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Africa Journal Of Evangelical Theology

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Cover: The emblem of Scott Theological College, shown on the cover, features the Mumbu Tree, a historic and cultural landmark on the College grounds. The Mumbu Tree is used by AJET as a symbol of the gospel in Africa. The good news of Christ, like the Mumbu Tree, is ageless, enduring and firmly rooted in African soil.

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The Quest For Authentic Humanity: Becoming Like Christ

by Augustine Musopole

Summary: Liberation theology is concerned about liberating people to become authentically human. But what does that mean? The author's thesis is that true humanity is becoming like Christ. After surveying Biblical concepts of the image of God and the person of Christ the author concludes that liberation theology is incomplete in its understanding of what constitutes authentic humanity. Religion is ultimately relational--involving love for God and one's neighbor. As he states at the end: "without the restoration of human integrity in and through Jesus any human liberation remains incomplete and only a temporary measure."

The Quest For Full Humanity

One of the major concerns of liberation theology is the quest for full and authentic humanity. Negatively, liberation theology seeks to expose and eradicate oppression and injustice of every kind under which people are treated as non-persons. Positively, they seek to establish justice and to restore a full and authentic humanity to the "wretched of the earth", to use Fanon's phrase.

For liberation theology, to liberate people is to restore their self-worth as persons on a personal, economic and political level. This is a fundamental aspect of salvation from their perspective. As Leonardo Boff explains:

> Salvation defines the terminal situation of the human being in God. It is secured once and for all by the redemptive act of Jesus Christ. But it is not only in eternity. It is anticipated. The human being must enter upon

> a whole salvation process, a process that begins here on earth and ends in eternity. . . Historical liberations are thus anticipations and concretizations, ever limited, but real, of the salvation that will be full and complete only in eternity.[1]

Liberation theologies have sought to widen the understanding of the meaning of salvation to include liberation from all forms of captivity. Such a liberation is a precondition for the realization of full and authentic humanity. Ela, speaking from an African context, underscores this point when he says,

> An awareness of the problems of development calls for a profound conversion to the gospel in a new situation in which the first duty of the human being is to be fully a human being. Now, if the glory of God never demands the human being's mutilation, then it is the task of the Christians to discover and manifest a faith in Christ that does not dispense the human being from the obligation to be a free, responsible subject.[2]

At the very heart of justice issues and human rights is the question of becoming authentically human.

The mission of the Church is also seen in these terms following the manifesto of Jesus' own ministry when he declared:

> The Spirit of the Lord is on me, because he has annointed me to preach Good News to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim freedom to the prisoners and recovery of sight to the blind, to release the oppressed, to proclaim the year of the Lord's favor.[3]

Here was a mission that was completely focused on the human plight and its alleviation. In the life of Jesus, we see this ministry holistically fulfilled. There was not a dichotomy between the physical and the spiritual as is often maintained. Such a dichotomy distorts mission praxis. Jesus spoke of each in terms of the other. He would perform a physical cure and then pronounce forgiveness of sin as he blessed the victim with shalom. Does this imply an agreement between Christ and liberation theology? Such a superficial

identification must be resisted. What is needed is a deeper look at the biblical understanding of authentic humanity.

One of the most pertinent questions in theology today is: What does it mean to be human? To make it more personal, the question is: Who am I? In the context of all sorts of oppression, this is a genuine question. Among other things, one is defined by the way one is treated by others. This is true of God also. God's treatment of us defines us concretely. Since there is no contradiction between God's word and God's actions, what God says we are is confirmed by God's actions.

However this is not the case with human beings. What we say to others is not always what we do to them. This is why it was possible to believe that all people were created in the image of God while at the same time the Church remained segregated. It is possible to believe that all people are made in the image of God and yet hate some and wish they went to hell.

It is not only liberation theologies that have recognized the urgency of this question, but the whole human rights movement is about this matter. The killings that went on in Uganda during Idi Amin's inhuman rule, the tortures and even killings inflicted on political prisoners and the deliberate starvation of whole populations as a political means of subjugating them all raise the question of the meaning of our humanity. The domestic violence perpetrated against women and children which is often justified by outmoded cultural customs and the exploitation of peasant workers caught up in a dependent situation by Africa's *petit bourgeuoise* make this question an urgent one. When one looks at the inhuman conditions of our city slums, one cannot fail to ask what it means to be human in such conditions. One cannot see victims of drugs, alcoholism, poverty, homelessness and never stop to ask, "What does it mean to be authentically human?" My thesis is that God's intention in Jesus is to make human beings Christlike, which is our full and authentic humanity, and that this is meant to define us by deed and not simply by word.
What does the Bible have to say?

The Image Of God And Authentic Humanity

As Christians we naturally turn to the Bible for answers in the knowledge that if my existence is the question, then the answer has to come from outside of

human boundaries. That is where the Bible begins. The book of Genesis describes for us what we are all about:

> So God created man in his own image. In the image of God, he created him, male and female, he created them.[4]

It is humankind that is created in the image of God and not God who is created in the image of humankind. Idolatry arises when we represent God, whether by thought, action or symbol, as if God were made in the image of human beings.[5] It is to reduce God to the creaturely level.

The primary question in knowing ourselves, according to the Bible, is not,"Who am I?" but rather "Who is this God in whose image I am made?" It is John Calvin who has said that our knowledge of God and ourselves are inter-related. We cannot know God without knowing ourselves and we cannot know ourselves adequately without the knowledge of God.[6]

The words "image" and "likeness" refer to the same things and they reinforce and amplify each other according to the Hebrew style of parallelism. The God in whose image and likeness we are made is the God who describes the Godself as, "I AM THAT I AM".[7] One thing that can be deduced from this enigmatic self-definition of God is that God is true to Himself. God's integrity is not an attribute, but who God is essentially. To be God is to have integrity and authenticity. God's personal being is the source and standard of human integrity, faithfulness, love, etc. Therefore, to be made in the image of God is to share in the character of God, the ability to be true to self as human beings.

