UNIVERSITY OF NAIROBI
COLLEGE OF HUMANITIES AND SOCIAL SCIENCES

FACULTY OF ARTS

In Collaboration With

CENTRE FOR OPEN AND DISTANCE LEARNING

PHILOSOPHY AND RELIGIOUS STUDIES

CRS 404: CHRISTIAN THEOLOGY IN AFRICA

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SECTION ONE: NATURE, SCOPE AND RELEVANCE OF THE COURSE

LECTURE ONE

EXPLANATION OF TERMS

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1.1 Introduction

This lecture handles the nature of African Theology (henceforth AT) and African Christian Theology (henceforth ACT) as it discusses selected definitions from some renowned scholars. It also identifies and explicates the working definition for the Unit. The lecture, moreover, analyzes the indispensable duties of a good African Christian theologian- among the tasks being the requisite of endeavoring to be a good philosopher too.
1.2 Objectives

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

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

2. Identify and critically assess the pluriformity of the conceptions of AT cum ACT in view of coming up with a worthy working definition.

3. Explain that it is a requisite of a good African Christian theologian to be a good philosopher too who is open to other disciplines like African Traditional Religions, history, sociology, anthropology, …and even Marxist social analysis

4. Elaborate that an ACT must necessarily be pastoral in the sense of responding fruitfully to people’s needs, worries, concerns, anxieties and aspirations for the welfare of all, maintain orthodoxy with regard to the kernel of Christianity/doctrine and be able to challenge the Church creatively with due respect and prudence.

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

Intext Questi

What is African Theology/African Christian Theology?

Just as is the case with general philosophy (i.e. philosophy in the broad sense) whereby practically all are philosophers, so too in African theology. You as someone who, as an African Christian, has discourse on the un-Originated Originator and your relationship with that Supreme Being and the rest of creation qualify as a theologian- and an African one at that.
1.4 Other Theologians’ Understanding of ACT.

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

1.4.2 C. Nyamiti: “AT is the scientific and systematic effort, guided by reason illumined by faith (faith seeking understanding), to understand and present Christian faith in accordance with African needs and mentality”.

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

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

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

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

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

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

1.5 Evaluation/Assessment/Appraisal of the Above Definitions.

1.5.1 There is a tendency in some of these definitions to confine, limit or even equate the term AT to ACT. One can easily notice a narrowing conception as if African Traditional Religions are devoid of genuine AT. This, of course, is a distortion of the reality.
1.5.2 Some limit AT to that which is connected with “study” or erudition. In their biases towards schooling cum academic, they forget that our African elders and some other Traditional religious leaders do theology as they participate on discourse on God and are thus ipso facto theologians especially in their cosmotheandric (belonging to the worlds of nature, humans and spirits) perception of being and beingness.

1.5.3 In their creditable effort to point out the elements which are needed for the building up of ACT some definitions confine themselves to African thought forms, idioms and categories without taking into account the importance of the African problems, anxieties, worries and needs for this purpose. In other words, they are not pastoral enough. The rationale is that, it is indispensable for a good theology to be involved in pastoral aspects thereby giving hope and way-forward. Aspects like: the phenomenon of single motherhood within family solidarity; salvation and being saved; positive and negative euthanasia; ubiquitous deaths, dying and life hereafter; liberation and living authentically; African elderhood that penetrates the whole of the African life and living with the resulting dominance; basic oppressive and exploitative factors today’s African women are subjected to and how to curb these unfavorable factors; respect cum phobia for benevolent and malevolent ancestral spirits; together with curses and being cursed- among others.

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

1.6 Our Recommended/Proposed Working Definition.

According to us, thanks to insights from Charles Nyamiti and self reflection, the recommended definition of AT is composed of the following:

1.6.1 AT in its broad/etymological sense may be defined as “discourse on God in accordance with the needs, aspirations, thought-forms and mentality of the African people.” In this broad conception, AT comprises:

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

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

1.6.3 This ACT in turn has a double understanding namely:

1) In its broad sense “ACT is the understanding, presentation and concrete interpretation of the Christian faith/Good News/Gospel in accordance with the needs, aspirations, thought-forms and mentality of the African people.”

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

Take note

The above understanding corresponds well with the anthropological and social realities in the Black Continent.

1.7 Discussion As to Whether ACT Does Exist.

1.7.1 Understood merely in the broad sense, ATC has been in existence since long:

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

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

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

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**Take note**

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

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

1.8 Our Business/Relevance of the Course.

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

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

1.8.3 We take it as the normative one for our Unit. We will approach this cautiously since ACT is still emerging imbued with diverse elements and diverging characteristics. As such there is no conclusive definition. That is why we are compelled to utilize the above as our working definition. The Unit is, moreover, extremely invaluable taking into account the huge number of followers and disciples of Jesus Christ called Christians (cf.p.12).

1.9 Our Duties as African Christian Theologians (your duties as such a student).

1.9.1 Introduction:

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

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

Take note

This fundamental requirement was later explicated at a most comprehensive academic level in Pope John Paul II’s globally renowned Encyclical titled- Fides et Ratio i.e. Faith and Reason.
1.9.3 They must be equally conscious of the intellectual demands imposed by theological work. One must strive to possess the deepest and most accurate scientific knowledge of humanity and the factors that condition it. One has to be able to dialogue meaningfully with other disciplines e.g. with medical experts through medical ethics’ issues of life like euthanasia, morality of the timing of organ transplant and abortion, political science issues like constitution renewal etc..

1.9.4 They must have a special commitment in being able to insert oneself into people’s situation in life otherwise one’s theology becomes both obsolete and irrelevant. They have also to be attentive to the questions raised and involving perception through emerging generations, changing situations in life, and new problems in living and changing values otherwise one’s theology is rendered obsolete. Above all, one has to be conversant with own people’s and other people’s CULTURES and to utilize their respective cultural values for authentic INCULTURATION/LIBERATION theologisation. Additionally, one has to be PASTORAL to answer people’s needs, anxieties, worries…and aspirations.

1.9.5 They are, moreover, obliged to have a genuine commitment to one’s Church- not being rebellious, arrogant and disturbing people’s peace. Here, one has to assist the Church to marry orthodoxy with orthopraxis. Do this always bearing in mind that the kernel of Christianity is the same BUT the mode /manner of explication is diverse. This calls for undertaking serious research and reflection but in reference to the Christian doctrine. Nevertheless, they must equally cultivate courage, as T.T. Tshibangu points out, and take risks in exploring, pondering and expressing the theological conclusions that derive from their authentic research.

1.9.6 Conclusion:

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

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

Activity 1.1

1) Explain the term ACT in the technical/narrow sense.

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

3) Explain the meaning of “African theology” and “African Christian Theology”

4) Discuss the main sources of ACT.

5) Comment critically on the different labels of ACT.

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

1.11 References


LECTURE TWO
FORMER AND PREVAILING SITUATION WITH REGARD TO ACT

Lecture Outline.

2.1 Introduction.

2.2 Objectives.

2.3 Christianity Young in Africa.

2.4 A Critical Analyses of Early Missionaries’ Implantation Method of Evangelisation.

2.5 Why they Used Implantation Method.

2.6 Factors That Gradually Transformed the Above Approach.

2.7 Summary.

2.8 Activities.

2.9 References.

2.1 Introduction.

In Lecture One awareness was created with regard to the importance of other disciplines, like philosophy, sociology, anthropology and history, for a deeper serious ACT. With this in mind, this Lecture will discuss the historical setting of the origin, emergence and growth of Christianity in Africa with emphasis on the mode of evangelization employed by the agents of Christianity, i.e., the early Christian missionaries. We shall also explain the transforming factors that brought about a more acceptable proclamation and fruitful catechizing approach.

2.2 Objectives

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

1. Explain that despite the huge number and tremendous increase of African Christian followers and disciples, Christianity is still very young in Africa
compared to the Westerners—with the exception of the Coptic Church in Egypt and the Orthodox Church in Ethiopia.

2. Elaborate that despite the vivid monumental merits of the early missionaries, these agents of Christianity utilized an unfavorable, indeed unacceptable, implantation method in their missionary enterprise.

3. Discuss that it is crucial to evaluate the rationale behind the above “un-Christian” mode of propagating, spreading and deepening the Good News.

4. Explain that the above shortcomings, interest in African socio-religio-cultural philosophical issues, attainment of political independence, monumental Vatican Two instructions on making Christianity at home in respective people’s cultures cum world-views, and African beneficiaries of benevolent missionary scholarships who successfully studied abroad thereby realizing the missionaries’ double standards triggered the emergence of African Christian theologians who came up with actual and factual ACT.

2.3 Christianity Young in Africa.

2.3.1 Introduction: Although the Orthodox Church in Ethiopia and the Coptic Church in Egypt have been in Africa for well over 1000 years, Christianity in Africa is a recent phenomenon. It is relatively young in Africa South of the Sahara. This is in the sense that out of the three millennia, Christianity in many parts of Africa is hardly 200 years old.

2.3.2 Christianity in contemporary Africa is a tremendous force to reckon with: One does not need statistical and demographic acumen to realize the rapidity of the growth and astonishing geographical spread of Christianity. While Western Churches are virtually empty, those in Africa are saturated with disciples and followers. A visit to any Church, especially on Sundays, will easily verify this assertion.
The increment, growth and spread of Christianity in Africa is just amazing. From the World Christian Encyclopedia edited by David Barret an awareness is created that: in 1912 in the whole of Africa there were 1,300,000 Christians; 3,750,000 in 1924; 14,000,000 in 1949; 53,000,000 in 1962; 97,000,000 in 1969; 203,000,000 in 1980. With this progression, the prediction was that of 350,000,000 in year 2000 - which actually was on the lower side. With this scientific growth analysis, one can roughly appreciate the overwhelming number of Christians today in Africa who, in view of our Unit, are in need of ACT. That is among the reasons why our Unit is of immense importance.

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

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

2.4.1 Preamble:

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

Nevertheless, in their evangelization endeavor in their missionary enterprise, they utilized the repulsive IMPLANTATION method which had a considerable number of shortcomings and limitations which we now examine below.

2.4.2 Meaning of implantation method:

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

2.5 Why they Used Implantation Method.

2.5.1 Introduction:

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

Intext Question

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

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

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

The basic mentality and issue was that, to them, the Africans were plain mission fields for the implantation of the Western theologies. For them, Africans were a kind of *tabula lazar* or virginal soil to be exploited and maneuvered.
Thus, the Africans were supposed to be dependent on the missionaries’ superior cultures. They glorified their Western cultures as being unpolluted by heathenism compared to the “unfortunate” African one.

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

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

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

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

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

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

Such issue of double standards is well captured by J. N. K. Mugambi in his book titled *African Christian Theology* pp39-40. This is how he puts it:

“Missionary activity in the early Church respected the religious and cultural backgrounds of the people to whom the Church spread. The New Testament presented a gospel in which Jesus Christ and His teaching were relevant. This positive approach was an important factor contributing to the great development of Christian theology during the first five centuries of Church history, and in particular to its influence by Greco-Roman philosophical and religious thought.

“In contrast, the modern missionary movement of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, which effectively introduced Christianity to the interior of East Africa, was negative to the African cultural and religious heritage.”

2.5.6 Consequences of their implantation approach:

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

Such general contempt and pious arrogance in disregard of African situation in life and world-view made some Africans be of the mentality that Christianity is a *Mzungu* (foreigner’s) religion. They even perceived it as a religion which has as its content the invasion of indigenous practices and Europeanizing of African-ness.
It actually brought a dichotomy between Christianity and the Africans. Such a rift, henceforth, has an impact of making even some of the convertees to Christianity practice double standards in their beliefs, life and living. In this way they now and then lean towards Christianity at their manipulative convenience while in other difficult or convivial situations they opt, with rigor, for their traditional norms and practices.

2.6 Factors That Gradually Transformed the Above Approach.

2.6.1 Introduction:

The above wrong method of evangelization became a stumbling block in the realization of ACT. Its radical change was long-overdue. There then cropped up factors that transformed the scenario. Let us point out and explicate such striking factors that brought out the change:

2.6.2 The emergence of critical-questioning African Christian theologians:

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

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

“How can I sing the Lord’s song in a strange land, in a strange language, in a strange thought, in a strange ideology? (cf. Ps.137:4). For more than a decade now the cry of the Psalmist has been the cry of many African Christians. We demand to serve the Lord in our own terms and without being turned into Euro-American or Semitic bastards before we do so. That the Gospel has come to remain in Africa cannot be denied, but now our theological reflections must be addressed to the real contextual African situations.
“Our question must not be what Karl Barth, Karl Rahner or any other Karl has to say, but rather what God would have us do in our living concrete condition. For too long African Christian theologians have been preoccupied with what missionary A or theologian B or scholar C has told us about God and the Lord Jesus Christ.

“The struggle of African theologians, scholars, and other Christians in ventures such as this consultation is to find a theology that speaks to our people where we are, to enable us to answer the critical question of our Lord Jesus Christ: Who do you (African Christians) say that I am?”

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

2.7 Summary

In this lecture you are expected to have established a strong base on the emergence of Christianity in Africa, the manner in which the otherwise creditable missionaries unfortunately employed implantation method in the propagation of the Good News owing to their attitude of contempt towards anything African imbued with their paternalism cum patronization, and the fundamental factors that transformed the above thereby being the springboard into real ongoing ACT.

Activity 2.1

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

2) Discuss at least four factors that helped in transforming the above unfortunate implantation method of evangelization.

3) Indicate and explain the challenge Vatican Two and Post-Vatican Two
magisterial documents subject African Christian Theologians to with regard to Christianity.

2.9 References


LECTURE THREE
PLURIFORMITY OF ACT

Lecture Outline.

3.1 Introduction.

3.2 Objectives.

3.3 Socio-political and Cultural Divergences.

3.4 Denominational Peculiarities.

3.5 Individual Choice and Personality.

3.6 One’s School of Thought and Academic Mentor.

3.7 Degree of Commitment and Authenticity: A Good Theologian Be a Good Philosopher.

3.8 Different Approaches.

3.9 Summary.

3.10 Activities.

3.11 References.

3.1 Introduction.

In Lecture Two, we elaborated how Christianity formally reached Africa, the agents and the
main method they used as a tool for evangelization, how this unfavorable implantation mode
was modified by invaluable factors that included the learned Africans who, ironically, benefited
from the missionaries’ benevolent funds cum scholarships to their home institutions and
universities thus actualizing ACT though in its infancy. In this Chapter, we will examine the
divergence despite the convergence of ACT pointing out clearly and distinctly and explicating
the elements that are responsible for the vivid pluriformity of ACT. The Lecture will,
Furthermore, identify the three main trends effecting diverse modes of ACT among individual
African Christian theologians i.e. some African Christian theologians choose liberation trend,
some opt for the Inculturation orientation, while some others intertwine the liberation trend and Inculturation orientation for their approach-hence the pluriformity of ACT.

### 3.2 Objectives

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

1. Explain that even at its present initial stage ACT is neither monolithic nor uniform but diverse and constantly diverging.

2. Elaborate that the pluriformity in ACT, analogically like that of the Gospels viewed through historical critical method under redaction criticism, is healthy and, indeed, welcome.

3. Discuss that among the main characteristics bringing about differences in ACT are socio-political and cultural distinctiveness, diverse faith affiliations, individual choice and personalities, one’s initiation into peculiar schools of thought, diverging degrees of commitment to scholarship and doctrinal royalty, and options in engaging in the threefold pivotal approaches in ACT.

4. Identify and explain that basically there are practically three fundamental approaches in ACT namely: liberational perspective; inculturational orientation; and an implicit as well as explicit merger of these two approaches owing to their correlativity and necessary mutuality.

### 3.3 Socio-political and Cultural Divergences.

These affect the theologizing of the theologians. The rationale is that one normally does theology with an anchor to ones situation/circumstances in life, ethnic/cultural endowment, political affiliation and national background. It should be remembered that theology is fundamentally situational.
That is why we notice, for instance, outstanding distinctiveness between French speaking African Christian theologians and the English speaking ones. Generally, Francophone African Christian theologians tend to be more speculative, more creative (even in music) and better philosophers thanks also to French language which is friendlier in speculation and metaphysics. On the other hand, Anglophone African theologians are inclined to be less speculative, less creative and more pragmatic thanks to English language which is less friendly in metaphysics and speculations. While French may be said to be more abstract, English is more concrete/pragmatic. Thus, employing these languages as theologizing tools necessarily triggers divergences in ACT especially in depth, seriousness and creativity.

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

3.4 Denominational Peculiarities.

Faith affiliation is another factor that contributes to the pluriformity in ACT. The issue here is that the religion or denomination or sects or membership in the ever-cropping up Christian splinter groups and ongoing mushrooming counter-splinter groups contribute heavily in influencing their respective members, directly or indirectly binding own theologians, in coming up with ACT they can own. In other words, royalty to their Churches compel the theologians to come up with ACT that complies to their respective Churches-hence the differences. To be more pragmatic, let us assess two of our pioneer internationally renowned African Christian theologians namely, Prof. Charles Nyamiti and Prof. John S. Mbiti.

Intext Question

What do you know about Prof. Charles Nyamiti?
Charles Nyamiti is a Staunch Roman Catholic and a dedicated pious Priest at that. He theologizes necessarily within the precepts of the Catholic magisterial instructions and guidance. You will, moreover, find more accentuation on “conversion” and less on “being saved” in his numerous works. He adheres also to the strict Roman Catholic tradition, Catholicism and hierarchical respect. That is why, in his huge number of extremely serious publications, you will easily be hit by his strong passion for emphasis on magisterial cum Papal cum Encyclical references, adherence to Tradition (at times more emphasized than Biblical sources), Scholasticism cum classical elements, rigidity owing to heavy metaphysics (remember Philosophical study is a necessary condition for all Roman Catholics aspiring to Priesthood) making his theological voluminous works both deep, systematic and tough reading.

**Take note**

In his ACT then, Charles Nyamiti actually Inculturates Christian Doctrines from a philosophical and speculative stance. He does ACT by approaching the Christian mysteries ontologically and anthropologically. He does this in a systematic and scientific manner- from what we previously defined as ACT in the strict narrow sense.

**Take note**

What do you know about Prof. John S. Mbiti?

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 *nil 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, John S. Mbiti actually inculturate 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.

### 3.5 Individual Choice and Personality.

Among the African Christian theologians the above is explicit. They opt for different tools in their theologizing: Some employ Marxist social analyses in their ACT. Some utilize Thomistic philosophy. Some grapple with African music and dances in their inculturate Christian liturgy and worship. Many enrich their ACT with African cultural heritage…and some utilize the philosophies they are personally comfortable with like sage philosophy, existential philosophy, 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 ACT.

### 3.6 One’s School of Thought and Academic mentor

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

**Take note**

Perhaps this is among the underlying principle behind African theologians owning with pride where they were educated to stress their distinctiveness: You often hear them asserting- I am a PhD but from Tubingen; I am an academic Doctor from Oxford, Louvain…I am a PhD holder from the University of Harvard…or University of Nairobi.

### 3.7 Degree of Commitment and Authenticity- A Good Theologian Be a Good Philosopher:

Ones seriousness or lack of seriousness in schooling and education and openness to other disciplines or lack of it results in different types of African Christian Theologies: Some deep; some superficial; some naïve and far-fetched.

To appreciate this crucial point, I strongly recommend a revisit of what [Lecture One](#) identified and explained as the indispensable duties of a good African Christian theologian as spelt out and explicated by Tharcisse T. Tshishiku as follows:

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

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

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

The African theologian must, moreover, have a special commitment in being able to insert oneself into people’s situation in life otherwise one’s theology becomes both superficial and irrelevant. One must also be attentive to the questions raised and involving perception through emerging generations, changing situations in life, new problems in living and changing values. Above all, one has to be conversant with own people’s and other people’s CULTURES and to utilize with a high degree of authority the cultural values for authentic INCULTURATION/LIBERATION theologization. Additionally, one has to be PASTORAL enough to be able to answer people’s needs, anxieties, worries…and aspirations.

The African theologian is further required to have a genuine commitment to one’s Church- not being rebellious, arrogant and disturbing people’s peace. Here, one has to assist the Church to marry orthodoxy with orthopraxis. One is required to do this always bearing in mind that the kernel of Christianity is the same BUT the mode /manner of explication is diverse. This calls for undertaking serious research and reflection but in reference to the Christian doctrine. Nevertheless, they must equally cultivate courage, as T.T. Tshishiku points out, and take risks in exploring, pondering and expressing the theological conclusions that derive from their authentic research.

Thus, the degree of adherence, or lack of it, becomes a primordial cause of differences in ACT.
3.8 Different Approaches.

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

3.9 Summary

In this Lecture, you were conscientised to understand that though ACT is still in its remarkable formative stage compared to the Western one, nevertheless, it is not uniform but has a pluriformity. Awareness was created that, just as is the case with the Gospels, the divergences in ACT are healthy and, indeed, welcome and should even be encouraged. The Lecture has, moreover, empowered you to identify and enabled you to explicate the factors that trigger the pluriformity in ACT and necessarily exposed you to an awareness of the three-pronged key approaches to ACT. The Lecture, further identified three main trends effecting diverse modes of ACT among individual African Christian theologians i.e. some African Christian theologians choose liberation trend, some opt for the Inculturation orientation, while some others intertwine the liberation trend and Inculturation orientation for their approach.

3.10 Activity

1) Give and discuss the six basic characteristics which bring about divergences in ACT.

2) Identify and critically evaluate the three main orientations/trends in ACT indicating also their intrinsic inter-relatedness.

3) Discuss how the following factors trigger a pluriformity in ACT:
a) Denominational peculiarities/varieties.

b) Socio-political and cultural differences.

c) One’s school of thought.

d) Individual choice.

e) Theologian’s degree of commitment.

f) Own option for a fundamental approach.

3.11 References


6. J. Healey and D. Sybertz, Toward an African Narrative Theology
LECTURE FOUR

EXPLANATION OF TERMS, DIVERGENCE CUM CONVERGENCE, LEVELS IT IS DONE AND METHODOLOGY

Lecture Outline.

4.1 Introduction.

4.2 Objectives.

4.3 Explanation of the Term “Liberation Theology”: Gustavo Gutierrez; Leonardo Boff.

4.4 Liberation Theology in Relation to: Radical Social Revolution; Anthropocentrism; Theocentricity; Christology; Ecclesiology; and Eschatology.

4.5 Liberation Theology: One Though Many.

4.6 Peter Frostin’s Analysis of Levels of Oppression.

4.7 Threefold Inter-related Levels LT is Done.

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

4.9 Geographical Spread: Wherever Christianity Is –Since Jesus is the Liberator Par Excellence.

4.10 Summary.

4.11 Activities.

4.12 References.
4.1 Introduction

As we saw in a previous Lecture, there are two fundamental approaches to ACT namely, Liberation approach and Inculturation perspective. In this Lecture, we will discuss liberation theology dwelling mainly on Latin American Liberation theology. The main reason is that the Latin American not only has a global repute but also the African one is greatly influenced by the Latin American way of doing liberation theology. As such, background knowledge of Latin American’s is indispensable in grasping that of Africa. The affinity is just too strong to be ignored.

4.2 Objectives

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

1. Explain the affinity between Latin American LT and that of Africa.

2. Define LT from insights gained from G. Gutierrez and L. Boff.

3. Relate LT to radical revolution, anthropocentrism, Theocentrism, Christology, Ecclesiology and Eschatology.

4. Discuss the issue of LT being one yet imbued with pluriformity.

5. Give and explain the levels of oppression that trigger divergences in LT.

6. Identify and discuss the three levels at which LT is done.

7. Give and explain the methodological approach to LT.

8. Discuss the Geographical spread of LT.

4.3 Explanation of the Term “Liberation Theology”: Gustavo Gutierrez; Leonardo Boff.

4.3.1 Gustavo Gutierrez Merino:
This Latin American scholar of international repute merits some attention since he is referred to as the “father of liberation theology”. According to me, however, Gutierrez should share this enviable title with Paulo Freire for his commitment to education for all including “illiterate” adults and his concretization of the concept “CONSCIENTIZATION” which is the very core of liberation theology in view of CREATING AWARENESS for authentic transformation, growth in freedom and self actualization cum orthodox fulfillment. This universally respected educator wrote monumental pedagogical books which are still very much used worldwide even after his demise on 2\textsuperscript{nd} May, 1997 in Sao Paulo City of heart attack. He authored liberation educative scholarly publications which have influenced even African Christian Theologians.

