yet overlapping factors and elements effecting differences among the single mothers can be identified.

Intext Question
What, according to you are the main elements that bring about a pluriformity with regard to single mothers?

1) These are: uniqueness of single mothers owing to multi-faceted causes, personal endowment in existence and being-ness, ethnic affiliation, denominational loyalties, geographical setting, level of schooling cum education, individual personal effort in setting ideas striving to achieve them, generation and age groupings, mental acumen, intellectual potency and achievement.

2) The other characteristics are those of personal vision and confusion, choice of one’s individual life-style, contemporary mindset, mode of employment or unemployment,

3) We also have the elements of socialization imbued with companionship status, degree of submission or rebellion against the normative living elements and life characteristics inscribed in cultures and perpetuated in traditions and, finally, philosophical cum religious orientations.

Take note
A unitary perception of single mothers may thus have to be embraced reasonably, cautiously and assiduously. While venturing into socio-religio-philosophical-cultural considerations, it is of immense importance for you, therefore, to know who single mothers really are.

6.5.3 You should know that etymologically the term “single mother” is a coined double concept namely “single” and “mother”.

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1) In the *Longman Dictionary of Contemporary English*, the term “single” is defined as “being the only one having only one quality, one part, separate, considered by itself it can also refer to unmarried person”

2) *The Standard Dictionary of English Language* elaborates more explicitly that “single” means “consisting of one only, separate, individual; having no companion or assistant; alone; unmarried state of or pertaining to one alone; hence, uncommon, singular, unique, designated for use by only one person.

**Take note**

It is also interesting to note that Biblically, the term “mother” as derived from the name Eve, *Hawwah*, is explained by the Hebrew root *hayah* meaning “to live”. Thus the name Eve given to the first woman in the *Yahwist* creation and fall narrative which is remarkably anthropocentric has this “life” connotation. By implication then, a mother is a “source of life”. Hence our reading from the Bible that the first man, namely Adam, called his wife Eve because she is the mother of all those who live (Geneses 3:20).

3) Interestingly, and I can only trust that you are aware of this, “motherhood” is not merely parenting a kid called a baby. It is above all being mother!

4) That is the rationale behind “motherly mothers” graciously touching the very core of humanity. Furthermore, you should acknowledge and appreciate that when you talk of “single mother”, you are already in the realm of parenthood with the appertaining “home-ness” and “familyhood” elements imbued with vital living characteristics.

5) The term “single parent” embraces both “single mothers” and “single fathers”. Our Lecture’s option is that of “single mothers”.

6.5.4 It is important to equip you with a further explanation of the Terms

Whenever and wherever you hear the term “single mother”, the notion which spontaneously emanates is that of a rather loose woman, of whatever age, with a child or children of her own but with no husband apart from the secret biological father or fathers or today’s occult sex sperm donors like in the case of in-vitro fertilization—perhaps heterologous or even homologous.
1) The implication from this popular misconception and distortion of *en masse* categorization is that of an immoral woman mother or lady mum or girl *mzazi* (parent) with the sole responsibility of bringing up her child or children minding their integral welfare without explicit support of the co-creator(s).

2) It is an unfortunate tendency of putting all the single mothers into one prefabricated pot saturated with evils, boiling with misconduct and covered with a humanly immoral lid. Mind you this unlawful perception is still conservative in our Third Millennium.

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<tr>
<th>Take note</th>
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<tr>
<td>Notwithstanding the above perception there are, as we indicated earlier, diverse categories of single mothers</td>
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3) You should be enlightened that the very attribute “*single mother*” already reflects parenthood thus deserving the overwhelming respect and dignity that goes with being a *mother* despite the socio-religio-cultural existential challenges involved.

4) The fundamental fabric of our African social vitality and relationality, communal accomplishment and common welfare, personal cum personality fulfillment, and healthy inter-personal relationships with the creator, the ancestral spirits/ancestors, the living-dead, the living, the individuals, the environment, the animate and inanimate beings, and creation as such may be said to revolve around motherhood in marriage.

5) You need to know that, single or married, a woman needs at least a child to be a *mother*. Being in motherhood state *ipso facto* and essentially demands at least a child as a *condition sine qua non*. What is striking, more so in our millennium, is that one does not necessarily have to be a biological mother of the child to acquire this status.

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<tr>
<td>It is becoming more common today for one to adopt a child as many are rightly, legally and religiously doing. By this very fact, such a woman qualifies as a mother. This is commendable more so in our contemporary society where so many destitute children are orphaned or thrown away and others abandoned.</td>
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</table>
6.5.5 Bearing the above in mind, you need to identify single mothers’ Categories.

A profound critically analysis of the diverse types of single mothers is indispensable. This should be done in collaboration with the next sub-title which examines the multi-faceted causes of single motherhood.

Activity 6.3
Read and understand the following outstanding categories of single mothers from- P.N. Wachege, Third Millennium African Single Mothers & Mother Widows: Ethno-Religio-Philosophical Touch (Nairobi: P.N. Wachege, 2003), pp.72--126.

1) Raped Single Mothers;
2) Widowed Single Mothers;
3) Post Single Mothers’ Mothers;
4) Feminist cum Feminism Single Mothers;
5) Ghost Marriage Single Mothers;
6) Women with Red Thighs Single Mothers;
7) University Students Single Mothers;
8) Adoptive Single Mothers;
9) Insatiable Sex-maniacs Single Mothers;
10) Women to women Single Mothers;
11) Radical Response to Christ Single Mothers;
12) Mentally Deranged cum Physically Challenged Single Mothers;
13) Incongruent Charactered Single Mothers;
14) Permanent Confined Husbands’ Single Mothers;
15) Commitment Phobia Single Mothers;
16) Ghetto and Prostitutes Single Mothers;
17) Ethnic cum Tribal Clashes Single Mothers;
18) Devil Worship Adherence Single Mothers;  
19) Husband Murderers Single Mothers;  
20) Parent and Family Pressured Single Mothers;  
21) Bad Omen Carriers Single Mothers;  
22) Faith Adherence Preference Single Mothers;  
23) Academic Pursuit/Erudition Advancement Single Mothers;  
24) Broken Marriages/Separation/Divorce Single Mothers;  
25) School/Colleges Drop Out Girls Single Mothers;  
26) Neglected Polygamous Marriage Single Mothers;  
27) Lesbian Single Mothers;  
28) Socially Feared Diseases Single Mothers;  
29) Voluntary/Own Choice Single Mothers;  
30) Post Commercial Sex Workers Single Mothers;  
31) Incest-ed Single Mothers

**Intext Question**

What other types of single motherhood are you aware of and how do you explain them?

**6.6 Examining the Causes of Single Motherhood Phenomenon.**

It is important for you to know that you cannot understand single mothers’ families adequately without a thorough knowledge of their respective causes. The truth is that there are **multifaceted causes of single motherhood. Each of the causes triggers respective uniqueness.** It does not take a lot of effort from you to notice some significant causes of single motherhood that stand out in the midst of others. The following are some of such causes which are identified and rather comprehensively explicated by P.N. Wachege:

**Activity 6.4**

Read and understand the following outstanding **causes** of single motherhood
as profoundly documented in- P.N. Wachege, *Third Millennium African Single Mothers & Mother Widows: Ethno-Religio-Philosophical Touch* (Nairobi: P.N. Wachege, 2003), pp.130-150

1) Widowhood;
2) Perennial Separation and Divorce;
3) Naïve Venture into the World of Men;
4) Irresponsibility-Men’s and Women’s;
5) Prolonged Seclusion and Confinement;
6) Anti-Social Behaviors: Witchcraft and Destructive Magic;
7) Men’s Unethical Maneuvers and Manipulations;
8) Rifts from Family Planning and Birth Control;
9) Individual Choice;
10) Permissiveness;
11) Cheap Sex-oriented Mass Media and Modernization;
12) Economic Pressure and Social Strain;
13) Security and Assurance Endeavor;
14) Our African Society’s Double Standards in Relation to Men and Women Issues;
15) Adherence to One’s Career;
16) Education and Schooling;
17) Christian Proselitization and Catechesis;
18) Rape;
19) Parents’ Harshness and Unreasonableness;
20) Wives Actually Killing Their Own Husbands;
21) House “Marriage”;

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22) Labor Migration;
23) Christ’s Radical Discipleship Demands;
24) Exaggerated Radical Feminism;
25) Distorted Gender Sensitivity.

These outstanding causes of single motherhood are rampant in our African society. The elements are somehow inter-related and inter-twined in their underlying principle. They have as their common denominator the explicit fact that they are major causes, among others, of the above form of family-hood.

6.7 Perusal of Traditional Perspective, Treatment and Mistreatment of Single Mothers.

There is, furthermore, a great need to address traditional perspective, treatment and mistreatment of Single Mothers

6.7.1 Introductory Reflections is important.

You should equip yourself with the underlying philosophy involved as follows.

1) Among many African ethnic groups, single motherhood was not a way of life. It was actually a deviation from the rightful proper way of life. Nevertheless, the sage philosophical reasoning was: they were still somehow respected and honored as mothers.

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<td>Why do you think in our African traditional society, people could not understand how and why a woman could bear a child or children and bring them up alone?</td>
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2) The basic reasoning was not only that single motherhood was associated with immorality. It was fundamentally because customarily traditional marriage was a must for any normal person bearing children within family framework thereby perpetuating the clan, promoting the community, enhancing family solidarity and participating actively in being pro-life.

3) Customary traditional marriage was a renowned uniting factor of persons enabling proper authentic relationships and essential mutuality with the earthly living members, the departed spiritualized ones, the ancestors and the environs of the anim ate and the inanimate, the divinities and ultimately the Almighty Supreme Being called Ngai or Nyasai or
Mwenenyaga… or God. **Marriage was thus the very centre of life and living.** It was a life institution making somebody be a somebody, a person be a real person, and a community be a real **vitalistic** perpetual community all **in family solidarity.**

4) Marriage was taken most seriously as a “holy”/sacred and wholistic part of life and living. It was a *de facto* fabric of the African community and society as such. Marriage was the very backbone of the community and the core of the African family’s interpersonal and social structures. It was the gist of humanity and humanness. Traditional Africans carefully guided, guarded, promoted and supported it mainly by implementing a set of significant customary laws, values, taboos and norms.

5) Under normal circumstances, marriage was entered into after a thorough knowledge of the consort’s background, family genealogical history, individual personalistic temperaments and an ample process of preparation imbued with critical invaluable initiatic rites. That is why children were carefully and assiduously brought up and earnestly socialized with and into this vital value in mind through accompanying well organized and carefully implemented initiatory rituals and traditional religio-socio-ethical philosophical pedagogy.

### 6.7.2 African Philosophy On and About Single Mothers is crucial.

You would do well to enlighten yourself with the following further insights concerning our subject.

1) With the above in mind, how could a woman with no husband be considered to be a parent simply because she had a child or children? How could her dwelling be traditionally perceived as a home? Moreover, how could the accompanying vital human set-up be regarded to be a family? And what is the African traditional philosophy on and about single mothers?

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<td>The general attitude towards single mothers, and indeed, the bottom line philosophy in the African traditional society was that they were <strong>incomplete</strong> beings and <strong>unfulfilled</strong> persons of <strong>extra-ordinary</strong> parenthood and family normalcy. The worldview was that full status and accomplishment were realized in marriage. Consequently, single mothers could then not acquire these traditional life requisites. They actually remained juveniles in the traditional society.</td>
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2) Mothers with no husbands, therefore, **were a cause of serious concern, great shame and embarrassment.** They were somehow withdrawn from the family limelight and in a way, socially excluded or held in contempt. Their state, in their status of lack of official
attachment to men they could call their husbands, traditionally rendered them incomplete beings and unfulfilled persons. This earned them social condemnation and ridicule even among their peers. One may, of course, query whether male accomplice rank as righteous, complete or fulfilled and fully accepted.

3) Traditional code of behavior and ethical precepts giving way of life in form of taboos, customs, traditions, disciplinary observances and related rules tend to make single mothers feel shameful, remorseful, undermined, fickle in character and guilty of being mothers. These mothers were viewed as having violated matrimonial covenant in the sense that among the Africans a normal family, an ordinary one at that, has to have a mother and a father together with a child or children.

6.7.3 Sub-section Conclusion:

Each ethnic group has its traditional perspective, treatment and mistreatment of single mothers. The selection and emphasis, obviously, varies.

**Activity 6.4**

Examine this issue in your own ethnic group and dispose yourself well to learn from other ethnic groups through dialogue and comparing notes for mutual enrichment.

6.8 Analyzing Third Millennium Challenges to Traditional Perspectives, Perception, Treatment and Mistreatment of Single Mothers.

It is good to know that the traditional perspective, treatment and mistreatment of single mothers and their respective families are going through the rigor of contemporary test. Though some of the aspects remain conservative, nevertheless, there are strong transforming forces in today’s society.

**Intext Question**

How are single mothers’ families treated in your community and what is the underlying philosophy behind it?

6.8.1 Some setting reflections are in order.
You need to bear the following basic issues in mind that:

1) **Africans, like other races and ethnic groups, are part and parcel of this world which has become a “global village” of cultural interpenetration, modern civilization, enterprising ever innovative Information Technology cum mass media, urbanization, industrialization, remuneration vocations, salaried jobs, evangelization ministry and Christianizing mission, quest for economic independence and accelerated changes of modernity. In no way then can our African cultures remain the way they used to be in the traditional society—especially on the issue of single mothers.**

2) The impact of social change, social interaction and “flight” scholars cum scholarship are certainly and surely exerting their effects on our Third Millennium society as is the case the world over. These factors have precipitated tremendous changes in life, life-style and family issues. It is a reality we cannot afford to act ignorant of but be alert to.

3) Admittedly, socio-political, economic, cultural and modernization factors have watered down African cultural fabrics, communal network and family solidarity.

4) The above indulgences, cultural disintegration and traditional adulteration are fundamental agents of bothersome single motherhood phenomenon which is most pronounced in this Third Millennium.

5) We are witnessing a new trend whereby numerous numbers of women deliberately choose to opt for single motherhood.

6) **The above reality compels us to assert that our traditional perception of marriage within the parameter of family solidarity is no longer acceptable uncritically.** The transitional forces are generating deeper turmoil in relation to the African traditional way of life and customary orientation.

7) The social anathema attached to them is apparently ineffective and, somewhat, discredited. There is a real breakdown of the traditional family set-up, home cohesion, cultural values and customary ethical norms.

8) Inevitably then, single mothers today are not treated in exactly the same way as in the traditional society. Neither are the guilt, shame and trauma attached to this state of life as strong as it used to be.

6.8.2 **Some of the Outstanding Challenges:**

There are powerful tests single mothers and their families are going through today.
Intext Question

What kind of challenges do single mothers’ families go through in your community and what advice would you give to your Church for a more fruitful pastoral care to such families?

Among the vivid challenges are:

1) Impact of socio-religio-economic, political, cultural and media modernization agents;
2) Taboos being de-tabooed;
3) Initiatic rites being seriously undermined and held in contempt;
4) Weakening of traditional norms, cultural aspirations and religiosity;
5) Dwindling communal concern;
6) Abuse of traditional worldview effecting anti-family practices;
7) Induced exodus from maternal homes;
8) Getting more educated and schooled;
9) Misplaced sexuality;
10) Questionable widow inheritance, high cost of living, diseases and Christian challenges;
11) Increment of the challenged ones and emergence of more humane organizations;
12) Freedom of association and mobility;
13) And Reformed property inheritance and re-marriage.