No wonder the lack of integrity is one of the symptoms of being under the power of sin, and therefore under subhuman conditions. When Jesus tells his disciples to be perfect as their heavenly father is perfect he is drawing their attention to human integrity.[8]

In his gospel, John describes God as spirit.[9] Spirit is likened to the wind, invisible and yet real. Just as the wind sustains life,so does the Spirit of God. To be made in the image of God is to have a spiritual bonding with God and to share in God's creative spirit. To be in the image of God means being open to God and having the capability of communion and communication with Him. Viewed from the biblical perspective authentic humanity means becoming an integrated person where one's mind and body, thought and feelings, senses and

emotions, rationality and intuitions are responsive to God. To be made in the image of God is to have a kinship relationship with God. We are created to relate and participate in God. We cannot opt out of this relationship, just as no one can opt out of a blood relationship. The attitude to it may change, but not the kinship itself. Either we relate positively or negatively.

Genesis also tells us that we are a humanity in two related varieties. As male and female, we each are made in God's image and likeness. The main theological and anthropological point of the second creation story is the creation of Eve, to which Adam responds: "This at last is bone of my bone and flesh of my flesh."[10] There is a mutual and participatory kinship. Being both made in God's image, our sexuality as male and female has spiritual dimensions. It is as sexual beings that we are created in the image of God, and it is also as such, spiritual and sexual, that we relate to each other and grow as families and communities. However, it is our spirituality that defines all our human relationships ultimately.

Religion And Authentic Humanity

The creation of man in the image of God tells us why religion cannot be defined only in terms of our relationship to God, but must also include our relationship to one another. The deuteronomic historians and the prophets make this abundantly clear. Jesus takes it up in Matthew's gospel when he says that if someone has a grievance against you and you have to make an offering, be reconciled first, then come and make your offering.[11] Or when he says that our being forgiven by God is contigent on our forgiving other people first.[12] Or when he says that the sabbath is made for human beings and not human beings for the sabbath.[13] Religion has to do with the way we relate to each other and to God, whether well or badly. This is what is meant when it is said that to be human is to be religious. Whenever we relate to others, be it personally, economically, socially or politically, we are involved in religion--good or bad religion. It is out of this religious relatedness that community and communion or individualism (based on personal or group interest) and non communion emerge. Therefore, to be made in the image and likeness of God, is to be made for community and communion, for belonging and loving, for membership and fellowship.

It is in the context of this spiritually charged community-in-communion that we are supposed to discharge our various God-given responsibilities, namely, responsible personhood as those who are made in the image of God, responsible parenthood as those who are sexually spiritual, and responsible management of the environment as those who are meant to participate in the reign of God. To be made in the image and likeness of God is to be responsible to God (the theological and primary aspect); to the self in terms of integrity (anthropological aspects based on the theological); to others as a community (the sociological based on the first two); and to the environment (the ecological context in which we discharge all these duties). These four relational dimensions define the context of the meaning of our humanity. To be human is not a theoretical understanding, but an actual praxis of being human and becoming human in one act of living. It is not a thinking, but a doing or rather a being-in-action under, for, and with God. It is a call to integrity. As we call attention to the integrity of creation, we need to call even more attention to integrity in the other three dimensions: theological, anthropological and sociological. Righteousness is the state of being in integrity. It speaks of right relationships and dealings. This brings to mind the biblical statement that "Righteousness exalts a nation, but sin is a discrace to any people."[14]

The spirit of any nation suffers when integrity is lacking. To be human is to maintain total integrity. The laws are enacted to prevent the loss of integrity and encourage its maintainance.

Jesus And The Authentic Image Of God

As Christians, the image and likeness in which we are made can be understood best in the light of Jesus Christ as the second Adam. However, Jesus as the second Adam becomes significant in view of what happened in the first Adam. The story of the Fall portrays graphically how our integrity as human beings was lost and how that loss affected all other aspects of our being in the world. Paul summarizes the verdict on the human condition with these words: "All have sinned and come short of God's glory."[15] In the gospels of John and Matthew the mission of Jesus is tied to liberation from sin. The angel told Joseph in regard to Mary's expected child,

> She will give birth to a son, and you are to give him the name Jesus, because he will save his people from their sins.[16]

John the Baptist told the masses to look to "the lamb of God, who takes away the sins of the world!"[17]
Paul tells us that sin entered the world through one man and led to the condemnation of all to death.[18] With the loss of human integrity, the fullness and authenticity of life were also greatly impaired and have not been fully restored because of the prevalence of sin. Sin is a matter of bad relationships due to the loss of moral integrity or righteousness. Therefore, it amounts to bad religion. It is a spiritual dislocation, disease, ill-health or dis-integration. Jesus brings salvation (health, wholeness, integrity) by breaking the power of sin in our lives and setting people free for total righteousness. Jesus liberates people by removing the cause of their lack of integrity and thereby doing away with their condemnation. We are restored on the road to our authentic humanity. Paul tells us that if anyone is in Christ Jesus, he is a new creation.[19] To be in Jesus is to be born anew into the spirit of Jesus who is the image of the invisible God.[20] To be human is to have the integrity of God's image in us restored by Jesus.

The Embodiment And Manifestation Of Human Integrity

The Gospel proclaims that the integrity of our humanity can be restored through a relationship with Jesus Christ. Through this relationship we are put on the road toward exhibiting full and authentic humanity in all aspects of our lives. How does this happen?

Mark's gospel opens with the words, "The beginning of the Gospel of Jesus Christ, the Son of God."[21] Mark is not only referring to the ministry of John the Baptist which he goes on to describe after quoting Isaiah. He is also telling the reader that his whole book is about the beginning of the Gospel which he is called to proclaim. Therefore, the beginning of the Gospel had to do with the life and ministry of Jesus. Jesus is the Gospel and the Gospel is Jesus. The good news concerning our human integrity is Jesus and without Jesus, we have nothing good to say about the restoration of our human integrity. The best that we can say is the experience of wretchedness that Paul describes:

> I do not understand what I do. For what I want to do I do not do, but what I hate I do. . .For I have the desire to do what is good, but I cannot carry it out. For what I do is not the good that I want to do-- no, the evil I do not want to do--this I keep on doing...What a wretched man that I am! Who will rescue me from this body of death? Thanks be to God--through Jesus Christ our Lord.[22]

In the gospels, the titles "Son of God", and "Son of Man" are used of Jesus. There has been much scholarly discussion on the origins, authenticity and meaning of these titles.[23] I will not go into that discussion, but I would like to make one humble suggestion. While the titles may be affirming the messianic and apocalyptic roles of Jesus and his two natures, they do so not so much as to emphasize the dualistic character of his person, but rather to assert their identity. Apart from the messianic import of the titles, they also belong to a linguistic genre to which the following names and titles belong, for instance, Barnabbas meaning , "son of courage", Boanerges meaning "sons of thunder", and also "son of peace", "son of righteousness","son of light", etc. The import of these names is that they describe one fundamental characteristic of the person thus designated. While it is the on-lookers who called Jesus "Son of God", it is Jesus who called himself "Son of Man." In so doing, he is actually saying to the on-lookers that this which they see and recognize as divine, is what humanity is supposed to be. This means that in Jesus we find our authentic humanity. It is to this way of being in the world that Jesus invites us to follow him in order to escape the contradiction that Paul has described for us above. How do we begin to move towards this Christlikeness which is our authentic humanity?