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<td>Among such Paulo Freire’s pedagogical, or rather integrally liberating books are:</td>
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<td>1. \textit{Pedagogy of the Oppressed} (London: Sheed and Ward, 1972);</td>
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<td>3. \textit{Pedagogy of the City} (New York: Continuum, 1993);</td>
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<td>4. \textit{Pedagogy of Hope: Reliving Pedagogy of the Oppressed} (New York: Continuum, 1997);</td>
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<td>5. \textit{Education For Critical Consciousness} (New York: Continuum, 1998);</td>
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Gutierrez’s prominence in this approach to theology was mainly as a result of pioneering a most serious liberation monograph titled \textit{A Theology of Liberation: History, Politics and Salvation} (Maryknoll, New York: Orbis Books, 1973). Gutierrez has authored other serious influential books like: \textit{We Drink from Our Own Wells: The Spiritual Journey of a People} (London: SMC

**Intext Question**

What other publications by G. Gutierrez are you aware of?

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

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

**Take note**

Gutierrez studied philosophy at the Pontifical Seminary in Santiago Chile, then to the University of Louvain in Belgium in 1951 where he studied philosophy and psychology. He then did theology at the Catholic Institute in Lyons France and got licentiate in 1959. He was ordained Priest in 1959, taught at the Pontifical Catholic University, Lima (department of theology). Gutierrez was involved with the Catholic Action Movement and he was invited at CELAM as a member of its theological reflection team. Furthermore, he had an active role in Second General Conference of Latin American Bishops at Madeline Colombia in 1968—which was the main inspiration with regard to liberation theology.
Gutierrez felt that Western theology did not make the Gospel touch the daily life of the poor. It left them unchanged proving to be inadequate and not so relevant among them. Mingling with the poor in his pastoral duties, Gutierrez got the following insights:

I discovered three: “I discovered that poverty was destructive, something to be fought against and destroyed, not merely something that was the object of charity. Second, I discovered that poverty was not accidental. The fact that these people are poor and not rich is not just a matter of chance, but the result of a structure…Third, I discovered that poor people were a social class. When I discovered that poverty was something to be fought against, that poverty was structural, that poor people were a class and could organize, it became crystal clear that in order to serve the poor, one had to move into political action.” That is why he became a kind of political activist living literally among the poor. That is why his approach to theology got transformed. This is how he defines Liberation theology:

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

He further qualifies it as:

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

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

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3 Ibid., p.15.
traditional theology stresses “reflection on”, LT accentuates “PRAXIS” for transformation.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

4.3.2 Leonardo Boff:

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

**Take note**


Boff gives a more comprehensive definition of LT. This is how he puts it:

“The theology of liberation is nothing other than the theological moment of the experience of Christian faith when it undertakes to consciously transform a world in a situation of dependence on the basis of the Gospel.”  

He sees it as FAITH seeking to TRANSFORM/REMAKE the world.

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The above definition gives an insight into the starting point and the specific goal of LT:

1) The starting point for LT is situation of UNFREEDOM. This state is also called situation of alienation, degradation, marginalization, rejection…depersonalization. It is a condition noticed within the context of oppressive structures, attitudes, mentality and conduct. A situation resulting in too few people having excessive wealth while too many are imbued with abject poverty. All these are in the realm of un-freedom.

2) The goal of LT is implied in the point of departure. The finality is FREEDOM. This aim is also called by other names like emancipation, liberty and authenticity. It implies a serious commitment to the struggle for emancipating the sufferers and the poor from the shackles of oppression and deprivation into integral freedom and wellbeing. One can further rightly refer to it as re-establishment of humankind as humankind ought to be i.e. human uplift to authenticity. Hence the emphasis on concepts likes “liberation”, “salvation” and “redemption”.

4.4 Liberation Theology in Relation to: Radical Social Revolution; Anthropocentrism; Theocentricity; Christology; Ecclesiology; and Eschatology.

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

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

Take note

Paulo Freire further explains this “radical social revolution” proposed by the exponents of LT as geared towards transformation of structures through PRAXIS (i.e. reflection and action = reflective action) implying honest dialogue, solidarity, sincere communication and healthy inter-personal relationships and interaction.\(^7\)

4.4.2 Anthropocentrism:

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

Thanks to this focus, LT aims at liberating man/woman from the shackles of whatever undermines or blocks his or her self-responsibility/awareness/actualization/fulfillment. It endeavors to eliminate such impediments and stumbling blocks that hinder the above. Thus, LT

strives for the annihilation of the exploitative and alienating factors and makes a determined effort in the re-establishment of continuous restoration of liberty and authenticity to all.

4.4.3 Theocentricity:

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

4.4.4 Christocentricity:

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

4.4.5 Ecclessiology:

The above understanding logically leads to the Church aspect of LT. It should be remembered that the Christian Church\(^8\) is by its very nature the Body of Christ who is the Head and as such

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His Church MUST do what He did and commissioned and necessarily be who He is to many-and, indeed, to all.

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

4.5 Liberation Theology: One Though Many.

**Take note**

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

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

**Intext Question**

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

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

4.6 Peter Frostin’s Analysis of Levels of Oppression:

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

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<td>What do you understand by the following levels of oppression?</td>
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1) Economic level- this has to do with rich and poor;
2) Classist level- this has to do with capitalists and proletariats;
3) Geographic level- this has to do with North and South;
4) Sexist level- this has to do with male and female;
5) Ethnic level- this has to do with whites and blacks;
6) Cultural level- this has to do with dominant and dominated culture.⁹

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

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4.7 Threefold Inter-related Levels LT is Done.

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

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

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

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

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

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

L. Boff remarkably provides us with an inspiration into the method of approach as far as LT is concerned. According to him, the method consists of the following moments/mediations/aspects/steps:

1) The moment of insertion: The experience of captivity and un-freedom becomes real when one is on the ground. Here one gains experiential knowledge. This is gained when one is on the ground.
2) **The moment of social analysis:** Having experienced the above, one asks oneself WHY things are the way they are. This is a daring bold step whose consequences can be extremely painful to the liberator but a worthy cause all the same.

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

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

### 4.9 Geographical Spread.

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

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4.10 **Summary**

As we saw in this Lecture, there are two fundamental approaches to ACT namely, Liberation approach and Inculturation perspective. In this Lecture, we discussed liberation theology dwelling mainly on Latin American Liberation theology and main exponents like Gustavo Gutierrez Merino and Leonardo Boff. The main reason is that the Latin American LT not only has a global repute but also the fact that African LT is greatly influenced by the Latin American way of doing liberation theology. As such, background knowledge of Latin American’s is indispensable in grasping that of Africa. The affinity is just too strong to be undermined.
4.11 Activity

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

2) Give and analyze P. Frostin’s aspects of levels of oppression that effect a pluriformity in African liberation theology.

3) Discuss Leonardo Boff’s understanding of “liberation theology” indicate also his importance in ACT.

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

5) Discuss:

   a) The assertion that: “Gustavo Gutierrez and Paulo Freire ought, or ought not, to share the reputable honorary title of “father of LT”.

   b) Gustavo Gutierrez’s triple connotations of the term “liberation theology”.

6) Using the insights of L. Boff’s definition of liberation theology, discuss the point of departure and goal of liberation theology indicating also its value in our African liberation theology.

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

4.12 References


2. G. Gutierrez, The Power of the Poor in History (Maryknoll, New York:


LECTURE FIVE

SOUTH AFRICAN BLACK THEOLOGY: JESUS THE BLACK MESSIAH/LIBERATOR

Lecture Outlines

5.1 Introduction.

5.2 Objectives.

5.3 A Portrait of Liberation.

5.4 Historical Setting of South African Black Theology.

5.5 Black Consciousness As the Key Concept And Its Meaning.

5.6 Sources of South African Black theology.

5.7 Jesus the “Black Messiah.”

5.8 Summary.

5.9 References.

5.1 Introduction.

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

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

1. Assess the specificity of SABT as compared to other liberation theology approaches.

2. Discuss the nature of SABT,

3. Give and explain the historical setting of SABT showing also the Affinity with North American Black Power Theology (henceforth NABPT)

4. Explain the term “Black Consciousness” as the key concept in SABT.

5. Give and elaborate the six main sources of SABT.

6. Discuss the significance of the title “Black Messiah” as attributed to Jesus Christ the Liberator par excellence within the context of South Africans.

5.3 A Portrait of Liberation.

5.3.1 Specificity of SABT:

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

5.3.2 Explanation of SABT:

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

In this connection, Boesak says:

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

(b) National Committee of Black Churchmen in June 1969 explains it in this manner:

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

(c) According to Bonganjalo Goba:

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

5.4 Historical Setting of SABT.

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

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

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

5.4.2 At the beginning, in its infancy, SABT had militant and aggressive elements. This was basically because of its affinity with the radical North American Black Power Theology NABPT as propagated by scholars like James H. Conn especially in his three books titled, A Black

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13 Ibid., p.60.
Theology of Liberation; For My People: Black Theology and the Black Church; Black Theology and Black Power 14 and Gayraud S. Wilmore works15.

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

**Take note**

We all are both oppressors and oppressed- and thus in need of liberation and transformation.

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

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

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

“Black theology is the product of concrete struggles that were being waged by black people in the late 1960s and early 1970s”16.

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

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

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

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

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

5.5 Black Consciousness As the Key Concept and Its Meaning.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Take note

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

Intext Question

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

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

5.5.4 Steve Biko:

Intext Question

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

Although Steve Biko was more of a political activist than a theologian, nevertheless, he is honored as the “father of Black Consciousness.” The rationale behind this is that it is him, more than anybody else, who propagated, explicated, concretized and accentuated the belief that all races are equal and, therefore, there should be freedom for all. This was a cause for which he
gave up his vibrant youthful life through the internationally renowned brutal murder which shook South Africa.\textsuperscript{20}

5.6 Sources of SABT.

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

\textbf{Intext Question}

What are the main sources of SABT?

5.6.1 Black people in the USA:

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

\textbf{Mokgethi Motlhabi} acknowledges and appreciates the affinity and borrowing in these words: “There is general agreement that Black Theology originated in the USA when, in 1969, James Cone produced his pioneering work on the topic, titled \textit{Black Theology and Black Power}.\textsuperscript{21}” It should, however, be noted that the South Africans did not copy that of North America blindly. They borrowed creatively and utilized it critically


Contrasting SABT with NABPT:

Intext Question

How do you distinguish SABT from NABPT?

SABT has many similarities with that of North America. Nevertheless, despite the affinity, there are apparent differences namely:

1) Whereas NABPT is based on Black Power Movement, SABT starts from Black Consciousness.
2) NABPT is, as a result of the above, fundamentally secular while SABT is basically religious.

Take note

It should be remembered that SABT is essentially religious since it is rooted in the African culture which is imbued with traditional religiosity.

3) While NABPT is one of revolution hence its militancy cum aggressiveness, that of South Africa is not. It is, indeed, generally opposed to the use of violent means-unless as a last resort.
4) NABPT hardly integrates African traditional elements whereas the South African one tends more and more to integrate African traditional characteristics in its very core.
5) Unlike the North American Black Power theologians like James H. Cone and Gayraud S. Wilmore with who the South Africans have an explicit affinity, the South Africans are not reluctant to take Marxist social analyses in their theologizing. They critically employ Marxist tools thereby enriching their methodology. They freely, but critically, utilize Marxist social analysis as means/tools for deeper theologizing. One should, however, not be quick to call them Marxists.
5.6.2 South African Theologians themselves:

The other main source of SABT is South African theologians themselves in their exegetical sermons and preaching, academic endeavor, symposia, monographs, periodicals…and pastoral implications and applications thereby. Scholars like Dr. Manas Buthelezi—an exemplary thinker. Scholars like Dr. Basil Moore—a white theologian much respected by South Africans for being genuinely supportive and sympathetic with Africans. A reputable scholar who played a major role in organizing and engaging black theologians with regard to the focus on this new way of theological reflection. Scholars like Allan Abbey Boesak who is of international repute in this regard and thus meriting more introductions:

Allan Abbey Boesak:

He is sometimes referred to as the “father of SABT.” One of the main reasons is that he is the very first person to publish a major scholarly book on SABT. The monumental monograph is titled—A.A. Boesak, *Farewell to Innocence: A Social-Ethical Study on Black Theology and Black Power*, (Maryknoll, New York: Orbis Books, 1977).

![Take note]

**Boesak** is of the strong opinion that a strict dichotomizing and categorizing of Liberation theology as—Black theology in South Africa, Black theology in the USA, Latin American theology of liberation, and African theology is rather artificial. He endeavors to treat them as Liberation Theologies.

This is how he puts it:

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

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

**Take note**

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

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

Boesak sees his book as a genuine attempt at interpreting authentically the Black people’s experience within South African situation in life in the light of the Gospel as his contribution to the Christian ministry of liberation. Inserting himself in his South African rooting, Boesak is a bitter man. In this milieu context, he manifests his bitterness as follows:

“This book was born of the black experience in South Africa- out of anguish and deep concern; out of the inevitability of commitment; out of anger and a fragile but living hope; out of an explicable joy through faith in Jesus the Messiah, whose refusal to let go of me has been my

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liberation." He sees this as an attempt to take black situation seriously- an element ignored by Christian theology.

5.6.3 African Independent Churches:

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

Intext Question

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

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

5.6.4 African Traditional Religions and Culture:

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

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

24 Ibid., p.10.
Itumeleng J. Mosala makes the following observations in view of the above source:

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

5.6.5 The Holy Scriptures:

The Bible is another invaluable source of SABT. Itumeleng J. Mosala observes: “There can be no Black Theology of Liberation and no corresponding Biblical hermeneutics of liberation outside of the black struggle for both survival and liberation. Such a struggle, however, requires being as clear about issues in the black community as possible.”

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

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

5.6.6 Christological Source:

The sixth extremely important source of SABT is Christological source. In their kind of liberation theology, the South Africans enrich themselves with insights, guidance and support of
Jesus Christ. Mind you it is mainly Jesus Christ seen not only as Liberator *par excellence*\(^{29}\) but also as “the Black Messiah”.

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

“The Bible is the witness to God’s self-disclosure in Jesus Christ. Thus the black experience requires that Scripture be a source of Black Theology. For it was Scripture that enabled slaves to affirm a view of God that differed radically from that of the slave masters. The slave master’s intention was to present a ‘Jesus’ who would make the slave obedient and docile. Jesus was supposed to make black people better slaves, that is, faithful servants of white masters. But many blacks rejected that view of Jesus, not because it contradicted their African heritage, but because it contradicted the witness of Scripture.”\(^{30}\)

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

5.7 Jesus the “Black Messiah.”

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

**Intext Question**

What are the main elements found in SABT Christology?

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


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

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

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

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

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

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

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

5.8 **Summary**

In this Lecture, we have focused on South African kind of liberation theology—a distinctive approach called South African Black Theology (SABT). The Lecture has discussed its nature and assessed the peculiarity of this mode of theologizing...
as compared to other liberation approaches and how it has a close affinity to that of North America while maintaining a remarkable distinctiveness. It also gave and explained the historical rooting thereby elaborating the term “Black Consciousness” as the kernel of this theologizing. The Lecture, moreover, identified and explicated six main sources of SABT. This was followed by a crucial Christological discussion in which Jesus is qualified as the “Black Messiah” and the justification thereby.

5.9 Activity

1) Identify and discuss some elements and characteristics that guarantee the future of liberation theology in Africa in general and South Africa in particular.

2) Elaborate how Bonganjalo Goba explains the term “black consciousness”.

3) Discuss six main sources of South African Black Theology.


5) Discuss at least SIX main factors that contributed to the emergence and growth of SABT.

6) Discuss how Allan A. Boesak explains the terms “Black Theology” and “Black Consciousness”.

7) Within the context of South African Black Theology explain:
   a) Jesus as “Black Messiah”.
   b) The unfinished business of South African Theology.
5.10 References


LECTURE SIX

FEMINIST THEOLOGY IN AFRICA: AFRICAN CHRISTIAN WOMEN LIBERATION, GENDER ISSUES, WOMEN EMPOWERMENT AND MODES OF FEMINISM

Lecture Outline.

6.1 Introduction.

6.2 Objectives.

6.3 Preliminary Observations and Definition.

6.4 Biblical Rooting.

6.5 Main Objectives.

6.6 Diverse Feminisms Triggering a Pluriformity of Christian Women Liberation.

6.7 How Men (And Women) Oppress and Exploit Women.

6.8 Sevenfold Basic Modes of Oppression and Exploitation of African women and How to Curb the Factors.

6.9 Jesus Christ as the Model and Mentor of African Christian Women Liberation.

6.10 Summary.

6.11 Activities.

6.12 References.

6.1 Introduction.

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

### 6.2 Objectives

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

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

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

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

4. Analyze the main objectives of feminist theology.

5. Give and discuss diverse “feminisms” that trigger differences in African Christian women liberation theology.


7. Identify, analyze and explicate the seven main types of oppression and exploitation women are subjected to.

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

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

This mode 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 since by then there was a close rather spontaneous affinity between the Westerners and the Africans. This approach to liberation theology is mainly a protest against oppression and exploitation of women and a determined conscious effort to ensure women’s worth, authenticity and freedom. The “movement” demands a transformation or reform of the oppressive and exploitative structures of socio-economic political and cultural life and also ecclesial from the point of view of women.

Intext Question

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

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.”

P.N. Wachege explains women “oppression and exploitation” in these terms:

“Women oppression and exploitation is a distorted way of life in which women are dehumanized, marginalized and subjugated by being denied their rights as real persons, being treated and mistreated as inferior beings and deprived of growth into human authenticity and self-fulfillment.”31

6.4 Biblical Rooting.

Intext Question

What are among the Biblical passages that give insights into women liberation and why?

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

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

According to H.M. Conn:

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

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

1) The entire Biblical message, including that about women, revolves, not around patriarchalism or egalitarianism, but around God’s covenant, His redemptive dealings

with humanity and creation. The closest thing to Biblical definition of who we are, man or woman is our creation as ‘image of God’ (Gen. 1:27).

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

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

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

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

**Intext Question**

What do you know about Elizabeth S. Fiorenza?

**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

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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.

### 6.5 Main Objectives.

**Intext Question**

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

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

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

**Intext Question**

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

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

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

6.6 Diverse Feminisms Triggering a Pluriformity of Women Liberation.

**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. There is a pluriformity of it hence the multi-dimensional approach to it.

**Take note**

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

8) **Marxist/Materialistic Feminism**: It seeks to describe the material bases of women’s subjugation and the relationship between the modes of productions and women’s status. It argues that an analysis of women’s oppression must include both reproduction and production.
9) **Eco-feminism:** It seeks to make connections between the destruction of the natural world and the oppression of women. The feminine is not strictly identified with the female but it is an energy or power in living things.

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

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

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

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

14) **International Feminism:** This is embodied by the four United Nations Conferences on Women held in Mexico City (1975), Copenhagen (1980), Nairobi (1985), and Beijing (1995) together with the conference on population control in Cairo (1994) debate issues of women’s equality and well-being.
15) **Religious feminism** (Jewish, Christian, Muslim, Goddess, Buddhist, American Indian, Hindu, Indigenous, Aborigine or Da lit Religious Feminism): It seeks to comprehend the interaction between “secular” and “religious” feminists as one of different location rather than one of binary in-difference. It focuses feminists’ attention and inter-religious dialogue on the positive and negative pressure of religion in women’s lives and argues that religion is not only a force for maintaining societal and cultural domination but also a resource in women’s struggles for survival and liberation.

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

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

The bottom-line is that these diverse and diverging categories of FEMINISM trigger a pluriformity of women liberation. They effect a multi-dimensional approach to this mode of liberation theology. 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 us to handle feminist theology/women liberation theology with a multi-faceted approach. As we do this, one has to bear in mind that the limitation imposed on our Unit is on African CHRISTIAN Theology. That is why the Unit accentuates African CHRISTIAN women liberation theology.

6.7 How Men (And Women) Oppress and Exploit Women.

**Intext Question**

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

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). 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.

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. Women are generally regarded as docile, gentle, amiable and relatively attractive beings.”

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.”

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

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society, in life and ecclesiastically. We exploit them when we manipulate and take advantage of their physical weakness”.

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

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

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.

Take note

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

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

**Take note**

To avoid making this Lecture too weighty, you are referred to this publication.

6.9 Jesus Christ as the Model and Mentor of African Christian Women Liberation.

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

**Take note**

With diverse insights and inspirations, women liberationists like T. Souga and L. Tappa of Cameroon, M.A. Oduyoye and E. Amoah of Ghana…give a commendable reflection on Jesus Christ from a Woman’s perspective in view of liberation of women, in particular, and humans in general.39

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.

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

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

**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!

**Mk 14: 3-9:** In the Old Testament, it was the prerogative of the High Priests 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 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.

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

This lecture has given and explained the historical emergence of African Christian Women liberation theology and its affinity as well as distinctiveness to the Western one. It has defined “feminism” and “women oppression and exploitation”. Furthermore, it has given and elaborated the Biblical rooting of this mode of liberation theology. It has also analyzed the main objectives of feminist theology. In addition, the Lecture has given and discussed diverse “feminisms” that trigger differences in African Christian women liberation theology. This was followed by an explanation on how men oppress and exploit women. Next in the sequence was an identification and explication of the SEVEN main types of oppression and exploitation women are generally subjected to. The Lecture then presented and justified the fascination women have in Jesus owning Him as their exemplar and mentor- despite the fact that He was a Jew and a man at that- in their kind of liberation theology. Then followed the giving and explanation of some exciting Christological pericopes/texts that inspire and illumine the Christian feminists to an extent of having and accepting Jesus as pro-them in their feminist/women liberational effort and by verifying that Jesus Christ is the model and mentor of women liberation.

6.11 Activity

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

2) Discuss “feminist theology” and “African Christian women liberation theology”.

3) Explain the traditional and Church oppression and exploitation of African women and how to liberate them from such factors.
4) Give and explain the objectives of “feminist theology”. Discuss also the intellectual and political oppression and exploitation of African women in Kenya and how to liberate them from such evils.

5) In the light of Jesus Christ as the liberator par excellence and within the context of African Christian Feminist Theology, explain the following Biblical pericopes:

   i. Mark 14:3-9.
   iii. John 8:3-11.

6) Indicate the objectives of “feminist/women liberation theology” in Africa. Give and explain also at least FOUR types of feminisms that trigger divergences in women liberation theology.

6.12 References


4. S.A. Ross, Extravagant Affection: A Feminist Sacramental Theology (New


LECTURE SEVEN

INCULTURATION ORIENTATION

Lecture Outline.

7.1 Introduction.

7.2 Objectives.

7.3 Explanation of the Nature of Inculturation.

7.4 Related Terms and Their explanation.

7.5 The Six Main Undertakings in This African Christian Theological Approach.

7.6 Summary.

7.7 Activities.

7.8 References.

7.1 Introduction.

In this Lecture, we will explain the term “Inculturation”. This will be done by presenting some representative definitions from renowned scholars. The Lecture will also expose you to concepts related to the term “Inculturation” and assess their weight in conveying the meaning of this basic approach to ACT arguing which of them is more adequate for this finality. It will also be explained what one has to be weary of while being involved in this mode of theologizing. The Lecture will, furthermore, identify and discuss SIX items one has always to keep in mind with regard to the emergence, growth and spread of African Inculturation theology.
7.2 Objectives

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

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

2. Identify and assess some related terms with which some African scholars prefer to substitute the term “Inculturation” and assess their positive aspects as well as their limitations.

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

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

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

7.3 Explanation of the Nature of Inculturation.

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

Intext Question

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

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

7.3.2 Marcello C. Azevedo:

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

7.3.3 Aylward Shorter:

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

7.3.4 Pontifical Council for Culture:

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

7.3.5 Herve Carrier:

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

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7.3.6 Laurenti Magesa:

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

7.3.7 Pedro Arrupe:

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

**Take note**

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

7.4 Related Terms and Their explanation.

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

1) **INDIGENIZATION**: implying the localization and promotion of local Church personnel.
2) **CONTEXTUALIZATION**: theologizing within a particular context or situation in life.