Activity 6.5


6.8.3 Concluding reflections.

At this point you should be able to draw invaluable conclusions. Some of them are as follows:
1) From the foregoing it appears that our modern Third Millennium society somewhere in its socio-cultural ethical and religious matters has grown lax or somehow eradicated vital traditional heritage in family affairs and home shauri. It comes as no surprise then, that single motherhood is now something that has become part and parcel of our African society. One would dare say that it is now almost the “normal” way of motherhood and family parenthood. Truth has it that among single mothers are renowned personalities who enjoy respect, mentorship, exemplarity and recognition both nationally and inter-nationally.

2) As the Lecture has elaborated, new challenges brought about by new situations in life and diverse circumstances of change and transforming civilization have brought about moderation and evolutions among our Africans today. As the Lecture has profoundly explained, modern changes have influenced virtually all sectors and aspects of life and practically all living disciplines.

3) Yet, admittedly, some elements and characteristics of the African cosmotheandric perception of being and beingness thanks to parenthood persist and remain conservative. No realm of life, however, can be said to be the way it was before the changes and the new circumstances we encounter and the changing generations we are confronted with in this epoch.

4) Despite all these, the Lecture has made it clear that a mother, single or married, made to let go her motherhood and motherliness is *ipso facto* deprived of her dignity, worth and beingness among the human beings. Hence the indispensability to accord mothers the dignity they deserve as mothers.

5) The above are among the main issues in the Trend within the ACT the Lecture has examined.

6.9 Summary

In this Lecture, you were initiated into a profound discussion concerning the Trend geared towards family issues especially African Single Mothers’ and Widowed Mothers’ families. The Lecture helped you to understand the nature, philosophy and challenges involved and the way forward taking into account the traditional setting and contemporary perspective. You should now be able to:

- Impress upon yourself the invaluability of today’s Trend geared towards family issues especially African Single Mothers’ and Widowed Mothers’ families which some exponents of ACT are involved in and have a proper setting for it;
- Profoundly explain the nature of single mothers using socio-cultural-philosophical analysis;
- Identify and critically elaborate the main causes of single motherhood phenomenon;
- Give and explain the traditional treatment and mistreatment of single mothers;
- Expose and examine Third Millennium challenges to traditional perspectives, perception, treatment and mistreatment of single mothers;
- Identify and explicate the positive elements and negative aspects of single motherhood;
- Provide and assess some single mothers’ advices to the Church concerning them; and draw out some recommendations on the way forward to enrich this Trend of family theology to make it more fruitful.

**Concluding Activity 6.6** Mention and explain major positive elements and negative aspects of any two categories of single mothers.

### 6.10 References

LECTURE SEVEN
THE TREND OF AFRICAN CHRISTIAN FEMINIST CUM WOMEN LIBERATION THEOLOGIES

Lecture Outline

7.1 Introduction.

7.2 Objectives.

7.3 Definition and Main Objectives.

7.4 Multi-dimensional Approach to African Feminist/Women Liberation Theology.

7.5 Biblical/Christian Tradition Setting.


7.7 Why Feminists/Women Liberation Theologians in Africa Own Jesus as the Model and Mentor in Their Theological Trend.

7.8 Men as the Main Culprits in Women Oppression and Exploitation.

7.9 Controversial Lukan Pericope (Lk 10: 38-42) on Mary’s and Martha’s Hospitable Encounter with Jesus in Their Bethany Home as an Excellent Example of Women Liberation Theologians’ Passion in Sourcing from the Bible.

7.10 Summary.

7.1 Introduction.

In Lecture Six you were introduced to the Trend geared towards family issues especially African single mothers’ and widowed mothers’ families. In this Lecture you will learn about the Trend of African Christian feminist cum women liberation theologies.
One of the powerful Trends in contemporary ACT is that of African Christian Feminist cum Women Liberation Theologies. Though the exponents borrow heavily from Western scholars, they nevertheless contextualize it remarkably. This Lecture will peruse and elaborate this Trend of African Feminist cum Women Liberation Theologies as highly rooted in both Biblical/Christian Tradition sources and African women experiences.

It is important for you to know also that this Trend of doing liberation theology in Africa emerged more explicitly in the last quarter of the Twentieth Century. At fast it was extremely radical owing to the influence of the Western radical feminists’ revolutionary stance. This was so since by then there was a close rather spontaneous affinity between the Westerners and the Africans. Nevertheless, as time went on, the militancy gave way to a moderate approach thanks to African cultural rooting which-as you know- is highly religious and has a more complementary attitude towards gender issues.

7.2 Objectives

The goal of this Lecture is to Peruse and elaborate the Trend of African Christian Feminist cum Women Liberation Theologies as highly rooted in both Biblical/Christian Tradition sources and women experiences. With this finality, therefore, by the end of this Lecture, you should be able to:

1. Define and indicate the Main Objectives of this Trend;
2. Explain the Multi-dimensional Approach to African Feminist/Women Liberation Theology;
3. Elaborate the Biblical/Christian Tradition Setting of the Trend;
5. Verify Why Feminists/Women Liberation Theologians in Africa Own Jesus as the Model and Mentor in Their Theological Trend;
6. Identify Men as the Main Culprits in Women Oppression and Exploitation;
7. Discuss Luke’s pericope (10: 38-42) on Mary’s and Martha’s Hospitable Encounter With Jesus in Their Bethany Home as an Excellent Example of Women Liberation Theologians’ Critical Passionate Sourcing from the Bible.
7.3 Definition and Main Objectives.

**Intext Question**

What do you understand by African Feminist/Women Liberation Theology

The nature of feminism which is greatly responsible for the pluriformity of women liberation is fitting in the perception of African Feminist/Women Liberation Theology.

**7.3.1 Teresia 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.”

**Activity 7.1**


**7.3.2 P.N. Wachege** explains women “oppression and exploitation” as follows:

“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”- P.N. Wachege, *African Women Liberation: A Man’s Perspective* (Nairobi: P.N. Wachege, 1992), p.22.
7.3.3 Main Objectives of this Mode of Liberation.

**Intext Question**

What is the finality of the above mode of liberation theology that triggers the Lecture’s Trend?

There are a considerable number of aims of feminist or, rather, women liberation approach to ACT. 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 to women and which undermine women dignity, worth and authenticity.

3) To challenge women to endeavor to do their own **exegesis** drawing inspiration from women’s experiences as well as conscientizing them to learn, understand and interpret the Bible from the point of view of women.

**Take note**

In this regard, one would do well to take note of H.M. Conn’s cautious insights in our Lecture’s sub-section 6.5.4.

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.
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.

### 7.4 Multi-dimensional Approach to African Feminist/Women Liberation Theology.

Feminist theology or women liberation approach to theology is not monolithic. It is not the same all over. Neither does it have a uniform outlook.

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<tr>
<td>What triggers pluriformity in African Feminist/Women Liberation Theology and to what effect?</td>
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There is a pluriformity of it hence the multi-dimensional approach to it.

#### 7.4.1 Among the crucial factors that are responsible for distinct African Women Liberation Theologies are different notions of “feminism”. Each perception of “feminism” necessarily triggers a diverse somehow autonomous approach to African Women Liberation Theology.

#### 7.4.2 On the issue of diverse and diverging notions of “feminism”, Elizabeth S. Fiorenza provides an invaluable documented articulation and critical analyzes in her book titled E.S. Fiorenza, *Wisdom Ways: Introducing Feminist Biblical Interpretation* (Maryknoll New York: Orbis Books, 2001), pp. 60-63 as follows:

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.

### Intext Question

Why do you think **Maternal Feminism** is so appealing to both traditional and contemporary African women?

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.

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.

### Take note

This ecological spirit and, indeed, paradigm is well explained in- L. Boff, *Cry of the Earth, Cry of the Poor* (Maryknoll, New York: Orbis Books, 1997), pp.1ff.
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.

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.

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**Take note**

You can examine these international conferences more profitably in the light of L. Boff, *Saint Francis: A Model for Human Liberation* (London: SCM Press, 1982), pp.3-157. From this monograph, you will broaden your feminist knowledge in relation to:

1. An oppressive consumer-oriented society;
2. The spiritual and economic barriers between rich and poor;
3. Human liberation achieved not by violence but by inner strength;
4. The new Church reflecting and ministering to existing realities;
5. The integration of the negative into everyday life.
15) Religious feminism (Jewish, Christian, Muslim, Goddess, Buddhist, American Indian, Hindu, Indigenous, Aborigine or Dalit 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.

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.

Take note

The bottom-line is that these diverse and diverging categories of feminism trigger a pluriformity of African women liberation. They bring about a multidimensional approach to this Trend of theologizing. To be more pragmatic, for instance, one basing ones women liberation theology on Maternal Feminism 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 you to handle feminist theology/women liberation theology with a multi-faceted approach by identifying the kind of feminism each is based on.

7.5 Biblical / Christian Tradition Setting.

The Trend in this Lecture is remarkably based, not just on women experiences but more so on Biblical sources and Christian Tradition. You must remember that the Bible is the main source of any Christian theology together with Christian Tradition and traditions. That is why the Lecture has now to give and elaborate the Biblical setting of the Trend.

7.5.1 In Geneses Chapters 1-2, they make you learn the narrative of how the Creator created man and woman.
God did this 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).

Activity 7.2

The exponents of this trend remind you that 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.

7.5.2 For the proponents, the above challenge triggered a new agenda of study, theological reflection, theological investigations and Biblical exegesis.

According to H.M. Conn:


7.5.3 H.M. Conn cautions proponents of negative rejectionism subjected to the Bible and Tradition by impatient radical feminists.

Intext Question
What critical ideas does H.M. Conn give with regard to serious sourcing from the Bible
In her realistic approach to the Bible, Conn accentuates the following fundamental points in view of the above:

1) That the entire Biblical message, including that about women, revolves, not around patriarchal 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);

2) That 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) That 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) That 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) That 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);
6) That before the fall into sin, man and woman lived in covenant mutuality and solidarity before God. In partnership they rebel against God and rend that harmony…The battle of the sexes is begun, the woman’s desire to control the husband, the man’s to master her (cf. Gen. 4:7b). Mutuality turns to superiority and inferiority;

7) That 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 (Ibid., pp.256-258).

7.5.4 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.

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

As a result of its universality, social cum humanitarian concern, accentuation of the Holy Spirit who inspires and illumines all indiscriminately and, best of all, giving fuller information on and about women, Lukan Gospel is referred to as “feminist Gospel” that appeals to African Christian women liberationists a great deal.

7.6.1 You have to appreciate, nevertheless, that Jesus’ liberational ministry cuts across the New Testament. His liberation role in reference to women is not a confine of Lukan Gospel. To take but one example, the Gospel According to Mark records numerous incidents in this regard.

7.6.2 To put you into the picture, consider the following episodes recorded in Markan Gospel.

1) Jesus allowed a woman with a bad name at Bethany to play the prophetic role of anointing Him at the home of Simon the Leper praising her for her liberated repentant gesture (Mk 14: 3-9). The scenario is recorded also in Mt 26: 6-13 and Jn 12; 1-8;

2) Jesus curing and healing the woman who had endured severe hemorrhage whose faith was so liberated that she believed that Jesus, though not a physician by profession, was able to make her well (Mk5: 25-34);

Activity 7.3
Compare this episode i.e., Mk 5: 25-34, with that of the healing of Bartimaeus (Mk 10; 46-52).

3) The “women of the Cross” who, out of their liberated conviction of the innocence of Jesus fearlessly stood by Him in His crucifixion (Mk 15: 40-41), at His burial (Mk 15:47); and the brave daring Mary Magdalene who had the privilege of being the first to talk with the risen Jesus and had the honor of being entrusted with the transmission of the Good News of His resurrection to the others (Mk 16: 1-8);

4) That daring Phoenician woman of deep liberating faith who engaged Jesus in a discussion on prejudices against the Gentiles by the Jews, knowing very well Jesus was a
Jew and she a non-Jew cum a woman at that, winning the admiration of Jesus who had to grant her request forthwith (Mk 7: 24-30).

There is no doubt that, these and other pericopes guide, inspire and illumine African Christian women liberationists.

7.6.3 While appreciating the above, the fact remains that the Gospel According to Luke is outstanding with regard to conveying Jesus as the Model and Mentor of African Christian women liberationists. For you to appreciate this assertion, think about the following analyzes:

1) Luke describes better than the others Jesus’ humanitarian concern, for which this Gospel is called nowadays “the Social Gospel”: His deep sympathy for the poor, oppressed and the outcast. While Mt stresses perfection in 5:48, Luke emphasizes mercy Lk 6:36. Only Lk adds after the Beatitudes a series of woes against the rich, 6:24-26. Only Lk has the beautiful passage on selfless love towards the poor and the sick in 14:12-14.

Take note
Since women are generally the socially deprived, dehumanized, reduced to the unhappiness of dependence and, therefore, living in a state of abject poverty at the mercy of the rich, what is recorded here speaks to their hearts.

2) Exhortation to almsgiving and voluntary poverty occur more frequently in Lk, 6:20ff; 12:33f; 14:33; 16:25ff etc. Luke alone records Zacchaeus’ public renunciation of his earlier life of dishonesty as a tax collector, Lk 19:8; and of the Pharisees as “lovers of money”, Lk 16:14.

Take note   Since women are occasionally the victims of the “Zacchaeus of the contemporary society” who reduce them to objects of “charity”, such exaltations to genuine almsgiving, authentic poverty and restitution with them as the main beneficiaries for being deprived by exploitative “money lovers”, such conversion of their exploiters and restitution thereby strikes them. Hence their admiration of Jesus.

Since women are in great need of the intervention of a most powerful force to overcome the stumbling blocks and “impediments” in their life and living as well as support to enable and empower them in the realization of their difficult Trend of theologizing, such Pneumatological touch and reality Who Jesus left to us as His legacy makes them own Him most in their liberation task.

4) **While the writers of the New Testament were rather mean in recording women stories and history from their point of reference, Luke was generous** in this regard. No wonder Christian women liberationists embrace this New Testament Document as their Gospel. Moreover, more than any other New Testament Document, Luke is notorious in pairing up men and women in important occasions and events. This points to the universality of the Good News and equality of gender in this regard. To some, of course, this is an un-lawful mixture!

7.6.4 On this issue, African theologian Luke Ssemakula points out that:


**Intext Question**

How does African theologian Luke Ssemakula justify this assertion?

It would be of great value for you to take into account how Ssemakula argues his case. This is how he verifies the above:

“This is very evident in the practice of pairing two narratives where a man and a woman are the main protagonists. Some of the famous cases are: the annunciation to Zachariah and Mary (1:11-20, 26-38); Simeon and Ann await God’s revelation (2: 25-38); the centurion of Capharnaum and
the widow of Nain (7:1-7); the man with the mustard seed and the woman with the leaven (13: 18-21); the man with 100 sheep and the woman with ten pieces of silver (15; 4-10); the woman at the tomb and the Emmaus disciples (23:35-24:35); Ananias and Sapphira (Acts 5: 1-11); Dionysius and Damaris (Acts 17:34). Martha and Mary are paired with the Good Samaritan (10: 29-42)”-Ibid., p.24.

7.7 Why Feminists/Women Liberation Theologians in Africa Own Jesus as their Model and Mentor in Their Theological Trend.

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

7.7.1 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.

Activity 7.4

7.7.2 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.