The first message of Jesus in Mark's gospel is, "The time has come, the **reign** of God is near, *repent* and *believe* the good news.[24] Repentance is a call to a radical turn around. It is the negation of our contradictory way of life. If the Gospel is Jesus, to believe it is to put one's trust in Jesus. It means an engaged commitment. The need to repent and believe are demanded in the light of the imminent reign of God as manifested in Jesus. Therefore, Jesus is demanding a revolutionary change of allegiance from the rule of the kingdoms of this world to the rule of God. In a world filled with ideological definitions of humanity

(Marxist, Freudian, evolutionist, humanist, biological, liberal and capitalist) this kingdom oriented definition of humanity in Christ comes as a challenge. To be truly human means to surrender our humanity to the demands of the reign of God through the acknowledgement of Jesus as Saviour and Lord. It is to engage in a praxis based on the values of the reign of God.

To believe the Gospel involves the willingness to learn from the one who embodies the Gospel completely and to act it out in faithfulness to him. It is to become a disciple in the process of learning how to become authentically human in order to be conformed to the image of Jesus Christ. It is not merely rhetoric on the part of Jesus when he makes his way of loving the standard for the disciples.

> A new commandment I give you--love one another. As I have loved you, so you must love one another.[25]

And again:

> My commandment is this-- Love each other as I have loved you.[26]

Love-in-action is the core value of the reign of God and the true mark of discipleship.

The tragedy of the Church in Africa today (as well as elsewhere) is that it has many members, but few disciples. This is largely due to our educational philosophy which is patterned on secular models and not on the goals of our Christian calling--being Christlike. Our catechetical practice is geared too often towards the accumulation of head knowledge only at the expense of a lived experience as disciples where to know means to live it out. We should never be satisfied with being processed Christians. This is especially important for those of us who have come out of Christian homes where religion is a major element of our culture.

We must become professing Christians. To be a professing Christian is not an assent to some doctrinal statement, but rather to Jesus as the Christ, who is the embodiment of the Gospel of our human integrity. It is to opt for a Jesus-perspective on life as the ultimate perspective. It is to place all perspectives under the perspective of Jesus. Using the imagery of an

animal-drawn plough, Jesus refers to discipleship as the taking on of his yoke. This course with rabbi Jesus in authentic humanity is a hands-on-experience and obedience is the only attitude that bears results.

Christlikeness And The Community Of Faith

Jesus has given gifts to the community of faith to aid us in our learning and growing process towards Christlikeness--the mark of authentic humanity. Paul states the objective as being that "...we all reach unity in the faith and in the knowledge of the Son of God and become mature, attaining to the whole measure of the fullness of Christ."[27] This is a collective enterprise. It falls within the sociological dimension of our humanity. We can never be authentically human in isolation. Even seminary degrees are no substitute for this personal experience and growth towards the whole measure of the fullness of Christ. We settle for less than the best to our own peril and loss. Note that this growth and maturity comes with engagement in service or ministry whereby the Church gets built up both in terms of membership and quality of Christian living.

Conclusion

To be Christlike is not to escape from the world, but to be engaged in it for and with Christ. To be authentically human is not to be less Christlike, but rather to be more Christlike. When we become more unlike Christ, we also become less authentic as human beings and more like beasts with a human body. We become inhuman in our relationship with others and God. Either way, we undergo an existential mutation.

Like Paul we have to forget what lies behind and to begin to strive for the upward call in Christ,[28] which is our authentic humanity, our integrity, our salvation and liberation. Without the restoration of human integrity in and through Jesus any human liberation remains incomplete and only a temporary measure. To be fully restored involves the theological, anthropological, the sociological and ecological dimensions of our humanity. These four dimensions define the extent of human salvation and liberation as well, a liberation found only in and through Christ.

Endnotes

[1] Leonardo and Clodovis Boff, *Salvation and Liberation*, (Maryknoll, New York: Orbis Books, 1984), p. 18.

[2] Jeanne-Marc Ela, *African Cry*, (Maryknoll, New York: Orbis Books, 1986), p. 87.

[3] Lk. 4:18-19. NIV

[4] Gen. 1:27.

[5] cf. Rom. 1:18-23.

[6] John Calvin, *Institutes of Christian Religion*, The Library of Christian Classics edition,(London: SCM) pp. 35-38.

[7] Ex. 3:13.

[8] Mt. 5:47.

[9] Jn. 4:24.

[10] Gen. 2:23. RSV.

[11] Mt. 5:23-24.

[12] Mt. 6:13-14.

[13] Mk. 2:27.

[14] Prov. 14:34.

[15] Rom. 3:23.

[16] Mt. 1:21. NIV.

[18] Rom 5:12-21.

[19] 2 Cor. 5:17.

[20] Col. 1:15.

[21] Mk. 1:1.

[22] Rom. 7:15, 18, 24.

[23] See Seyoon Kim. *The Son of Man as the Son of God*, (Grand Rapids, MI, Wm. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1985).

[24] Mk. 1:15.

[25] Jn. 13:34.

[26] Jn. 15:12.

[27] Eph. 4:13.

[28] cf. Phil. 3:12-14.

Leadership Training For Churches In Africa

by Watson Omulokoli

Introduction

There is a crisis of leadership in the Church in Africa today. At the root of this crisis is the vacuum which exists because the Church needs larger numbers of leaders of high calibre than are presently available within its fold. The situation was not always this grave. In the initial years of the establishment of Christianity in Africa, the African clergyman and the allied catechists and evangelists, were among the most highly respected men in their communities. His spiritual role, personal integrity and pronounced academic attainment, gave him an elevated social status which made him an opinion maker in the larger society.