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

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

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

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

Without ignoring these concepts, since each of them has its own contribution and limitations, we give preference to the term INCULTURATION. We appreciate it as the one that conveys best the process and effect of presenting, interpreting, explicating and putting the Christian message/Gospel/Good News in such a way that it germinates thereby maturing and flourishing in our African people’s culture(s). In other words, according to us, the term INCULTURATION contains and expresses best and most coherently our contemporary African trend of understanding, presenting and concretely interpreting Christianity in
accordance with our African people’s aspirations, needs, thought-forms and mentality. We find it more explicit in our approach and effort of confronting the Gospel with our African culture(s) for mutual enrichment, fruitfulness -and correction cum elevation on the side of our cultures.

7.5 The Six Main Undertakings in This African Theological Approach.

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

7.5.1 Involvement In Methodological Discussions Only:

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

7.5.2 Actually Inculturating But In A Non-Speculative Manner:

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

7.5.3 Actually Inculturating from a Philosophical and Speculative Stance:

While doing this kind of theology, they approach the Christian mysteries ontologically and analytically. They theologize in a systematic and scientific manner employing metaphysics and other related academic disciplines thereby coming up with a serious scholarly and comprehensive ACT.

Take note

They implement what we defined in Lecture One as ACT in the narrow technical sense-a goal this Unit opts for and strives to achieve.
7.5.4 Actually Inculturating Within the Sphere of Pastoral Problems in African Way of Life:

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

Take note

Let it be remembered and appreciated that any good theology has also to be pastoral. It has to come up with pastoral implications too that meaningfully and genuinely help people to live more authentically and in view of life after this earthly life thereby giving them HOPE in life and living.

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

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

Take note

The main elements contributing to cultural originality are:

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

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

7.5.6 Proper Disposition To Dialogue With Others:

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

Take note

Having identified and explained these SIX items, it is important to approach or come up with African Christian theologies assessing them with the above standards.

One has to critically evaluate them with the above measure to be on the right track with regard to solid scholarship, authenticity or genuine adherence to Christian Doctrines and the resulting originality.

7.6 Summary

In this Lecture, we have profoundly explained the term “Inculturation”. This was done by presenting some representative definitions from renowned scholars. The Lecture also exposed you to a considerable number of outstanding concepts related to the term “Inculturation” and assessed their weight in conveying the
meaning of this basic approach to ACT arguing which of them is more adequate for this finality. The terms the Lecture identified for this goal are: “Indigenization”, “contextualization”, “incarnation”, “reformulation”, “adaptation” and “inter-culturation”. Moreover, a justification was given as to why our Unit opts for the term “Inculturation” without ignoring these other related concepts. It was also pointed out what one has to be careful of while being involved in this way of theologizing. The Lecture, furthermore, identified and discussed SIX items one has to always bear in mind with regard to the emergence, growth and spread of Inculturation theology.

7.7 Activity

Explain the term “Inculturation” and other related terms within the context of ACT.

1) Give and discuss SIX undertakings/involvements in Inculturation approach to ACT.

2) Give and explain the main shortcomings of African Inculturation Theology as given by Laurenti Magesa in his book titled- Anatomy of Inculturation: Transforming the Church in Africa.

3) Within the insights from the Pontifical Council for Culture, explain the term “Inculturation” as you briefly explain the following concepts in reference to the Theology of Inculturation: Adaptation; Reformulation; Contextualization; inter-culturation; and indigenization.
7.8 References


LECTURE EIGHT

ELABORATION OF EXEMPLARY INCULTURATIONAL WORKS IN WEST AFRICA

Lecture Outline.

8.1 Introduction.

8.2 Objectives.

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


8.5 John S. Pobee: Nana Christology.

8.6 Summary.

8.7 Activities.

8.8 References.

8.1 Introduction.

In West Africa, we have a considerable number of prominent African Christian theologians. In this Lecture and for a wider reading, we will identify some of the renowned scholars. We will also indicate their specialties and give the countries they come from. Then, for practical purposes, we will choose two of the theologians and discuss their respective African Christian Inculturation theologies. These are Kwesi A. Dickson and John S. Pobee.

8.2 Objectives

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

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

2. Discuss Kwesi A. Dickson’s African Theology of the Cross.
3. Examine and assess John S. Pobee’s Nana Christology.

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

**Intext Question**

Which of these West African scholars of ACT touches you most and why?

1) **Harry Sawyer**-Pastoral/Systematic Theology-from Sierra Leone.
2) **A.M. Oduyoye**-Feminist Theology-from Ghana.
3) **B. Idowu**-African Traditional Religions-from Nigeria.
4) **G. Beata**-Ecclesiology/Ecumenism-from Ghana.
5) **C.B. Okolo**-Liberation Theology-from Nigeria.
6) **K.A. Kubi**-Sociology/Independent Churches-from Ghana.
7) **W. Amewowo**-Biblical Studies-from Ghana.
8) **K.A. Dickson**-Biblical Theology-from Ghana.
9) **J. Ukpong**-Biblical Theology-from Nigeria.
10) **J.S. Pobee**-Doctrinal Theology-from Ghana.
11) **E. Uzukwu**-Liturgy-from Nigeria.
12) **E. Fashole** Luke-Doctrinal Theology-from Sierra Leone.
13) **Theresa Okure**-Biblical Theology/Feminist Theology-from Nigeria.
14) **P. Sarpong**-Liturgy-from Ghana.


8.4.1 Kwesi A. Dickson, after presenting New Testament teaching and understanding of the Cross especially from St. Paul’s Documents, begins by criticizing Western theology. This is a theology in which “the Cross gets to be overshadowed in significance; it becomes a disaster, a regrettable prelude to Easter”. Hence their theology of the Cross, from Kwesi’s observation, becomes rather negative and pessimistic. It waters also down the concept of sacrifice and life.
8.4.2 Kwesi maintains that the above may be due to the fact that “with the growing complexity of life in the West, death is fast ceasing to be a public event”, an event which involves the community as a whole. Hence death is seen as “an embarrassment to be passed over as quickly as possible…”He confirms this assertion on the bases of a German scholar called Haselbarth who points out that:

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

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

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

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

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

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

To understand this point thoroughly well, one has to revisit the African cosmotheandric perception of being and beingness.

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

6) **Death affects the whole community:** It “affects a much wider social group than the deceased’s immediate family”. That demise of someone and burial issues is not just the nuclear family or extended family affair. It, indeed, is the concern of all. The attendance is by the whole community.

8.4.4 **In the light of the above and the New Testament teaching on the Cross,** the author presents a theology of the Cross in keeping with the African understanding of death as follows:

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

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

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

4) Just as for the African, **death does not negate natural self-expression** (“one’s own identity”), so also is the theology of the Cross not basically opposed to its interpretation in African cultural terms.
That is how Kwesi A. Dickson presents his Theology of the Cross in a Christian Inculturation manner. P.N.Wachege develops this more comprehensively in his book titled Living to Die, Dying to Live: African Christian Insights, which admittedly was not inspired by Kwesi’s ideas but by a proliferation of numerous deaths on land, in the air, in the sea even underground imbued with the tremendous pressure to LIVE FULLY the contemporary person is subjected to that tends to be overwhelming.

8.5 John S. Pobee: Nana Christology.

8.5.1 There are two fundamental approaches to Christology:

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

1) **Perfect state of sinlessness since sin is an anti-social fact:** On the Biblical bases, Christ was like us in all things but sin. On Biblical evidence, He actually strove to protect individual personality and to liberate all from oppression and exploitation.

2) **Authority and power:** He showed this in His miracles, exorcizing ministry and the way He taught which impressed even the police who were sent by the Pharisees and the Herodians to arrest Him.

3) **Healer:** Christ is recorded in the Scriptures as not just performing numerous authentic cures but also resurrecting the dead and spiritual healings of those whose sins He forgave.
4) **Creator:** Johannine Gospel confirms this of Christ as follows—“Through Him God made all things; not one thing in all creation was made without Him” (John 1:13).

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

**8.5.5 Christ as the Great Ancestor and Chief (connected with Christ as Great-Ancestor-Nana):**

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

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

2) **Dangers of “chief” analogy:**

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

**8.5.6 Conclusion:**

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

1) He calls Christ the **Great and Greatest Ancestor = Nana** in Akan language.

2) He calls **Him Nana because:**
a) As Ancestor Christ has power and authority to judge, reward…and punish.

b) He has authority on people and on the world of spiritual beings i.e. cosmic and spiritual.

3) To acknowledge Christ as Nana, according to Pobee, is to let His standards reign supreme:

   a) In personal orientation and conduct;
   b) In structures of society;
   c) In the cosmic process and economic affairs;
   d) In the political process i.e. personal and social justice and even recreation.

These are very important pastoral implications in his Nana Christology.

8.6 Summary

In this Lecture, we brought to awareness that there are a considerable number of prominent African Christian theologians from West Africa. For a wider reading, we not only identified some of the renowned ones. We also indicated their specialties and the countries they come from. Then, for practical purposes, we chose two of the theologians namely, Kwesi A. Dickson and John S. Pobee and discussed their respective African Christian Inculturation theologies and their respective pastoral implications. These are: Theology of the Cross; and Nana Christology.
8.7 Activity

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

2) Point out and elaborate some African religio-cultural characteristics which John S. Pobee utilizes critically in his Nana Christology.

3) Bearing in mind the cultural emphasis in modern trends on Christian thought, discuss one of the following:
   
   a) Royal-Priestly Christology/Nana Christology by John S. Pobee;
   
   b) Theology of the Cross by Kwesi A. Dickson.

4) Identify at least six prominent African Christian theologians from West Africa indicating their specialties and the countries they come from.

8.8 References


LECTURE NINE

EXPLICATION OF EXEMPLARY INCULTURATIONAL WORKS IN EAST AFRICA

Lecture Outline.

9.1 Introduction.

9.2 Objectives.

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

9.5 Charles Nyamiti: Methodology, Pedagogy and Actualization of ACT Especially Through Ancestral Approach.


9.7 Summary.

9.8 Activities.

9.9 References.

9.1 Introduction.

East Africa is blessed with several serious African Christian theologians of international repute. In this Lecture, and for a wider reading, we will identify some of the prominent scholars from this region including some missionaries famous for the emergence, growth and development of ACT. We will also indicate their specialties and give the countries they come from. Then, for practical purposes, we will choose two of the theologians and discuss their respective African Christian Inculturation theologies. These are Charles Nyamiti and John S. Mbiti.

9.2 Objectives

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

1. Identify some of the prominent African Christian theologians from East Africa, point out their specialties and indicate the countries they come
2. Discuss Charles Nyamiti’s methodological approach, pedagogy and actualization of ACT especially through his **ancestral approach**.

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

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

**Intext Question**

Which of these East African scholars mean much to you and why?

1) **C. Nyamiti**-Systematic Theology/Anthropology/Music-from Tanzania.
2) **J. S. Mbiti**-Doctrinal Theology/African Traditional Religion-from Kenya.
3) **J.M. Waliggo**-Church History/Inculturation-from Uganda.
4) **J.N.K. Mugambi**- Missiology/African Traditional Religions-from Kenya.
5) **P.N.Wachege**-Systematic Theology/Philosophy-from Kenya.
6) **L. Magesa**-Liberation Theology/Moral Theology-from Tanzania.
7) **J.M. Mbinda**-Pastoral Sociology-from Kenya.
8) **P. Kalilombe**-Pastoral Theology-from Malawi.
9) **C. Mwoleka**-Pastoral Theology-from Tanzania.
10) **S. Kibicho**-African Traditional Religions-from Kenya.
11) **Z. Nthamburi**-Liberation Theology-from Kenya.
12) **T. Hinga**-Feminist Theology-from Kenya.
13) **Nasimiyu**-Feminist Theology-from Kenya.

We also have the following Western missionaries doing ACT in this region:
1) A. Shorter-Social Anthropology/Missiology.
2) Hastings-History/Sociology.
3) E. Hillman-Pastoral Theology.
4) Hearne-Dogmatic Theology.
5) Barret-Religious Sociology.
6) B.G.M. Sundklor-Theologian Anthropologist.

9.4 Charles Nyamiti: Methodology, Pedagogy and Actualization of ACT Especially Through Ancestral Approach.

9.4.1 Introductory Reflections:

Prof Charles Nyamiti, born in 1931 belonging to the Wanyamwezi of Tanzania, was ordained a Roman Catholic Priest in 1962. His vocation to Priesthood remains the rationale behind his Catholicism in his writings with bias towards emphasis on magisterial instructions/guidelines, Tradition (at times more highlighted than the Bible Sources), scholasticism/classical elements intertwined with patrology, and appeal to papal authority.

Soon after his ordination to Priesthood, Nyamiti was sent for further studies abroad. He studied in Louvain University in Belgium from 1963-1969. It was here that he graduated with a PhD in Systematic/Dogmatic Theology and a certificate in Music Theory and piano. He was then sent to Vienna where he studied Cultural Anthropology and Music Composition graduating with another PhD and Licentiate respectively. From 1976 to 1981, Nyamiti was a professor at Kipalapala Senior Seminary in Tanzania and a co-worker in some neighboring Parishes. In 1983, he moved to Nairobi to be a founding member of CHIEA-today’ CUEA University where he taught and published a lot till he became too advanced in age.

Owing to the above credentials and many more, Nyamiti was a globally wanted and hunted African Scholar. Let it suffice to mention just a few consultancy and professional membership in
this regard: For over ten years he was a resource person for the Congregation for non-Christian religions in Vatican Rome; a founder member of EATWOT; a founder member of the Ecumenical Theological Symposium of Scholars from East Africa; and a co-editor cum great contributor of African Christian Studies (a reputable academic journal in CUEA). He was also a resource scholar for the Special Assembly for Africa of the Synod of Bishops.

**Take note**

This great African Christian scholar is well known not only by his numerous serious publications. He is also renowned for molding and forming many students some now bishops and professors in various Universities. Nyamiti’s pedagogy is specifically rooted in African world-view and Christianity. His vision for ACT is the realization of African Theology of reconstruction. This is a kind of African theology which, authentically and scientifically, marries **Inculturation approach** with **Liberation orientation** adhering strictly to orthodoxy and relevance to our changing society and new economic, political and cultural realities. This is notwithstanding the fact that he himself is more inclined to Inculturation approach.

**9.4.2 Nyamiti’s Conception and Articulation of African Theology:**

Like any reputable scholar, Nyamiti commences his theology not only with the explanation of terms or concepts. He also starts with the methodological issue. His precise definition of African theology is “the self-same catholic/universal doctrine expressed and presented in accordance with African mentality and needs.” As for Inculturation, it “implies the effort to incarnate the Christian message in African cultures.” It is Nyamiti’s conviction that to qualify as a genuine exponent of African theology and to acquire the title “African Theologian”, there is an indispensable requirement -embracing African theology in the technical sense!

**Intext Question**

What do you understand by ACT and how does your perception compare with Nyamiti’s?
According to him, and many concur, the scientific **recommendable definition** of African theology is double-pronged: **African theology in its etymological sense; and African theology in the technical sense.**

**Intext Question**

How does Nyamiti define African Theology in the broad sense?

**In its broad/etymological sense,** explains Nyamiti, African theology is **discourse on God and what is related to God in** accordance with the African needs and mentality. As such, it **comprises** African traditional theology, i.e., **African non-Christian theology** as found particularly in African traditional religions imbued with myths, narratives, dramatic intuitiveness and symbolic characteristics. This is **owing to general revelation and the theocentricity** involved.

**Take note How does**

Nyamiti define African Theology in the technical sense?

**On the other hand, in its narrow technical sense,** Nyamiti goes on to explain, African theology is **ACT** with focus on Christ, Christian Tradition and the Bible as the inevitable revelatory agents. This is owing to special revelation and the Christocentricity involved. **This in turn has a twofold conception namely, the broad sense and the narrow/technical perspective. In the broad sense, ACT is** the understanding, presentation and concrete interpretation of the Christian faith in accordance with the needs, aspirations, thought-forms and mentality of the peoples of the black continent. Understood as such, ACT has been in existence since the era of the early missionary enterprise.
The focus in our Unit is on ACT in the narrow/technical sense.

In the narrow/technical sense, ACT is the systematic and scientific understanding, presentation and elaboration of the Christian faith according to the needs, aspirations, thought-forms and mentality of the peoples of the black continent. Nyamiti explains this notion as corresponding well with the socio-religio-philosophical and anthropological realities in the black continent. It is within this latter understanding that Nyamiti theologizes. So do some other African Christian scholars like T.T. Tshishiku, B. Buzo, Allan Boesak, P.N. Wachege, J.N.K. Mugambi, K.A. Dickson, A.M. Oduyoye… and J.S. Pobee.

9.4.3 Nyamiti’s Methodological Approach:

Nyamiti’s works can rightly be said to be highly metaphysical, speculative, systematic and, in some cases, abstract in the deductive sense. A critical perusal of Nyamiti’s outstanding works enables an objective reader to appreciate that the option of his methodological mode reveals, among other elements, the basic stages of the evolution of Nyamiti’s thought.

Nyamiti’s methodological approach inspiring and guiding the evolution and outlook of his thought as a pioneer member in African Christian theology is mainly and clearly influenced and guided not only by African situation. It is also fundamentally guided by the magisterial instructions. Among them, that of Denzinger-Hermann (no. 3016) and Vatican 11’s Optatam totius are outstanding in impacting on his theologizing within the African context. It is from here that he borrows and profoundly utilizes:

The essential items of these two crucial documents in view of the realization of serious ACT deserve your attention.

1) The use of reason, implying the use of the idea of social anthropology and other useful sciences like philosophy, sociology, linguistics and history;
2) The subordination of such anthropological data to Christian faith;
3) The use of analogy when ascribing categories and other cultured elements to Christian mysteries;
4) The employment of the principle of the interconnection of the Christian mysteries (nexus mysteriorium); and
5) The relevance of the specific theology for human welfare/ultimate end thus implying drawing out the consequential pastoral implications.

True to his honesty and commitment to the emergence, growth and demystification of African theology, Nyamiti has nothing to hind on how he theologizes as an African exemplary scholar. This is how he puts it:

“Like any other theologian, I start by choosing the Christian mystery or topic as subject of my study. After having chosen such topic, I try to find out the appropriate African cultural item or theme which can be employed for theological elaboration of the Christian mystery. In principle, any African theme or category can-according to me- be employed for such purpose. Nevertheless, I usually limit myself to one or several African themes which appear to me as more relevant for theological or pastoral purposes.”

He further discloses:

“The next step I undertake is theological reflection on the meaning of the Christian mystery- first in itself, and afterwards, in its relevance for our spiritual and material welfare- in the light of the African theme(s). In order to achieve this goal as best as possible, I try to bring about what I have called the intrinsic employment of cultural themes in theology, i.e., the identification of the African categories or themes with the Christian elements (mysteries) in order to allow the African themes to enter internally into the theological elaboration of revealed truth so as to form an organic part of it and thus influence its constitution, presentation and progress.”

**Take note**

Moreover, Nyamiti indicates that the above employment involves two processes: that of identification of such cultural themes with Christian mysteries; and the one of explication of such identification. Within the context of the principle of interconnection of Christian mysteries and the magisterial
pedagogy, as indicated earlier, Nyamiti tackles almost the entire realm of Christian mysteries. His serious investigation ranges, for instance, from Christology to the Trinity to Ecclesiology to Theodicy to Martyr-logy to Social Ethics to Creation mainly through the lenses of ancestor-ship outlook as understood by Africans. What is conspicuously missing, however, is the theme of Canon Law. Despite this vivid lacuna, as one reads on and peruses such huge literature authored by him, one is confronted with a striking insight: an inevitable appreciation that this is where Nyamiti’s originality and creativity in theologizing particularly on the basis of ancestral category of thought within the ambit of the African world-view as analogically and somehow dialectically elevated, purified and accomplished by Christianity is most explicit and is extremely informed about the sources and resources of African Christian theology.

Nyamiti is elaborate and decisive that there are two intertwined vital sources which are indispensable while doing ACT. One such primary source, according to him, is the Christian fundamental source i.e., the Bible. It includes authentic Tradition of the entire Church. This crucial source is regarded as the soul of all theology. The other main source is the African one i.e. “the African situation- seen in its relation to its past, present and future… the totality of the African situation as it is found in today’s world.” It is to be reiterated that it is in strict adherence to these fundamental sources that Nyamiti theologizes.

Nyamiti is so convinced and satisfied with this methodology. He puts such sentiments in these words: “With regard to the methodological principles I have been employing so far, I must admit that I have not yet come across an African theological approach which corresponds better than mine to the magisterial directives on theological Inculturation.”

9.4.4 His Basic Orientation:

While acknowledging the two basic orientations in African theology namely-the Inculturation and the Liberation, Nyamiti is inclined more to the former perspective. Nevertheless, he makes a fruitful effort in integrating the two. As such, Nyamiti may be credited
with a third fundamental orientation to African theology, which inter-relates the above two to come up with “African Inculturation Liberation Theology.”

Nyamiti, however, opts mainly for the Inculturation orientation, and offers several points to explain and verify this as follows:

1) “African theology of Inculturation fits better with my academic formation in theology and cultural anthropology;

2) This approach corresponds better and more adequately with the prescriptions of Vatican 11 and other official Church documents on theological insertion of the Christian message into various contexts;

3) The Inculturation trend seems to me more apt- than the one of Liberation- to achieve some kind of continuity between the Catholic way of doing theology as has been done throughout history both in the Western and Eastern Churches;

4) On account of its inherent capacity to employ an almost indefinite number of cultural themes as theological points of departure, the Inculturation approach appears to me to be in a better position to avoid the danger reductionism, and impoverishing the Gospel message by approaching it from the perspective of only one particular category, as is the case with the Liberation trend.”

5) Although Nyamiti’s readers may refute the above foundation(s) of his theologizing, as one reads on through his African theological investigations, one is gradually confronted with the painstaking authenticity with which Nyamiti employs and scrupulously highlights this conviction as his
fundamental mediation.

9.4.5 Nyamiti’s Pedagogy in Actualizing ACT:

Within the context of the foregoing, Nyamiti comes up with a profound appraisal well backed up with invaluable recapitulations and inspiring recommendations. With a deliberate bias towards Inculturation theology, Nyamiti sees the thematic approach, among other aspects, utilized by a considerable number of proponents and exponents of African theology as essentially comparative. He speaks well of “some particular subject(s), theme(s) or category (or categories)” employed by such theologians in the emergence and growth of African theology. Themes like healing, naming ceremony, ancestral veneration, related pluriformity of Christological aspects and so on. Nevertheless, he is quick to point out that many such theologians are devoid of critical intrinsic/extrinsic interpretations, explications and serious drawing out of the implications.

Through his weighty exemplary works, he enthusiastically recommends, not just the identification endeavor of coming up with convergences and divergences between Christianity and African socio-religio-philosophical elements thanks to theologico-philosophical and anthropological sources but also the following creative interpretative vital factors:

**Intext Question**

What makes Nyamiti’s publications unparalleled in ACT?

1) Theological interpretation of the parallelisms and differences between the African theme and its Christian counterpart;

2) Theological interpretation of the Christian mystery in terms of its African counterpart with which it is analogically identified;

3) The use of the principle of interconnection of Christian mysteries is organically linked with all the others in such a way that it is possible to gain a deeper understanding of the particular mystery by examining it in the light of the other mysteries;
4) Pastoral implications or functional perspective emanating from the above ontological and existential task as well as reflection.

Take note

It is of immense importance to take heed to Nyamiti’s counsel and caution on what is involved in the originality of African theology. This is how he articulates it: “Its originality will not consist in the context of faith (this must be one and the same everywhere and at all times in the whole Church), but in the manner of presentation, interpretation and formulation of that very same faith. This will lead to new perspectives, accents, ways of approach, categories, etc. and hence to a deeper understanding and new way of living the perennial faith of the Church.”

He is also deeply concerned with reiterating that among the major goals of Inculturation theology is “to scrutinize in a scientific way and to probe more deeply- in the light of the African social and cultural contexts- the understanding of the Christian mysteries, in themselves first and, secondly, in their relevance for our life here on earth and in the world to come.” These comments point to Nyamiti’s commitment to resolving the problems of African theology. He pragmatically witnesses to the above prerequisites and principles by utilizing fully these guidelines and critique. Nyamiti’s exemplarity is best reflected in his monumental books titled. Among such monographs are:

Intext Question

Which publications by Nyamiti are you aware of?