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.
7.7.3 It would be striking for you to have an awareness of some other kinds of Biblical passages African women liberation theologians source from. Through the following five texts- among others-, they Bibliically verify that Jesus Christ was pro-women and, therefore, pro-them:

1) **Mk 5: 25-34**: The desperate woman bogged down with hemorrhage for 12 years was very daring. Imbued with courage and liberating faith, she encountered the itinerate Jesus. He was on a journey to cure the little daughter of Jairus at the request of this *Archisynagogus* (Ruler of the Synagogue). Though she had hemorrhage she dared touch Jesus’ clothes (violating a serious taboo) and in public (Mk 5: 25-26) knowing very well the serious implications among the Jews!

The cured woman had courage also to own up to her deed without being persuaded by anyone thereby volunteering to tell the whole truth (Mk 5: 32-34). Jesus in turn acknowledged her deep faith and liberating courage. He not only guaranteed her cure from her severe nagging bleeding but, above all, healed her from her troubles.

Tha woman’s disadvantaged situation of hemorrhage suppressed her so much that she was unable to live authentically just as numerous jobless African women bogged down with diseases like acute fibroids and breast cancer are enslaved in dependence.

### Take note

Thanks to her deep liberating faith: she pushed herself into the path of Jesus not fearing to take the initiative in breaking the monumental Jewish undermining taboo of not mingling with people while she was “dirty” (cf. Lev. 15: 25-30). She went to an extent of daring to touch Jesus’ clothes. By so doing, she ignited and provoked a tense dialogue with Jesus who was a Jewish male after the touch brought about immediate cure. She owned up the misconduct of touching Jesus’ garments and the rationale behind it. Consequently, Jesus was so touched by her liberating faith and courage that He also healed her. In a way she actually transformed Jesus to an extent of “making” Jesus own her with the attribute “my daughter”.

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2) 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 un-imagineable among the Jewish Rabbis. It was also extremely scandalous for Him to frequent those women’s home and unaccompanied at that.

3) 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!

4) 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 cultural 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.

5) 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 this 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.

These and many other Biblical texts make women persuade women to not only take Jesus as their exemplar in their Trend of Liberation Theology. They also accept Him as pro-women. The above empower them to identify themselves with Jesus, though a man and a Jew at that, such that you cannot understand African Feminist/Liberation Theology without a prior knowledge of Jesus as the Liberator par excellence.

Activity 7.5

You may familiarize yourself with this attribute by reading- L. Boff, Jesus Christ Liberator: A Critical Christology for Our Time (London: SPCK, 1980),
7.8 Men as the Main Culprits in Women Oppression and Exploitation.

Your experiential knowledge brings to your awareness that, from time immemorial, women have been subjected to brutality, harassment, dehumanization, depersonalization, oppression and exploitation mainly by their male consorts (and occasionally by fellow women).

7.8.1 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.

7.8.2 Thanks to today’s Trend in our subject-matter, you notice some transforming factors and mitigating elements. Let us identify some liberating voices and contribution in this regard:

1) **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.

2) **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”- B.I Mosala, “Black Theology and the Struggle of the Black Women in South Africa” in I. J. Mosala and B. Tlhagale (Eds.), The Unquestionable Right to be Free: Black Theology from South Africa (Maryknoll, New York: Orbis Books, 1986), p.132.

3) 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”- P.N. Wachege, African Women Liberation: A Man’s Perspective (Nairobi: P.N. Wachege, 1992), p.23.

7.8.3 Sevenfold Basic Mode of Oppression and Exploitation of African women:

There are, according to P.N. Wachege, at least SEVEN basic oppressive and exploitative factors African women are subjected to. These are:

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.
Activity 7.7

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. You are, therefore required to read them for yourself.

7.8.4 On how to liberate from these sevenfold un-freedom factors, Wachege has critically given the way forward as a pragmatic model in the same monograph. He profoundly comes up with transforming requisites in reference to the seven un-freedom factors.

Intext Question


He has also given and verified that Jesus the Liberator *par excellence* is the best model for African Christian Women liberators.

Intext Question

What is your assessment of Wachege’s justification that Jesus the Liberator *par excellence* is the best model for African Christian Women liberators as recorded in- *Ibid.*, pp.143-169?

Wachege crowns the issue with a creatively proposed exemplary type of African Christian Women Liberation theology.
Take note

To avoid making this Lecture too weighty, for the above contribution, you are referred to this publication- Ibid., pp.179-193.

7.9 Controversial Lukan Pericope (Lk 10: 38-42) on Mary’s and Martha’s Hospitable Encounter With Jesus in Their Bethany Home as an Excellent Example of Women Liberation Theologians’ Critical Passionate Sourcing from the Bible.

As earlier explicated, for this theological Trend to qualify as Christian, it must necessarily source from Christian crucial sources- especially the Bible itself and Tradition. That is why, as explained earlier, exponents of the Trend draw a lot of inspiration from Biblical passages that touch and speak to them. It is of immense importance, therefore, for you to know how the proponents of the Lecture’s Trend source from the Bible. For practical purposes, let us discuss just one pericope i.e., Lk 10: 38-42.

7.9.1 In this text (Lk: 10: 38-42), Martha and her sister Mary dared to invite Jesus in their Bethany home. By the Jewish tradition and rabbi’s etiquette, this was crazy of them.

Activity7.8


7.9.2 You will be struck by the passion with which women liberationists have read, understood, interpreted and creatively drawn insights from the above pericope in this theological Trend. Let it suffice to consider the thinking of some of these liberationists as documented by L. Semakula in- Luke 10: 38-42, Martha and Mary: A Historical Interpretation, in V. Zinkuratire (Ed.), ACS, Nairobi: CUEA Publications, vol.18, nu.3, September 2002, pp.22-46.:”

7.9.3 Elizabeth Fiorenza is a feminist who sources from the Bible critically.
Activity 7.9


Elizabeth Fiorenza “creatively proposes four interpretative strategies for such a text:

1) “First, a hermeneutics of suspicion by which she questions an abstractionist reading of the text that reduces Martha and Mary to theological types like justification by faith or by works, or a good versus bad woman polarization. Through her linguistic and form critical analysis, she sees antagonism (with Martha losing out) in this text which she traces not to Jesus but to Luke’s social-ecclesial situation- Fiorenza, But She Said, pp. 57-58, 60-62.

2) “Second, a hermeneutics of remembrance by which she tries to recover the memory behind the text, which is, the alleged fact that diakonia in Luke’s time referred to ecclesial leadership, particularly to Eucharistic table service and proclamation of the Word in the house Church. The implication is Luke’s interest in subordinating women’s leadership to a passive role- Fiorenza, But She Said, pp.62-68.

3) “The third is a hermeneutics of proclamation by which Fiorenza rejects oppressive texts as the Word of God, and celebrates women as historical and independent apostolic figures. An example is how she interprets Mary: ‘Mary’s audacity in taking time out from work to sit idle and relax in good company can have a liberating effect’- Fiorenza, But She Said, p.70. Also E. Fiorenza, “A Feminist Critical Interpretation, p. 24.

4) “The fourth is a hermeneutics of liberative vision and imagination by which through imagination, she tries to retell the story of Jesus with the sisters in the light of her earlier construction – Fiorenza, But She Said, pp.73-76.” – L. Semakula in- Luke 10: 38-42, Martha and Mary: p.29.

7.9.5 Barbara Reid also delves into the exegetical discussion from the point of view of women.
Activity 7.10


1) “Barbara Reid asks why the sisters are cast dualistically, why only hearing of the word is esteemed here whereas the Gospel generally emphasizes both hearing and doing and why Jesus would not sympathize with Martha, the underdog?

2) “She challenges the paring of Luke 10: 38-42 with the story of the Good Samaritan arguing that there is no evidence to back it up in the tradition, in addition to the fact that the two stories illustrate different points- B. Reid, *Choosing the Better Part? Women in the Gospel of Luke*, 145, 147-148.

3) “Reid debunks the conception that Jesus was revolutionary in instructing Mary. The education of women at the time was nothing new. She interprets the real point of disagreement in the text as concerning what ministries the women would be involved in.

4) “Reid charges Luke with the intention of silencing women by placing a strong approval of the silent Mary in Jesus’ mouth.

5) “She translates the Greek *perispao* (10:40) which is commonly translated as ‘distracted,’ as ‘being pulled or dragged away’.

6) “Martha’s complain then is that she is being dragged away from diaconal ministry and her female companions have acquiesced into a silent role”- L. Ssemakula in- *Luke 10: 38-42, Martha and Mary*: pp. 29-30.

7.9.6 Adele Reinhartz too makes her contribution in this regard.

Activity 7:11

Get her more comprehensive explications in- A. Reinhartz, “From Narrative to History: The Resurrection of Mary and Martha,” in “Women Like This” *New Perspective on Jewish Women in Greco-Roman World*, Amy-Jill Levine
Take note

Adele Reinhartz is a Jewish scholar who is an exponent of Feminist Theology. The implication is that she is well grounded in Jewish world-view and religiosity.

1) “Adele Reinhartz criticizes the agenda of Fiorenza.
3) “She suggests that the gentle ‘rebuke’ to Martha possibly refer to not letting one element of discipleship overshadow the importance of listening to the Word. Mary demonstrates the central element of discipleship: ‘true service consists not of caring for physical needs but of ingesting, and digesting, the message of the Gospel’- A. Reinhartz, “From Narrative to History, pp. 170-71.
4) “She dismisses Fiorenza’s claim that the sisters’ relationship to Jesus is androcentric by characterizing it as Christocentric.
5) “She also asserts that by using women to express his views on discipleship, Luke attests to a role for women in the Church.

7.9.7 Turid Seim is not afraid to critic fellow women scholars as she contributes to the debate.
Activity 7.12

1) “Turid Seim claims that some of Fiorenza’s interpretations betray vested political and theological interests.
2) “She says that the original connotation of diakonia (‘serve food’ or ‘to wait at table’) is at play in 10:40- T. Seim, The Double Message: pp. 72, 73.
3) “Seim places Luke 10:38-42 in the travel narrative and holds that it is a narrative about hospitality. She says that Martha’s receiving Jesus into her home contrasts with the Samaritans who did not receive Him (9:53).
4) “She rejects Fiorenza’s reading of Martha’s address to Jesus as Kyrios as an automatic proof that it refers to the life history of a later community. She believes that Jesus’ reply to Martha is not about her serving but the way it is done.
5) “The antithesis, therefore, is between agitated toil and concentration on hearing Jesus’ words but she notes the positive portrayal of diakonia in the Gospel makes Martha’s part of good too, Mary’s being better. Here she agrees with Fiorenza that one ministry is subordinated to another.
6) “Seim concludes that this text opens up women to leadership roles (hearing the Word and doing service), though she regrets that women are not explicitly commissioned to preach but to be recipients of the Word”- T. Seim, The Double Message: pp.100, 103, 105, 106-07, 112, 118, 163”- L. Ssemakula in- Luke 10: 38-42, Martha and Mary: pp. 30,31.

7.9.8 Victoria Koperski is not left out either.

Activity 7.13

1) “Victoria Koperski faults Reinhartz for not paying attention to the text’s depicting Martha as subordinate and childish, for not dealing with the omission in Luke-Acts of a leading
male/female pair, while presenting males as leaders and not doing the same for women despite evidence to the contrary.


7.9.9 **Jane Via** is also elaborate in the discussion.

### Activity 7.14


1) “Via shows that *diakonia* texts in Luke-Acts relate to women within the context of the preparation and service of food.

2) “She argues that meal etiquette is the model of Jesus for the exercise of authority in the Christian community (see Lk22:27) as well as being a metaphor for discipleship: as Jesus is among them as a waiter, so must leaders serve and all disciples live lives of service.

3) “She sees a direct connection between meal imagery and hearing the Word in the Martha and Mary text.

4) “It is acceptable for women to do *diakonia* and to hear the Word.


7.9.10 As we conclude this sub-section:

1) You are now convinced of how rich the Lukan passage is.

2) You are well persuaded to appreciate the passion with which the exponents of African Christian feminist/Women Liberation Trend embrace the pericope.

3) You might have noticed that practically all the above Christian feminist scholars grappling with the controversial pericope (namely, Luke 10:38-42) are non-Africans.
Take note

Why do you think African exponents of Christian Feminist/ African Women Liberation are so handicapped in exegesis and what, according to you, is the implication of this lacuna in their liberational works?

4) Nevertheless, **when it comes to women doing exegesis, the Westerners are, admittedly, far ahead of the Africans.** Theirs is most comprehensive and highly scientific! You have to admit, without necessarily feeling ashamed but taking it as a challenge, that **scholars of ACT rely so heavily on Western exegetes- some critically, some slavishly.** This is more pronounced in our Trend of African Christian feminist/Women Liberation Trend. The borrowing is so enormous that there is a great need in taking this discipline of scholarship with the seriousness it deserves.

7.10 Summary

The goal of this Lecture was to peruse and elaborate the Trend of African Christian Feminist cum Women Liberation Theologies as highly rooted in Biblical/Christian Tradition sources and women experiences.

With this finality, the Lecture enabled you to: Define and indicate the main objectives of this Trend; Explain the multi-dimensional approach to African Christian Feminist/Women Liberation Theology; Give and examine the Biblical setting of the Trend; Discuss why Luke’s Gospel stands out in inspiring this Trend.

The Lecture has, moreover, helped you to: Verify why Christian Feminists/Women Liberation Theologians in Africa own Jesus as the Model and Mentor in their theological Trend; Identify and explicate men as the main culprits in women oppression and exploitation; Identify and discuss the controversial Lukan pericope (Lk 10: 38-42) on Mary’s and Martha’s hospitable encounter with Jesus in their Bethany Home as an excellent example of Women Liberation Theologians’ passionate yet critical sourcing from the Bible/Christian Tradition.
Concluding Activity 7.15

Find out some Biblical Texts on Jesus’ liberational activities in reference to women from the Gospel according to Matthew and Johannine Gospel also pointing out what you think strikes African Feminist/Women Liberation Theologians in their theological Trend.

7.11 References


LECTURE EIGHT

THE TREND HANDLING DEMONOLOGY THOUGH A TABOO SUBJECT

LECTURE Outline

8.1 Introduction.

8.2 Objectives.

8.3 Qualifying Demonology as a Valid Contemporary Trend in ACT.

8.4 Explaining the Nature of the Terms “Satan”, “Devil Worship” and “Diabolical Cults”.

8.5 Examining Historical Aspects with Regard to Belief in Satan.

8.6 Discussing Worshippers’ Personality and Enigmatic Advantages of Satanism.

8.7 Exploring Hopeful Struggle and Determined Confrontation in Faith Triggered by Our Lecture’s Trend.

8.8 Drawing out Some Invaluable Concluding Reflections.

8.9 Summary.

8.10 References.

8.1 Introduction.

In Lecture Seven you learned about the Trend of African Christian feminist cum women liberation theologies. In this Lecture you will be confronted with the Trend handling demonology though a taboo subject. This Lecture will enable you to confront and examine the Trend handling Demonology which is regarded as a taboo subject. The Lecture will empower you to qualify Demonology as a valid contemporary Trend in ACT though mainly having those of pastoral and popular level as its main exponents. It will also assist you in comprehending the nature of the terms “Satan”, “Devil Worship” and “Diabolical Cults” which are indispensable in understanding the Trend. The Lecture will, furthermore, empower you in examining the historical aspects with regard to belief in Satan and acceptance of Demonic deeds. In addition to these it will discuss worshippers’ personality and enigmatic advantages of Satanism. This will be followed by an exploration and assessment of hopeful struggle and determined confrontation in
Faith triggered by our Lecture’s Trend. Finally, you will be well disposed to draw out some invaluable concluding reflections.