It is now abundantly clear that although the churches in Africa started on a strong and promising foundation in the sphere of leadership, there has been deterioration in this respect with the passage of time. This is because of the process of stagnation which set in after the first generation of distinguished and outstanding Christian leaders. Commenting on this retrogressive development, Roland Oliver notes that

> During the first three decades of the colonial period this had not been so. Of the first literate generation of East Africans the elite had become either chiefs or churchmen. But with the development of secondary education and with the widening of secular opportunities, the Churches began to be outpaced in the competition for the best educated men.[1]

This is all the more deplorable when it is realised that whereas the Church has been standing still, the pace of overall development has been staggering, bringing with it earth-shaking adjustments at every level of society. In 1931, J.H. Oldham and B.D. Gibson noted that, "Dynamic forces are at work in Africa."[2] In the same vein, Roland Oliver pointed out in 1964 that, "In the political field the scene has changed since independence almost beyond recognition."[3] At the same time, "The Churches, however, have undergone no such dramatic changes."[4]

The Church in Africa can ill-afford to remain out of step for long with the general trends on the continent and among its people. It augurs ill for the future of the Church if, remaining myopic to these developments, it fails to devise adequately the ways and means of grappling with this ever-shifting environment. It was in this light that Harry Sawyerr appealed for the Church to take cognizance of the prevalence of a rapidly shifting milieu. Commenting on this in 1961, he urged, "The Church must take steps to refurbish herself adequately well in order to keep abreast of the times and so to grasp the implications of any social problem which may arise."[5]

To achieve efficiency in its affairs, the Church in Africa needs to have among its leaders, those whose theological and ministerial preparation has equipped them well enough to shoulder effectively the responsibilities with which they are entrusted. As Harry Sawyerr has put it,

> This means that the Church in Africa should endeavour to hold within the ranks of her Ministry men of the requisite standard of education and training who can stand cheek by jowl with the nuclear and theoretical physicists, the biochemists, the eminent jurists, economists, historians, sociologists and indeed the large host of specialists who are making their presence felt increasingly in Africa today, and will do so all the more in the future[6]

The Challenge Before Us

Among the key issues facing the Church in Africa today is the fact that those who are in its service at the moment are insufficient in numbers and in calibre for the tasks before them. This is a challenge which threatens the very existence

of the Church, and therefore, one which deserves the attention, not only of the Church in Africa, but also co-operation from churches in other parts of the world as well. If this challenge is not met adequately the Church faces the prospect of suffering irreparable damage. Writing on this matter in 1951, Roland Oliver lamented,

> The danger is rather that, under the stress of political and social change, [Christianity] may start to disintegrate at the centre while it is still expanding at the circumference. There is a real possibility that a Church led by peasant priests may come to be increasingly spurned and ignored by the educated minority which will come in the future to exercise the greatest share of political power.[7]

This undesirable plight was noted in 1966 by Thomas Beetham as an agenda which needed to be taken up in dialogue between the churches in the West and the churches in Africa. Singling out developments at the university level, he observed, "We must take serious note of the picture of the gap between university students and their church leaders."[8] When Roland Oliver revisited the topic of the ministry in 1964, he was disappointed with the progress, and pointed out that in the case of Protestant denominations, there was not a single African graduate in the ordained ministry, whereas in the 1950's and the early 1960's, "hundreds of East Africans have been studying in the universities of Europe, Asia and North America."[9] Oliver concluded that the central concern before the church was how to produce an educated clergy:

> And yet there is a vital question about the Churches' leadership, which I posed in the final chapter of this book, and to which, so far as I am aware, no reassuring answer can yet be given. It concerns the utter failure of the Churches, ever since the 1920's, to attract into the Christian ministry even a handful of the best educated East Africans.[10]

Proposed Course of Action

In view of the fact that the Church in Africa suffers from a shortage in numbers and quality of leaders with the requisite theological and ministerial competence,

the task of righting this acute situation is extremely urgent. The time has come when it is imperative that priority attention should be given to identifying, recruiting, and training those who will be mobilised for and channelled into the service of the Church. We must wage a concerted campaign to net young men who combine Christian commitment and zeal with the calling, propensity, and potential for theological and ministerial leadership in the Church. In the words of Harry Sawyerr,

> The Church should think out a bold and vigorous programme of recruitment and training for the Ministry, coupled with plans for attracting men of the highest calibre...The Church should indeed make this task their chief primary concern now, even now and at all times. Laity and clerics alike should make this task the heaviest burden on their heart.[11]

There is some rationale for pursuing deliberate and conscious steps to train the top cadre of those who will serve the theological and ecclesiastical leadership of the Church in Africa today. Focusing attention on a select target group of those with distinctive abilities will ensure that a particular category of leaders has been prepared to help steer the Church in its affairs.

In 1950, at the conference of the Inter-Seminary Movement, at Rock Island, Illinois, Elton Trueblood discovered the full import of this truth. In an address to the delegates, Stephen Neill stressed the importance of having within the church, a cadre of leaders who are well-suited to equip the rest of the members for effective service. In the words of Trueblood,

> The most memorable address was that of Bishop Stephen Neill. From his lips I heard at Rock Island for the first time in my life the phrase, "the equipping ministry." We realized instantly, as we heard his fresh interpretation of Ephesians 4:12, that we were listening to a conception which can give unity to all of the ministry in which we are engaged. The central idea of the new emphasis is that the characteristic Christian ministry is that of enabling other people in their ministry, and equipping them to perform it. The purpose of God's gifts to pastors and teachers, we are told, is "to equip God's people for work in his

> service." This means that if a person is a Christian at all, he is to be, in some sense, a minister, but he is not likely to be fully effective in his ministry unless there are some persons who are dedicated to its guidance and enrichment.[12]

These sentiments are parallel to those which W.E.B. DuBois held with regard to the need for enlightened leadership among the African-American people. Concerned about their plight, together with the need for strong leadership among them, he outlined some corrective measures. In his view, the key to the whole enterprise was the training of the talented tenth of the people. He argued,

> How then shall the leaders of a struggling people be trained and the hands of the risen few strengthened? There can be but one answer: The best and most capable of their youth must be schooled in the colleges and universities of the land. All men cannot go to college but some must: every isolated group or nation must have its yeast, must have the talented few [in] centers of training where men are not so mystified and befuddled by the hard necessary toil of earning a living, as to have no aims higher than their bellies, and no God greater than Gold.[13]

Among the pointers to the solution, DuBois envisaged the springing up of "colleges and college-bred men; not a quantity of such colleges, but a few of excellent quality; not too many college-bred men, but enough to leaven the lump, to inspire the masses, to raise the Talented Tenth to leadership."[14] In its own way, the Church in Africa can meet its objectives in the sphere of theological and ecclesiastical training of its leadership by emulating some of these measures.