In his endeavor to respond to Jesus’ perennial question as recorded in Matthean Gospel 16:13, “Who do people say that the Son of Man is?”, Nyamiti explains Him as the Ancestor par excellence as he qualifies Him as the perfect model, elevation and finality of ancestors-in his *Christ as Our Ancestor* book.

The book has two main sub-divisions: Part One deals with Christ’s Brother-Ancestor-ship to us through the saints. It commences with the anthropological realm. In this perspective, Nyamiti expounds on the philosophy, belief and practices concerning the ancestors as understood by the Africans. This enables Nyamiti to logically and convincingly draw out four core characteristics, the main elements in the African notion of ancestors. These categories are:

1) Natural relationship (consanguineous or non-consanguineous);
2) Supernatural status;
3) Mediations;
4) Title to regular sacred communication with one’s earthly relatives.

For comparative purposes, and in his tedious theological exercise, Nyamiti chooses Christian issues from the Bible, Tradition and traditions analogous to ancestral shauri utilizing the above four ancestral elements. These are carefully tackled and articulated as rooted in the aforementioned primary sources of African theology i.e. the Christian sources and the African situation.

Through the selected four ancestral categories, Nyamiti compares and contrasts the African ancestor-ship and the Christian perspectives. He goes beyond the above comparative stage by fully drawing out and identifying “ancestor” as appropriate to Jesus Christ within the African perception as also highlighted and fulfilled in Christianity thereby intrinsically explicating these innovative attributes in his ACT. This necessarily, as propagated in his methodology, triggers off the drawing out of the implications of the aforementioned
identification and explication in the African interrelationship and conception of the saints and further recommendations in the form of concluding reflections.

Take note

Christ as Our Ancestor is a pointer to more and deeper contributions by Nyamiti to ACT. One can easily verify this assertion by perusing his numerous related publications. His contribution to the genesis, realization, growth and future of ACT is no doubt outstanding. According to me, Nyamiti should not only be qualified as among the Pioneers of ACT. According to me, Nyamiti also merits the title “father of ancestral ACT”. Indeed, his contribution is immense, monumental and, somehow, unparalleled!


Intext Question

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

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

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

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

1) Christus Victor (miracle worker, resurrected Christ). Hence Conqueror of evil powers feared by the African (spirits, magic, disease, death) and guarantor of immorality.
2) His birth, baptism and death correspond to the life crises ritually stressed by the Africans. They are hence relevant subjects for Africa.
9.5.3 Confrontation of the New Testament with the African Traditional Views- Christ and the African World-View:

**Intext Question**

How does John S. Mbiti’s methodological approach differ from that of Charles nyamiti?

1) Mbiti,s method is essentially **Comparative**. He seeks parallels and differences, similarities and dissimilarities. In other words, he draws comparison between Christianity and African traditional religious beliefs and practices. In his “adaptation” (Inculturation) Mbiti stresses the themes of Christianity parallel to African traditional themes or expectations. Among such examples are:

   a) **God’s Son**-idea found in some African tribes like Shona, Ndebele, Shilluk and Dogan;
   b) **Servant of God**, found in some tribes;
   c) **Redeemer**, d) **Conqueror**, e) **Lord (chief)**;
   f) His birth, baptism, death and resurrection correspond to life crisis and initiations rites.

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

**9.6 Summary**

In this Lecture, we have indicated that in East Africa, we have several serious African Christian theologians of international repute. For a wider reading, we identified some of the prominent ones from this region including some missionaries famous for the emergence, growth and development of ACT. We also indicated their specialties and gave the countries they come from. Then, for practical purposes, we chose two of the theologians, discussed their methodological approach to their respective African Christian theologies including their renowned effects in actualizing ACT. These scholars are **Charles**
Nyamiti and John S. Mbiti.

9.7 Activities.

1) Give a short biography of Charles Nyamiti as one of the pioneers of ACT indicating also his most invaluable publications that are exemplary in this mode of theologizing.

2) Give and critically elaborate Charles Nyamiti’s understanding of ACT in the technical sense and his proposed methodological approach.

3) Briefly introduce Charles Nyamiti’s Jesus Our Ancestor Christology spelling out clearly its peculiarity in relation to traditional Christology.

4) Discuss how Charles Nyamiti develops his African Ecclesiology in the light of Biblical and Church Teaching.

5) Identify and briefly explain the main points of J. S. Mbiti’s Christus Victor Christology indicating also why it is so appealing to the Africans.

6) Compare and contrast John S. Mbiti’s methodological approach to ACT with that of Charles Nyamiti.

9.8 References


2. C. Nyamiti, Christ as Our Ancestor: Christology from an African


LECTURE TEN

EXEMPLARY INCULTURATIONAL WORKS IN FRANCOPHONE AFRICA

Lecture Outline.

10.1 Introduction.

10.2 Objectives.

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

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

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

10.6 Benezet Bujo: Christ as Proto-Ancestor.

10.7 Summary.

10.8 Activities.

10.9 References.

10.1 Introduction.

In Francophone Africa, we have a considerable number of outstanding African Christian theologians. In this Lecture and for a wider reading, we will identify some of the renowned scholars from this region. We will also indicate their specialties and give the countries they come from. Then, for practical purposes, we will choose three of the theologians and discuss their respective African Christian Inculturation theologies. These are Tharcisse TShibangu Tshishiku, A.T. Sanon and Benezet Bujo.
10.2 Objectives

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

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

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

3. Examine and assess Tharcisse TShibangu Tshishiku’s Methodological Approach in ACT and also examine and elaborate the main “Commitment Requisites” he strongly recommends for a serious African Christian theologian.

4. Explain Benezet Bujo’s Christ as Proto-Ancestor Christology.

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

Intext Question

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

1) T.T. Tshishiku - Systematic Theology/Methodology on African Theology-from Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC).
2) B. Bujo - Moral Theology/Liberation Theology-from DRC.
3) V. Mulago - Pastoral Theology-from DRC.
4) N. Mushete - Systematic Theology-from DRC.
5) A.T. Sanon - Dogmatic Theology-from Burkina Faso.
Some Western Missionaries famous for ACT from Francophone Africa Are:

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

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

10.4.1 Introductory reflections:

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

**Take Note**

French is friendlier in speculation and philosophizing than English which tends to be rather pragmatic and concrete. Hence the upper hand of Francophone thinkers in music, philosophy and systematic theology as compared to the Anglophone ones.
How would you justify the assertion that T.T. Tshibangu is a pioneer member of the giants of ACT?

As very well documented by Emmanuel Ntakarutimana: “Tharcisse Tshibangu Tshishiku was born at Kipushi, near Lubumbashi, present Democratic Republic of the Congo, on 24th April 1933. He studied at Lovanium from 1957-61. From 1961 to 1965 he went for further studies at Louvain in Belgium. In 1965 he came back to Lovanium (Kinshasa), where he secured an appointment as a full-time professor until 1966. He was appointed Vice-rector of Lovanium in 1966 and rector in 1967. After the merging of the various universities in Zaire into the National University of Zaire (UNAZA) in 1971, Tshishiku became its rector until a decentralizing policy restored autonomy to the various universities. From 1981 to date he has been Chancellor and President of the Board of Directors of the Universities of the Congo.

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

What elements “compelled” T.T. Tshibangu to involve himself fruitfully in the emergence, growth and development of ACT?

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

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

Take note
A good theologian must also be a good philosopher.

2) The insights of Seumois and Jean Faure.
3) Several African Priests symposium in Paris. In this, those Priests studying in Europe discussed seriously the positive needs and realization of ACT. Among their contributions is contained in the publication titled: Des Pretres Noirs S’interrogent (Collect. Rencotre, no. 47, Paris, 1956).
5) Debate on the “African Theology” with Tharcisse TShibangu Tshishiku and Alfred Vanneste as the main exponents.

10.4.2 Real Discussions on ACT in 1960s:

This commenced with the exciting and, indeed, fascinating debates between Fr. T.T. Tshishiku and Prof. A. Vanneste. This most creative and edifying monumental discussion is well documented in B. Bujo & J.I. Muya (Eds,) African Theology: The contribution of the Pioneers, pp. 179-199. The venue was the faculty of Kinshasa in Zaire (today’s DRC). While the former earnestly pleaded for local theology with African color, the latter was apologetic on “universal theology”. This controversy provoked more enthusiasm in the realization of ACT through conferences, lectures, meetings…and publications. The most remarkable thing was that such an effort was interestingly backed by hierarchy members like Cardinal J.A. Malula, Mgr. A. Sanon … and P. Zoungrana.
10.4.3 Contrasting stances between Fr. T.T. Tshibangu and Prof. A. Vanneste:

Take note

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

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

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

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

Intext Question

Is it valid to categorize A. Vanneste among the proponents of IMPLANTATION method of evangelization?

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

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

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

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

Take note
This fundamental requirement was later explicated at a most academic level in Pope John Paul 11’s globally renowned Encyclical titled- Fides et Ratio i.e. Faith and Reason.

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

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

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

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

**10.4.6 Tshishiku’s international repute as a serious orthodox ACT:**

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<td>Tshishiku’s outstanding local and international recognition speaks for itself. Emmanuel Ntakarutimana captures this issue extremely well. This is how he articulates it:</td>
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“Msgr Tshishiku has formed part of many learned societies and commissions. Besides the ones already mentioned, he has been a member of the Thomas Aquinas International Society in Rome, contributor to the International Association of Third World Theologians, founding member of the Ecumenical Association of African Theologians, guest professor at the University of Kyoto in Japan, consultant of UNESCO and member of the International Scientific Committee for the writing of the General History of Africa sponsored by UNESCO.”

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

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

According to him, these rituals comprise various elements namely:

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

2) Initiation, especially tribal initiation, involves two elements:

   a) Passage from a lower condition to a higher status- with new rights and duties;

   b) Introduction into community membership- family, tribe, particular society etc.

3) Initiation involves various rites and other items namely:

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

10.5.2 Application to Christ:

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<tr>
<td>How does A.T. Sanon employ the above African items to Christ in his initiatic Christology?</td>
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1) **Basing himself on NT teaching** - especially Hebrews, Philippians and the Synoptics- Sanon interprets various stages of Christ’s life in the light of the African sense of **initiation**. In the NT teaching, he sees in Christ’s life a gradual movement/passage towards a goal, i.e. perfection (cf. Hebrews 2, 10:7; 28:5, 9).

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

   a) At His birth (new name, circumcision, presentation into the Temple: to enter ritually into His Jewish family and community);
   b) Even Jesus’ remaining in Jerusalem at 12 years is interpreted initiatically:
      i. This implies separation from His family;
      ii. Receiving instructions from Jewish Rabbis;
      iii. Instructing His father and Mother- since an initiate is to instruct others.
   c) Even Luke 13: 31-32 (Tell Herod that today, tomorrow and on the third day I remain here) is seen in connection with the “Paschal triduum mortis”;

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

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

**10.5.3 Other initiatic elements:**

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

2) Use of symbols and signs (parables, etc);

3) Cross signifying the initiatic tree;

4) Church perceived as place of initiation;

5) Time of initiation signifying time of grace;

6) Global act of initiation symbolizing the Sacraments.

**10.5.4 Practical consequences/implications:**

> Take note

Any theology that has no pastoral implications is empty and of no use.

From the above, **Sanon manages to come up with very interesting implications** which are of immense importance in ACT. This is how he articulates them:

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

2) Sharing His initiation involves following His initiatic steps to the Cross for motives of charity.
3) Through Baptism we share in Christ’s initiation by sharing in His initiatic death and resurrection.

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

### 10.6 Benezet Bujo: Christ as Proto-Ancestor.

**Intext Question**

What factors and disposure trigger a solid stance in B. Bujo’s ACT?

#### 10.6.1 Introductory Remarks:

This great African Scholar from DRC 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.

“Through the commentaries of biblical texts, Thomas developed a whole methodology of doing theology rooted in symbols, analogy and metaphors, closer to the Fathers and to the African thought…this centrality of the Word of God, which on meeting cultures causes the springing up of something totally new will determine not only Bujo’s theology, but also his spirituality. If it is true that enrichment and reciprocal transformation results from every meeting, Christianity must not ignore African cultures.
“Bujo needed then to return to Kinshasa and get going with the great work of acculturating Christianity in this dear land of our ancestors”.42

Among the theological issues that fascinated B. Bujo is that of understanding, presenting and explicating Christ in such a way that the Africans can not only understand Him better but also LIVE Him. For Bujo the ancestor item among the Africans scientifically and systematically confronted with Christology would meet this Inculturation need better. More specifically, Bujo, very creatively, explains Jesus Christ as PROTO-ANCESTOR. This is how he explicates his kind of ancestral Christology:

Intext Question

How does Bujo develop his PROTO-ANCESTOR Christology?

10.6.2 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.

10.6.3 From this context, Bujo reflects on Christ’s mystery:

This is the sequence Bujo follows in his theologization:

1) He sees Christ as Proto-Ancestor-i.e. unique Ancestor: the Source of life and highest model of ancestor-ship.
2) Through the incarnation Christ assumed the whole human history including the legitimate inspirations of our ancestors.
3) This assumption of the future which the ancestors sought to guarantee is assured because 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) The idea of Christ as Ancestor 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. This demands a Christology from below-i.e. functional/ascending Christology. It does not, however, ignore ontological/descending/ Christology but is a matter of emphasis.

6) **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) 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) Descending/ontological Christology (also called Christology from above) is required to present in African categories and to elaborate a relevant ethic for Africa.

10.6.4 Pastoral Implications:

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<tr>
<td>As a good scholar in ACT, B. Bujo draws out interesting pastoral implications from his fascinating Christology.</td>
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**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.”

10.6.5 Charles Nyamiti’s Comments on Benezet Bujo’s Proto-Ancestor Christology:

Intext Question

Do you think it is prudent for C. Nyamiti to profoundly criticize an ACT from a fellow African?

Prof. Charles Nyamiti is highly critical on Prof. Benezet Bujo’s Proto-Ancestor Christology. Mind you Nyamiti is an authority in ancestral approach to Christology, Ecclesiology, Sacraments, Eucharist, Martyr- logy, Initiatic rituals, Morality…and even the mind-boggling Blessed Trinity. That is why this Lecture inserts Nyamiti’s critic of Bujo. He does this from a serious level of erudition and creatively at that. Below is his scholarly reaction:

1) “Bujo seems here to limit unduly the scope of African ancestral Christology to the one type he has developed, and excludes others which differ from it.

2) “It should be remembered that the mystery of Jesus Christ is multi-dimensional, and can therefore be approached in different ways.

3) “One can approach Christ as God-man, or from the perspective of His divinity alone, e.g. as He existed eternally as Logos before His Incarnation. One can also consider His

humanity alone, either from the natural or supernatural viewpoint. It is thus possible to conceive Jesus as a natural member of the Jewish community, having natural Jewish ancestral relationships. But we can consider Him from the perspective of His membership in the human race originating from Adam and Eve.

4) “Now when all these Christological dimensions are taken as points of departure for African ancestral Christology, each of them will lead to a Christology which is specifically different from the others. It is for this reason that my examination of link between Christ’s Ancestor-ship with Adam is bound to produce Christological views which are not necessarily false, but are nevertheless different from those of Bujo, who has not developed his Christology in terms of that link.”

It is intellectually fascinating and enriching in view of ACT to follow critically the “harsh ongoing confrontation” between these two giants in ACT: Nyamiti defending and firing from his Jesus Our Ancestor position; and Bujo defending and counter-attacking on the grounds of his Jesus Proto-Ancestor stance. What makes it even more exciting is that Nyamiti is from Anglophone Africa while Bujo is from Francophone Africa. Despite the seeming enmity, I personally know them to be seriously pious Roman Catholic Priests and great exemplary scholars who are amicable among themselves since both are my friends.

10.7 Summary

In this lecture, awareness was created that in Francophone Africa, we have a considerable number of outstanding African Christian theologians. With the finality of a wider reading, the Lecture identified some of the renowned scholars from this French speaking region. We also indicated their specialties and gave the countries they come from. Then, for practical purposes, we chose three among the most outstanding theologians from this region and discussed their respective African Christian Inculturation theologies. These scholars are: Tharcisse Tshibangu Tshishiku; A.T. Sanon; and Benezet Bujo. The Lecture ended by presenting C. Nyamiti’s creative criticism on B. Bujo’s Jesus Proto-Ancestor

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Christology which is of great benefit in ACT Unit.

10.8 Activity

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

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

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

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

5) Give and discuss Benezet Bujo’s *Proto-Ancestor Christology* indicating also what you learn from it.

6) Comment on Charles Nyamiti’ critic of Benezet Bujo’s *Proto-Ancestor Christology comparing it also with Nyamiti’s Jesus Our Ancestor Christology.*

10.9 References


Lecture Outline.

11.1 Introduction.

11.2 Objectives.

11.3 Preliminary Observations & Reflections.

11.4 Examining & Elaborating the Concepts.

11.5 African Inspiration & Aspirations.

11.6 Summary.

11.7 Activities.

11.8 References.

11.1 Introduction.

In this Lecture, we shall bring to awareness that Western insights into “salvation” and “being saved” are still invaluable but inadequate for our African world-view and situation in life. This will be done by examining insights from some Western Christian scholars as well as African ones. It will be explained that African traditions, religions, cultures and philosophy of life had salvific characteristics prior to Christian missionary enterprise- thanks to divine general revelation. The Lecture will, moreover, conscientize you to the awareness that African traditional religiosity and world-view properly explored, critically investigated and authentically integrated are fundamental in enhancing the Gospel more fruitfully. The Lecture will further indicate that the Christian elements found in African traditions, religions, cultures and philosophy of life on Christian conception and propagation of the doctrine of “salvation” and “being saved” is substantial-thus needing to be taken with the seriousness it deserves.
11.2 Objectives

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

1. Provide, assess and critique selected works on and about “salvation” and “being saved” by some prominent Western scholars of international repute like Karl Rahner, Gerald O’Collins, Oscar Cullman, Avery Dulles, Joseph A. Fitzmyer, Jacques Dupuis, Hans Kung, Karl Barth and Edward Schillebeeckx.

2. Explain the terms “salvation” and “being saved”.

3. Investigate, examine and articulate fundamental elements of salvation imbued in African traditions, cultures, religions and philosophy of life prior to Christian missionary enterprise explicating the inter-relationship and mutual enrichment with Christianity.

4. Identify and elaborate the great effects the above African elements have on a more meaningful, more fruitful and more personalistic existential understanding and propagation of the Christian doctrine of “salvation” and “being saved”- with the rich image of the FAMILY thanks to the African cosmotheandric perception of being and being-ness.

11.3 Preliminary Observations & Reflections.

1) The points of interaction and discussion between African Traditions, religions, cultures as well as philosophy of life and Christianity in relation to “salvation” and “being saved” will be investigated and examined.

2) The overriding finality in this Lecture will not be confined to Christianity’s influence on people’s traditions, religions, cultures and philosophy of life. It will mainly be their
(in our case Africans’) influence on Christianity’s conception and propagation of the vital doctrine of redemption and salvation.

3) Moreover, we are in an era of inter-denominational and inter-faith dialogue technically called ecumenism within the framework of religious pluralism, satanic cults and devil-worship phenomenon. Yet, hostility in proselytizing, cut-throat-competitions, constant defections from denominations and shift to emerging sects, splinter cliques some of which are suspect, and religious animosity hindering the catholicity involved in Christianity is well pronounced.

Take note

Is it in order to say that if we absolutely ignore Western scholars we become parochial-minded?

4) Diverse and diverging studies have been undertaken on and about “salvation” and “being saved” as well as ecumenism and Inculturation within the religious pluralism thereby. A great deal of them is by renowned Western scholars of international repute like Karl Rahner, Gerald O’Collins, Oscar Cullman, Avery Dulles, Joseph A. Fitzmyer, Jacques Dupuis, Hans Kung, Karl Barth and Edward Schillebeeckx.

5) Nevertheless, it does not need much mental acumen to peruse and realize that these works focus on the impact of Christian doctrine of salvation on people’s traditions, religions, cultures and philosophy of life. Our Lecture strives to explore and investigate expose and articulate the other neglected aspect too, namely; the influence of African people’s traditions, cultures, and philosophy of life on a meaningful yet orthodox understanding, articulation, presentation, propagation and concrete interpretation of the Christian doctrine of “salvation” and “being saved”.

Take note

It should be appreciated that our situation here in Africa today is that of cut-throat proselytizing. This is made worse by the emerging phenomenon of numerous sects, splinter cliques, fundamentalism, satanic cults and devil-
worship. Such a state is creating a lot of useless anxieties, religious phobia, confusion, despair, devil-atory, irreligiosity and syncretism. Our Lecture is thus long overdue to help curb and correct this widespread negative tendency. It is, moreover, needed so as to propagate better the Church image of the Family of God and bring about more hope in trusting one’s capability of reaching heaven.

11.4 Examining & Elaborating the Concepts.

11.4.1 Preamble:

Intext Question

What do you understand by “salvation”, “redemption” and “being saved”?

1) **What is “salvation”?** A useful response here leads yet to another worrying, disturbing and highly controversial question: **And what does “being saved” mean?** Can one rightly enjoy the eureka of “I am saved”?

2) Another “unresolved” dilemma complicates the perception: **Is “salvation” the same as “redemption”?** Does “salvation” effect “redemption” or is the contrary true? Which of the two takes the priority and what is the rationale behind it? **Are the two correlatives?** How is one expected to understand this concepts vis-à-vis one’s animating cultural background, customary world-view and philosophy of life?

3) There is no gainsaying the concepts “salvation” and “being saved” are two of a kind. One is also tempted to perceive a spontaneous inter-dependence in them. They are terms saturated with expectations, reassurance and vital hope.

4) These two terms should be perceived as mutually inclusive. They are concepts which caution us **not to view** our subject matter in purely futuristic manner as propagated by the adherents of the pie-in-heaven theory and that of me-and-my-personal Savior
individualism. Mind you, to explain them as mutually exclusive would be to destroy the core of their essence—the Redeemer and Savior Jesus Christ. In a materialistic metaphorical conception, each of these terms mirrors the other and, in a sense, are mutual and of mutual benefit.

5) The upshot of the foregoing is the realism of an individual’s effort within the framework of subjective redemption thanks to the vital dynamism of gratuitous means incorporated in objective redemption striving towards heaven as the ideal. The two i.e. “salvation” and “being saved”, therefore, overlap into each other such that, though distinct, they are inseparable.

6) The foregoing notwithstanding, there is a determinative root of the variables making it difficult to come to grips with the doctrine of salvation. We notice twofold crucial paradigms which a considerable number of believers adapt and adopt: the “this world salvation” and the “life after this life salvation”. The apparent proponents of the latter are a considerable number of the Roman Catholics. Those of the former are obviously the Protestants. The repercussions of these twofold tendencies are a pluriformity of ideas, beliefs, assertions, mutual disparaging paternalism, patronization and pontification cum un-Godly disputes.

11.4.2 Redemption, Salvation and Justification:

1) The concepts “redemption” and “salvation” are of immense importance in doctrinal matters. Within the framework of Christ as the Redeemer and “Savior”, the terms “redemption” and “salvation” are the very core of the Christian faith. They invite all to a life of holiness and wholeness as we encounter and confront Christ. It is a calling to be fulfilled in the life to come thus requiring persistent renewal and constant re-commitment.

Take note

QUALIFYING Christ as Redeemer and Savior, therefore, implies that the concepts should be handled concurrently. In fact, they are so intertwined that for practical purposes, they are used interchangeably in our reflections.
2) It should be remembered that: “The English word ‘redemption’ translates the Greek word *apolytrosis*, which means a buying back or a ransom (*lytron*). In Mark’s Gospel, Jesus is seen as ‘the Son of Man’ who came not to be served but to serve, and to give His life as a ransom for many (10:45).”

The interesting thing to note is that “the image of ‘buying back’ has its roots in Hebrew family law where the *go’el* was the close relative whose duty it was to buy back goods and persons that had become someone else’s property.”

Moreover, there existed “also the law of the marketplace where one could buy back (*pada*) the life of a slave” and that is why the Hebrew Scriptures present God as the One, who as the Redeemer, pays the ransom price for the people.

In the New Testament, Jesus as the Redeemer (1Cor. 1:30) is the one “who gave Himself for us that He might redeem us from all iniquity and purify for Himself a people of His own who are zealous for good deeds” (Tit. 2:14).