### 8.2 Objectives

The goal of this Lecture is to confront and examine the Trend Handling Demonology which is regarded as a taboo subject. With this finality, therefore, by the end of this Lecture, you should be able to:

1. Qualify demonology as a valid contemporary Trend in ACT though mainly outside erudition;
2. Explain the nature of the terms “Satan”, “Devil Worship” and “Diabolical Cults”;
3. Examine historical aspects with regard to belief in Satan and acceptance of Demonic deeds;
4. Discuss worshippers’ personality and enigmatic advantages of Satanism;
5. Explore hopeful struggle and determined confrontation in faith triggered by our Lecture’s Trend;
6. Draw out some invaluable concluding reflections.

### 8.3 Qualifying Demonology as a Valid Contemporary Trend in ACT though Mainly Outside Erudition.

8.3.1 To a considerable number of people, perhaps you included, the issue of demonology which is a taboo subject does not qualify as a contemporary Trend in ACT. Yet a critical examination reveals a wide spread emphasis on the theme triggering a kind of paradigm.

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**Take note**

8.3.2 To appreciate this Lecture, you need to recall the nature of ACT.

1. AT (African Theology) in its narrow/technical sense, within the context imposed upon our Unit, consists of ACT.
2. This ACT in turn has a double understanding namely:
   1) **In its broad/etymological 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 Africans.”
   2) **In its narrow/technical 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 Africans.”

**Take note**

So, if you approach Christian Mysteries in the broad/etymological sense- as is the case with demonology- that too qualifies as ACT like is the case when tackled from the narrow/technical point of view.

8.3.3 You should, moreover, bear in mind that ACT is not the monopoly of the academics and their published monographs, journals and other scholarly exercises. It is also done spontaneously, orally and at pastoral level outside academic institutions. Mind you it is also validly transmitted in narrative forms, preaching forms, sermon forms, homily forms and pastoral letters - hence the scarcity of published material in this contemporary powerful demonology realm in ACT.

8.3.4 On the basis of the above setting, spontaneous transmission, preaching, giving sermons and sharing homilies on the Devil/Satan inspired by both Christianity and African socio-religio-cultural perspectives as is so explicit today is actually participating in the realization and growth of ACT.
Intext Question

How do you verify or falsify the assertion that the ordained ministers’ over-emphasis on Devil/Satan in their spontaneous counseling, preaching, sermons, homilies and pastoral letters is a kind of propagation of Devil worship or adoration of Satan?

8.3.5 The proliferation of this powerful orally transmitted and spontaneous theologizing in reference to Devil/Satan qualifies this “ubiquitous” approach as a contemporary Trend in ACT.

Activity 8.1

Visit any Christian church when Mass or Service or Worship is in progress. Experience how strongly you will be hit by a powerful passion on the Pastors’ or Priests’ or Evangelists or televangelists’ or Apostles’ emphasis on demonology.

8.3.6 You should, therefore, realize that to ignore such a tremendous phenomenon on the basis of it being more on the realm of spontaneous popular level and less on scholarly sphere would be a serious lacuna in ACT. The vibrancy, emphasis and geographical spread of this approach to ACT are, indeed, powerful pointers to a theological Trend among the Africans deserving a serious consideration.

Take note

On account of all these and other justifications, you are persuaded- and in fact compelled- to take this ACT that highlights Satan, Devil Worship and Diabolical Cults with the seriousness it deserves.

What is more encouraging is that an effort is being made in putting such ACT material in CDs, DVDs, Power Points and even in publications- and this positive undertaking is ongoing.
Take note

The Lecture will, for convenience sake, use the terms “Devil”, “Satan” and “demon” interchangeably. The assumption is that the three concepts essentially mean the same-at least for our subject matter.

8.4 The Nature of the Terms “Satan”, “Devil Worship” and “Diabolical Cults”:

Take note

It is not enough for you to say that Devil/Satan is the Master of Evil. There is more to it than that! That is why Alex Ojacor is candid in explaining the concept of evil together with the origin and nature of evil in African thought:


It is of immense importance that you get a clear understanding of these terms to have a thorough knowledge of this Lecture.

8.4.1 Karl Rahner defines the “Devil” as “the highest of the evil spirits”-K. Rahner, “The Devil,” in K. Rahner (Ed.), Encyclopedia of Theology: A Concise Sacramentum Mundi (London: Burns and Oates, 1975), p. 341. I hope you are aware that this conception is well supported by Biblical texts. Examples of these passages are Matthew 4:1; Luke 8:12; John 8:44 and Revelation 12:9.

Rahner goes on to remind those who tend to equate the Devil with God perceiving the two as parallel entities owing to the Devil’s awesome might that they are wrong. He verifies this by accentuating that the Devil “is a creature whose evil remains comprised within the scope of the power, freedom and goodness of the holy God.”(Ibid., p.341). It is thus crucial that contrasting God with the Devil, God is not even primus inter pares (first among equals). God is supremely goodness itself, eternal and the Creator at that. The Devil, on the other hand, is a contingent creature, diabolically evil, supra-malicious, and radically the personification of sin par excellence. You should then realize that nobody, therefore, not even the Devil can deflate
God’s omnipotence. Nevertheless, you should have the awareness that the reality of “Devil-worship” is persistently pronounced.

8.4.2 The term “Devil worship” may be defined as the cultic practices of homage paid to Satan, frequently developed from the doctrine that there are two supreme beings the one all good, the other all evil- M.D. Griffin, “Devil Worship” in Whalen and ‘O’ Boyle (Eds.), New Catholic Encyclopedia (New York: MHB Co. 1967), p. 829.

This perception points to the sacrilegious syncretism, anti-social activities, irreligiosity and contempt for Christianity. You need not belabor the assertion that this phenomenon is accelerated by multinational manipulations, emerging irreligiosity and economism, global “culture of death” which is often actually pseudo-culture imbued with materialism, negative relativism and hedonistic as well as atheistic tendencies.

I suppose the adherents are well known to you for their dirty maneuvers, unreasonable quest for wealth, hero worship, pretended charity imbued with negative ulterior motives and ruthlessness. You will find some who are sadistically proud of propagating, perpetuating and sustaining evil and diabolical cults even in institutions of learning.

8.4.3

Intext Question

What term does your ethnic community use for the concept “Satan” and what implications does it have for the people’s behavior?

*Caitani*, a Gĩkũyũ corruption of the term “Satan” is often existentially blamed for wrong doers. Despite the fact that they are endowed with that empowerment of choice called “freewill”, people still capitalize on this perception. They do this to conceal what should be revealed and “scape-goating” as an escape from answerability. That is why a thief will readily defend himself/herself, as a mitigating factor, by openly saying that it is the Devil who opened the offender’s eyes to see the money and thereby grabbing it. You will easily find that such conduct of apology is in vogue today.
Take note

I hope that it is obvious to you that such conduct of apology is an exercise of cowardice that amounts to the serious sin of denial of sin, that we explicated in a previous Lecture, thus blocking repentance, conversion, forgiveness, reparation and reconciliation.

8.4.4 The danger of “Satanism” is real. It would be of great interest for you to note with Andrea Porcareli that:

1) “Satanism involves the belief in some form of ritual magic which has the power to propitiate occult forces, whither they are clearly and directly identified with the Satan of the Bible, or are conceived in a vaguer impersonal way, but nevertheless connected with the dark side of the cosmos and life, or are only seen to be vital cosmic forces opposed to an ordered and solar vision (which in the Judeo-Christian tradition is represented by God, the Creator of heaven and earth)”-A. Porcareli, “An anthropological View of Satanism”, in L’osservatore Romano, n.6-5February 1997, p.10.

2) According to this professor of philosophy and religious studies, by its very essence, Satanism is “an extreme example how people who are very poor in religious and human values, can reach the point of employing a type of contact (real, presumed, or even imaginary) with the Prince of Darkness, in order to exact their own ego and proclaim themselves to be absolute masters of good and evil”-Ibid., p. 11.

Take note

For the Satanists, in their anti-social un-Godly activities, the Church of Christ is reduced to “Satan’s church.” What, therefore, goes on in the “Satan worship” makes a considerable number of dismayed people- perhaps you included- remain tight-lipped and confused.

3) What is at stake is the seeming “annihilation” of Godly religion with which Africans are socialized and confirmed in by Christian missionaries. Consequently, rather than pretend that
Satanism is a myth, you should find it normal to study and grasp the phenomenon’s abnormalities, repugnant marvels and dubious fascinations thereby.

Take note

These include accompanying sex-orgies, malevolent cultic operational paraphernalia, repulsive night templeing, doing as one wishes and as one wants and with whoever one partners with, manipulative schizophrenic inflictions, induced controls, dangerous paranoid maneuvers and promotion of genocide and child abuse together with bestiality, sadism, and disintegration of the social fabric.

4) Such is the uncomfortable craze and madness that shocks and astonishes the people of the “Family of God”. No wonder Cardinal Joseph Ratzinger/ Pope Benedict XVI was compelled to lament that “Belzebub has returned.” Among the reasons that trigger this painful assertion was his sad shocking confrontation with evils such as the scandalizing numerous cases of child abuse among the clergy.

Activity 8.2

5) The uncomfortable veracity, however, is that the Prince of Devils has not returned but has been there in and throughout history though more pronounced in our contemporary society.

Intext Question

What are your comments on Pope Benedict XVI’s remarks that: “the devil could not stand the Year for Priests and therefore threw this filth in our faces, as it wanted to show the world how much filth there was, even and precisely among Priests. On the other hand, one could say that the Lord wanted to test us
and to call us to a deeper purification, so that we would not celebrate the Year for the Priests in a triumphalist way, as self-glorification, and above all penance- *Ibid.*, p.45.

8.3.5 *Biblically, Devils are rebel angels* who attempted to over through God. These enemies of God are said to be led by *Lucifer*, perhaps the Belzebub (Mt 12: 26-28).

**Take note**

*Lucifer* is depicted as the personification of malicious jealousy, foolish pride, dirty ambitions, diabolical envy, determined destroyer and stumbling block of God’s redemptive and salvific plan for all. Such are among the pervading evils and the devil-atory subjugations the “Family of God” has to combat and wrestle with.

Likewise, it is a phenomenon that should awaken in you the necessity for self-examination, genuine transformation, guidance, support even in evangelization and catechetical ministry.

**Intext Question**

Why do you think that in the midst of “Devil worship”, without the Almighty’s supernatural assistance and encouragement, our missionary enterprise and catechesis will be profoundly jeopardized and risk the peril of being rendered fruitless?

8.5 *Historical Aspects with Regard to Belief in Satan and Acceptance of Demonic Deeds:*

8.5.1 Since time immemorial, belief in devils and acceptance of demoniac deeds by even a clique of religiously maladjusted people has been real.
Intext Question

Do you think Pope Paul VI was right in saying that anyone who refuses to admit the existence of the Devil has departed from the framework of Biblical and ecclesial teachings and why?

It is a notorious reality that should never be played down, suppressed or distorted.

Take note

As Vatican Council II puts it: “A difficult struggle against the powers of darkness pervades the whole history of men; the battle was joined from the very origin of the world and will continue until the last day, as the Lord has attested.”

Neither should it be mythicized or mystified.

8.5.2 A. Sharma presents some rather interesting yet curious theories explaining the genesis of belief in Devils.

Activity 8.3


History has it that the Devil has some loyal adherents who not only venerate but actually “worship” the Devil. To deny this would be a fiasco. It would be a religious disaster indeed!

You may have come to know that history witnesses to the fact that the Devil-atory phenomenon has become too powerful a force to be brushed aside or taken for granted. Awareness is created that we are in a moment of orthodox Christian grave test of maturity, endurance and
commitment. You are thus in an occasion of self-examination as to whether your Christian belief and discipleship are founded on sand or upon a solid rock as articulated in Christ’s parabolic pedagogy (Mt 7: 21-27) - which is an ongoing challenge.

**Take note**

You have to be careful of maintaining the traditional evasive attitude that the Devil- also called Satan, demon and Evil Spirit- with the accompanying diabolical elements and characteristics is universally despised by people.

The reality of religio-transgressors who “worship” and venerate the Devil as their liberator from God thereby striving to be the Devil’s advocates, disciples and fanatical followers must be acknowledged. However painful the shock, you need to know that history is quite informing in this unfavorable reality.

**8.5.3** It is palpable that the Devil is taken most seriously in the Republic of Kenya. The commitment is such that Kenya’s former President Daniel Arap Moi had to order and constitute an investigative search and research commission fully funded by the government. He duly appointed Archbishop Nicodemus Kirima in October 20\textsuperscript{th} 1994 to head the Presidential commission.

After thorough investigations, the critical findings were shocking: that Devil worship was rampant and cutting across professions, social status, religious loyalty, political party affiliations and generations. It was a case study revealing that Satanism is having its heyday. It was a disclosure that malevolent cults and Devil-worship have permeated even into churches. You can now understand better why the Trend focusing on demonology has become such a vibrant orientation in ACT more so from the popular level.

**Activity 8.4**

Furthermore, it is no longer news to learn that some clergy members-Deacons and Priests/Pastors- have become double-dealers: they are Church shepherds and occult adherents of “Devil-worship” at the same time!

Intext Question

In situation and times like these, you are left wondering at the seeming overwhelming power the Master of Evil has in the society. Would you then say that we are living in the apocalyptic era of the end of time and why?

8.5.4 History, moreover, brings to your awareness that there are devotees absolutely loyal to the Devil.

You will notice that they worship this Master of Evil with all their hearts and minds and souls and material wealth owing to their being satisfied with generously rewarding Demonic Spirits and Evil forces of darkness. Devil’s “apostles” who are proselytizing aggressively to win more followers and disciples are numerous.

Thus the scandal of a great number of people worshipping the Devil implicitly or explicitly adhering to satanic beliefs, occult practices, diabolical rituals and repugnant symbols is to be faced with courage and determination. This reality has to be encountered as an “overwhelming” challenge to Christianity and ACT.

8.5.5 You may have noticed that Satanists, who succumb to being hunted, haunted and hosted by the Devil, more than ever before usually associate the Devil with quick material wealth, power, progress and glory. These adherents are known to ridicule the God of Christianity as Master of poverty, pseudo-dependence, utopia inclinations and raping people’s freedom and luxury.

Intext Question

Don’t you think these people may have a point here since, from a worldly perspective, you easily notice that Devil-worshippers are great in material wealth, high societal status, humanitarian glorification and governing powers which the Christians may be deprived of here on earth?

Like Lazarus begging for dives’ left-over (Lk 16: 19-31) you do notice devout Christian leaders “worshipping” devil-worshippers luring them to be guests of honor (not dishonor) in their respective Parishes’ matega (self-help contributions) and harambees (pulling together sourcing)
for the construction of Church building since they are the ones with “real big money”. In some cases they invite them knowing very well the evil sources of their wealth.

8.5.6 The historical critical analyzes on Demonic sects and Satanic cults by Giuseppe Ferrari from psychological, sociological, anthropological, juridical and doctrinal perspectives is pedagogical, catechetical and pertinent. A considerable number of the exponents of our Lecture’s Trend are provoked by it to come up with their kind of ACT.

In reference to the world’s super power, the United States of America (USA), Giuseppe Ferrari comes up with the following worrying findings:

Take note

USA is considered by many of us as the model of civilization, advancement, modernization, development, growth in freedom, liberalization and democracy. Its global influence is unparalleled.