There is a need to cultivate and maintain in the Church a cadre of able leaders who are comprehensively suited for the Christian ministry in Africa. Equipping them with a high standard of education is part of the invaluable equation which will help engender a measure of competence and capability. This is imperative, because now, more than ever before, there is a crying need for deeply committed Christians who combine fervent devotion to Jesus Christ, with the relevant high level of academic attainment. As in other fields of endeavour, the Church should carry out a determined and sustained programme

of training a select number of those whose high potential and aptitude for leadership singles them out as best suited to steer and guide the Church in its varied affairs.

Maintenance and Cultivation of Existing Patterns

It needs to be underscored that whatever other categories of theological and ecclesiastical leadership training the Church in Africa undertakes, this should not be conducted at the expense of the grass roots level which has served the Church commendably from its initial years in Africa. The preparation which is envisaged should not be misconstrued so much as a subsitute for, but rather, as an addition to prevailing patterns. In these basic categories, the Church in Africa is served by a host of self-giving Christians who combine singleness of purpose with bold and imaginative approaches to Christian work. It is largely through their efforts that the admirable traits of the Church in Africa today have become the talk and envy of the rest of Christendom.

To begin with, there is need to continue with and to strengthen the ongoing informal programmes for Christian nurture and overall general leadership training. Through this channel, the Church has constantly gained natural leaders who continue to serve as its backbone from generation to generation. Then there is the training of evangelists-cum-catechists for primary evangelism as well as for foundational church-planting endeavours. When an enlightened assessment of the role of the class of evangelist-catechists in the establishment of Christianity in Africa is made, it is clear that they are comparable to the worker bees who shoulder the greatest responsibility for the primary tasks of the Church. There is a sense in which this group of church workers will always remain an indispensable part of the Church. This being the case, their retention in the system, and the training thereof will always be a matter of priority concern for the Church.

As a complementary activity in the sphere of theological and ecclesiastical leadership training, it is imperative that well-organized,occasional, formal sessions of varying duration and varied levels be incorporated in the plans of the Church. For those who have already been trained, these will serve as much-needed refresher courses. For the others, this may be an avenue which introduces them to new vistas of equipment for the service of the Church.

In addition to the categories and steps outlined above, the prevalent long-time options should be encouraged and promoted. These relate to work carried out in existing Bible schools, institutes, and colleges. Whether they are denominational, interdenominational or non-denominational, generally, these are purely church-based and normally do not have secular government accreditation for their programmes. They are so central and will continue to be so pivotal to foundational theological and ecclesiastical leadership training for the Church in Africa that it would be detrimental to the Church's welfare to underestimate their lasting contribution. While some award certificates and diplomas, others have established themselves as degree-granting institutions.

The truth of the matter is that ongoing informal programmes, preparing of evangelists-cum-catechists, occasional and regular seminars, and long-term institutionalized schemes, are all measures which presuppose the existence of yet a higher category of leaders. These are those who will look into all the aspects of the Church's welfare, and from that standpoint, initiate and direct those leadership schemes which are calculated to ensure its efficiency. Their endowment, abilities, and training should in turn, be such as to point to the fact that they are equal to the task of guiding and steering the Church in the totality of its affairs.

The Educational and Academic Criteria for the Select Category

The priority level of theological education to be attained by the top leadership of the Church will vary from one African country to another. All the same, two guiding principles will be useful in this direction. First, it would be advisable to consider what the average level of education of the leadership in the general society is in a given country. In the second instance, the people in question should acquire in some sense, the broadly agreed upon standard of competence in theological education on a world-wide scale. As a member of the universal Church, the African Christian leader cannot isolate himself from global stipulations, however loosely defined these may be. Yet, as a leader of a community in his own local society he needs to be true to the demands and requirements of his particular milieu.

This being the case, the people going into the select leadership of the Church should be those who have a broad basis of general knowledge as provided for in

the appropriate public educational process of their respective countries. This background will have prepared them in a sound manner by equipping them even to undertake comprehensive theological studies with minimal difficulties and optimum understanding. At this level, it is possible to be innovative and creative by benefitting from a variety of theological experiences without swallowing them wholesale and mimicking patterns borrowed from different contexts.

Identifying, recruiting, and enlisting of would-be Church leaders are key ingredients to the success of the desired theological and ecclesiastical training. There is a head-start where these take into account a deep-seated commitment to Christ and a clear-cut call to Christian service. When due care is taken in this matter, it means that a strong foundation has been laid for the entire process which is to be pursued later. This is especially true in the case of the high category of Christian leaders where integrity is a premium. In many cases, many weaknesses which surface in the course of service in Christian work are traceable to the fact that due care was not taken at the preliminary level of identification, recruitment, and enlistment of Church leaders. Thoroughness in selection gave way to need-dictated expediency.

Once identified, recruited, and enlisted in Christian service, those being prepared for theological and ecclesiastical leadership require adequate direction, guidance, and moral support at the all-important training stage. Without being overbearing in this role, it is possible for those who are charged with the task of shaping the destiny of the Church to help the selected candidate to choose and chart the course of his studies to the mutual benefit of the Church and the individual. More often than not, the executors of training schemes are not aware of, let alone involved in, the detailed programme and schedule of the student. Discrepancy crops up when it is realised too late that the aspirations and achievements of the scholar are at cross-purpose with the assumptions and inclinations of the hierarchy of the churches.

Possible Target Groups for Training in Advanced Leadership

The ideal situation is one where graduates of local African universitites are tapped for the Christian ministry. Following their recruitment and acceptance, they should be channelled to institutions where they can attain the necessary

advanced theological knowledge. This target group of people should be taken seriously in that, despite their respectable academic status through association with the local educational system, this category of prospective Church leaders has suffered neglect and has received least attention from the Church. When they combine fervent commitment to Jesus Christ and a deep sense of call to the Christian ministry, and when they meet all the other spiritual criteria which Christian work requires, they serve as a vital source for the requisite select leadership in the theological and ecclesiastical arena of the Church in Africa today. With their commitment to Jesus Christ and their call to the Christian ministry assured, what is needed is to set up a mechanism by which to identify and select suitable individuals for the relevant theological and ecclesiastical training.