3) We find the titles *ebed Yahweh* (conveying the notion of suffering servant of God) and *Messiah* linked together in Judaism in the New Testament era. Although the concept of vicarious suffering atoning death is missing in Jewish messianism, the two terms “have the task of restoring the destroyed or distorted relationship between Yahweh and His people, of leading the people back to the vocation which God had given them through His election.”

There are Biblical indications that Jesus Christ regarded His vicarious suffering and death as part and parcel of His service as He fulfilled His salvific mission and totally got involved in re-establishing of God’s covenant with the people.

4) In Luke (13:31ff) Jesus identifies Himself with a divine mission unto death. His death is necessarily intertwined with His work, hence His death prophesies (Mk 8:31; 10:33ff). The anointing at Bethany (Mk 14:8) and the parable of the bad tenants (Mk 12:1ff) re-echo these all the more. Although the direct quotation from Isaiah (53) is only one (Lk 22:37) there are more obvious allusions to Isaiah (52-53). In this we have Mark (10:45). The other apparent ones are the sayings of Jesus concerning the Lord’s Supper (Mk

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46 Ibid., p.7.
14:24; Mt 26:28; Lk 22:20; 1Cor.11:24) in which He discloses that it is for many that He would shed His blood. It is at this decisive moment that He ascribed to Himself the role of ebed Yahweh thanks to, probably, the insight He got at His baptism (Mk 1:11 and parallels). He thus qualifies most adequately as the reconciler par excellence.

5) In Paul’s epistles, “reconciliation” sometimes appears as the parallel and equivalent to “justification” (Rom. 5:9, 10; 2Cor. 3:9; 5:18ff) and it effects “peace”. In view of these two concepts, it could be said that “reconciliation” as peace with God is the consequence of “justification” (Rom. 5:1). Indeed, reconciliation or rather re-union, connotes re-establishment of proper relationship between two parties: negatively as against enmity, alienation (Rom. 5:10; ph. 2:14ff; Col. 1:22); and positively as implying peace (Rom.5:1,10f; Eph.2:15ff; Col.1:20ff). Through Jesus Christ, God mediates and initiates reconciliation (2Cor. 5:18-21). As the reconciler, Christ effects reconciliation among the Gentiles and Jews (Col.1:20, 22; Eph. 2:16). So “reconciliation is the work of redemption going out from God in Christ to the world, for the removal of enmity; for the restoration of peace.”

Take note

The sense of restoration- establishment of a right relationship between God and creation through Christ, involving, of course, man’s disposition has eschatological repercussions. As such, “reconciliation constitutes the foundation of the new creation, of the fact that the old has passed away, that the new has come (11Cor. 5:17, 18), of the now of the day of salvation and of the acceptable time (11Cor. 6:2).” This necessitates Christ’s redemptive death resulting in peace (Col.1:20; Eph. 2:14ff). This way, each one of us is called to turn away from selfishness, pride and egoism and journey towards God in order to acquire genuine peace- all of which is made possible by Jesus Christ (Col. 1:21, 22). This peace from God’s love gives meaning to reconciliation. It is peace that manifests new relationship (Rom. 5:1), embraces a person in own integrity (Rom. 15:13), goes beyond

50 Ibid., p.183.
understanding (Phil. 4:7) and helps in right discernment (Thess. 15:13).

6) Such propitiatory sacrifice of Jesus Christ effecting reconciliation and peace does not mean that He appeases an angry God to rethink atonement. It is taken in the positive sense of redemption and divinization i.e., *Jesus Christ living and dying as a sacrifice for all sinners (Rom. 5:6) and accomplishing this in His being raised for our justification (Rom. 4:25), exalted as Savior (Phil. 2:9) and being established as Redeemer or rather, as Lord, Son and Christ (Rom.1:4)."* It means that through Christ’s reconciling Cross and resurrection, purification from sin and union with God, with neighbors and with the rest of creation becomes available to all (Rom. 10:10; 11:15; 2Cor.5:18-20; Col. 1:20-22; Eph. 2:15-16).

11.4.3 Objective Redemption and Subjective Redemption:

Intext Question

How do you verify or falsify the assertion that: “To have salvation, there has to be a savior. To have redemption, a redeemer is indispensable. Jesus Christ, as we have already elaborated, is this two. He is the Redeemer par excellence and the absolute Savior”?

1) Within this principle, His personal followers and disciples, technically called Christians, are ipso facto imbued with His Spirit. As such, they too are empowered and are required to be redeemers with the Redeemer as their perfect model and saviors exemplified by the Savior first and foremost of themselves and of their brothers and sisters and of the universe cum creation.

2) Indeed, “the mystery of Jesus Christ is that of total self-gift of God of love to humankind in His Son made man, in whom through a ‘marvelous exchange’ God calls all human

beings to a personal communion with God as an I to a Thou.”\textsuperscript{52} Moreover, “in Him the factual and normative coincide, beyond the dialectic of the historical.”\textsuperscript{53} Thus Jesus Christ accomplished *objective redemption, i.e. He Himself living, dying and rising for all, to its elastic limit. He did it in His pedagogy, preaching, SUFFERING, death, resurrection, ascension, GLORIFICATION and His legacy of His own Mother and Holy Spirit/Paraclete. By so doing, He enabled *subjective redemption, i.e. we as free individuals responding to the empowered invitation to the Kingdom of God, to be.

3) Thus, *objective redemption, by its very essence, is consequently the apex, the dynamism and the synthesis of salvation. It could as well be taken to be the matrix of the same. Without it, *subjective redemption would be non-existent. On this score, it is good to note that objective redemption and subjective redemption are inextricably related. Each implies the other since the two are so intertwined. Each is apt to be accomplished in the other. Dichotomizing the two would then be a serious misconception. They tend to overlap thereby creating identification temptation of budding or grafting them-which, of course, should not be the case.

4) Tension between *objective redemption and *subjective redemption is essentially bound to remain. It evokes a painfully spontaneous existential strive. Despite the struggle involved, it is for our fascinating growth which should be demonstrated in the family set-up too. The family context spurred by African praiseworthy perspective typified by each and every person’s involvement, communality, enthusiastic mutual support and vitalistic promotion for the welfare of all and the good of each and everyone.

5) It should be reiterated that the distinction between objective redemption and subjective redemption is not, therefore, merely conceptual. It is a real and actual one. In a way, and in pragmatic terms, while *objective redemption is automatic and gratuitous/unmerited, *subjective redemption demands our conscious effort, persistent involvement, continuous metanoia (conversion) and habitual repentance and Church support.

\textsuperscript{53} Ibid., p. 142.
6) At the risk of being misunderstood, it can be said that, **while still on earth, we have salvation orienting us to salvation- salvation** on earth leading into the culmination of salvation at the end of time **in heaven**. The consummation of our redemption and fullness of our salvation have to be FINALLY in the ESCHATON.

11.4.4 Salvation as Process: Way of Life:

1) Thanks to *objective redemption* that obviously, as earlier elaborated, surpasses *subjective redemption* we are able to earnestly hope expecting, in trusting faith, eternal redemption. This is a realization in which we will be saved for real, final and everlasting transition to our destiny of fulfillment. The task then is to persevere in life and advance, living in our resolute journey looking into and towards the future with confidence for our glorified consummation. This should be done courageously, step by step, following a difficult path towards our perfection and blissful happiness.

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**Take note**

Salvation is thus a growing ongoing reality developing towards accomplishment. This dynamic journeying on to fulfillment implies finality in the eschaton. As such, so long as we are in our diaspora, we must keep striving in our restlessness and existential anxiety. As long as we are in this world, no one can categorically assert: I am already saved and I am definitely there in heaven. This could as well a nightmare. The rationale behind this is that salvation in the sense of subjective redemption is incomplete and provisional. It is tentative in this life. It is ongoing and is to be completed in heaven. This understanding should conscientize us to refrain stereotyping and labeling the others as “unsaved”, “worldly”, “satanic” and “hell’s charcoal” just to promote our holier than thou mentality and clique of the “saved ones”.

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2) The sagging Satanism and the pronounced phenomenon of devil worship is a souvenir for our constant need of salvation and ongoing conversion. To manage this by ourselves would be an exercise in futility. The Master of objective redemption keeps reminding us: “Those who abide in me and I in them bear much fruit, because apart from me you can do nothing” (John 15:5). We remain informed that objective redemption is irreversible while subjective redemption can be reversible. No wonder we are in need of integral liberation to be authentically on the way of salvation leading to the future blissful happiness.

11.4.5 Salvation Integrality, Present Yet Future:

1) **Salvation** not only **embraces the integral liberation** especially from SIN for GRACE. It also includes the **fulfillment of the Kingdom of God.** It provides a path we must follow with all our being-ness journeying on towards such a realization **in the eschaton.**

2) The above notwithstanding, **we encounter the paradox of salvation already present and futuristic.** It is not dilly-dallying to accentuate that salvation interweaving the two dimensions does not solve the problem. It is incomprehensible. Neither does explaining the present salvation as the on-the-way and futuristic salvation as the definite solve the mystery. Nevertheless, in earnest faith- and, of course, salvation by its very essence presupposes faith-one would go for the former. The present salvation is drawn into and geared towards the future one which finally accomplishes it thereby making it **eternal salvation which is absolutely irreversible and irrevocable.**

**Intext Question**

How does Pope John Paul 11 explain “salvation” through the lenses of history and economy of salvation?

3) **Pope John Paul 11** articulates the centrality of the history within the context of the history of humanity. In his words:

“The history of salvation is synthesized in the fundamental observation of God’s great intervention in the history of humankind. This intervention reaches its culmination in the
Paschal Mystery- the Passion, Death, Resurrection, and Ascension of Christ to heaven-and is completed at Pentecost, with the descent of the Holy Spirit upon the Apostles.”

4) In a thorough manner, the Pope indicates the requisites for salvation on the human side as follows:

“Awareness of our sinfulness, including that which is inherited, is the first condition for salvation; the next is the confession of this sin before God, who desires only to receive this confession so that He can save man. To save means to embrace and lift up with redemptive love, with love that is always greater than sin. In this regard the parable of the prodigal son is an unsurpassable paradigm.”

11.4.6 Salvation as Voluntary Shauri:

1) To put salvation into proper perspective, one should know that the transforming underlying dynamism of salvation is God’s unconditional yet gratuitous love for all which, nevertheless, requires a conscious personal response. Indeed, “God so loved the world so much that he gave His only Son, so that everyone who believes in Him may not perish but may have eternal life” (John 3:16). All are, therefore, called to undergo metanoia which means genuine renewal of self-effecting authentic RETURN to God.

Take note

In Jesus Christ, God irrevocably, finally, freely and unconditionally gave the Good News of salvation offered to all. In solidarity with Jesus then, the entirety of *objective redemption was realized and sealed in Jesus Christ and is indispensable in the economy of salvation.

2) His disciples and followers are, nevertheless, expected to freely cherish this treasure on their part with a decisive adherence to all that appertains to it. They are required to voluntarily make a fundamental option for this divine gift. Do so in every circumstance and existential situation.

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55 Ibid., p.58.
3) While *objective redemption is irrevocable, as we explained earlier, *subjective redemption depends entirely on each mature individual person’s option. One has the burden and the blessing of choice. Thus salvation is not imposed on us. It is offered in freedom to us as people endowed with free will. Consequently, it would be wrong to force salvation on anyone in missionary enterprise and evangelization.

4) God does not save us INSTEAD of us. God does so THROUGH our own effort. What St. Augustine said that God who created us without our effort will not save us without our voluntary conscious effort is of immense importance in this regard. To be liberated, one has to participate by being involved in liberation process.

11.4.7 Conclusion:

1) So long as we are in this world, as long as we are sinners and in sinful state and environment, we can only cheat ourselves that our subjective redemption is finally achieved. It is unfortunate but, nevertheless, true that when we convert we enter into a salvific path that we must painstakingly keep following step by step. This we must do both individually and as a community focusing on faithful hope that one day we will realize the point omega (to use Philosopher Teilhard de Chardin’s terms) of salvation.

2) Despite the diverse nuances and, perhaps, distortions in the conception of salvation, nevertheless, a fundamental denominator is apparent: that the finality of salvation is the realization and the ultimate enjoyment of the Kingdom of God/Heaven. With this eschatological end, the being-ness in heaven, an underlying principle in universal evangelization, catechesis and pastoral care is incorporation into heaven. This implies a constant fight with devil/Satan and destroying sin thereby embracing God’s gratuitous grace of *objective redemption which is finally given without our effort that brings about *subjective redemption with which we must consciously participate in.

3) Drawing from the foregoing, it is legitimate and justifiable, therefore, to formulate our own working definition of salvation as follows: Salvation is a constant transforming process and grace-full reality of divinization, conversion and re-conversion with everlasting happiness in the heaven of the eschaton as the goal made possible by objective redemption and realized freely in subjective redemption, endowing one with the chance to start a fresh as one perseveres in the realm of grace which in our diaspora
situation on earth, is in great danger of being dis-graced owing to sinful state, sinful deeds, sinful situations or environment in life imbued with good forces but also with evil forces.

11.5 African Inspiration & Aspirations.

It is crucial though curious to ask: Is there an African salvation? Do we have explicit African terms for “salvation” and “being saved” as such? Can a serious research come across corresponding concepts and conceptions? What about heaven?

Triggered by the above concern, we need to briefly examine and explicate the following themes:

- Inculturation;
- African Communal, Relational and Vitalistic Elements;
- Evil Forces, Good Powers and Sin;
- African Salvation and Heaven.

11.5.1 Inculturation:

Take note

With the understanding of “Inculturation” comprehensively discussed in the previous Lectures, the above doctrine must necessarily be made at home among our Africans. It should be acknowledged that even before the propagation of “salvation” and “being saved” the loving God is already in the targeted people. God is there via general revelation preparing them to have a proper and sympathetic disposition. That is why, devoid of close cooperation with God in respective cultures and religions, our evangelization ministry and mission are wanting.

1) A reasonable research indicates that our African cultures are pro-salvation. There is no doubt that a true African does not confuse the abstract ideal of salvation with actual life in salvation. To ask an African to define “salvation” would make the African most
uncomfortable. Yet, an African can spend a whole day, normally over an alcoholic drink or tea or coffee vividly and insistently describing what living in salvation or, rather, living a saved life within cultural religiosity is.

2) **The challenge is:** do not tell an African about “salvation” and “being saved”. Show him/her by the way you live and believe and relate to other community members, to creation, to the ancestors, to God and the life you live from Sunday to Sunday. This congenial statement is strewn with vital elements of Christian companionship particularly Christ’s principle of “living fully” and not merely existing or even surviving.

3) **We should,** therefore, strive to critically see salvation in indigenous people’s riddles, songs, myths, proverbs, plays, oral narratives, legends, idioms, history…and sage philosophical insights. To ignore these will impoverish us making us be barriers of salvation instead of being carriers of the same. Such a lacuna will compel one to term one’s Gospel enterprise a haphazard mode of evangelization. Nevertheless, the apparent conflict between the status quo within the realm of African tradition and the change generated by modernization may not be simply undermined as trivial. It is a mode which should be thoroughly investigated and critically accepted with much zest minus the repulsive elements that may be repugnant to and incompatible with Christianity.

4) To be more meaningful and relevant then,, the Christian understanding of “salvation” and “being saved” should be rooted in our people’s cultures, philosophy and religiosity critically scrutinized. We should, therefore, not hesitate to draw from our traditional heritage the positive values in connection with salvific affairs to let our religio-cultural values inspire us. We have it on the authority and, indeed, evidence of history of Christianity that our Christian predecessors in the early Church, mediaeval period, reformation epoch, enlightenment time and even those of the contemporary era did not and do not deem it un-Christian to enrich “Christianity” with “non-Christian” or even pagan elements and articulations.

5) **Religio-cultural practices like those Euro-pagan ones behind the dating and festivities of our two pertinent feasts namely, Christmas and Easter were borrowed.** Marriage rites and formulations too were also enriched with diverse Western pagan matrimonial customary rituals. The implication here is that, if those Christians who we
rightly hold with high esteem and reverence utilized their customary values from their traditions and philosophies without distorting Christian tradition via syncretism, there is absolutely no excuse in not doing the same from our African perspective.

11.5.2 African Communal, Relational and Vitalistic Elements:

1) The Africans, in their *sitz im leben*, are remarkably communal, relational and vitalistic. Their interpersonal relationship binds them deeply into united caring family members. Whatever severes such cohesion and customary solidarity becomes a serious deviation. This deviation is the one which Christians call SIN, within the religio-communal personalistic conception. On the other hand, whatever promotes this cohesion and vital solidarity is a blessing. This cohesion promoter is what Christian call GRACE

2) Moreover, salvific elements and qualities abound in the traditional African proverbs, riddles, folktales, songs, dirges, dances, narratives and traditional pedagogy. They forestalled sinfulness through taboos, decorum inculcated during pre-initiation and post-initiation rites, norms pertaining to peer-groups and communal solidarity. They constantly referred to ancestral patronage and the serious wrath of the living dead.

3) Among the traditional Africans, blood pact binds individuals into a closely knit family membership. This is cemented by powerful components of amicability, persuasion, communality and, above all, mutual consensus. Christ’s cherished and precious blood He on Calvary shed for all, BINDS ALL into members of HIS Mystical Body and, indeed, Family of God in the African conception. Not only do we, therefore, become Christ’s followers, witnesses, empowered agents and disciples as previously articulated. We also are evoked to become, in true African sense, vigorous brothers and sisters. We become intimate relatives convivially enabled to dance together. Do so inspired to relate and
interrelate and empowered as a vital community to celebrate and promote life to the full in our homes.

4) The above vital inter-personal bond reminds us that, to scoff at somebody dismissing him/her as “hell material” or “damnation candidate” is thus both un-Christian and un-African. This assertion has its own prevalent critics particularly from those of popular level as the aftermath of protagonists of fanatics and fundamentalists. It should be reiterated that person-hood is one of the gist of African world-view.

Take note

African traditional Religions employ person to person relationship and are communally, verbally and orally transmitted. The insistence is on person’s involvement and deep inter-personal relationships. That is why African symbols of salvation are highly vitalistic, involving, communal, personalistic and, sometimes, experiential. Consequently, Africans worship and service are extremely convivial and full of life. One cannot imagine such rituals without dancing, drumming, dramatizing and all-involving-active participation. This is in contrast with Christianity, which is per se, a “religion of the book”. Consequently, the two approaches influence a diverse mode of salvation.

5) It would not be far-fetched then to say that traditional Africans dance their salvation, sing, dramatize…and, above all, LIVE their salvation. It would be interesting to observe, for instance, the Akūrinū Christians in their worshipping service and one would verify this. For an African, salvation involves all aspects and dimensions of life and corporeality such that they seem to lack a precise definition of salvation.

11.5.3 Evil Forces, Good Powers and Sin:

Intext Question

In your own ethnic group, what is the people’s understanding of “evil”, “good” and “sin”?
1) History records two powerful forces: the good (benevolent) ones and the evil (malevolent) ones. Christianity roots good forces in God and the evil forces in devil-Satan. A perennial conflict between the two is not only real. It also creates constant and persistent tension and confusion in people. That is why the Agikuyu have a saying: “Weka wega niwe weika; weka uru niwe weika” (If you do good, you do it to yourself; if you do evil, you do it to yourself). This reminds us that, like Jesus, the Africans convey deep realities via proverbs vis-à-vis parables and allegories.

2) Traditionally, Africans dread enemies and evil spirits. The common belief is that enemies are agents of misfortunes, calamities and catastrophes. That is why, to this day, witches, evil-eyed-people, sorcerers and ngoma njuru (evil spirits) are greatly despised, condemned and segregated. They are viewed as terminators and malevolent agents. Their common denominator is that they are essentially enemies of life and breakers of harmonious cosmotheandric being-ness.

3) Within this aggravating principle, anyone who prevents or blocks or stops others from living fully commits a grave Sin. To use African terms, one breaks the greatest taboo. On the other hand, whoever supports and ensures full living is appreciated and highly honored.

4) Africans understand this promotion of life. Elders, medicine-people, rainmakers, mediums, diviners, mediators… and pregnant women are highly respected because of their commitment to the promotion and protection of human life. Thus in a most ontological sense, Africans are people of life. They are pro-life. For them, except for some disillusioned ones, salvation has everything to do with life. In their philosophy of vitality, it is not just a matter of mere existing or surviving or living temporarily. It is life fully lived and everlastingly. It is life lived in communal-relational-interpersonal solidarity within the dynamism and context of vitalistic family hence everlasting life in the eternity of the living dead, the ancestors…and the primordial Principle of life called by life titles like Ngai and Nyasai.

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Take note

They understand God as the Principle behind good forces. Such powers are delegated to some people for the common good. People like elders, medicine-people, rainmakers, mediums, diviners, mediators…and pregnant women. The elders - both men and women - tend to outshine those who are endowed with this empowerment for the welfare of all.

5) Apart from sacrifices and prayers, the elders manifest all the more their role as community religious leaders by blessing and cursing.57 Their blessings emanate from deep within their hearts for their people and their own welfare. They believe strongly that they perform this ministry in the power and authority of God who endows them with their own lives, fecundity and families. It is also believed that they bless in collaboration with the ancestral spirits who they believe are more powerful than they owing to the spirits’ proximity to the source of life, i.e. God.

6) For traditional Africans, the blessing of salvation is linked with every aspect of life. Their indigenous names, moreover, convey such treasure. Salvation for an African is not just a religious issue. There is a binding connection with every existential aspect, which includes the cultural ones and environmental entities. The diverse ethnic names for “salvation’ and “being saved” reflect something. They point to and at the generosity and overwhelming cultural giftedness and the deep religiosity involved.

7) As such, integral salvation, far from impeding, will be unequivocally concerned with all dimensions of life and living. Among the aspects and areas of challenges are: spirals of abject poverty, manipulative dependence, socio-economic-political oppression cum exploitation, illiteracy cum education, disease (including the dreaded H.I.V/AIDS) and medical care, medical ethics in the midst of inventions like cloning…justice and peace together with dialogue and democratization, all aspects of life, living, loving and interpersonal relationships. The inference is that, among the Africans, there is no split between salvation and all aspects of life.

8) **Africans’ Salvation and Heaven:**

1) In traditional Africa, salvation is more lived than talked about. It is more practiced than preached. As such, a researcher ought not to be worked up if one asks an African “what is salvation according to you?” only to get an “I do not know what you are talking about” answer.

![Intext Question]

**Intext Question**

In your ethnic community, how do people understand “heaven”?

2) **Underneath such a seeming indifferent reaction lies the answer.** Such an African respondent may start sharing his/her abundant experiential life and that of the community, expressing harmony with nature, the family, the ancestors, God and adherence to traditional norms of morality, customary laws and traditional values. Then, explicitly or implicitly, the respondent will react: “this is OUR kind of salvation which is vitalistic, harmonious, personal, communal, relational…and dynamic also imbued with a mysterious force inspiring us to accomplish all these.”

3) To an African mindset, a salvation that separates the worldly from the heavenly, the profane from the religious, the corporal from the pneumatic, the contingent from the absolute is ridiculous. It is a major factor of social disintegration. Yet, **the one that is integrally and holistically conceived makes sense and is welcome as transformative.**

4) Thus, **heaven presented as a personalistic state of fullness of life with a convivial community** of the living dead and ancestral spirits in nearness to the Supreme Being would appeal most to the African. Among the fundamental justifications is in Black Africans’ very world-view which revolves around the community, relationality, vitality, Pneumatological dynamism, sacrality…all within the family set-up. Sacred life force and the accomplishment with the ancestors thereby in life after this earthly life with proximity to the Supreme Being, therefore, make a lot of sense to an African.
5) An enigma, nevertheless, is real in the ambivalence Africans existentially manifest. An African normally yearns and longs to be with own ancestors and the Supreme Being. Notwithstanding this, the same Africans deplore death by manifesting a real phobia for departure from this world of tangible human terrestrial families and the excruciating solitude cum loneliness involved. Strictly speaking, and challenge somebody to falsify by correcting me, this departure-fear is not unique to the Africans but is common among other races too.