1) “The USA undoubtedly manifests the greatest concentration of Satanic sects which we could define as well-known, that is, which act more or less in the open; and it is always in this country that we can find the most bibliographical references to contemporary Satanism”-G. Ferrari, “Phenomenon of Satanism in Contemporary Society,” in L’Osservatore Romano n.5-29 January, 1997, p.10.

2) In addition to this disclosure, Ferrari fearlessly reveals and underscores the vexing diverse and diverging Satanic sects in the USA as follows:

“Among the well-known groups which have risen in the USA and which are still active we find: Church of Satan, Temple of Set, Order of the Black Ram, Warewolf Order, Worldwide Church of Satan Liberation, and Church of War. Among those which seem to have ceased their activity after a few years we find: Church of Satan Brotherhood, Brotherhood of the Ram, Our lady of Ender Coven, The Satanic Orthodox Church of Nethilum Rite and The Satan Church”-Ibid., p.10.

Take note

Ferrari, furthermore, unhesitatingly discloses the notorious yet significant fact that: “There are other organizations for which it is difficult to determine whether they have ceased their activity or not, for example the so-called Order Templi Satanis, whose writings are distributed on the Internet”-Ibid., p.10.

3) An aggravating awareness is also created within the context of dire need for conscientisation that Italy is no exception. Italy, within which the world universally renowned religio-moral ethical-social conscience of the globe called Vatican City is
situated, is prone to the pathetic entrapping Satanic rites and has her share of Satanism. In Ferrari’s candid terms: “In Italy, among the Satanic sects of which something is known because in one way or the other they have reached notoriety in the press, we can cite: Bambini di Satana, Chiesa di Satana di Filipo Scerbia, Chiesa Luciferiana di Efrem Del Gatto, Imperi Satanico dell luca degli Infer or Sequaci del Maestro Loitan”- Ibid., p.10.

Take note

You may be obliged to accept that the disorientation of the above two esteemed Nations have serious repercussions and devastating global consequences.

4) Moreover, the anxiety and discomfort resulting from the above is rather overwhelming.

Intext Question

Why do you think the scenario involving America and Italy (where the Pope’s Vatican City is situated) has grave implications to the world’s genuine Religions, people’s authentic cultures, diverse genuine ethnic philosophy of life, healthy inter-personal relationships and the perception of national, international charity and banking complexity?

8.5.7 It is disturbing, moreover, to observe the impression Satanism, particularly in the USA and Italy, utilizing the devastating electronic media, is making to a considerable number of people all over the world. The phenomenon is winning more and more convertees to shift camps from Christianity to being Devil-adherents.

Intext Question

What is it, according to you that Satanism in the USA, Italy and elsewhere is offering people that Christianity is lacking? How come the USA with sacred inscription in the civil dollar-money reading “in God we Trust” and Italy hosting “the Servant of the Servants of God” called His Holiness the Pope, have become so prone and submissive to Devil-atory?

8.6 Examining Worshippers’ Personality and Enigmatic Advantages of Satanism.

It has been established that what we believe affects not only what we do. It also has a strong impact on our personality and beingness.
In his critical yet visionary analysis of the personality elements of those committed to divinities with satanic features, the psychologist Eugenio Fizzoti provides the following four invaluable characteristics of such Devil worshippers:

**Activity 8.5**

Establish rapport with true Devil-worshippers and have an experiential knowledge of their respective personalities—guarding yourself not to be initiated into the group as you perform this activity.

1) “A clear masochistic tendency, manifested by a weak temperament, by their inclination of self-deprivation, by the need to feel weak and impotent, by the voluntary renunciation of all sense of freedom and personal responsibility;
2) “A profound sense of guilt due to the difficulty of the human situation;
3) “The introjections in strong, imposing terms, of the demands of one’s surrounding, which leads one to perceive the world of culture, society, and the family as tyrannical;
4) “The orientation towards death and dead objects, which is an expression of a longing for a continual transformation of self, society and the surrounding world into a cemetery or an automated factory”- E. Fizzoti, “Satanism From a Psychological Viewpoint,” in *L’Osservatore Romano*, n.7-12 February, 1997, p.10. This fourth factor is, therefore, saturated with necrophilia inclination.

**Intext Question**

What are your comments on the statement of Pope John Paul II that “The Evil Spirit tries to transplant into man/woman the attitude of rivalry, insubordination and opposition to God which has, as it were, the motivation of his/her entire existence?”

**8.6.2** The above mind-boggling analysis and astonishing disclosure in view of the evil beings and the destructive impoverishment of their disciples’ personality is eminently revealing.

It enables and inspires Eugenio Fizzoti to draw out the following conclusion whose serious perusal is very informative to you:

“For the psychologist then, the worshipper of Satan represents a pressing and often tragic warning bell. In fact, he appears in no way oriented towards personal growth, towards a sincere and authentic relationship with others, towards a commitment of service to others”- *Ibid.*, p10.
Eugenio goes on to remarkably accentuate that the Devil-worshipper “shows strong, worrisome self-destructive tendencies made even more evident by hiding and flight, and by the voluntary renunciation (it is difficult to determine up to what point) of his own will in favor of an authority which demands only blind obedience and rigid behavior with obsessive involvement in formulas and magical rites”-Ibid., p.10.

**Take note**

In addition to the above, you should also know that indulgence into Satanic sects and nefarious cults makes one more prone to diabolical sexual immoralities thereby. It should be clear to you that, obviously, whatever the rationale, this is a deplorable phenomenon with awful consequences to somebody’s autonomy, normal self-esteem and journeying on in salvation path. No wonder the issue has attracted the attention of Africa Christian theologians in coming up with this Trend in ACT.

It is an unfortunate reality that should not be lost to you as a genuine Godly person.

**Activity 8.6**


**8.6.3 As you are now much more aware, the phenomenon is morally repulsive, religiously repelling and existentially repugnant.**

That is why African Christian theologians have taken it so seriously as to make it a Trend in ACT. **Lucia Musti** underscores such correspondence to deplorable diabolical activities and conduct in these words:

“Other types of crime traceable to a sect have to do with personal sexual freedom, in the sense that the rite is necessary to perform certain sexual acts with consequent ejaculation in order to establish a relationship with Satan. The victims of such actions are usually women, very often made incapable of understanding and willing by taking adulterated drinks or stupefacients or they are minors, even when of a tender age. These later have a particular significance in Satanic rituals, in that the painful mistreatment of a child, who by definition is pure and close to God,

8.6.4 You need to confront such deviations and deplorable deeds as a student of ACT with courage, determination and, above all, deep informed faith and cooperation with the Paraclete.

As such, you and other scholars of ACT need to participate fully and strengthen this Trend of theologizing as a new mode of evangelization to counter the wide spread Devil-worship and flourishing diabolical cults even among our African communities.

8.6.5 But can anything good come from the above shocking, devastating painful phenomenon?

From your experiential knowledge, you are aware that God, in God’s own mysterious ways, occasionally allows evil to thrive so as to painfully draw good out of the experience!

In Unit CRS 202: Introduction to the New Testament, you learned something very interesting. Awareness was created to you that it is thanks to the Devil’s constant harassment of Jesus with juicy temptations, defamations and, above all ill-willed demoniac challenges that Jesus had occasion to expound His Good News. It is thanks to Satan’s use, mis-use and abuse of Jesus’ followers and disciples like Simon Peter that Jesus deepened His proclamations and catechesis. He was, furthermore, compelled to prepare those He called and commissioned as agents of the Gospel in a more adequate manner knowing the power of Satan as the Evil Master of darkness, sickness, death and sin. He was also compelled not to leave us people just like that as orphans. Owing to the devastating influence and power of the devil, Jesus had to leave us with the empowering Holy Spirit.

Take note

Yves Conger in his Three Volumes titled I Believe in the Holy Spirit published in London by Geoffrey Chapman in the year 1983, brings to your awareness the Attributes of this Holy Spirit of Jesus left to us as His legacy empowering us to be winners in the midst of Evil forces. The attributes are
even better condensed in The *Litany of the Holy Spirit* brochure.

**8.6.6** In my view, the following are among **the elements you can derive from the prevailing evil of Devil-worship and other Satanic malevolent issues:**

1) The phenomenon has triggered the emergence of the current Trend in our Lecture which is quite enriching in ACT;
2) Disturbing those who would otherwise take redemption and salvation for granted;
3) Ability and, perhaps, a voyage to perceive the weird and awful power Devil-Satan has and is capable of

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4) Outright repugnancy notwithstanding, the phenomenon generates an anxious interest in demonology bearing in mind that knowing the enemy well is half the battle won;
5) A kind of tear-gas aimed at lazy members of the clergy in contemporary milieu who hurriedly prepare careless preaching, sermons, homilies and catechesis to analogically shed tears thereby washing away the particles of complacency and lack of professionalism in shepherding;
6) Challenge from those who adhere wholeheartedly to Devil-worship to an extent of accepting death/suicide in loyalty to their Satanic cult masters/mistresses to us to be even more committed and explicit in our worship of the One True God embracing martyrdom if need be;
7) Disturbing our comfort on earth invigorated by being immersed in assuming that we are already saved and in heaven-on-earth-alleluia-praise the Lord ecstasy to realize and accept that we are still in diaspora while in this world;
8) Learn a lot on and about shrewdness, patience, persistence and determination from Devil-Satan who endeavors to win the earth and reign over the whole world;

9) Creating a better realization that “Satan” meaning “Adversary” in Hebrew is not just our arch-rival. That Satan is, above all, a supreme enemy with awful atrocities that are anti-human life, anti-families, anti-healthy interpersonal relationships and heinous un-Godly conduct;

10) Create a vivid awareness that the Devil is not confined to the monster called Satan. That we human beings are occasionally “devils”. This is so when we perpetrate malpractices or co-operate in evils to the detriment of other people’s salvation putting souls in peril of damnation in hell;

11) Creation of a shift from making the Devil the scapegoat of our misconduct and shortcomings to a new realization that we are the answerable malevolent agents when we turn away from God to the Prince of Darkness. As such, a powerful passion hits us to realize better that we are personally accountable, answerable and responsible for our sins;

12) It challenges us not to fall into the category of pneumatomachoi (fighters against the Spirit). It is an awakening call from the slumber of sidelining the Paraclete- at least pragmatically. There was a kind of mentality of putting the Holy Spirit in the appendix of salvation history.

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**Take note**

Thanks to the above both shocking and provoking phenomenon of Devil-worship and all that appertains to it, there is this days a vivid re-awakening and re-orientation focusing, hoping and co-operating with the Holy Spirit- the monumental legacy the resurrected cum glorified Jesus Christ left us.

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8.7 **Hopeful Struggle and Determined Confrontation in Faith Triggered by Our Lecture’s Trend.**

Despite the inevitable intrinsic struggle, conflict and rivalry to be who we ought to be made worse by the above phenomenon of evil forces, there is still an inspiring guiding hope emanating
from the Trend in our Lecture. This is notwithstanding the tribulations, trials and geographical spread of Devil-atory practices.

8.7.1 On this note, you will do well to acknowledge the following positive orientation articulated by Angelo Scola follows:

“Salvation history is not a struggle of equal forces between the God of mercy and the Father of lies. It is entirely defined by the omnipotence of the Father who sent His Son ‘to destroy the works of the Devil’ (1Jn 3:8). There is only one principle of being and, therefore, there is but one possibility of victory: the whole work of Satan is overwhelmed from the beginning, by defeat”-Ibid., p.7. You will find these invaluable ideas highlighted in numerous works belonging to this Trend.

8.7.2 Underlying and undercutting all these is the reality that, essentially, God is the Creator and Devil-Satan mere creature.

Any reversal of this revelatory truth is ontologically erroneous and religiously illicit. No wonder Jesus condemned and chased away Devil-Satan saying: “Away with you, Satan! For it is written, ‘worship the Lord your God, and serve only Him”’ (Mt 4:10). If you, therefore, find anyone entertaining the Devil with “welcome dear Satan! Feel at home. I worship you”, know that such a person is anti-Christ.

**Activity 8.8**


Such a person manifests the highest degree of rebellion and imprudence to one’s fellow human beings and, ultimately, to God. This, of course, includes the undercover Devil-worshippers.

**Take note**

It should be reiterated that an appraisal of Satanism challenges us not to overlook but to bear in mind that: “It is not only faith that is violated in these
practices. Christian hope is also radically offended; in that whoever does such actions entrusts his present and eternal salvation to Demonic powers rather than to God. We must not forget that those who worship Satan act against charity because they put themselves at the disposition of his work of destruction” - Angelo Scola Ibid., p.7.

8.7.3 In the struggle against the evil forces, thanks to our Lecture, you should remember that:

1) “The whole man, and his Christian character based on the theological virtues, is at stake in this worship. In this case we are not confronted with the simple weakness of human nature, but with a free and radical decision against God, which must objectively speaking, be considered a mortal sin’’ - Ibid., p.7.

2) To ignore the above would be as ridiculous as the futile exercise of putting off smoke while neglecting the fire emitting the smoke.

3) Co-operation in enormous diabolical practices and submitting to Satanic wails, moreover, makes one become “more easily the prey of the realities such as ‘witchcraft’, the ‘evil-eye’, ‘diabolical disturbances’ and ‘Demonic possession’” - Ibid., p.7.. In this way one weakens ones strength to fight. It is such a grave matter that in case of actual possession by Satan the Church, prior to blessing the victim, cautiously performs exorcism rite.

8.7.4 The Church visionary pedagogy of the New Roman Catholic Catechism, which neither excuses nor accuses the culprit, teaches that:

1) “Exorcism is directed at the expulsion of Demons to the liberation from Demonic possession through the spiritual authority that Jesus entrusted to His Church. Illness, especially psychological illness, is a very different matter; treating this is the concern of medical science. Therefore, before an exorcism is performed, it is important to ascertain that one is dealing with the presence of the Evil One, and not the illness’’ - The Catechism of the Catholic Church, n. 1673.

2) The above New Catholic Catechism’s concern, teaching, support, and guidance on exorcism should not be downplayed. You should not shun it as merely hierarchical
conservatism of the traditionalist Roman Catholics. You will find the text both inspiring and illuminating in our subject-matter.

3) “The power of Satan is nonetheless, not infinite. He is only a creature, powerful from the fact that he is pure spirit, but still a creature. He cannot prevent the building up of God’s reign. Although Satan may act in the world out of hatred for God and His Kingdom in Christ Jesus, and although his actions may cause some grave injuries- of a spiritual nature and, indirectly, even of a physical nature- to each man and to society, the action is permitted by Divine providence which with strength and gentleness guides human and cosmic history. It is a great mystery that Providence should permit diabolical activity, but we know that in everything God works for good with those who love Him “Ibid., n.395.

4) You should know thoroughly well that:
“The doctrine of Original Sin, closely connected with that of redemption by Christ, provides lucid discernment of man’s situation and captivity in the world. By our first parents’ sins, the Devil has acquired a certain domination over man, even though man remains free…Ignorant of the fact that man has a wounded nature inclined to evil gives rise to serious errors in the areas of education, politics, social action and morals”-Ibid., n.407.

5) The foregoing disturbing reality creates a lot of anxiety to you, to me and to the others. The evil forces and devastating Satanic influences are great temptations to us. It is such a grave temptation that can easily persuade you and I and others to abandon ourselves to fate, tragic pessimism and negative permissiveness rather than struggle on to transform ourselves, liberate all- the environment included- regain our authenticity, remake the world and return to Godliness and, ultimately, to God.