It must be conceded that it should not be assumed that those who have gone systematically through the regular educational process have a monoply on capacity and aptitude for advanced theological studies and the related select leadership roles in the Church that we have outlined. Among the most astute theological and ecclesiastical leaders of the Church in Africa, even today, are those whose innate intellectual faculties have been stimulated to the highest levels when they have been afforded academic opportunities which they had missed earlier when their educational journey was interrupted in their formative years. With this in view, in addition to regular university graduates, three other categories need to be considered for the projected special leadership training. First, there are those capable and practising leaders with unique aptitude for Christian scholarship. Secondly, Christians in different professions who feel drawn to Christian work are another group. Then there are exceptional and outstanding Bible college graduates who have proved to be a valuable source over the years.

Concluding Remarks

The question which next comes to mind is one which has vexed Christian leaders in Western European nations and in the Third World alike. This has to do with the geographical location of the proposed advanced theological and ecclesiastical studies for the select group of leaders.

Whether Third World Christian leaders should be restricted and confined to training in theological institutions in their own countries and natural environment is an issue which will continue to be debated upon for generations to come. Whichever way the debate goes, it must be kept in view that the key is to equip quality leadership for the Church in Africa with relevant theological and ecclesiastical tools in doctrinally sound and academically reputable institutions of higher learning.

The challenge before us is an African problem whose solution should engage the minds and resources of Christians in Africa. But the Church in Africa cannot work out the required answers in isolation. These must be sought for in the context of collaboration, partnership, and co-operation with churches in other parts of the world. Touching on collaboration, J.H. Oldham and B.D. Gibson once wrote: "We believe that there are hundreds of persons in Africa, in Europe and in America, who would be heartened and fortified in their work by the knowledge that they are associated with others in an endeavour to think out together how the largest Christian service may be rendered to the African race.[15]

It was the African political theoretician and practical revolutionary, Amilcar Cabral (1924-1973) who said,"I am a simple African man, doing my duty in my own country in the context of our time."[16] On the issue before us, the decision makers in the churches in Africa may need to borrow a leaf from Cabral with all of his practical idealism. At the same time, there may be need to summon aid from other quarters as with Winston Churchill in his memorable words, "Give us the tools, and we will finish the task."

Endnotes

[1] Roland Oliver, *The Missionary Factor in East Africa* (London: Longmans, 1966), p. x.

[2] J.H. Oldham and B.D. Gibson, *The Remaking of Man in Africa* (London: Oxford University Press, 1931), p. 13.

[3] Roland Oliver, *The Missionary Factor*, p. ix.

[4]Roland Oliver, *The Missionary Factor*, p. x.

[5]Harry Sawyerr, "The Church and the State," in *Christian Theology in Independent Africa,* edited by Harry Sawyerr, (Fourah Bay College: The Aureol Pamphlets, 1961), p. 7.

[6]Ibid., p. 8.

[7]Roland Oliver, *The Missionary Factor*, pp. 291-292.

[8]Thomas A. Beetham, "The Future of Christian Education in Africa," in *Christianity and African Education*, R. Pierce Beaver, ed. (Grand Rapids; Eerdmans, 1966), p. 216.

[9]Roland Oliver, *The Missionary Factor*, p. ix.

[10]Roland Oliver, *The Missionary Factor*, p. x.

[11]Harry Sawyerr, "The Church and the State," p. 8.

[12]Elton Trueblood, While It Is Day, (New York: Harper and Row, 1974), pp. 92-93.

[13]W.E.B. Du Bois, "The Talented Tenth," in Herbert Aptheker, ed. *Writings by W.E.B. Du Bois* in *Non-periodical Literature Edited by Others* (New York: Krans-Thomas Organization Limited, 1982), p. 20.

[14]Ibid., W.E.B. Du Bois, p. 26.

[15]J.H. Oldman and B.D. Gibson, *The Remaking of Man in Africa*, p. 15.

[16]Amilcar Cabral, *Return to the Source: Selected Writings* (London: Monthly Review Press, 1973), p. 2.

Folk Islam: The Case Of The Hausa Of Northern Nigeria

by George Foxall

Summary: The brand of Islam brought to Northern Nigeria in the Middle Ages bears little resemblance to orthodox Islam. Today Islam among the Hausa people is dominated not by the worship of Allah but by fear of the spirits, trust in diviners and reliance on magic. How can we bring the gospel to the Hausa? Some of the conclusions drawn by the author include proclaiming the gospel in a way that confronts the Hausa worldview; meeting the felt needs of the Hausa by giving them hope that the power of the spirit world can be broken; and, finally, providing powerful witness to the Hausa through the transformed lives of true and sincere converts to the Christian faith.

The Historical Interaction Of Animism And Islam Among The Hausa Of Nigeria

The early recorded historical accounts of the Hausa people are found in *The Kano Chronicle*, and the *Wakar Bagauda* ("Song of Bagauda", giving a king list and homily).[1] According to the *Chronicle*, Wangarawa missionaries from Mali arrived in the city of Kano during the reign of Yaji (1349-1358), bringing the teachings of Islam. This resulted in a confrontation between the animistic beliefs and practices of the Hausa people and Islam which has remained to this very day. Other historical sources also make it clear that Islam was brought to the Hausa by non-Arab Muslims from the west. During the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, Islam was nominally accepted by the ruling class; animism

persisted among the people (*talakawa*). Semiliterate *mallams* (Islamic teachers) actually perpetuated animism and at the same time diluted Islam. A number of attempts to purify Islam of animistic practices were made.[2]

A Maliki scholar of strict orthodoxy, Muhammad b. 'Abd al-Karim al-Maghili of Tlemcen, at the end of the fifteenth century initiated an attack on bogus *mallams* and advocated the establishment of a strong central imamate as the only authority capable of enforcing government according to the *shari'a*.[3] He visited Kano during the reign of Mohumman Rima (1463-1499). His concept of retaining orthodox Islam by political authority is still reflected in current political struggles in Nigeria. His attempts were revived three hundred years later by the Fulani Revivalist Shehu Usumanu Dan Fodio (1754-1817), who was born in Gobir and was of the tenth generation from that of Musa Jakollo who had first led the Fulani into Hausaland. Shehu Dan Fodio defeated the Habe kings and set up a system of emirates ruled principally by members of his own clan. His primary accusation leveled against the Habe kings was that they failed to govern according to the *shari'a*. He insisted that the *shari'a* of Malik be enforced. The Habe rulers had continued to use pre-Muslim titles, social and political order, resulting in an accommodation and eventual synthesis of animism and Islam. This situation was the grounds and justification of Shehu's *jihad* into Hausaland. But how lasting were these reforms? An Islamic imamate was established which the British colonial powers significantly entrenched. Theological literature in Hausa was established to uphold the discipline of a hierarchical Muslim society. However, it appears that the reforms did not survive the second generation of Shehu's descendants. Traditional titles and offices remained. That which long ago the *Wakar Bagauda* condemned still existed, viz., the village *mallams* rather than propagate orthodox Islam through literary tradition deluded Islam by the admixture of animistic custom and popular magico-religious practices.[4]

Hausa Folk Islam Described

Given the historical roots of Islam in Northern Nigeria, it is no surprise that today the Hausa hold to a form of folk Islam far removed from Islamic orthodoxy. Let me describe the beliefs and practises of this folk Islam under

six headings: practioners, spirits, diviners, saint veneration, the nature of man, and rites of passage.