### 11.6 Summary

In this Lecture, we have brought to awareness that Western insights into “salvation” and “being saved” are still invaluable but inadequate for our African world-view and situation in life. This was done by examining some insights into the subject matter from Western scholars and some African ones. It was explained that African traditions, religions, cultures and philosophy of life had salvific characteristics prior to Christian missionary enterprise- thanks to divine general revelation with its theocentricity characteristics.

It was explicated that, indeed, salvific and redemptive characteristics abound in the traditional African proverbs, riddles, folktales, songs, dirges, dances, narratives… and traditional pedagogy owing to divine general disclosure which is essentially theocentric. Nevertheless, the Lecture created the awareness that Jesus Christ who the Africans came to know through the Western missionaries accomplished the issue of salvation by way of special revelation which is necessarily Christocentric.

The Lecture, moreover, conscientised you to the awareness that African traditional religiosity and world-view properly explored, critically investigated and authentically integrated are fundamental in enhancing the Gospel. It further indicated that the Christian elements found in African traditions, religions, cultures and philosophy of life on Christian conception and propagation of the

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58 I recall presiding over a requiem Mass and burial of a staunch Catholic Mzee (old man) in a public cemetery at Lang’ata on the outskirts of the City of Nairobi. Although this old African Christian had an extremely big shamba (land), in his last will he indicated that he opted to be buried in wananchi’s (common people’s) burial place to be with the others and not to be isolated in a lonely graveyard in his farm like a witch or a sorcerer.
The doctrine of “salvation” and “being saved” are substantial and crucial in presenting and explicating the perception of “heaven” in a more fruitful way to an African.

11.7 Activity

1) Discuss the distinction between “salvation” and “being saved”.

2) Verify or falsify the assertion that “African traditions, religions, cultures and philosophy of life had salvific characteristics prior to the propagation of Christianity by the Western missionaries thanks to gratuitous divine general revelation.”

3) On the bases of “objective redemption”, explain why salvation is already accomplished.

4) Within the context of “subjective redemption” elaborate that salvation is voluntary, incomplete and ongoing.

5) Identify and explicate how an African ethnic group of your choice understands and explains “heaven”.

11.8 References


5. D. Edwards, *What Are They Saying About Salvation?* (New York:
LECTURE TWELVE

EUTHANASIA: CHALLENGE TO AFRICAN CHRISTIAN MEDICAL ETHICS

Lecture Outline.

12.1 Introduction.

12.2 Objectives.

12.3 Nature of Euthanasia.

12.4 Active Euthanasia and Passive Euthanasia.

12.5 Some Controversial Questions Involved.

12.6 Discussion on Legalization.

12.7 Ecclesial/Church Reaction.

12.8 Summary.

12.9 Activities.

12.10 References.

12.1 Introduction.

The issue of euthanasia may be thought to be 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.
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.

Since ACT must necessarily be pastoral, as elaborated in the previous Lecture, this issue is of great interest to an African Christian theologian. With this concern, this 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 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.

12.2 Objectives

At 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 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 ought to be tackled.

12.3 Nature of Euthanasia.

Intext Question

Whenever you hear the term “euthanasia” what comes to your mind and how do you define this troublesome term?

1) The meaning of “euthanasia” reminds us of a disturbing ambiguity. Etymologically, the word is derived from the Greek term eu thanatos: eu meaning “good” or “happy”, thanatos meaning “death”. 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.

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.”59

3) G.V. Lobo says:

“The distinction between permitting to die and ‘causing death’ seems to be vital for a decision in this regard. The distinction between ‘omission’ and ‘commission’ never entirely vanishes.”60

60 G.V. Lobo, Current Problems in Medical ethics, p.63.
4) **R.M. Gula 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.”

5) **B. Haring elaborates:**

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.

6) **There are disturbing implications or consequences:**

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.

7) **Haring remarks:**

“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.”

**12.4 Active Euthanasia & Passive Euthanasia.**

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64 B. Haring, *Medical Ethics*, p. 144.
It is important to distinguish between the **two types of euthanasia:**

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.

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.

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.

It is VOLUNTARY PASSIVE when there is CONSENT. It is NON-VOLUNTARY when NO CONSENT is given.

**12.5 Some Controversial Questions Involved.**

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 an African Christian theologian. The same technology that extends the life of one person may hasten the dying of another, or even cause immediate death. The questions are:

   a) When may a person be declared dead?
   b) What are the leading positions on it?
   c) What is the responsibility to care for the terminally ill- especially among the Africans?
d) What are the morals of terminal care?
e) What determines the “usefulness” or “uselessness” of someone’s life?

2) George V. lobo takes to task the exponents of euthanasia in these terms:

“Supporters of euthanasia also argue that 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.”

3) He remarks:

“‘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.”

4) 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.

5) In this perspective “death” is re-evaluated as a potential good, and life is not to be sustained at all costs. With regard to the terminally ill there arise other questions:

a) What is the best care for such patients?
b) What is the moral balance between preserving life and preventing suffering?
c) Should life be preserved regardless of circumstances?
d) 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?
e) Can patients like these be allowed to die without life-saving interventions and machines?

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65 G.V. Lobo, Current Problems in Medical Ethics, p. 62.
66 Ibid., p.62.
67 R.M. Gula, What Are They Saying about Euthanasia?, p.2.
f) 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?

6) **The issue of prolonging life by use of extraordinary and expensive medical machines** gave rise to heated controversies in the 1970s. The case was **Karen Ann Quinlan**.

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.\(^6^8\)

12.6 **Discussion on Legalization.**

**Intext Question**

Are you for or against the legalization of **euthanasia** and on what grounds?

1) The **Netherlands was the first country to legalize euthanasia** at the dawn of this Third Millennium, de-penalizing what was a criminal offence before that. Abortion came first. Euthanasia followed on its wings. Where are we going to get shelter?

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

\(^6^8\) Ibid., pp. 2-3.
“compassionate care”, “honoring sufferer’s wishes”, “selective treatment”, and the like. Behind the sweet talk, the reality is skilful killing and clinical murder.

3) Such cruel cheapening of human life is disturbing. 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.

4) What is most striking is that it is decided who deserves to live and until when, but 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.

12.7 Ecclesial/Church Reaction.

Take note

The doctrine of the **INVIOLABILITY OF HUMAN LIFE** 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.

1) Among the most outstanding Christian thinkers is **St. Thomas Aquinas**. He\(^\text{69}\) opposes euthanasia on the following grounds:

   a) It is unnatural, being contrary to the charity that every man/woman bears towards self;
   b) It is anti-social, i.e., an offence against the community;
   c) It usurps God’s power to give and take life.

2) In relation to the above, **Bernard Haring observes that**:

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\(^{69}\) St. Thomas Aquinas, *Summa Theologica* ii liae Q 64,5.
“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)”\textsuperscript{70}.

3) **Haring then adds:**

“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.”\textsuperscript{71}

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”\textsuperscript{72}

5) **Peschke emphasizes:**

“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.”\textsuperscript{73}

6) **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 analyses the philosophy behind the euthanasia movement is largely of a utilitarian, immanent, secularist nature. If the meaning of human life exhausts itself in

\textsuperscript{70}B. Haring, *Medical Ethics*, p.146.
\textsuperscript{71}Ibid., p.146.
\textsuperscript{72}C.H. Peschke, *Christian Ethics*, p. 351.
\textsuperscript{73}Ibid., p.351.
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.”74 Neither is it an African one.

7) **Peschke then articulates the Christian perspective as follows:**

“Christian theology interprets man’s existence from the life of Christ. 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).”75

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**12.8 Summary**

In this Lecture, we have explained that the issue of euthanasia is not just 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.

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 awareness that since ACT must necessarily be pastoral, the issue of euthanasia is of great interest to an African Christian theologian. With this concern, the Lecture examined the nature of euthanasia. It also explained active euthanasia in relation to passive euthanasia. The lecture furthermore evaluated some controversial questions.

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74 Ibid., p. 352.
75 Ibid., p. 352.
with regard to euthanasia. It, moreover, discussed the issue of legalization. After that the Lecture ended by examining Ecclesial/Church reaction on the subject-matter.

12.9 Activity

1) Discuss the inviolability of human life whether one is old or terminally sick or severely deformed/challenged or a born idiot…or economically “useless”.

2) 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.

3) Elaborate the distinction between Active/Positive/Direct Euthanasia and Passive/Negative/Indirect Euthanasia as an African Christian theologian.

4) Identify and discuss at least FIVE controversial questions with regard to euthanasia.

12.10 References


LECTURE THIRTEEN
THIRD MILLENNIUM AFRICAN SINGLE MOTHERS

Lecture Outline.

13.1 Introduction.

13.2 Objectives.

13.3 Crucial Setting.

13.4 Pertinent Self-Searching Questions Verifying the Relevance of the Lecture to ALL.

13.5 Who single Mothers Are.

13.6 Identification, Perusal and Explication of Single Mothers’ Categories.

13.7 Causes of Single Motherhood.

13.8 Traditional Perspectives, Treatment and Mistreatment of Single Mothers.

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

13.10 Summary.

13.11 References.

13.1 Introduction.

This Twenty First Century in the Third millennium demands innovative vision, transformed ministry, relevant mission and up-to-date perception and approach to contemporary changed and swiftly changing single mothers. It calls for knowing who single mothers are and identifying their rich and enriching factors. It also demands an appreciation of their poor and impoverishing aspects and doing something about the scenario. All these are for the well being and the welfare of authentic FAMILY OF GOD which is of great interest and concern for today’s African Christian theologians.

This lecture, therefore, commences with some crucial setting insights. It then identifies and provides some pertinent searching questions directed specifically to the single mothers and to all
with the finality of verifying that the subject of single motherhood is not merely a confine of individual single mothers or even the prerogative of women but is everybody’s concern and ought to be owned by all. The lecture also defines who single mothers are as it focuses too on the identification, perusal and explication of a pluriformity of diverse categories of single mothers. It further identifies and explicates diverse causes of this “ubiquitous” mode of parenthood. This is followed by a critical examination of the traditional perspective, treatment and mistreatment of single mothers among the Africans. It further justifies that Mother Mary of Nazareth is the perfect model and inspiration of today’s African single mothers. The lecture ends with an identification and explanation of the Third Millennium challenges to these factors and the whole issue of single motherhood.

### 13.2 Objectives.

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

1. Elaborate the necessity of knowing who single mothers are and why this subject is of great interest and concern for today’s African Christian theologians.

2. Identify and examine some pertinent searching questions directed specifically to the single mothers and to all in view of verifying that this subject is of relevance and challenge to all.

3. Identify, peruse and explicate diverse categories of single motherhood accentuating their specific and unique pastoral demands.

4. Give and explain different causes of single motherhood.

5. Identify and explicate some main Third Millennium challenges to both parents’ families and single mothers’ families.

6. Justify that Mother Mary of Nazareth is the perfect model and inspiration of today’s African single mothers.

### 13.3 Crucial Setting.

1) Notwithstanding some pronounced conservative characteristics and continuity elements, contemporary single mothers have to be understood, appreciated, “condemned”, involved, ministered to and evangelized within the Third Millennium *sitze im leben* (i.e. situation in life). They have to be done so taking into account the changing generations, new aspirations, fears, worries, concerns, inspirations, values, prospects, trials, tribulations, identity crisis, modernized assertions, globalized self-esteem, salaried job
economy and hope-less as well as hope-full beingness. All these earnestly yearn for genuine significant invigorating INSPIRERS to bring about authentic COURAGE TO BE.

2) The new Millennium is already visibly inclined to new vision, new concern, new ideas, new perception, new challenges and new anguish, new critical awareness, new achievements, new hope, new family solidarity and WELL BEING with regard to African single mothers. All this is within the essential umbrella of originating and parenting families.

3) No extraordinary acumen is required to comprehend that nature has it that each one of us is an offspring of two parents namely, a mother and a father. The two are gratuitously endowed with fecundity by God to be God’s co-creators thanks to their gift of parenthood and the Godly empowerment to establish homes and families. 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, a nuclear family is perceived as consisting of two parents and the fruit(s) of their matrimonial bond. In other words, it consists of a mother, a father and their child or children as the basic component of their conjugal love.

4) The above family and home set-up within the realm of parenthood has been ruthlessly tested and still continues to be severely tested in this Third Millennium by a strong wave, euphoria and trend namely, the phenomenon of single motherhood. This is the case both in the so-called Western and Eastern Worlds too. It is so in practically every ethnic group, nationality and race.

5) Indeed, the emergence and growth of this peculiar “institution” of single motherhood, which some see as maladjustment, is emerging so forcefully that if the growth in increment and geographical spread continues, and chances are that no one can stop it, the prediction is that parenthood in this Millennium will be more in single motherhood than in married covenant.

6) Today it is almost “fashionable” to be a single mother. 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 rapidly. One is astonished in encountering single mothers of multi-faceted modes owning mum-status AND WITH PRIDE! Their assertion is apparently that of: “I am a single mum and I am proud of my beingness!”

7) 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

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76 Read Genesis 1 and 2 to get the gist of the matter.
and proudly revealing one’s single motherhood status tends to enforce another parental paradigm. The growth, openness, “normalcy” and pride in this mode of family hood may no longer be taken for granted or be dismissed as inconsequential craze. The very fact that single mothers tend to be no longer bogged down by guilty conscience, that they no longer accept embarrassment in being husbandless parents, that their increase and geographical spread is uncharacteristically tremendous, that a considerable number of them significantly-not just ideologically- claim existential, pragmatic and functional supremacy over the married ones proved, for instance, by their being emphatically voted into parliament as MPs (Members of Parliament) despite the gruesome male-dominated party nominations cum hostile campaigns and actually some of this mothers earning lucrative cabinet minister status and prestigious posts as PSs (Permanent Secretaries) in strategic competitive positions is perhaps a cause for grave concern and great worry.

8) What is, nevertheless, encouraging is that ecclesial shepherds are already addressing this crucial issue- of course not legitimizing it- with a considerable amount of limited success. Such caring concern by the Church is commendable. However, there are some consequential elements and, indeed, lacunae yearning for serious pastoral attention and appropriate praxis. Some laxity of the Church as being the light of the world and the salt of the earth unto the single mothers is put into question. The Church’s human face as the Church is blurred by her poor commitment to the cry of today’s single mothers.

13.4 Pertinent Self-Searching Questions Verifying the Relevance of the Lecture to ALL.

The above will be addressed: to self; to you student; specifically to you single mother student; specifically to you male student; to you married mother student; and to you Christian student. The finality here is to verify that the lecture is of relevance and challenge to all and not just to the single mothers.

13.4.1 Questions Addressed To Self:

Various and varying questions for a proper setting on and about single mothers should by now linger on in our minds namely:

78 One can get insights into this from: L. Boff, Ecclesialgenesis; The Base Communities Reinvent the Church (London: Collins, 1986); J. Ratzinger, Church, Ecumenism and Politics (New York: St. Paul Publications, 1987).
79 This attribute, symbolism and implication are well explicated in: J. Ratzinger, Salt of the Earth: The Church At the End of the Millennium (San Fransisco: Ignatius Press, 1997).
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 instance, rape or through incest or individual choice or via being widowed?

2) What mother or which mother adequately qualifies as a single mother?

3) Are- and how are- single mothers involved in the Third Millennium Church evangelization ministry, catechizes role, proclamation mission and pastoral administrative councils?

4) Are there scriptural prophetic proof-texts and biblical proof-texts that justify minimization or alienation of single mothers in the ministry and service-as baptized common Priests/Pastors- of the Good News? Is it not justifiable from scriptural proof-texts that single mothers are consequential agents in the economy of salvation?

5) To those who would be quick to falsify-i.e. the exponents of exclusion and diplomatic alienation of single mothers’ involvement in Church lawful services- what would they say of Mother Mary of Nazareth in the New Testament? What about some other single women mothers in the Old Testament famous for their redemptive roles among the Israelites?

6) What then would be the logical rationale justifying the fostering encouragement of married mothers to play primary roles in the above while subjugating the single mothers to secondary minute services intertwined with suspicious supervision?

13.4.2 Questions Addressed To You Student:

This lecture further challenges you student with additional conscious-creating pertinent guiding questions concerning today’s single mothers. Mind you great philosophers and renowned thinkers recommend reading with prior questions in mind\textsuperscript{82} for deeper fruitful results. Among such questions I, therefore, directly confront you student with in view of this Lecture are:

1) What image do you have of single mothers that influence your imagination, interpretation, judgment and conceptualization of single mothers?

2) What are your understanding, knowledge, wisdom, ignorance and folly concerning single mothers?

3) Are you reliably aware of the diverse and pluriformity of single mothers’ categories? How deep is your knowledge and appreciation of each specific category?

\textsuperscript{82} Among this kind of philosophers is Otto Muck. Read his book titled: \textit{The Transcendental Method} (New York: Herder and Herder, 1968).
4) What is the level of your knowledge about single mothers’ existential life, causes of their respective state of parenthood, ambitions, negative-positive-ambivalent perspectives, children-families-homes-houses?

5) From your observations, what does it mean to be a single mother in our Third Millennium epoch of the Twenty First Century?

6) How do you and your Church and the society and co-single mothers (where applicable) use or misuse or abuse or treat or involve or alienate single mothers?

7) What, according to you, are the rights and duties and the yearnings, aspirations and inspirations of today’s single mothers?

8) Are you aware of the tremendous increase, growth and geographical spread of modes of single motherhood phenomenon imbedded with the inevitability thereby?

9) What corrective conceptualization, mentality, attitude and focus with regard to the single mothers are called for through the principle of Christian agape?

10) 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?

11) Is it too disturbing to accommodate the biblical text that in heaven there will be neither marriage nor marrying whereby “painfully” appreciating that exemplary single mothers are already pointers to that eschatological family?

12) In this Third Millennium “saturated” with single mothers, are you scared of them or are you comfortable with them and why? Do you feel free and at ease in their company or are you threatened or threatening?

13) In case there is no single mother you know of in your family, are you aware that your mother and your sister(s) and, where applicable, your wife and daughter(s) are potential single mothers? When their potentialities will be actualized and they become accomplished single mothers, how will you want them treated? Is that the measure or the norm or the standard you use towards other single mothers or is it the issue of double standards?

14) In a scenario where single mothers are used, misused, abused, treated, mistreated, alienated, derogatively segregated and deprived of motherhood worth, what prejudice do you student harbor/entertain for or against them? What is your attitude and mentality towards their motherhood and their children?

13.4.3 Questions Addressed Specifically to You Single Mother Student:

In case you student happen to be a single mother, let these be your additional questions for a more fruitful appreciation of this Lecture:
1) Who do you take yourself to be? Who do you think you are? How do you define yourself? What are your positive elements and negative characteristics?

2) What do you do to enhance the good in you and to correct or minimize the evil in yourself? Are you excessive and promiscuous in sex appeals? Are you directly or indirectly engaged in commercial sex “work”, lesbianism, grabbing other women’s men or boys, bestiality, masochism and sadism and to what end?

3) Are you consciously aware of the overwhelming dignity, worth, value, responsibility and respect being a mother entails? What are you doing about it?

4) How do you relate to married mothers? How do you inter-relate with fellow single mothers? Do you live in harmony or in discord with them and why?

5) Do you single mothers have the COURAGE TO BE yourself asserting yourself as a mother and a parent you ought to be? Are you guided and inspired by the principle of being mother and being parent at that letting motherhood “ineffable” norm and family hood standards illuminate you in the realm of salvation?

6) What category of single mothers do you identify yourself with and to what end? Do you feel guilty or ashamed or embarrassed of your parental status and why? 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?

7) In your concrete historical existential life situation as such a mother and parent in this Third Millennium, who is your distinguishable role model or inspiring exemplar? How do you justify an ideal mentor?

8) 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 Millennium? If so, what kind of a man-husband would you opt for and why?

9) What actually gives you your true identity as a single mother and what do you expect from this lecture in enhancing your self-actualization?

10) How vulnerable are you to the defamatory stereotypes single mothers are subjected to? Are you enslaved in the vices or do you struggle to emancipate yourself from them?

11) How literate or illiterate are you and what are you doing about your schooling and education?

12) What about the 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 churches?
13) What have you been doing with this enormous gratuitous power and talents and charisms for the welfare and well being of all?

13.4.4 Questions Addressed Specifically to You Male Student:

Turning to you male student, permit me to subject you to the following additional questions that will make you benefit more from this Lecture:

1) In your adventurous endeavor to male dominance, promotion of virility and ego, craving for hedonistic accomplishment, “quenching” your self cum existential frustrations imbued with brutality as well as fecundity esteem, which category-or categories- of single mothers are you responsible for?

2) Do you take responsibility for it? What are you doing or not doing about it? How willing would you be to marry or- where applicable- allow your son to wed a woman with another man’s child or children and why?

3) 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 coined terms- “wretched of the earth” status?

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

5) Do you extend the same treatment to other single mothers more so those- where applicable- you have put into single motherhood?

6) Who do you prefer to work with, single mothers or married mums and what is the rationale behind it?

7) Do you realize that the issue of single mothers is also your shauri and, consequently, this Lecture is about you too?

13.4.5 Questions Addressed Specifically to You Married/Husband-ed Mother Student:

How could we forget you married mother student? After all you are a co-mother in relation to single mothers both subjected to values and challenges of your identity and being. For your reflective exercise and, perhaps, further self re-examination let me ask you some extra crucial questions to help you anchor yourself best in perusing this lecture:

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1) Do you married mother appreciate that as far as mothering and motherhood are concerned, you have a binding tie with single mothers?

2) Do you positively manifest 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?

4) 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 these elements?

5) Would you like to be measured by the same standards and why? Do you actually accomplish or fulfill the above expectations?

6) 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 do unto you? Would awareness like this make you spiral into anxious stress, depression, schizophrenia and worrisome confusion?

7) Does it scandalize you that Mother Mary of Nazareth was 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 (Jn 19:25-27)? What does this Mariological reality mean to you?

13.4.6 Questions Addressed To You Christian Student:

With the awareness that those of you following this University Lecture belong to a pluriformity of religions and faiths, allow me to challenge those of you who are Christians with these additional questions:

1) And you Christian student, follower and disciple of Jesus Christ Son of single Mother Mary, how deep is your Mariology?

2) Assuming that the only Mary you are familiar with is the Virgin of the Holy Rosary and Queen of the Litany and miracle agent of numerous apparitions like those of Lourdes, Guadeloupe, Fatima, “Mukuyu-ini” and others to emerge, what are you doing to grow up from your nursery level in expanding your understanding and knowledge of Mary Mother of God and Our Mother?

3) Did you know that after the demise of Joseph Her “husband” Mary of Nazareth became a single mother belonging to the category of widowed single mothers?

4) Are you inspired and illumined by Her liberational magnificat (Mary’ emancipating song of praise) as recorded in Lukan Gospel (Lk 1:47-55)?
5) Does it mean anything to you in transforming your perception, notion, prejudice, madharau (contempt), animosity and bias in view of single mothers? What about Her exemplarity in living and relating to others in freedom and loving concern?

These prior provocative and thought stirring yet searching queries and questions are not intended to be offensive or to evoke embarrassment. They are deliberately meant to be eye-openers towards a fruitful deeper disposition for this Lecture. The finality is to assist you student to own up this Lecture as you methodologically delve into the investigations and reflections thereby.

13.5 Who single Mothers Are.

13.5.1 Introductory Reflections:

Let it be appreciated forthwith that single mothers are not monolithic. Reality has it that one encounters and is confronted with a pluriformity and divergence of single motherhood. They are of different categories each of which is somehow autonomous. Each reveals specific facet of the self-same single motherhood within the framework of and in relation to the multi-faceted causes.

Among the crucial underlying yet overlapping factors and elements effecting differences among the single mothers are: uniqueness of single motherhood owing to multi-faceted causes; personal endowment in existence and beingness; ethnic affiliation; denominational loyalty; geographical setting; level of schooling cum education; individual personal effort in setting ideals and striving to achieve them; generations and age-groups; mental acumen, intellectual potency and achievement; personal vision; choice and assertion of one’s individual life-style; contemporary mindset; mode of employment or unemployment; 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. A unitary perception of single mothers may thus have to be embraced reasonably, cautiously and assiduously.

13.5.2 Explanation and Elaboration of Who Single Mothers Are:

It should be understood forthwith that the term “single mother” is a coined double concept namely “single’ and “mother”.

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”. 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

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one person: a single-bed designated for use …” The term “mother” according to the Longman Dictionary of Contemporary English means “a female parent of a child or animal” Also “care or protection which is like that of a mother.”