8.7.5 As University students winding up this fascinating yet disturbing Trend in our Unit, it would be of great interest for you to reflect on what the progressive internationally renowned educationist, Paulo Freire, indicates in his monumental book titled Pedagogy of Hope. He says:

“While I certainly cannot ignore hopelessness as a concrete entity, nor turn a blind eye to the historical, economic and social reasons that explain that hopelessness- I do not understand human existence, and the struggle needed to improve it, apart from hope and dream. Hope is an
ontological need. Hopelessness is but hope that has lost its bearing, and become a distortion of that ontological need’ - P. Freire, *Pedagogy of Hope* (New York: The Continuum Publishing Co. 19940, p.8.

Paulo goes on to counsel that: “When it becomes a program, hopelessness paralyses us, immobilizes us. We succumb to fatalism, and then it becomes impossible to muster the strength we absolutely need for a fierce struggle that will re-create the world’ - Ibid. p.8.

8.8 Critical Concluding Reflections.

As you must have noticed, the Trend in our Lecture is so complex that it remains ongoing. Nevertheless, owing to the limitations imposed on our Unit, we must bring it to an end. Let us, therefore, conclude it by drawing out some further invaluable concluding remarks as follows:

1) What the Lecture has explicated should psyche you to dwell on the reality of the Devil, Devil-worship and diabolical elements at the dawn of the Third Millennium of our redemption;

2) It energizes you to reflect better on the nagging issues of sadism, drug abuses, alcoholism, child-abuse, sex aberrations and genocide propagated and imposed upon the schools, colleges, diverse institutions and society in general;

3) The Lecture enables you to comprehend the occult agents of ritual killings, severing of human private/genital organs, engineering of ethnic cleansing and tribal clashes and pre-meditated genocide, calculated bombing and exponents of notorious grabbing and ruthless violation of the environment ruining ecosystem;

4) You are also compelled to think deeper about high-tech dynamics of corruption, organized crimes, sadistic brutality, extreme self-aggrandizement, severe dehumanization, institutionalized irreligiosity and pressured living phobia;

5) You are now in a stronger stance in witnessing that you should no longer take the issue of Devil-Satan as a myth or a fairy story or utopia ogre narrative. Neither should you henceforth condone a no-go-zone exclusively for Devil-Satan. You now understand that the unparalleled sources of revelation, i.e., the Bible, Tradition and traditions, confirm- as the Lecture explained- the actuality of the Devil and inspire you to confront, encounter and counter diabolical and evil forces which are detrimental to our salvation;
6) At this stage, you know better and more reasonably: That a major vocation of a good Christian is to participate fully in the ministry of destroying Devil-Satan and re-establishing Godliness through the restoration of God’s grace; That what frustrates in this mission is the proliferation of devil-worship, as the Lecture explained, such that the Satanists are rarely treated as pariahs; That this merits being pondered and prioritized in catechesis and pastoral praxis; That this is a fundamental issue that must, therefore, never be snubbed when tackling salvific affairs;

7) The seriousness of the above is further attested to by the flourishing of Devil-worship, the mushrooming of demonic deeds and awesome conglomerations of Satanic cults, malevolent occult rituals and emergence of numerous and malignant diabolical practices;

8) You can now rationally acknowledge: That the upcoming and ongoing devotional groups like the Small Christian Communities, the Women Gild, the Sacred Heart, the alliance of Two Hearts, Bible Study groups, Saint Ann…Pioneers membership and Charismatic Renewal Organizations are basically deployed to combat Evil forces and that they are in order;

9) The reflections the Lecture has exposed you to, moreover, assists you to dispose yourself better in co-operating with the Paraclete. The Holy Spirit who is Christ’s inheritance to us, and legacy at that, in the struggle against Devil-Satan and for God and not to wallow in despair or over-confidence;

10) Furthermore, thanks to the Lecture, you are, henceforth, enabled to investigate, peruse and understand works on the Trend within the context of ACT both those belonging to the category of erudition and the numerous ones belonging to pastoral and popular realms.

8.9 Summary.

This Lecture has enabled you to confront and examine the Trend handling Demonology which is regarded as a taboo subject.

The Lecture has empowered you to: Qualify Demonology as a valid contemporary Trend in ACT though mainly having those of pastoral and popular level as its main exponents; Explain the nature of the terms “Satan”, “Devil Worship” and “Diabolical Cults” which are indispensable in understanding the Trend; Examine historical aspects with regard to belief in Satan and acceptance of Demoniac deeds; Discuss worshippers’ personality
and enigmatic advantages of Satanism; Explore and assess hopeful struggle and determined confrontation in Faith triggered by our Lecture’s Trend; and, finally, draw out some invaluable concluding reflections.

### Concluding Activity 8.9

Do an exegesis of Markan passage (Mk 7: 24-30) concerning Jesus exorcising the Demons. Discuss also the phenomenon of Devil worship in your country.

### 8. 10 References

LECTURE NINE

THE TREND OF AFRICAN CHRISTIAN THEOLOGIES FOCUSING ON MEDICAL MORAL ISSUES LIKE EUTHANASIA

Lecture Outline

9.1 Introduction.

9.2 Objectives.

9.3 Nature of Euthanasia.

9.4 Active Euthanasia and Passive Euthanasia.

9.5 Some Controversial Questions Involved and the Arising Discussions.

9.6 Discussion on Legalization.

9.7 Ecclesial/Church Reaction.

9.8 Summary.

9.9 References.

9.1 Introduction.

In Lecture Eight you encountered the Trend handling demonology though a taboo subject. In this Lecture you will benefit from the pedagogy concerning the Trend of African Christian Theologies focusing on medical moral issues like euthanasia.

As you are well aware, medical profession has asserted itself today with its technological advancement, innovative practices like that of cloning, organ transplant, heterologous and homologous artificial insemination, delicate surgeries—the list seems endless—and Euthanasia. As a result of these, medical professions have captured a serious attention of Christian theologians in the realm of medical ethics. The impact is such that we are nowadays witnessing a Trend in ACT focusing on medical moral issues like Euthanasia. For practical purposes, this Lecture will limit itself to the subject of Euthanasia in this Trend.
Take note

You may think that the issue of Euthanasia is Western or even Eastern. Nevertheless, as a result of medical professionalism in every single country and owing to the impact of globalization and complex IT (Information Technology), Euthanasia is in vogue in Africa too as a curious cause of death demanding medical ethics theologizing.

Since ACT must necessarily be pastoral, as elaborated in a previous Lectures, this issue is of great interest to African Christian theologians.

With this concern, our Lecture will examine the nature of Euthanasia. It will explain active Euthanasia in relation to passive Euthanasia. The Lecture will also evaluate some controversial questions and the arising discussions with regard to Euthanasia. It will, moreover, discuss the issue of legalization. After that it will end by examining Ecclesial/Church reaction on the subject-matter.

9.2 Objectives

The goal of this Lecture is to examine and assess the Trend of African Christian Theologies focusing on Medical Moral Issues like Euthanasia. With this finality, therefore, by the end of this Lecture, you should be able to:

1. Verify that Euthanasia is not a foreign issue but is in vogue in Africa.

2. Elaborate that with regard to the recipients of Euthanasia there is a chain-reaction.

3. Explain that since any good Christian theology must respond to people’s needs, aspirations, worries…and concern thereby giving them hope, it is indispensable for African Christian theologians to handle Euthanasia with the seriousness it deserves more so within the realm of medical ethics.

4. Compare and contrast Active/Positive/Direct Euthanasia with
Passive/Negative/Indirect Euthanasia.

5. Indicate and evaluate some controversial questions and the arising discussions concerning Euthanasia—e.g. that of its legalization.

6. Give and discuss the teaching/doctrine of the Church in the light of which the issue of Euthanasia is and ought to be tackled.

9.3 Nature of Euthanasia.

Intext Question

What do you understand by the term “Euthanasia”?

9.3.1 The meaning of “Euthanasia” should remind you of a disturbing ambiguity. Etymologically, the word is derived from the Greek term eu thanatos: eu meaning “good” or “happy”, thanatos meaning “death”.

Take note

Joined together then, it literally means “good or happy death” or “bene-motasia (good death)”. As such, the original meaning of “Euthanasia” implies helping a patient die a happy/good death.

9.3.2 H.E. Rose explains Euthanasia as:

“The doctrine or theory that in circumstances, when owing to disease, senility, or the like, a person’s life has permanently ceased to be either agreeable or useful, the sufferer should be painlessly killed either by himself or by another”—H.J. Ross, “Euthanasia”, in J. Hastings (Ed.), Encyclopedia of Religion and Ethics, Vol. 5, p.598.
9.3.3 G.V. Lobo says:

Intext Question

How did we explain “the sin of omission” and “the sin of commission” in a previous Lecture?


9.3.4 R.M. Gula makes a very interesting observation:

He notes that the above historical meaning has in time acquired an evil or violent connotation “making it synonymous with murder and a social policy of killing those suffering from incurable diseases, old age or serious physical handicap”- R.M. Gula, *Current Problems in Medical ethics*, p.63.

9.3.5 B. Haring elaborates that:

Take note

Bernard Haring has made an enormous contribution in moral/ethical sphere. He has profoundly published in practically every area in moral ethics, including medical ethics and with a lot of scholarly authority.

“The word ‘Euthanasia’ is of Greek origin and originally signified a ‘good and honorable death’. In medical language, it has always expressed the kind assistance which the physician gave to the dying patient in order to alleviate his sufferings, to diminish pain and anguish. It is only in the course of the Twentieth Century that the friendly word came to mean the direct and painless killing of a patient who, lacking the prospect of recovering health, might want this kind of immediate death”- B, Haring, *Medical Ethics*, p. 144.
9.3.6 There are disturbing implications or consequences:

**Intext Question**

How are the mentally ill, the physically challenged, the poor and those advanced in age traditionally and customarily treated in your community and why?

**Binding** and **Hoche** proposed, under this name of “Euthanasia” “the premeditated and large-scale planned extermination of socially ‘unfit’ persons, especially the mentally ill, and the crippled who might impede economic progress. This is the Euthanasia practiced by Hitler; besides millions of ‘undesired’ Jews, he executed hundreds of thousands of mentally or physically handicapped persons of his own nation” - B, Haring, *Medical Ethics*, p. 144.

9.3.7 Haring is compelled to make the following further remarks:

**Intext Question**

What criterion or standard do the people around you use to categorize others as “useful/important” and “useless/wretched”?

“The present discussion of Euthanasia reported in the professional literature reveals that everyone is most eager to dissociate his proposals from the mass crimes of Hitler; however, expressions like ‘useless life’ constantly recur and for any number of justification” - B. Haring, *Medical Ethics*, p. 144.

9.4 Active Euthanasia and Passive Euthanasia.

**Activity 9.1**

Elaborate the distinction between **Active Euthanasia** and **Passive Euthanasia**
Intext Question

What other synonymous names is the term “Euthanasia” given?

It is important to distinguish between the two types of Euthanasia:

9.4.1 ACTIVE or POSITIVE or DIRECT EUTHANASIA is termed “mercy killing.”

Death is by commission. It may hasten death; bring about death sooner than would otherwise have been the case, not allow nature to run its course by interfering with it.

Take note

Euthanasia is voluntary if carried out with the patient’s consent/own choice, who agrees to be helped to die. It is non-voluntary active if done without one’s consent/volition.

9.4.2 PASSIVE or NEGATIVE or INDIRECT EUTHANASIA is simply allowing the patient to die.

Death is the result of planned omission- or withdrawal of treatment that would probably prolong life. Life is no longer prolonged by ordinary means. Nature is deliberately allowed to run its course.

Take note

It is voluntary passive when there is consent. It is non-voluntary when no consent is given.
Take note

“Active Euthanasia” is also referred to as “Positive Euthanasia” and “Direct Euthanasia”. You should also have the awareness that “Passive Euthanasia” is also referred to as “Negative Euthanasia” and “Indirect Euthanasia”.

9.5 Some Controversial Questions Involved and the Arising Discussion:

9.5.1 Medical intervention may either lengthen or shorten human life.

It can do so by OMISSION or by COMMISSION or by both. In either case it poses a good number of ethical questions which are of great interest to African Christian theologians particularly the exponents of the above Trend. The same technology that extends the life of one person may hasten the dying of another, or even cause immediate death.

Activity 9.2

Identify and discuss at least five controversial questions with regard to Euthanasia.

Among the questions are:

1) When may a person be declared dead?
2) What are the leading positions on it?
3) What is the responsibility to care for the terminally ill- especially among the Africans?
4) What are the morals of terminal care?
5) What determines the “usefulness” or “uselessness” of someone’s life?

9.5.2 George V. Iobo takes to task the exponents of Euthanasia in these terms:

“Supporters of Euthanasia also argue that the quality of life is more important than the quantity. But what is meant by ‘quality?’ What criterion can be used to judge it and by what standards can anyone assess the level of quality below which life is ‘useless?’ Where human life is concerned,
‘usefulness’ as the only criterion is unacceptable. Besides, how is ‘uselessness’ to be defined? Many an old invalid or severely handicapped child in the home has formed a focal point for the family love”- G.V. Lobo, Current Problems in Medical Ethics, p. 62.

**Take note**

He argues that: “‘Useless’ may easily be extended to all incurables who are incapable of deciding for themselves. It may even be extended to make ‘mercy killing’ compulsory for all who are considered a burden on society. This happened in fact in Nazi Germany”- *ibid.*, p. 62.

**It is a different issue when** the question is whether to prolong the hooking or pinning down of the dying onto extraordinary machines that only prolong vegetative life if this means under-treatment or depriving of medical treatment of more viable people.

**9.5.3 The resulting inference is that:**

In this perspective “death” is re-evaluated as a potential good, and life is not to be sustained at all costs- R.M. Gula, What Are They Saying about Euthanasia?, p.2. With regard to the terminally ill there arise other questions:

1) What is the best care for such patients?
2) What is the moral balance between preserving life and preventing suffering?
3) Should life be preserved regardless of circumstances?
4) Should those who are not dying but whose lives will be seriously impaired, like some handicapped new-born or victims of spinal cord injuries, be given treatment at all?
5) Can patients like these be allowed to die without life-saving interventions and machines?
6) Is it ever permissible to intervene directly, but mercifully, to hasten death when death is inevitable and dying is so anguishing like in the case of fully blown HIV/AIDS?

**9.5.4 The issue of prolonging life by use of extraordinary and expensive medical machines gave rise to heated controversies in the 1970s.**
It provoked the monumental case of Karen Ann Quinlan with extremely interesting consequences among the physicians, the jurists, the philosophers, the theologians and the public at large.

**Take note**

On April 15, 1975 she stopped breathing. Resuscitation restored breathing, but Karen Ann had remained comatose, a victim of irreversible brain damage. Thirteen months after Karen Ann had lapsed into a coma, the New Jersey Supreme Court authorized the removal of the respirator. Karen Ann did not die. She remained in a coma for over ten years, until she died on June 11, 1985 of respiratory failure following acute pneumonia. The Quinlan case widened public discussion on the right to die and on the definition of death. Not only physicians, but also jurists, philosophers, theologians and the public at large have joined the fray since- *ibid.*, pp. 2-3.

### 9.6 Discussion on Legalization.

**Activity 9.3**

Find out whether there are African countries that have legalized abortion and why?