1. **Practitioners**. Both the Muslim *mallams* and the traditional priests (particularly among the mugazawa) [5] compete with one another to have the right of explanation and action in the magico-religious fields. These competing systems may be categorized as (1) *boka* (medicines), which act by principles of sympathetic and contagious magic; (2) *arnanci* (animism), the worship of *iskoki* (spirits), particularly the *bori*, a spirit-possession cult; (3) Islam, which incorporates animistic elements, such as *jinn* and magical elements in charms.[6]

2. **Spirits**. Both muslim and animistic Hausa have an explicit and strong belief in the power of the spirits. The famous Ahmadu Bello, Sardauna of Sokoto and Premier of the Northern Region (early 1960s), states in his autobiography[7] how spirits influenced his childhood:

> They believed that the bush, or certain parts of it, was haunted by spirits, most of them evil. We were frightened of them too, but more of the great wind-devils. Baba of Kano (in the book of that title) said, 'All the rulers like the *bori* . . . all agree with them. So do the *malams*, secretly.'[8]

Learned Muslim men retain the belief in the power of animistic spirits which creates the situation which permits the survival of spirit cults among the Hausa people.[9] When asked about this apparent inconsistency, a *mallim* replied that one should not confuse *al'ada* (custom) with *addini* (religion).[10]

An obvious pre-Islamic practice still prominent among the Hausa Muslims is *bori.*[11] In pre-Islamic times *bori* occupied an important place in the main religious life of the Hausa people. Since the *jihad* of Shehu Dan Fodio with its intensification of Islamization, *bori* was relegated to a secondary position. However, syncretism has occurred as evidenced by the increase of the number of spirits, including Muslim and Fulani names of spirits. Since independence in 1960 the influence of *bori* has increased as women *bori* leaders have become the leaders of the women's wing of political parties.

Participants of *bori* are called *masu bori* (spirit owners), or *yan bori* (spirit children), or *dawakin bori* (horses of spirits). To be possessed means to be mounted by a spirit (*iska ya hau*). The person mounted is considered as a horse

of the spirit and the spirit rides him. To the Hausa a horse is a noble animal and a symbol of aristocracy. Both men and women participate in *bori*, but normally a woman is the head of the cult, known as the *magajiya*.

On one occasion while visiting a village in Sokoto State, my wife and I encountered a *bori* seance. The participants were dramatizing features of certain animals, and the *iskoki* (spirits) were said to have mounted them.

The Hausa believe that the spirits live in a spirit world called *jan gari* (red town) located somewhere unknown in the Hausa physical world. The spirits can be grouped in categories[12] with both animistic and Muslim overtones: (1) the Muslim spirits are called *yan riga* (clothed spirits) who live in towns and whose chief is *mallam alhaji* (teacher who has completed the Muslim pilgrimage to Mecca); (2) animistic spirits are called *babbaku* (black spirits) who live in rural villages and are farmers and hunters and whose chief is *mai-ja-ciki* (one who crawls); (3) the warrior spirits are called *yan garki* (children of the shield) whose head is called *garki baba* (big shield); (4) the *samari* spirits (youth) are Muslim spirits like their parents and whose leader is *ba-gudu* (runner) or *mailema* (owner of an umbrella); (5) the children of smallpox are called *ya'yan zananna* (children of smallpox) who cause smallpox and other diseases; and (6)) the bush spirits are called *yan dowa* who are spirits of wild animals, groves, forests and water.

The influence of Fulani domination brought the spirit *inna* (term for mother used by Fulani) who presides over markets and sometimes is considered the mother of all spirits.[13] As a Fulani maid, *inna* owns cattle (like the Fulani) and lives on milk. A number of Mugazawa keep a model of her inside their compounds in a hut, where she is to live and with other related spirits. When she returns from herding her cattle at sundown, she rests on a small stone seat erected for her. A calabash of milk is kept for her, and when empty is refilled. A worshipper of her spills a few drops of milk on the ground as an offering to her before he begins to milk. *Inna* also cares for the farm as the principle giver of crops, guards the property of her worshippers, pursues thieves, causing their stomachs to swell with deadly effects. This is the chief reason the Mugazawa do not steal.

Inna's son is *gajimari*, a serpent-like being who lives in wells and ant hills and who controls the rain. To the Mugazawa, *inna* is their totem and the one to whom sacrifices are made. Another son of *inna* is *kura* (male hyena) who is

associated with boxing, a favorite sport of the Mugazawa. *Duna* is the son of *gajimari* who is said to be the son of *mallam alhaji* and *sarauniya* (queen) who is a handsome young man, popular among women, a spend-thrift, and a gambler. His three wives are gamblers. Sheep with a black circle around the eye (representing the mascara a young dandy paints his eyelids) are sacrificed to him. These spirits are considered to be especially operative on Thursday and Friday evenings and prescribed colors of animal and fowl sacrifices are kept, e.g., red he-goat sacrificed; a red chicken with tail and feathers set at an angle; a black chicken with white feet, and so forth.

After the death of a *bori* cult member, appropriate music to the spirit that mounted the deceased person is continually played to her children until one of them becomes possessed. It is then assumed that the child has inherited the parent's *bori*. If the *bori* member fails to effect a cure on an ill person, they will then initiate the person as a *bori* cult member. This initiation takes about seven days and includes drugging the initiate, teaching him *bori* music, dancing, going into a trance, foretelling the future, and treating or prescribing remedies for diseases. Before intensified Islamization, sacrifices were made at each stage of the initiation. Today alms are given as directed by the person possessed or by the *magjiya*.