2) 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 (Gen. 3:20). In this endeavor, to explain the concept “single mother”, one should be open to the implied ethno-philosophical perception of a human being. That is why it is important to reflect deeply on what Ivon Gebara and Maria Clara Blingener document within the context of pluri-dimensional anthropology as follows:

“The human being is not primarily a definition but rather a history within space and time. Within themselves human beings contain the animal, the vegetable, the mineral, the spiritual, the divine. They also contain good and evil, love and hatred, peace and violence, not as mutually exclusive but in a mixture that includes all these ‘ingredients’. Thus human beings are not first good and corrupted, nor first corrupted and then saved, but rather humans are this whole complex reality striving to explain themselves and to explain the world in an existence marked by internal division and marked by the nature of their being, which is conflictive and simultaneously limited and unlimited”.

3) Interestingly, “motherhood” is not merely parenting a child. It is above all BEING MOTHER. This is the rationale behind “motherly mothers” graciously touching the very core of humanity. One is, by implication, required to have the COURAGE TO BE such a mother—whether single or married. Yet the puzzling thing is that understanding “courage” can be relative. What is “courage” to someone may be construed to be cowardice to the other. What was “courageous” yesterday may not be termed so today. Still today’s “courage” might not qualify as “courage” tomorrow. This points to the tentativeness, subjectivity and provisionalism of “courage to be” mothers.

4) Furthermore, let it be acknowledged and appreciated that when one talks of “single mother,” one is already in the realm of parenthood with the appertaining “home-ness” and “family-hood” elements imbued with vital living characteristics. When one attaches the concept “single” to “parent” one is by that very fact in a crucial ambiguity of two parties: “the father” and “the mother”. In other words, “single parent” could refer to either a “single mother” parent on the one hand, or to a “single father” parent on the

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It is, therefore, imperative to be aware that there are “single fathers” also only that our Lecture’s concern is that of “single mothers” as our opted for subject-matter.

5) It is of immense importance in our Lecture to identify, examine, critically peruse and explicate the overwhelming distinctive categories of single mothers to be able to come up with a creditable comprehensive notion and perception of single mothers.

Take note

Whenever and wherever people hear the term “single mother”, the notion which spontaneously emanate is that of a rather loose woman, of whatever age, with a child or children of her own but with no husband apart from her child’s/children’s secret biological father or fathers or today’s occult sex sperm donors like in the case of in-vitro fertilization whether heterogeneous or homologous. The implication from the above popular misconception and distortion of en masse categorization is that of an immoral woman mother with the sole responsibility of bringing up her child or children minding their integral welfare without an explicit or guaranteed support of a husband.

13.6 Identification, Perusal and Explication of Single Mothers’ Categories.

13.6.1 Introductory Reflections:

With the above reflections in mind, our Lecture’s task now is to profoundly identify, enumerate, examine and critically analyze the diverse types of single mothers. We do this in view of and in collaboration with the next sub-theme on the multi-faceted causes of single motherhood. This is a principle responsible for the aspects of single mothers which is extremely critical in understanding the single mothers realistically and in their peculiar specificities. In this endeavor, be alerted right from the beginning that though the numerous categories the Lecture will identify and explicate are related and, indeed, inter-related, one must, nevertheless, guard oneself from rushing into merging or tying them up. However strong the inclination or the urge to merge them, it is of immense importance to find out first the specificity of each one of them demanding own pastoral attention.

13.6.2 Categories of Single Mothers:

The following are some of the categories of single mothers which are identified and rather comprehensively explicated by P.N. Wachege:

1) Raped Single Mothers;

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88 To avoid over-loading our lecture making it unnecessarily long, I strongly recommend that you read –P.N. Wachege, Third Millennium African Single Mothers & Mother Widows: Ethno-Religio-Philosophical Touch (Nairobi: P.N. Wachege, 2003), pp.72-126.
2) Widowed Single Mothers;
3) Post Single Mothers Mothers;
4) Feminist cum feminism Single Mothers;
5) Ghost Marriages 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 Character 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

For practical purposes, let us examine two of the above categories of single mothers namely:
Raped Single Mothers and Incest-ed Single Mothers:

13.6.3 Raped Single Mothers:

1) There are those who are single mothers not because of mutual enjoyment of sex as a strong erotic passion and basic human instinct. They find themselves in this “club” as a result of being victims of male harassment, animalism, coercion and brutality. In distinct and specific terms, they are victims of rampant RAPE resulting in unwanted cum un-willed repugnant pregnancies and child-bearing. Cases of such forced sexual intercourse resulting in pregnancies have become so numerous in our contemporary African society that they no longer make sensational news. In fact, one experiences media fatigue in this regard. Of course, this is extremely unfortunate.

2) Need we open the wounds of such evils inflicted on our women especially in our institutions for instance, the mass raping of innocent college girls in Hawainga Girls Secondary School in Siaya District of Kenya in 1993? Do we need to re-visit the haunting traumatic notoriety and tragedy of St. Kizito Mixed Secondary School in Meru of Kenya in 1997? What about the numerous notorious cases in this Third Millennium epoch? An era witnessing consistency of car-jacking and rape thereby resulting in pregnancies and unwanted children? Can we easily forget unparallel rampant rape accompanied by unwanted babies in the crazy aftermath of ruthlessly disputed Presidential elections in Kenya in 2008?

3) Oftentimes we come across numerous cases of hijacked matatus and other public vehicles like buses whereby brutal thugs not only gang rape the youthful pretty lady passengers. They also sodomize men at gun point. Worse still, they now and then force men passengers to rape the not so beautiful girls and old women passengers coercing them with instant death. With no provision for morning after pill or such anti-conception things, some such ladies conceive in the scenario, opt not to abort thereby ending up with unwanted single motherhood status if unmarried.

4) One must always remember that rape is an outright exploitation and depersonalization of the victim. Rape is generally an act of forcing or coursing a female/woman to have sexual intercourse by both males and women evil collaborators. Our observation wherever we

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are is that, despite the fact that this heinous act is immoral and gravely sinful, yet the evil is rampant in our society. As editor cum counselor Eunice Njambi rightly observes “rape breeds fear, hatred and guilt on the victims. It is most surprising that hardly a day goes by without reports of rape cases in our daily papers.”

The trauma inflicted on the victims tends to make them fragile hypersensitive people. This calls for extremely careful handling of such single mothers out of rape misdeeds.

5) I believe, moreover, that you student have established that some men brutes in this era of liberal sex promiscuity are so sadistic that in their desperation to violate women, they shamelessly and forcefully rape even maturing minors turning them to unprepared delicate single mothers. Such rapists subject the women and, more so the youthful girls, to long term psychosomatic problems with subsequent existential traumatic experiences. In some cases the victims are actually infected with sexually transmitted diseases like syphilis, gonorrhea, tricommoners as well as the dreaded HIV and AIDS. This includes being “infected” with unwanted pregnancies and unplanned for babies which often enhance socio-economic, religious and psychological strains as well as mental stress sometimes leading to psychosis. But you may wonder: is motherhood through rape completely innocent?

6) On the issue of rape, you may find some evidence that some women in some cases- sorry to say-ask for it! When a woman goes out to odd places with a strange man for members’ day (Friday evenings) for nyam(a) chom(a) ie delicious roast meat and drinks “at no price” then the drinks hit the “couple” (or is it one night stand companions?) hard a very interesting scenario develops. In this state, if the woman encourages the man to be intimate with her fondling her sexual organs, persuading him passionately into necking and petting and when the stranger-man is naturally thoroughly aroused and emotionally electrified, she demands that they stop just short of intercourse on the grounds that she is unsafe/fertile and not ready for a baby, she cannot rightly claim to be innocent of the deed, misdeed and the repercussions of the provoked act. That is why women have to be cautious of dating carelessly and enticing men to sexual immoralities and indecent aggressiveness to sexual sanctity. What they wear should also manifest prudence, dignity, self-worth and minding the welfare of the others. By this unpopular observation which my conscience compels me to disclose to you students, I do not mean or intend to recant the seriousness of rape explained earlier and the disorientation of this mode of motherhood.

7) Such experiences of betrayal, abuse and lack of respect from men make a considerable number of such victims decide to have nothing to do with men as matrimonial partners. Some understandably over-react by viewing all men as primitive brutes and crude wild beasts to be avoided by all means. A good number, nevertheless, bring their pregnancies resulting from rape to full term. They become mothers in spite of occasionally viewing

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their children as memorial and extensions of the rapists’ evil and culpable injustice of forcefully pushing them to unplanned and undesired motherhood-and single at that.

8) Some such mother victims, as you student can easily find out, are readily “compelled” to deviate to lesbianism or masochism and even sadism for their sexual satisfaction. Some easily become beneficiaries of artificial sexuality or self-induced intercourse using today’s gadgets like the user-friendly vibrators. This is done to quench their sexual thirst. Some turn to sorcery, denial/withdrawal syndrome and sadism as an escape from conjugal desires. Moreover, more than a few today stoop to the lowest level of sexual aberrations like that of bestiality whereby they literally sexually sleep with/have sex with domestic animals like dogs, cats and tamed/manipulated he-goats.

13.6.4 Incest-ed Single Mothers:

There are single mothers who are so as a result of incestuous sex union. It is an open secret that in the contemporary society biological fathers are becoming notorious in sexual abuse and, consequently, impregnating their very own daughters.

1) Perhaps architectural structures like those in densely populated Nairobi ‘s City Estates like Ofafa Kunguni, Maringo, Jericho, Kaloleni and shanty domitats cum ghetto dwellings like Kariobangi, Ngomongo, Mukuru kwa Njenga, Kibira and Korogocho where a whole family has to share one tiny rented room with bazia (curtains) partitioning parents’ bed from the rest is accelerating this abnormality. This is in contrast to our African traditional housing philosophy involving space particularity of houses, partitioning network with, for instance, rooms exclusively and strictly for girls thus guarding against eroticism temptations to fathers, mothers and sons.

2) Though not very much talked about, such deviant repugnant evil practices are so numerous nowadays that few women mothers trust their husbands unconditionally with their own daughters. Add to this sexual violation of girls by their own brothers, proximate cousins and uncles and the resulting babies thereby. The unfortunate deviation, as one can find out, is a common phenomenon particularly among those under the influential control of drug addiction, excessive alcoholism among drunkards and alcoholics, joblessness, the depressed ones and those with psychotic complications.

3) The motherhood resulting from the above repulsive unions becomes shameful, depersonalizing, traumatic and generally despicable. One can establish that under normal circumstances, no African man in his right frame of mind would take such girls for wives. It remains a pronounced taboo to date. Neither can these unfortunate girl-mothers seek refuge in their impregnating fathers’ care. Other mothers avoid them like mbirira (graveyard) not to be seen to associate with them. Theirs is a real situation of being within the two horns i.e. in a dilemma. They find themselves in an actual condition of being in a terrible fix like the tongue placed between the two sets of teeth.
4) In such an existential family dilemma these de-secreted girls ruined by their own kins are condemned to single motherhood of the worst kind. No wonder, as you can easily find out, a considerable number of them are known to kill their incest children and then commit suicide. They are highly vulnerable and more prone to take their lives with the slightest provocation. But when you student condemn, despise, defame or isolate these mothers making them unwanted fugitives in the society, who do you expect them to go to? To whom should they take their problems? By closing your ears not to hear their CRY for human touch, company and courage to be the challenged mothers they are, how the hell do you help them? Do you even bother to listen, hear and understand what they go through? Is your rumor-mongering, defamation and carelessly ruining their good name by narrating their life history of incest procreation to your excited listeners your Christian therapy unto them? Supposing you are one of them, a situation in life they never chose, would you not yearn for empathy, sympathy and to be attended to with tender loving care? Indeed, how would you fair in our contemporary selfish competitive society of the survival of the most corrupt?

5) As sure as the night follows the day, such mothers struggle with psychological trauma, distress, acute frustrations, occasional depressions, psychosomatic conflicts and varying degrees of schizophrenia generated by their violations and condemning unforgiving community members who hardly listen or hear them because of the uncharitable care-free attitude to the unfortunate but persist in keeping them pinned down to their fate.

6) They, moreover, complain bitterly of the superficial misinformed shepherding they are subjected to by their clergy members called Priests and Pastors who, in their pastoral ministry, ought to be exemplary in being sympathetic, apathetic and caring to them. Worst of all, their incest children do not spare them either. No sooner do such “incest children” become aware of their mode of birth mainly from their peers than a considerable number of them view their mothers as mad seducers, caress feminists, temptation vectors, agents of malevolent motherhood and evil mothers at that. Some such children go to an extent of spitting out impossible impudence to their mothers.

7) They ridicule their mothers telling them to their faces point blank that they should have had the common sense to prevent their shameful births either by aborting them as fetuses or by infanticide as babies or they themselves should have had the gumption to commit suicide with their pregnancies, to be swallowed up underground. This way, some frankly tell their mothers, they would have saved them (the children) from the pre-determined “curse” and pre-ordained abomination of being referred to as children of the product of unspeakable tabooed incestuous sexual relations of, for instance, being of the same father with their mothers.

13.6.5 Concluding Reflections:
1) All these most significant perusal and crucial elaboration on the nature, identity, existence and critical categorization of single mothers should, hopefully, dispel crass ignorance on and about them thus assisting in eradicating exaggerated bias, prejudices, caricatures, pseudo-distortions and narrow-mindedness directed to and against single mothers en masse.

2) It provokes the questioning attitude like when PEOPLE SAY this or that about single mothers YOU put it to them to specify WHICH single mother CATEGORY they are talking or speaking or discussing or rumored about.

3) It is a pointer to the fact that single motherhood cuts across all social strata, ethnicity, academic achievements or levels of illiteracy, age groups, generations, religious cum political affiliations and diverse situations in life and is either by one’s fundamental option or due to circumstances beyond one’s control.

4) Thus what we have examined enhances the minimization, if not annihilation, of narrow-parochial mindedness in single motherhood issue eventually effecting the adoption of a more humane, critical, sympathetic, emphatic and understanding attitude.

5) Moreover, thanks to what the Lecture has explicated, when one critically examines the crucial types of single motherhood analysis which the Lecture spelt out, it logically follows that one ought to opt out of perceiving single motherhood as fragmented categories. Instead, one will henceforth be expected to understand them as integral essentially integrated within the umbrella of MOTHER-NESS, MOTHERHOOD and in the dominant FAMILY AFFINITY framework.

13.7 Causes of Single Motherhood.

13.7.1 Introductory Reflections:

Just as there is a pluriformity of the types of single motherhood as profoundly explicated previously, so too are the divergences of the causes of this mode of parenthood. The reality and intensity of the multi-faceted causes of the aforementioned phenomenon vary from community to community, from ethnic group to ethnic group, from generation to generation and from epoch/era to epoch/era. Nevertheless, it would not be a far-fetched generalization to assert that, to a great extent, the main causes converge and are fundamentally the same. It has to be accentuated that some single mothers are in this state of parenthood status out of their own free will. Others, on the other hand, find themselves in their motherhood status through circumstances and situations beyond their choice and control. One cannot, therefore, confront this issue or subject-matter realistically, soberly, uprightly and with philosophical rationality without tackling the vexing issue of the causes. It is indispensable then to turn to this vital reflection specifying the factors that occasion single motherhood.
13.7.2 Multi-faceted Causes of Single Motherhood: There are 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:1

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 Proseltization and Catechesis;

18) Rape;

19) Parents’ Harshness and Unreasonableness;

20) Wives Actually Killing Their Own Husbands;

21) House “Marriage”;

22) Labor Migration;

1 To avoid over-loading our Lecture making it unnecessarily long, I strongly recommend that you read –P.N. Wachege, *Third Millennium African Single Mothers & Mother Widows: Ethno-Religio-Philosophical Touch* (Nairobi: P.N. Wachege, 2003), pp.130-150.
23) Christ’s Radical Discipleship Demands;
24) Exaggerated Radical Feminism;
25) Distorted Gender Sensitivity.

Let us, for practical purposes, elaborate TWO of these none-exhaustive causes while you can read the rest in the given reference monograph—namely, widowhood; and anti-social behavior; witch-craft and destructive magic.

13.7.3 Widowhood:

1) Single motherhood may arise from widowhood. A state one finds oneself in as a result of natural or unfortunate or forced circumstances. Deaths of husbands are major and common causes of single motherhood in this Third Millennium.

2) With today’s modernization, globalization and impact of high-tech and civilization, there have been numerous such deaths. Deaths ranging from air-sea-underground-road accidents to alcoholism, suicide, ethnic violence cum tribal clashes cum ethnic cleansing, judicial, extra-judicial, political cause(ed), inter-national terrorism, martyrdom, torture unto death, suicide bombers, euthanasia and ukimwi (HIV and AIDS) cum other fatal diseases

3) Husbands’ deaths of whichever form or cause thus contribute to the tremendous genesis of single motherhood. These deaths deprive women mothers of their consorts. The wives are subjected to a state which leaves them with the demanding duty and burden of looking after respective families singly though they formerly used to do it as a couple.

4) It would be both superficial and idle to verify the demographical evidence that in today’s society husbands tend to die earlier and in more numbers than wives. They do so because, among other things, they are the weaker sex when it comes to survival in living and that majority of them customarily marry far younger women than themselves for traditional reasons.

5) Psychologists and existential philosophers of personality theories and gender parity provide insights into women outliving men. One of them is the theory that women are better at handling depressing frustrations, sharing and talking problems out than their male counterparts. I verified this in my research. The women I encountered and the men I was confronted with helped in establishing this “women more fitness in life and living” truth. In so many places I went to, there were so many widowed single mothers as

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compared to widowed single fathers. In my opinion, this scenario is a real national tragedy and disaster in families that I wonder whether husbands should not be declared an endangered species in homes and communities deserving more tender care and humane protection during the day as well as at night-sometimes protecting them from themselves.

13.7.4 Anti-social Behavior: Witchcraft and Destructive Magic:

Anti-social behavior like witchcraft and destructive magic\(^{93}\) are another cause of single motherhood.

1) If you do some research, you will most likely come across several interesting cases in this regard, some of which are notoriously vulgar and crude. In their desperation, some women act despicably towards their men to “pin” them at home and to “protect” them from being grabbed by other prettier more enterprising younger women. They aim at enviously owning and possessing their men completely with the finality of making them totally submissive to them only. To accomplish this goal, the women concerned apply diverse repulsive dirty magical practices and nauseating malevolent witchcraft deeds. Let it suffice to mention just a few of their repugnant deeds below while you complement them with your own findings since the ones below are not exhaustive at all:

a) They bake *chapatis*. Before they put them on the frying pan, they take off their knickers; sit on the baked prepared *chapatis* with their bare buttocks as if they were rubber-stamping them. They then put the *chapatis* on the frying pan, cook them and serve them to their men who normally love and have extra appetite for *chapatis*.

b) They take off their panties, carefully pluck out a considerable number of their pubic hairs, cut the hairs into fine pieces, add them as they would sugar in or spices to the men’s porridge.

c) They cut small pieces of *kitunguu saumu*, mix them with their cough-mucous merged with the usual *kachumbari* ingredients and serve it to their men.

d) They cut off the tails of chameleons, roast them like *nyama choma* (juicy roast meat), grind the roasted tails, pour this flour into the boiling soup or gravy as one adds flavors like curry powder, then they serve it to their men to drink the ingredient in bowls making their men to sometimes say, “*niongezee tafadhali*” (more please)!

e) They extract the oily substance from snails, mix them with cooking oil, prepare food with this mixture, then they serve the food so prepared to their men.

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f) When menstruating, they take some of their menstrual bloody staff, put it in their men’s food together with tomato-sauce, and pass the delicacy to their beloved consorts as a delicacy.

g) They prepare tangawizi (flavored tea), put some drops of their urine into it and add some white ashes, and then they serve it to their men.

h) They extract juice from some “dangerous” weeds or sap from selected trees and mix the juice or sap with tea, and then they serve it to their men to drink as health friendly herbal tea.

i) They pick over-ripe kea-apple fruits, crush them to get the juice, mix the liquid with mashed safari ants’ gravy, put the product into the ugali (stiff porridge), and then serve it to their men.

j) They get a hen’s egg and that of a weaver bird, crumble them together blending the concoction with a he-goat’s waste matter, fry the menu and serve it to their men using one’s “taboo” left hand.

2) These and other superstitious and diabolically repulsive practices which prudence and common decency compel me not to dare document for our Lecture are adhered to in strict secrecy and with remarkable scrupulosity. Obviously, to be found out adhering to such nauseating occult practices amounts to digging one’s grave or inviting instant divorce, societal wrath and ruthless rebuke and segregation from one’s peers as well as alienation from the community.

3) Such dirty superstitious practices abound in our modernized African society but secretly. Though commonly found among the illiterate and predominantly in mashambani (rural areas), nevertheless, a serious research will disclose the bitter truth that such mis-deeds are found even among the elite and they do also abound in the urban localities too.

4) The revelation or disclosure of the above occult behavior which is normally whispered about is in no way intended to embarrass those of you who practice it and those of you who are victims of the “evil”. Bear in mind that these repugnant deeds are in the name of love, possessiveness and human mutual jealousy. Neither is the above disclosure of perilous facts meant to perplex the innocent who would feel nauseated when told of such naughty reality. Nor does the lecture aim at triggering mistrust in interpersonal relationship making men over sensitive or hyper-conscious of whatever their women serve them. That would amount to missing the whole point!

5) The Lecture’s concern is that such strangely lamentable and, indeed, barbarous behavior causes the guilty mothers to be chased away by their men when discovered. As a result, they are compelled to live, with their children, as outcasts thus making their misdeeds demote them to this mode of single motherhood with their not enviable specificity.
13.7.5 Concluding Reflections:

1) What the Lecture has exposed and discussed are some of the outstanding causes of single motherhood rampant in our African contemporary society. These analyzed elements are somehow interrelated and essentially intertwined in their underlying principle. They have as their common denominator the explicit fact that they are major causes, among others, of this Third Millennium’s phenomenon of single motherhood as the Lecture has examined and reasonably substantiated-and which is of great interest and concern to African Christian theologians focusing on family from ethical/moral perspective.

2) This critical effort in identifying, investigating and explicating the pluriformity of single motherhood imbued with a multi-faceted genesis of single mothers is a rational persuasion and earnest caution to accept, appreciate, support, understand, guide and interrelate with single mothers in their variety cum uniqueness owing to the pluriformity of the causes of their beingness as the Lecture has elaborated and thanks to the divergences of their categories as the Lecture critically explicated.

3) The next step in the Lecture will now be that of the critical elaboration of the African traditional perception, treatment and mistreatment of single mothers. Focus will be more on how single mothers were understood and catered for in traditional Africa.

13.8 Traditional Perspectives, Treatment and Mistreatment of Single Mothers.

13.8.1 Introductory Reflections:

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.

2) 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. 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 animate 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.

13.8.2 African Philosophy On and About Single Mothers:

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?

2) The general attitude towards single mothers, and indeed, the bottom line philosophy in the African traditional society was that they were incomplete beings and unfulfilled persons of extra-ordinary 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.

3) 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.

4) 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

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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.

Take note

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

13.8.3 Some Ethnic Groups’ Perception, Treatment and Mistreatment of Single Mothers:

1) If you research and supplement your findings with your own experiential knowledge, it will become more explicit that there was no general standardized treatment of single mothers in our African traditional society. It is significant though that the treatment meted out to single mothers was determined basically by the instances leading to each individual case. In other words, far from being handled en masse, each category of single motherhood was traditionally treated in its distinctive manner and peculiarity. While some types, for instance those who were so as a result of being bereaved of their husbands, were more sympathetically handled and more accepted. Others were only reluctantly tolerated.

2) As a pointer and exemplarily for the above, let us consider the Akamba community—while I challenge you to examine your own ethnic group or any other of your choice to complement this:

3) In the Akamba community, marriage was so highly valued\(^{95}\) that single motherhood was not common. Even in difficult situations and crisis, the Akamba co-operated in saving families at all costs from disintegrating. No wonder they had complex marriage customs enhancing and regulating families within the traditional set-up, to refrain from deteriorating to single motherhood.