### 9.6.1 The Netherlands was the first country to legalize Euthanasia

This happened at the dawn of this Third Millennium, de-penalizing what was a criminal offence before that.
Intext Question

Abortion came first. Euthanasia followed on its wings. What do you think will follow in this chain reaction and why?

9.6.2 The life-sounding terms being used to push the idea of Euthanasia are but a cover up for the killing that it really is.

Euthanasia used to be called “mercy killing,” but that sounded too crude. It is a matter of euphemism. People use “having a good time”, instead of fornicating or committing adultery, “misappropriation” instead of corruption, “mishandling funds” instead of thieving, “grabbing” instead of stealing, “alternative sexual orientation” instead of sexual aberration/deviation, and so on. **Mercy killing** becomes first Euthanasia, and then “**compassionate care**”, “**honoring sufferer’s wishes**”, “**selective treatment**”, and the like.

Take note

Behind the sweet talk, the reality is skilful killing and clinical murder.

9.6.3 Such cruel cheapening of human life is disturbing- more so to the proponents of ACT.

Today, the targets of Euthanasia are the terminally ill and the severely physically and psychologically impaired. Tomorrow there will necessarily follow the aged, the “useless”, the “unproductive” and the “wretched of the earth”, and, why not, the pain-in-the-neck pro-lifers.

9.6.4 What is most striking is that it is decided who deserves to live and until when.

But as to who decides this, by whose authority and by what criterion or standard remains absolutely vague. What is vividly clear is that **such a chain reaction will not spare even the proponents** of this death business. In a society ever more prone to violence and fatal cum crippling accidents, today’s Euthanasia legislators cannot be completely sure not to be tomorrow’s Euthanasia victims.
9.7 Ecclesial/Church Reaction.

Activity 9.4

Drawing inspiration and guidance from the 5th Commandment of the Decalogue which reads, “Thou shall not kill”, discuss whether abortion should be legalized or not.

9.7.1 The doctrine of the INVIOLABILITY OF HUMAN LIFE is highly inspiring more so to the Christian theologians.

It is enshrined in the Decalogue/5th Commandment of God that reads: “Thou shall not kill” (Exodus 20:13) makes the Church categorically reject killings in any form.

Activity 9.5

Find out whether the Africans have related taboos forbidding murder and killing of human beings.

9.7.2 Among the most outstanding Christian thinkers is St. Thomas Aquinas.

Take note

He is among the greatest philosophers cum theologians ever lived. His profound and comprehensive works are published in five huge volumes titled *Summa Theologica*.

In his *Summa Theologica ii iiae Q 64,5* St. Thomas Aquinas opposes Euthanasia on the following grounds:

1) It is unnatural, being contrary to the charity that every man/woman bears towards self;
2) It is anti-social, i.e., an offence against the community;
3) It usurps God’s power to give and take life.

9.7.3 In relation to the above, Bernard Haring observes that:

“In some non-Catholic circles there would be no hesitation in labeling as negative Euthanasia the decision not to prolong life according to the principles enunciated by Pius XII in 1957. However, for the sake of clarity, it has to be said that there is a real difference in whether the direct objective (as in the Pius XII doctrine) is to dispense with extraordinary means or to stop treatments altogether in order to allow the patient to die (negative Euthanasia with a number of nuances)”- B. Haring, Medical Ethics, p.146.

Take note

Haring then adds that: “In the Catholic tradition, there is no reluctance to approve of treatment whose direct purpose is the suppression of undesirable pain and anxiety- even though a shortening of terminal illness might be foreseen. It is another thing, however, to stop treatment specifically in order to hasten death. Also different is the stopping only of those treatments which instead of really prolonging life, only prolong the process of death”- Ibid., p.146.

9.7.4 Henry Peschke asserts that: “From the moral point of view all forms of mercy killing are unlawful and murder, with or without the consent of the sick person. They involve suicide and co-operation to suicide or simply murder of the innocent”- C.H. Peschke, Christian Ethics, p. 351.

Take note

You should, furthermore, know that Peschke also emphasizes that: “The Magisterium of the Church is not the only one absolutely to condemn Euthanasia (Pius XII, GS 27). A great number of competent men in the fields of ethics and law reject it, and not least the very people who would have to perform the act, the physician”- Ibid., p.351.
9.7.5 The notion that some sufferers’ lives are useless, or burdensome, and as such deserve to be “mercifully” helped or persuaded to die, is challenged by Henry Peschke thus:

“In the last analyzes the philosophy behind the Euthanasia movement is largely of a utilitarian, immanent, secularist nature. If the meaning of human life exhausts itself in temporal happiness, progress and self-fulfillment, if it has no dimension which reaches beyond this world, then misery and suffering which cannot be cured or improved are without sense and value. Yet this is not the Christian understanding of human life”-Ibid., p. 352.

**Intext Question**

Would you say that in this regard, Henry Peschke speaks for the Africans too and why?

**Take note**

It is an open secret that invalids, the mentally retarded, the elderly, the “hopeless” alcoholics, the “helpless” drug addicts, the “wretched of the earth”, the fanatical cultists, devil worshippers, religious fundamentalist, crazy suicidal hedonists, atheist fatalists and, above all, the terminally sick are subjected to psychological pressure and brainwashing into opting for Euthanasia by those fostering this mode of death.

9.7.6 Peschke then articulates the Christian perspective as follows:

“Christian theology interprets man’s existence from the life of Christ and from His suffering, death and resurrection. In this light, even the poorest cretin has his special role in the divine plan of salvation. His helplessness is apt to awaken the capacity of love in fellowmen. Just as Christ’s suffering had a salvific value, so has the suffering of His brothers. Often enough men have to atone for their own sins. And at all times they are called to participate by their suffering in the redemptive work of their Lord and thus complete what is lacking in His suffering (cf. Col. 1:24)”- Ibid., p. 352.
9.8 Summary

In this Lecture, you have been made to understand that the issue of Euthanasia is not just Western or even Eastern. It is an African affair too! The Lecture brought to your awareness that as a result of medical professionalism imbued with all kinds of interesting, sometimes controversial, advancements in every single country and owing to the impact of globalization and complex IT (Information Technology), Euthanasia is in vogue in Africa too as a curious cause of death demanding medical ethics theologizing within the context of Christianity and African world-view.

The Lecture elaborated that it is an open secret that invalids, the mentally retarded, the elderly, the “hopeless” alcoholics, the “helpless” drug addicts, the wretched, the fanatical cultists, devil worshippers, religious fundamentalists, crazy suicidal hedonists, atheist fatalists and, above all, the terminally sick are subjected to psychological pressure and brainwashing into opting for Euthanasia by those fostering this mode of death. It brought to your awareness that since ACT must necessarily be pastoral, the issue of Euthanasia has become an issue of great interest to African Christian theologians.

With this concern, the Lecture has enabled you to: examined the nature of Euthanasia; explained active Euthanasia in relation to passive Euthanasia; evaluated some controversial questions and arising discussions with regard to Euthanasia; discussed the issue of legalization. The Lecture has, moreover, been a mind-opener to you in examining Ecclesial/Church reaction on the subject-matter assisting you to appreciate the ongoing Trend in ACT.

Concluding Activity 9.6

Basing yourself on African cosmotheandric perception of being and beingness, discuss the inviolability of human life whether one is old or terminally sick or
severely deformed/challenged or a born idiot…or economically “useless”.

9.9 References

LECTURE TEN

THE TREND HANDLING AFRICAN CHRISTIAN THEOLOGIES IMBUED
GRACE AND CONVERSION AS MORAL ITEMS

LECTURE Outline

10.1 Introduction.

10.2 Objectives.

10.3 The Nature of Grace.

10.4 Explaining That God’s Grace is For All.

10.5 Enjoying the Comfort of Mature Authentic Innocence When We Are in the State of Grace.

10.6 The Nature of Conversion.

10.7 Conversion Within the Context of the Resurrection.

10.8 Benefits of Conversion.

10.11 Summary.

10.12 References.

10.1 Introduction.

In Lecture Nine we assessed the Trend that inter-twins African Christian theologies imbued with medical moral issues like euthanasia. In this final Lecture we will tackle Grace, which by its very essence implies conversion. It will be explained to you that Grace has also to do with God’s gratuitous benevolence in life through death. In God’s infinite amazing grace, God undoubtedly touches even the “unredeemable” empowering them to undergo change for better. He helps even the worst of us in turning us into Saints in this life as well as in life after death. God does this through the unsurpassable gift of grace that makes conversion and all the accruing benefits possible.

With this setting, the Lecture will discuss what Grace means; Explain that God’s Grace is for all; Explicate that when we are in the state of Grace we enjoy the comfort of mature authentic
innocence; Discuss the nature of Conversion; Elaborate conversion within the context of the Resurrection and conclude by identifying the benefits of conversion.

10.2 Objectives

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

1. Discuss the Nature of Grace
2. Explain that God’s Grace is for all;
3. Explicate that when we are in the state of Grace we enjoy the comfort of mature authentic innocence
4. Discuss the Nature of Conversion.
5. Elaborate conversion within the context of the Resurrection.
6. Identify the benefits of conversion.

10.3 The Nature of Grace.

Were it not for God’s merciful grace, we would not even dare to sing with expectation the moving triumphant song:” I am a WINNER in the Lord.”In simple terms, salvation is a free Godly Gift to us who are neither worthy nor deserving of the gratuitous benevolence.

Activity 10.1
Familiarize yourself with the words of the “Amazing Grace” hymn slowly and reflectively letting it capture the depth of meaning in humane fascinating terms

Essentially, Grace is God’s gratuitous salvific and abundant benevolence.

You should know that grace is a fundamental gift which imbues the elect with blessings, peacefulness and joyful happiness to be accomplished in heaven. It is a generous encounter reaching its summit in our Redeemer and savior such that the believers acknowledge Him as the *par excellence* Gift of God (Mt 21:37). It is a fruitfying Gift whose impact surpasses that of sin (Rom. 5: 15-21). It is an invaluable Gift effecting a re-birth into new life (Jn 3: 3ff.) thereby proving to be Good News (1Pt. 5:12; Acts 14:3) even in our life setting and rebelliousness.

But grace could as well be a burden for transforming our egoism, pride and selfishness that is humanly repulsive and repugnant thus requiring decisive effort.

**10.4 Explaining That God’s Grace is For All.**

The consolation we all have is that His grace is universal and that, in God, there are no outcasts. God is open to each and every one of us except those who insist on making themselves fugitives from God casting themselves out. Still for the latter, God nevertheless, goes all out to return them to the fold leaving the ninety nine who have not strayed (Lk 15: 4-7; Mt 18: 12-14) even on the Sabbath (Mt 12: 11-12).

**10.4.1 When you and I rebel against the WILL of God, we sin.**

The Good News is that we can return to conformity and friendship with God’s plan by undergoing *metanoia* (conversion) animated by grace.

![Take note]

With such a commitment to the dynamism of reconciliation follows the joy and hope of being saved and following the path to eternal blissfulness after death.

This is despite the recurring conflicts; tension and temporary frustrations by both concealed and visibly expressed Satanic evil forces. Yet you should always remember that we do not just remain in grace. It is required of us to grow in grace and gracefully so. There is no short cut in the endeavor!
10.4.2 God does not scoff at us in our shortcomings and human frailty.

God generously provides all the necessary support, encouragement and means for all to be converted. This calls for serious cooperation with His grace on our part. It requires perseverance in hope and faith also. In the Second Vatican Council’s terms: “God who creates and conserves all things by His Word (cf. Jn 1:3), provides people with constant evidence of Himself in created realities (cf. Rom. 1: 19-20). And furthermore, wishing to open up the way to heavenly salvation, He manifested Himself to our first parents from the beginning. After the fall, He buoyed them up with hope of salvation, by promising redemption (cf. Gen. 3:15), and he has never ceased to take care of the human race. For He wishes to give eternal life to all those who seek salvation by patience in well-doing (cf. Rom. 2: 6-7)”.- (Vatican 11, Dei Verbum, no.3).

**Intext Question**

With such forgiveness principle and Divine merciful sentiments, what is your opinion on the manner in which Kenya’s potential Chief Justice, Deputy Chief Justice, Prosecutor etc., were publicly interviewed in 2011 and hit below the belt by being pinned down to their past misconduct in view of sins of commission and omission and what do you suggest as the way forward for such recruitments?

10.4.3 It is interesting to note that the civil authority has an idea of the above.

Take the Kenyan Government, for instance. It willingly allows chaplains not only in hospitals, schools and prisons but also in protected areas with sensitive undertakings like Armed Forces’ barracks. The Government goes to an extent of remunerating, grading and classifying them in their designations as Chaplains. Moreover, even the condemned criminals Kenya’s Kamiti Maximum Prison are given a chance to repent and convert with the assistance of their respective chaplains, Priests…and Pastors.

10.5 Enjoying the Comfort of Mature Authentic Innocence When We Are in the State of Grace.

When we are in the state of grace, we enjoy the comfort of mature authentic innocence.
10.5.1 Factually, when we are under the influential control of grace, we live in freedom.

We wouldn’t care even if we were to be stripped naked. In this light, Adamit philosophy of nakedness should perhaps be revived. From creation narrative (Gen. 3:1ff.) we learn that Adam was initially naked. So was Eve his consort. Yet, there was no shame, only serenity because of the innocence involved. Disobedience, nevertheless, brought about shame hence the need for clothing and over-clothing and other cover-ups. Jesus Christ, however, maintained His obedience unto death. As He was crucified utterly naked, He re-lived radically our first parents’ primordial innocence. He thus became the Second Adam who restored our innocence thereby empowering us to convert and conquer sin (1Cor.15:22, 45).

Intext Question

Do you think our contemporary semi-nude or even total stripping culture is grounded in this philosophy and why?

10.5.2 So long as we cooperate with God’s grace, we win.

Let it be appreciated that unless we insist on going astray, if we cooperate with God’s grace with the Sacraments Christ bequeathed to us, victory will definitely be finally ours.

The basic reason is that Christ set us free by conquering the Master of Sin and death (Hb.2: 14-15) and is our High Priest who has purified us from our sins (Hb. 2: 17ff.). You and I know perfectly well that as long as we are in this world, none of us is immune to sin. But on the other hand, none of us is disqualified from God’s enormous Gift of redemptive-salvific-grace.

10.6 The Nature of Conversion.

It is of immense importance for you to comprehend the term “conversion” alias “repentance” which confuses many people.

10.6.1 In the words of Andrew Walls:

“To become a convert is to turn, and turning involves not a change of substance but a change of direction. Conversion…means to turn what is already there in a new direction. It is not a matter
of substituting something new for something old- that is proselytizing, a method that the early Church could have adopted but deliberately chose to jettison. Nor is conversion a matter of adding something old, as a supplement or synthesis. Rather, Christian conversion involves redirecting what is already there, turning it in the direction of Christ.”-A. Wall, *International Bulletin of Missionary Research*, Vol.21, no.4, October 1997, p.148.

10.6.2 On repentance, which is radically intertwined with conversion, John L. McKenzie gives us the following insights:

“Repentance is a genuine and total conversion; Jesus describes it as becoming like a child: repudiation of one’s past and beginning a new life (Mt 18:3). It is evident that the call to repentance is fundamental in the preaching of Jesus: it implies the reality, the power, and the universality of sin, and the genuine, entire, and interior change of belief and attitudes which is necessary to escape from sin. For it is a call to repent and to believe (Mk 1:15); one turns from sin by repentance and turns to the Father through Jesus Christ by Faith.”-J.L. McKenzie, *Dictionary of the Bible*, p.1240.