4) Thus in the event of death of a husband, the *muka wa ndiwa* (widow) was inherited by the husband’s brother. The inheritor was called *musina* and had the obligation to cater for the welfare of the widow and her children. This way, the *musina* assisted the *muka wa ndiwa* practically in her mode of single motherhood. In the absence of such a brother, a male relative took over. This ensured that the woman’s social and emotional life was not unduly impaired by the departure/demise of her husband. It also guaranteed the proper co-operation in the up-binging of children and their mother’s welfare. As such, life for

her and her children proceeded without much strain or serious frustrations. If she was still of child bearing age, she was helped to beget more children.

5) The Akamba also somehow permitted pre-marital sex among lovers who were about to get married. This practice in some cases resulted in girls begetting children out of wedlock although giving birth out of wedlock was a kind of taboo. Ironically, those who did so were seen as social misfits. They were considered to be culprits who watered down their personal dignity and traditional worth/prestige so much so that their peer groups of the opposite sex avoided them conveniently.

6) Those who were rejected found it difficult to get their age group partners as their husbands. Such mothers found refuge, if they were lucky, in the practice of polygamy⁹⁶ which helped in integrating them and their children. Mind you the Akamba, like practically all the African ethnic groups, took children as gifts from God and living symbols of their social status. Older men, therefore, did not hesitate to marry girls with other men’s children. Not as first wives though but within a chain of other wives. This, nevertheless, traditionally catered for those who would otherwise be permanent single mothers. Polygamy, therefore, was a major means of curbing single motherhood. Consequently, among the Akamba, there were very few cases of single mothers thanks to discouraging them and resorting to polygamous provisions. Sexual morality was highly cherished also as a preventive measure.

7) In this community, it was very bad for a girl to give birth out of wedlock. Such a girl became the centre of bad jokes, ridicule and jocose lies. Her child was sometimes referred to as kana ka kitutoni (a baby of the dancing ground) since many girls got pregnant during the traditional dances which were highly provocative, sexually involving, passionately electrifying and emotionally demanding. Ironically, such mothers got an opportunity to pressure their people to enhance their marriage though to polygamists.

8) In isolated cases they got “married” to fellow women to continue bearing children for them thanks to maweto (women to women marriage) practice. Such “married” single mothers were given huts by their “women-husbands” where the latter had to approve the visiting males for procreation purposes get more children for them either because they themselves were barren or too old to bear or perhaps because gender preference. So, it is quite different from the kutuania (come-we-stay) style.

9) The mentally handicapped and severely crippled women were superstitiously handled. The belief was that such women were sub-human, extraordinary and, above all, the personification of bad omen. Some people went to an extent of viewing them as symbols of punitive significations of ancestral wrath. But strangely enough, they still conceived by men who walked out on them. As in the case of their mothers, contempt and superstitious

⁹⁶ For more thorough insights into African practice of polygamy and polyandry, I refer you to- D.G. maillu, Our Kind of Polygamy (Nairobi: Heinemann, 1988).
mistreatment were extended to their children and the chances were that these daughters became the unfortunate ones discriminated against through traditional taboos in the Akamba community. A chain reaction in such single mothers was oftentimes maintained.

10) In African traditional society, diverse and separation resulting in single motherhood were not as rampant as today. Divorce occurred in isolated cases and only after all possible efforts to effect reconciliation failed. It was a sad affair which had to happen only as a final resort. Thanks to our traditional African family set-up, they were evidently rare. Being so rare then, divorce was not among the main causes of single motherhood.

11) In the Akamba community, like in many other ethnic groups, marriage arrangements and accomplishments involved the whole community and not just the nuclear families or individual consorts. No wonder marriages were “indissolubly permanent”-thanks to traditional initiatory preparedness, cultural prohibitions cum taboos, communal/relational pride and customary aspirations-and were seen to remain so except in very extreme cases. Traditionally, one was primarily a community member such that one had fathers and mothers and a whole extended family to benefit from97. In case of pressure to break up, all kinds of mediators, intermediaries and counselors were effectively used. They adhered to the traditional philosophy to the effect that an individual exists and grows within the community and in oneness of the corporeality of the family98. Traditional norms of morality were propagated and adhered to, hence the rarity of single motherhood cases. Single mothers as a result of divorce in the Akamba community were seen as social misfits. Even their fellow women never accepted them fully. No wonder the Akamba community referred to such a lady as mukomanthi (one who sleeps on the floor). The practice was that they were given the floor for their beds. Hence the derogatory attribute.

12) The Akamba thus accorded different treatment to specific single mothers. In other words, how they handled them depended largely on the circumstances leading to their state of parenthood. For instance, in case of single motherhood as a result of being widowed, the treatment was more hospitable and reasonably sympathetic.

13) More cases could be cited from other African ethnic groups explaining how single mothers were traditionally understood, treated and mistreated. Not only is it unreasonable to tackle each African ethnic group in the subject matter but it is also unnecessary to exaggerate the lecture. I leave it to you student to fill up the gap.

14) Let me reiterate that, the general orientation as the Lecture has explicated is that, our African traditional society catered for single mothers in relation to the causes of their state. Those found in such a situation for justifiable reasons were more readily accorded favorable treatment and support. Nevertheless, kinship systems as well as traditional corporate life ensured that no single mother suffered endlessly. Let it also be remembered.

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that this was a rare phenomenon because of the high degree of adherence to traditional norms of morality, customary laws, traditional values and family solidarity in the African communities.

15) I accentuate once more that, in the traditional African society, single motherhood was not only discouraged but was also not supposed to exist at all since it was not the normal way of parenthood. As the lecture elaborated, it actually rendered those involved incomplete, extra-ordinary and unfulfilled. This is in accordance with the African philosophy of parenthood, family life, home and, above all, our cosmotheandric perception of being and being-ness in the African philosophy of life.

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

13.9.1 Introductory Reflections:

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. 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.

2) Admittedly, socio-political, economic, cultural and modernization factors have watered down African cultural fabrics, communal network and family solidarity. No wonder, one even notices women and men “liberated from” African socio-religio-philosophical traditional taboos commercializing sexuality, heterosexually or homosexually, and hadharani (openly/publicly) for monetary gain and hedonistic goals. As par African traditional philosophy of family, this despicable practice was either unheard of or was too minimal to warrant mention. The above indulgences, cultural disintegration and traditional adulteration are fundamental agents of bothersome single motherhood phenomenon which is most pronounced in this Third Millennium. We are witnessing a new trend whereby numerous numbers of women deliberately choose to opt for single motherhood.

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

13.9.2 Some of the Outstanding Challenges:

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.

Let us, for practical purposes elaborate TWO of these contemporary challenges i.e., taboos being de-tabooed and getting more educated and schooled:

13.9.3 Taboos being de-tabooed:

1) Whereas single motherhood was regarded in our traditional society as a kind of taboo, there is a glaring deviation from such a perception. We witness a notable and radical lenience in this regard making the phenomenon easily accommodated.

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99 For the explication of the others, I refer you to- P.N. Wachege, Third Millennium African Single Mothers & Mother Widows: Ethno-Religio-Philosophical Touch (Nairobi: P.N. Wachege, 2003), pp.191-220.
2) The traditional values, prohibitions, initiatory pedagogy and the belief that customary controlled family community life, with each member endowed with personal rights and responsibilities, have largely been watered down. In some cases, these practices have been caged in the museums of archaeology and ethnological archives for those interested. No wonder our contemporary liberal attitude strengthens such a state of life.

3) In practically all African traditional communities, for instance, men belonging to the same age-set could not take the daughters of their colleagues in marriage since they were considered as their daughters too. It was even an abomination to seduce such girls into motherhood instead of protecting them. Today such tribal values and invaluable taboos are virtually no longer respected. They do not seem to be binding or feared even by grown-up people who are supposed to be the role models. My informants, just to add a punch to this issue, told me of a seventy years old mzee (old man/elder) who drove to visit a mzee mong’o (elder age-mate). They feasted and drunk together.

4) All through, the mzee visitor was eyeing his host’s Form Three daughter who was wearing her school uniform. As the daughter came to bid them goodbye, carrying her school box to return to her boarding school after her mid-term break, the visiting mzee impressed on the girl and the hosting parents that since this was “his daughter too” he would not let her use matatus. He volunteered to drive her up to her school. The parents were, obviously, very grateful.

5) To cut the long story short, the mzee took the young girl to Nairobi, bought her wines, deliberately delayed her, persuaded her to spend the night with him in a posh lodging, seduced, used and abused her sexually. She conceived and later bore a child by his so-called father mzee. It was a despicable shame. It was, as the African sage philosophers say, “to give a leopard one’s goat to shepherd.” This was truly a muthuri kihunguiyo/ragai (a wicked/wretched elder). Instead of being family makers some irresponsible immoral grow-ups have become home breakers and it is unfortunate that they are scandalously numerous today.

6) The very institution of marriage is being put to the test. While marriage in the traditional society was accepted as the normal mode of establishing family life and homesteads, today many people are having their serious doubts and reservations.

7) There seems to be an underlying force diverted towards the annihilation of marriage. The supportive norms, values and taboos regulating motherhood in marriage are being heavily sabotaged while many of us stand around looking on. The clique or jargon is: today, being married and having a family in marriage has nothing to do with mutual fulfillment; happiness is never to be found in the confines of marriage. As a result, while the general attitude towards single mothers in our African traditional society was that they were INCOMPLETE and UNFULFILLED, the trend today seems to be that it is motherhood in marriage which is incomplete and unfulfilled. It is kind of turning matrimonial
covenant topsy-turvy. As an impact of such a mentality, we are hit by the passion of the reality the truth that one can hardly pass by two homesteads without encountering a single mother family.

8) On the basis of the aforementioned transforming agents together with bias mentality and attitude of contempt towards marriage in favor of single motherhood, one notices a vivid shift from the shamefulness and guilt of being a single mother in this Millennium. One could, perhaps talk in terms of Third Millennium single mothers family paradigm.

9) Yet, the setting of an African normal-ized family is still anchored in married motherhood. There are still easily noticeable conservative elements of African traditional acceptable family-hood. This could as well be the rationale behind numerous single mothers seeking to validate their respective families in married homes to accomplish themselves in, through and among them. More than a few single mothers, as one can easily find out, earnestly aspire to marry-being married- even in their old age more so to enterprising widowers and wealthy safe available men divorcees.

10) What was traditionally viewed as incomplete and unfulfilled is today taken by some exponents as complete and actualized. What was customarily viewed as perpetual stigma is in today’s society after all but a mirage. What was traditionally considered to be a big let down or a bad omen or a curse is in the modern society no big deal and, to some proponents, rather than being taken as a curse shauri it is welcomed as a blessing orientation of life and living.

11) In a big way, traditional restrictions, values, norms and beliefs are hardly binding. The “best” we are witnessing is the come-we-stay marriage style, where men and women mutually agree to cohabit, get children but with no matrimonial commitment or exclusive right to one another. Briefly, today, single mothers and their children are not as openly scorned, rejected and treated with bias as was the case in the old days. They are better able to enjoy their rights and privileges and not be bogged down with frustrating duties, traditional prohibitions and customary “slavery”. But is this for better or for worse?

12) Consequently, while single motherhood in traditional society was reduced to a bare minimum, evidence indicates that today there is a real boom of it. There is an apparent modification, and actually a shift, in this regard. A radical change of attitude towards unmarried mothers crowned with an element of permissiveness is rapidly sweeping across all ethnic groups. No wonder many radical values and taboos have been forgotten and cultural moral precepts trampled underfoot. But to what end is this scenario?

13) Thus what previously was a taboo is nowadays a quite ordinary life-style, a very simple and light problem. Even parents today are more willing to live with their daughters who opt for single motherhood. Some, moreover, deliberately encourage their daughters to embrace this mode of parenthood owing mainly to today’s male brutality. In today’s life of economic hardships, one is confronted with a considerable number of parents who
speak well of their daughters who are single mothers verily acknowledging that these
daughter-mothers are assets to their respective families. Such parents explain that unlike
they selfish greedy sons who are manipulated and controlled by their wives and unlike
the married daughters with strict loyalty to their respective husbands from whom they
have to beg permission to visit parent’s homes, their single mother daughters frequent
homes and their generosity and family output is remarkable. As a matter of fact, in
virtually every homestead these days, there is at least one single mother. The traditional
taboo, hindrances and impediments have thus been minimized and undermined if not
demolished.

13.9.4 Getting More Educated and Schooled:

1) Traditionally, not many communities were willing to educate their girl children in formal
schooling. Those who did send them to school did not allow them to go beyond a certain
level thereby making it a mere token schooling. Today, serious academic chances are
normally accorded to both boys and girls each given a chance to advance according to
one’s giftedness. Gender parity in this regard is minimal.

2) The introduction of Parallel Programs alias Module Two and Distant Learning called
Module three in our Universities is doing a lot in quenching the thirst for knowledge,
understanding, wisdom and COURAGE TO BE. My informed observation in the
University of Nairobi where I have been lecturing for 20 years is that there is an
overwhelming number of single mothers who enroll for the above modules.

3) It is undeniable that the above education orientations in our Universities and Higher
Institutions of learning is a remarkable phenomenon that has ushered in new
opportunities to single mothers, more so those whose mothering ejected them out of
schools. They are now enabled to nurture the noble COURAGE TO BE offering them a
second or even third chance in academic and professional pursuit thus enhancing
meaningful job opportunities and creditable promotions.

4) Through today’s “ubiquitous” formal education, women are acquiring wealth. With such
financial independence, a considerable number of them are readily opting for single
motherhood. They are, it is openly asserted, best placed to realize that, for their
professional progress and economic advancement, they can settle and manage better
without the support of accompanying pain-in-the neck husbands but with their own
“unattached” children. Others in marriage easily demand divorce—which is seemingly in
vogue these days- when “unable” to put up with their “impossible” husbands.

5) Moreover, polygamy which accommodated many single mothers is dying out rapidly. It
is disappearing not only as a result of the intrusion of alien values and forces as well as
numerous males losing their virility thanks to factors like sex unfriendly alcoholic drinks.
It is happening also because of academic pursuit cum achievement, aspects of radical
feminism, exaggerated gender assertiveness, yearning for liberated life cum autonomous
living in freedom and economic constraints. The acceptance of inter-ethnic marriages rare in traditional Africa has also increased single motherhood. Furthermore, people have become more of travelers, socializers, business-minded and more national as well as international in outlook. This is mainly thanks to academic scholarship and accelerated social mobility. But conflict of values provokes frequent fights, quarrels, tribal animosity and disharmony often leading many to single motherhood with no polygamy to take refuge in.

6) In connection with the above, traditionally, men were providers. A man having wealth could marry women from the whole ridge. The pride of male prowess and virile fecundity was in the number of wives and children one had. Having big families was at the very marrow or core of being a total man. Also, though women worked hard, men were customarily the family supporters and women the “dependent” ones. Nevertheless, as is the case within the other aspects of life, such traditional male provider-value is undergoing a real metamorphosis in this Third millennium. Thanks to modern education practically available to all, salary remuneration, emancipating liberation and diverse aspects of liberalization a good number of women no longer perceive men/husbands as the sole providers of familial welfare, upkeep and comfort. No longer do many of them pragmatically have to kneel down with begging bowls before men gods.

13.9.5 Concluding reflections:

1) From the foregoing it appears, therefore, 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. I 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 internationally.

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.

13.10 Summary.

The lecture has indicated that our Third millennium demands innovative vision, transformed ministry, relevant mission and up-to-date perception and approach to contemporary changed and swiftly changing single mothers. It brought to awareness that knowing who single mothers are and identifying their rich and enriching factors is a necessary condition. It also indicated the demand for an appreciation of their poor and impoverishing aspects and doing something about the scenario. All these are for the well being and the welfare of authentic family of God which is of great interest and concern for today’s African Christian theologians.

With the above in mind, the lecture gave some crucial setting insights. It then identified and provided some pertinent searching questions directed specifically to the single mothers and to all with the finality of verifying that the subject of single motherhood is not merely a confine of individual single mothers or even the prerogative of women but is everybody’s concern and ought to be owned by all. The lecture also defined who single mothers are as it focused too on the identification, perusal and explication of a pluriformity of diverse categories of single mothers demanding specific pastoral care. It further identified and explicated diverse causes of this “ubiquitous” mode of parenthood. This was followed by a critical examination of the traditional perspective, treatment and mistreatment of single mothers among the Africans. The lecture ended with an identification and explanation of the Third Millennium challenges to these factors and the whole issue of single motherhood. It, moreover, created the awareness 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.

13.11 Activity

1) Identify and discuss at least FOUR types of African single motherhood
as an African Christian theologian.

2) Verify or falsify the assertion that “the subject of single motherhood is the concern of not just women but, indeed, the shauri of all.

3) Pick any African ethnic group and discuss its philosophy on and about single mothers.

4) Identify and examine some crucial multi-faceted causes of African single motherhood.

5) Give and explain some fundamental elements and characteristics that are transforming the traditional perspectives, perception, treatment and mis-treatment of African single mothers in our contemporary society.

13.12 References.


UNIT CONCLUSION

This Unit CRS 404: Christian Theology in Africa was subdivided into four main Sections:

Section One dealt with the nature, scope and relevance of the Unit. It had three Lectures: Lecture One that handled the explanation of terms inevitable in understanding the Unit; Lecture Two which discussed the former and prevailing situations with regard to Christian Theology in African for a deeper understanding; and Lecture Three which examined the pluriformity of Christian Theology in Africa pointing to the multi-faceted approach involved.

Section Two tackled liberation perspective of Christian Theology in Africa and was sub-divided into three lectures: Lecture Four examined and elaborated explanation of terms, divergence cum convergence of Liberation Theology (LT), Levels at which LT is done and the methodology thereby; Lecture Five provided and discussed South African Black Theology with stress or Jesus seen as the “Black Messiah/Liberator”; Lecture Six tackled feminist theology in Africa with emphasis on gender issues, women empowerment and modes of feminist theology triggering different approaches to this mode of LT.

Section Three examined and explicated Inculturation approach to Christian Theology in Africa. It consisted of four inter-related lectures namely: Lecture Seven, which examined the nature and the six undertakings in his orientation; Lecture Eight which elaborated exemplary Inculturational works in West Africa; Lecture Nine which explicated exemplary Inculturational works in East Africa; and Lecture Ten which discussed some outstanding Inculturation works in Francophone Africa.

Section Four focused on some moral themes within Christian Theology in Africa. It had the following three lectures: Lecture Eleven which examined and explained salvation and liberation/redemption by some Christian Scholars including African ones; Lecture Twelve which perused and discussed exciting euthanasia subject as a challenge to African Christian medical ethics; and Lecture Thirteen which investigated and dwelt on Third Millennium African Single Mothers and their plight.

The Unit has, hopefully, provided you with a strong foundation in ACT for a deeper more comprehensive related Unit at post-graduate level. The author can only hope that you are now conversant and intellectually endowed with nature, relevance and the main approaches to
Christian Theology in Africa and, since theology is ongoing, you are invited to a related more comprehensive Unit at M.A. (Masters) level.

BE BLESSED!

BIBLIOGRAPHY/REFERENCES


APPENDIX FOR MODEL QUESTIONS

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

2. Explain the meaning of “African theology” and “African Christian Theology”

3. Discuss the main sources of ACT.

4. Comment critically on the different labels of ACT.

5. With insights gained from John Paul II’s *Fides et Ratio* Encyclical, discuss the mutuality between theology/faith and philosophy/reason. Discuss at least four factors that helped in transforming the above unfortunate implantation method of evangelization.

6. Indicate and explain the challenge Vatican Two and Post-Vatican Two magisterial documents subject African Christian Theologians to with regard to Christianity.

7. Identify and critically evaluate the three main orientations/trends in ACT indicating also their intrinsic inter-relatedness.

8. Discuss how the following factors trigger a pluriformity in ACT:

   a) Denominational peculiarities/varieties.

   b) Socio-political and cultural differences.

   c) One’s school of thought.

   d) Individual choice.

   e) Theologian’s degree of commitment.
f) Own option for a fundamental approach.

9. Give and analyze P. Frostin’s aspects of levels of oppression that effect a pluriformity in African liberation theology.

10. Discuss Leonardo Boff’s understanding of “liberation theology” indicate also his importance in ACT.

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

12. Discuss:
   a) The assertion that: “Gustavo Gutierrez and Paulo Freire ought, or ought not, to share the reputable honorary title of “father of LT”.
   b) Gustavo Gutierrez’s triple connotations of the term “liberation theology”.

13. Using the insights of L. Boff’s definition of liberation theology, discuss the point of departure and goal of liberation theology indicating also its value in our African liberation theology.

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

15. Elaborate how Bonganjalo Goba explains the term “black consciousness”.


18. Discuss at least SIX main factors that contributed to the emergence and growth of SABT.

19. Discuss how Allan A. Boesak explains the terms “Black Theology” and “Black Consciousness”.

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20. Within the context of South African Black Theology explain:
   
   a) Jesus as “Black Messiah”.
   
   b) The unfinished business of South African Theology.
   
   c) Discuss “feminist theology” and “African Christian women liberation theology”.

21. Indicate the objectives of “feminist/women liberation theology” in Africa. Give and explain also at least FOUR types of feminisms that trigger divergences in women liberation theology.

22. Explain the **traditional** and Church oppression and exploitation of African women and how to liberate them from such factors.

23. Give and explain the objectives of “feminist theology”. Discuss also the **intellectual** and **political** oppression and exploitation of African women in Kenya and how to liberate them from such evils.

24. In the light of Jesus Christ as the liberator **par excellence** and within the context of African Christian Feminist Theology, explain the following Biblical pericopes:
   
   a) Mark 14:3-9.
   
   
   c) John 8:3-11.
   
   d) John 4:5-52.

25. Give and discuss SIX undertakings/involvements in Inculturation approach to ACT.

27. Within the insights from the Pontifical Council for Culture, explain the term “Inculturation” as you briefly explain the following concepts in reference to the Theology of Inculturation: Adaptation; Reformulation; Contextualization; interculturation; and indigenization.

28. Point out and elaborate some African religio-cultural characteristics which John S. Pobee utilizes critically in his *Nana Christology*.

29. Bearing in mind the cultural emphasis in modern trends on Christian thought, discuss one of the following: Royal-Priestly Christology/Nana Christology by John S. Pobee; Theology of the Cross by Kwesi A. Dickson.

30. Identify at least six prominent African Christian theologians from West Africa indicating their specialties and the countries they come from.

31. Give and critically elaborate Charles Nyamiti’s understanding of ACT in the technical sense and his proposed methodological approach.

32. Briefly introduce Charles Nyamiti’s Jesus Our Ancestor Christology spelling out clearly its peculiarity in relation to traditional Christology.

33. Discuss how Charles Nyamiti develops his African Ecclesiology in the light of Biblical and Church Teaching.

34. Identify and briefly explain the main points of J. S. Mbiti’s *Christus Victor* Christology indicating also why it is so appealing to the Africans.

35. Compare and contrast John S. Mbiti’s methodological approach to ACT with that of Charles Nyamiti.

- a) Explain the core of the great debate on African Theology between Tharcisse Tshibangu Tshishiku and Prof. Alfred Vanneste as documented by Benezet Bujo.

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

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

d) Give and discuss Benezet Bujo’s Proto-Ancestor Christology indicating also what you learn from it.

e) Comment on Charles Nyamiti’s critic of Benezet Bujo’s Proto-Ancestor Christology comparing it also with Nyamiti’s Jesus Our Ancestor Christology.

36. Verify or falsify the assertion that “African traditions, religions, cultures and philosophy of life had salvific characteristics prior to the propagation of Christianity by the Western missionaries thanks to gratuitous divine general revelation.”

37. On the bases of “objective redemption”, explain why salvation is already accomplished.

38. Within the context of “subjective redemption” elaborate that salvation is voluntary, incomplete and ongoing.

39. Identify and explicate how an African ethnic group of your choice understands and explains “heaven”.

40. 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.

41. Elaborate the distinction between Active/Positive/Direct Euthanasia and Passive/Negative/Indirect Euthanasia as an African Christian theologian.

42. Identify and discuss at least FIVE controversial questions with regard to euthanasia.
43. Verify or falsify the assertion that “the subject of single motherhood is the concern of not just women but, indeed, the shauri of all.

44. Pick any African ethnic group and discuss its philosophy on and about single mothers.

45. Identify and examine some crucial multi-faceted causes of African single motherhood.

46. Give and explain some fundamental elements and characteristics that are transforming the traditional perspectives, perception, treatment and mis-treatment of African single mothers in our contemporary society.