10.6.3 It is in view of the above that Jesus made a fundamental option in calling sinners to conversion (Lk 5:32).

He backed this summon with diverse parables, allegories, miracles and preaching reaching the zenith in His Passion, death, resurrection, glorification and sending of the Paraclete. He even commissioned the Apostles to spread the Good News to all nations (Acts 1:8) empowering them to incorporate people into His Body through repentance and baptism (Mt 28: 18-20).
Take note

The Bible makes it explicit that to be a disciple and follower of Jesus Christ, conversion is a condition sine qua non (necessary condition). That is why one has to die in the old ways and rise in the new salvific life (1Cor.6:11; Rom.6:4). This involves constant transformation (2 Cor. 3:18). Such a progressive change, as the Council of Trent teaches, is a life-long profound yet gradual process demanding serious and conscious commitment.

10.6.4 R.P. McBrien’s perception of conversion is highly pedagogical.

For him, conversion may also be defined as: “The fundamental change of heart (metanoia) by which a person accepts Jesus as the Christ and orients his or her whole life around Christ and the Kingdom of God which he proclaimed.”- R.P. McBrien, Catholicism, Study Edition, p.1240. It is a call to repentance and belief, to a change of mind, of consciousness, and to a new mode of behavior in keeping with that of mind.”- R.P. McBrien, Catholicism, Study Edition, p.1240. In this regard, the philosopher-cum-theologian Bernard Lonergan identifies at least three types of conversion.

Activity 10.2
Read and understand the three types of conversion indicated and explained by B. J.F. Lonergan i. e., intellectual conversion, moral conversion and religious conversion through the lenses of ‘shifting horizons’- B.J.F. Lonergan, Method in Theology (London: Darton, Longman and Todd, 1972), pp.217ff.

10.6.5 To undergo metanoia, therefore, is to embrace a transformation of your whole self and your total life and vision.

You do this through faith in the Divine Person who empowers you with grace. It is to have a completely new and orthodox, or rather authentic, relationship with God, with yourself, with your neighbours, with your ancestors and with creation. As the penitent, you enjoy the bestowal of grace enabling you to re-acquire the right to inherit heaven in the eschaton.
10.7 Conversion Within the Context Death and Resurrection.

It is within the framework of death and resurrection that we are able to understand conversion better.

**Take note**

Let it be noted forthwith that our basic concern is nor proselytizing or being apologetic. Neither is our pre-occupation that of denominational loyalty. Our option is that of salvific liberational pedagogy and catecheses within the realm of religious pluralism and inter-religious dialogue pointing to a conscious return to God and persevering in the realm of salvation.

10.7.1 In this light, Conversion as a Dynamic Process.

Conversion, which in Greek is *metanoia*, means “change of heart”, as we saw earlier, indicating a return to God by turning away from Satan and, indeed, from sin. It is in a big way the result of salvation. It is also the dynamism towards salvation which enables continuous self-assessment and constant renewal.

**Take note**

Since all people, irrespective of their social, economic, political, religious or marital status are sinners (1Jn 1:8-10), all are in need of conversion and redemption. Admittedly, to remain in the state of friendship with God is an ongoing struggle.

We are often times converted from our sinfulness and have Godliness restored in us.

**Activity 10.3**

Find out how this implies “reconciliation” by reading e.g. C.C.A. Majawa, *African Christian Reconciliation in the Light of Yao traditions*, (Nairobi:
Such conversion need not be enthusiastic or electrifying. Excitement may be experienced, but even this is not a must. The paradox is that although we have salvation, we have to keep striving to get it and remain in its realm.

10.7.2 With this understanding Conversion instills a kind of Phobia in us:

Some of you are touched to be saved and yet you fear to convert. You, perhaps, feel that the transition from the merriment of sinfulness to the boring and less adventurous state of grace is too demanding. You prefer to live as slaves of devil Satan than to be free sons and daughters of the One True God.

Intext Question

What do you think should be done to overcome the phobia of conversion? Why do people find it easier to live a lie than to live in the freedom of truth? Could it be that the agents of the Good News have ignored the breath of fresh air and respective relevance in their evangelization ignoring new situations in life, new language and new generations?

10.7.3 The implications of conversion sometimes make us weep.

You may find yourself asking: Why should I remain oppressed, suppressed and depersonalized by both my personal sins and those of others? Such a searching reflection should propel and energize you to rebel, revolt and fight on against living un-authentically. Such courage would, furthermore, enabled you to steam out crying tears over your sins and those of the others.

Mind you, crying is very Biblical! For instance: Jesus’ counsel at the Last Supper was: “Very truly, I tell you, you will weep and mourn, but the world will rejoice. You will have pain, but your pain will turn into joy.” (Jn 16:20); at Bethany in Lazarus’ home, “Jesus began to weep. So the Jews said, ‘see how he loved him!’” (Jn 11:35-36); Remember Jesus, in a kind of desperation
owing to the evils of His own people, “as He came near and saw the City, He wept over it saying, ‘if you, even you, had only recognised on this day the things that make peace! But now they are hidden from your eyes’” (Jn 19: 41-42). But one should rejoice after absolution and reconciliation. This should be done as a bold and fearless signification from sinfulness and starting to live once more as a worthy child of God.

**10.8 Benefits of Conversion.**

Despite the feeling that conversion may sometimes be painstaking and humbling, nevertheless, it is an invaluable undertaking. It is good for all.

**10.8.1 That is why it is a good principle to keep lifting ourselves up whenever we fall.**

No wonder you find numerous counseling books by a considerable number of African Christian theologians more so those in the area of spirituality which you can easily find out for yourself.

**Intext Question**

Of what value is conversion to you, to your friends and to your enemies?

**10.8.2 A sinner being more welcome than the righteous sounds rather contradictory.**

The paradox of conversion is that the sinner with grave sins is, even Biblically, more cherished in his or her RETURN as a penitent than the righteous ones with venial sins. Jesus Christ Himself testifies to this by using monumental parables.

1) He does this, for instance, in the Parable of the prodigal son (Lk 15:11-32); the Parable of the lost drachma (Lk 15: 8-15); the Parable of the lost sheep (Mt 18: 12-14).

2) He does it also more dramatically in Bethany in the house of Simon the Leper in the episode of the woman of bad name pouring her expensive ointment from an alabaster jar in repentance and acceptance (Mt 26: 6-13).

3) Jesus manifests the attitude of mercy, forgiveness and fruitful value of conversion further and best in the episode of the sinful woman who courageously went right to Jesus as He
was having supper as a guest of a Pharisee. In her sorrowful mood, the sinful woman expressed her repentance by performing a “scandalous” deed upon Jesus fearlessly signifying her conversion, repentance and re-union with Jesus. He defended her thereby re-establishing her worth, dignity, hope and true peace (Lk 7:36ff.).

4) The bottom-line is: “Therefore, I tell you, her sins, which are many, have been forgiven; hence she has shown great love. But the one whom little is forgiven, loves little.” Lk 7:47).

5) The underlying philosophy which you would do well to remember is: “There will be more joy in heaven over one sinner who repents than over ninety-nine righteous persons who need no repentance.” (Lk 15:7). Also: “There is joy in the presence of the angels of God over one sinner who repents.” (Lk 15:10). A more moving and convincing fruitful repercussion of conversion and repentance cannot be imagined.

6) Notwithstanding the above, nevertheless, perusing such pericopes with interest and informed concern, you will be left with no doubt that while the sinner is welcomed wholeheartedly; one’s sins are radically condemned.

7) No wonder, for instance, the concluding remarks of Jesus on the issue of the adulterous woman forwarded to Him by the brutal and insensitive condemning Scribes and Pharisees (Jn 8: 3-11) is non-ambiguous. You notice that He categorically and firmly told her: “Go your way, and from now on do not sin again” (Jn 8:11). It is indicative too that Jesus painfully disclosed what sinning amounts to in these terms: “Very truly, I tell you, everyone who commits sin is a slave to sin. The slave does not have a permanent place in the household” (Jn 8:34).

8) Summary

In this Lecture you were engaged in a critical discussion on Grace which by its very essence, as the Lecture explained, implies conversion thanks to God’s gratuitous benevolence in life through death.

We saw that by God’s infinite amazing grace, God undoubtedly touches even the “unredeemable” empowering them to undergo change for better. He helps even the worst of us in turning us into Saints in this life as well as in life after death. God does this through the unsurpassable gift of grace that makes conversion and all the accruing benefits possible.

In the light of this, the Lecture enabled you to discuss what Grace means, that
God’s Grace is for all and that when we are in the state of Grace we enjoy the comfort of mature authentic innocence. It also enabled you to comprehend the nature of Conversion, conversion within the context of the Resurrection and also to identify the benefits of conversion.

Thanks to the Lecture it is hoped that henceforth you will bear in mind that conversion and repentance are emancipating, that you are liberated from servitude and re-incorporated into the Family of God where you truly enjoy genuine freedom and real happiness which you cannot get from pombe (alcoholic drinks), mundane wealth, health, sex, cheo cha jiuu (up-ward mobility) or even sifa (glory).

Concluding Activity 10.4
Explain the meaning of a “parable” as used by Jesus. Choose any of the following parables pointing out its fundamental message, its relevance to you and its usefulness to your community- the Parable of the prodigal son (Lk 15:11-32); the Parable of the lost drachma (Lk 15: 8-15); the Parable of the lost sheep (Mt 18: 12-14).

10.12 References
UNIT CONCLUSION

We have come to the end of our Unit CRS 561: Modern Trends in Christianity. For practical purposes, after a brief global setting, the Unit picked and examined ine major Trends in ACT which assisted you to adequately understand the fundamental orientations in ACT.

You were made aware that in our contemporary Africa, ACT is no longer emerging. It is actually in vogue. We have numerous orientations and a pluriformity of vibrant approaches. This is not merely in the narrow sense. It is factually in the technical understanding of it. You were challenged to visit Bookshops, College libraries, Higher Institutions, African theologians' private studies and even Seminaries to verify that they are saturated with serious works on and about ACT imbued with interesting theological approaches. You were conscientized that a good number of Private as well as Public Universities' Archives have all kinds of serious related theses, projects, periodicals ...and journals as well as related Units on the same.

You were encouraged to make an effort also to encounter African theologians of both erudition/scholarly level and popular level to come up with remarkable orientations in ACT. A cross examination of these secondary sources and a reasonable perusal of primary sources manifests explicit TRENDS in ACT that illumine and inspire Christianity, and indeed the Church, in Africa which are indispensable for you to examine, assess and use (them) as a springboard into coming up with yours from such enrichment. With this finality, our Unit focused on some of the most outstanding ones namely:

**LECTURE ONE** which created awareness with regard to Global Modern Trends in Christianity;

**LECTURE TWO** which discussed the Trend of approaching Christology through Ancestral perspective;

**LECTURE THREE** which examined and assessed the nature and worth of the Trend of African theologies inspired by blessings and blessing, curses and cursing;

**LECTURE FOUR** which explored and explained the Trend focusing on African ecclessiologies based on the model of the Church viewed as the Family of God;
LECTURE FIVE which discussed the Trend handling African Christian theologies imbued with sin as a critical moral item;

LECTURE SIX which examined and exemplified the Trend geared towards marriage issues especially African single motherhood;

LECTURE SEVEN which perused the Trend of African Feminist cum Women Liberation theologies;

LECTURE EIGHT which confronted and encountered the Trend handling taboo subjects like demonology;

LECTURE NINE which examined the Trend inter-twinning African Christian theologies imbued with medical moral issues like euthanasia.

LECTURE TEN which discussed the Trend handling African Christian theologies imbued with grace and conversion as moral items.
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APPENDIX FOR MODULE
QUESTIONS........................................................................................................................................

THE UNIT’S MODEL QUESTIONS ARE AS FOLLOWS:

1. How does Raimundo Panikkar develop his Asian Inculturation Christology?
2. What are the main elements of Pearl Drego’s feminist liberation Christology?
3. How do African Christologies of liberation relate to those of Latin America and what are the distinctive factors?
4. Indicate the qualities of those you categorized as “the blessed ones” and the characteristics of those you opt to refer to as “the cursed ones” justifying the rationale behind those elements
5. What is a curse intended to do and of what use are they?
6. Pick any African ethnic group and explain: Its perception of curses and cursing; Who curses and why; Different modes of cursing; The most feared curse and why; The demands for curse revocation, victim’s disposition and reparation; Utility of curses in maintaining morality and authentic living.
7. What roles do blessings and curses play in the realm of African spirituality?
8. Give your own understanding of the term “Church”. What does the Church mean to you?
10. Read how Clement Majawa explains the nature of the Church and its role in defining genuine democracy in Africa showing also the relevance of this interesting exposition to your respective motherlands- in AFER, February/April, 2000, Vol.42, Nos 1& 2, pp.80.
11. In view of “sin of despair” and that of “denial of sin”, do an exegesis of Matthean pericope (Mt 27:1-9) drawing out its relevant to your motherland- as an African Christian theologian.,
12. Drawing insights from the episode of the encounter between Zacchaeus and Jesus as recorded in Luke 19:1-10, what lessons do you think Zacchaeus would teach Judas Iscaliot, our corrupt leaders, your colleagues who have suicide tendency, and you?
13. What would you say about the assertion that “women invite rape upon themselves “and how do you justify your stand as a student of ACT?
14. Discuss the sins of drug trafficking, deliberate destructive interference with the environment and willful ruining of ecological balance
15. Basing yourself on insights you get from the Parable of the Prodigal Son (Lk 15:11-32), verify or falsify the assertion that “when it comes to mercy, God is extremely weak. If and when in this world we choose to convert and genuinely RETURN to God, He has no otherwise but to accept us wholeheartedly.”

16. Explain the difference between “sin of omission” and “sin of commission” from both the Christian and African views.

17. Comment on Paul’s greeting formula which reads: “The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God, and the fellowship/communion of the Holy spirit be with you” (2 Cor. 13: 13) showing its significance that makes some mainstream Churches adopt it in their respective Service/Worship and Mass?

18. Do you agree or disagree with Origen when he says: “where there are sins, there are also divisions, schisms, heresies, and disputes. Where there is virtue, however, there also are harmony and unity, from which arises the one heart and one soul of all believers” and why.

19. Explain how your community members guard themselves from falsehood/lies which the Africans take most seriously. Find out and give their different modes of swearing to guarantee and verify veracity and falsification of lies.

20. Explain the meaning of a “parable” as used by Jesus. Choose any of the following parables pointing out its fundamental message, its relevance to you and its usefulness to your community- the Parable of the prodigal son (Lk 15:11-32); the Parable of the lost drachma (Lk 15: 8-15); the Parable of the lost sheep (Mt 18: 12-14).

21. What do you think should be done to overcome the phobia of conversion? Why do people find it easier to live a lie than to live in the freedom of truth?

22. Comment on the following statement: “Our society has become so irreligious and materialistic because the agents of the Good News have ignored to insert the breath of fresh air and respective relevance in their evangelization ignoring new situations in life, new language and new generations.”

23. According to you, who are single mothers? What is your understanding of single motherhood?

24. Give and discuss the main objectives of African Feminist/ Women Liberation Theology?
25. Compare the episode of the encounter between the liberated woman who suffered Hemorrhage for 12 years in Mk 5: 25-34 with that of the “Good Thief” in Lk 23: 32-43 who impressed Jesus.

26. Basing yourself on African cosmotheandric perception of being and beingness, discuss the inviolability of human life whether one is old or terminally sick or severely deformed.