Bori dances are conducted in times of national or communal crisis, such as epidemics, the abandonment of an old town, or the establishment of a new one, crop failure, lack of rain, when opening new and closing old markets, and on market days. Among the Hausa, women are more susceptible than men to spirit possession. The spirits are regarded as beings of great force and people who come in contact with the spirits demonstrate attitudes of marked submissiveness and subservience. Husbands will treat their wives who are possessed with great deference, contrary to normal relations. Some men run from their homes when their wives become possessed and are ready to meet the demands of their wives in order to calm them. Women when possessed will defy their husbands, their menfolk and political authorities. The spirits of the *bori* represent and symbolize Hausa values of status, authority, political power, prosperity and the pomp of public life. Since women are normally excluded from public life, kept within the compound physically and in psycho-sociological isolation, women experience in *bori* the pomp of officialdom, the world of men, the world of political power, and the world of glory -- all in fantasy.

Spectors who are seeking health, prosperity and other needs from the spirit will put questions about the future to the possessed women. The spirit reassures the supplicants and asks them to offer certain sacrifices or alms.

3) Saint Veneration. Most authorities do not include saint veneration and the Muslim Hausa would deny the practise. Nevertheless, there is a degree of saint veneraton among Muslim Hausa. In Katsina there are a number of tombs of saints.[14] The legend of Dan Marina, (name of the son of a dyer) tells that his mother died during childbirth and was buried before he was actually born. He emerged from his mother's grave. The owner of the dye pits noticed that the indigo in his dye pits were being disturbed at night. He found that a tiny child played in them. He took the child and raised him with his family. The child, Dan Marina, grew to become a very learned *mallam* (teacher) and a poet in the Emir's court.

Near the famous Gobirau Mosque tower in Katsina city is buried another venerated Islamic scholar. The shrine is a small white-washed hut, shaded by large tamarind trees. Inside the shrine is a grave covered with fine white sand. People, especially women who are praying for fertility or good fortune, enter the shrine and take away small handfuls of the sand which in contrast to the local red soil seems to appear miraculously. Unknown to them is the fact that the custodian replenishes the white sand from the river outside the city.

The tomb of Shehu Dan Fodio in Sokoto City is to many a shrine. "Both Hausas and Fulanis believe that the founder of the empire, Dan Fodio, possessed supernatural power, that he ranks next after Christ, and that his power of blessing or banning has descended on his successors."[15] Many people make pilgrimages to his tomb, including many from other countries. I have heard many Hausa people in the Sokoto area swear an oath by the name of Shehu Dan Fodio. The song of praise to Shehu by Aldaya thanks him for answering his (Aldaya's) prayers to Allah and acknowledges him as the one who cares for the needs of the saints.[16]

4) Diviners. The Hausa Muslim sees little or no distinction between helpful magic (*rugya*, as allowed in the Koran) and harmful magic (*sihr*, as condemned in the Koran). The functions of the diviners is to conteract witches, to heal, to adminster oath-medicine, interpret dreams, and such like. The boundaries between helpful and harmful magic is vague in Islam.[17] Harmful magic is considered legitimate if there is no other way to rid society of an evil person. To

do this the Muslim *mallams* recite the Koranic chapter *Ya shin* while a rooster is slowly killed "over the name" of the victim. They have a vast inventory of harmful charms .[18] Charms may be vocal or material and often a combination of both is used. On her way into the village accompanied by a young teenage boy, my wife noticed that the boy became frightened. When asked the cause of his fear, he pointed to a stone near the path which he recognized as containing evil medicine. When my wife went over to pick it up, the boy ran for his life.

Helpful magic is found in the form of amulets to be worn on the body or placed on animals or in places for protection. Amulets are usually made like a small leather bag and may contain written Koranic verses, names of angels and *jinn*, mysterious formulas, the cabalistic table, certain written taboos and sometimes certain herbs and/or animal parts. This type is the dominant protective magic used by the Hausa. Two charms, *baduhu* and *layan zana*, are said to make the wearer invisible. *Mallams* often instruct the wearer of an amulet of certain taboos if the charm is to be effective. Taboos may include instructions that the amulet must not be opened, be left by itself, or touch water, and when removed for bathing it must not touch the ground. Certain acts may diminish its power, such as sitting on a morter in which corn is ground, showing the soles of one's feet when seated, walking over a hearth, and standing to urinate. This often means that Islamic teachers require non-Muslims who use their amulets to observe Islamic practices and taboos.

Another common practice is the writing of Koranic verses with charcoal on wooden slates. The writing is then washed off, and the water either drunk or rubbed on the body. It has many uses: to drive out possessive spirits, to cure illnesses, to help women obtain divorces from their husbands, to help politicians win elections.

6) **Nature of Man**. An old Hausa belief is that every living thing has a body, *rai*, and *kurwa*. *Rai* is said to be the vital force that animates the body, which muslims say is the personal spirit which goes to *lahira* (hades). *Kurwa* is connected with the body during life and it never dies. *Kurwa* is the double of a person which travels in one's dreams and plays an important part in *bori* possession. When Allah snatches a person's *rai*, death ensues; one's *kurwa* hangs about the body until burial and then, according to Muslims, enters heaven, or, according to the Mugazawa, enters the well of life. At birth one is

given a personal *iska* (spirit) of the same sex which remains with him for life and another *iska* of the opposite sex which normally leaves him upon marriage.

With Islamization a division of persons according to their *iskoki* (spirits) has been introduced, into categories of fire, wind, earth and water. Only the *mallams* can divine to which group one belongs. The importance of knowing one's group is seen, for example, in marriage. If fire marries water, the result is disastrous. Fire can marry wind; earth can marry water. The betrothed person is carefully watched for any unhappiness. If there is something significantly unusual, it will be interpreted that their *iskoki* are incompatible. The man will say, "*Kafadanmu bai zama 'daya ba*" ("Our shoulders are not one") and the engagement will be called off.[19]

6) **Rites of Passage**. The Mugazawa have given the Hausa *mallam* the right to administer the rituals of birth, marriage, and death. Only within the past thirty years has the Mugazawa followed the rites of Muslim burial.[20] The actual situation is that though the Muslim rituals give a sense of legality, traditional rites are also carefully conducted.

Missiological Implications

An in-depth understanding of folk Islam as it relates to the Hausa people is essential, if the Gospel is to be communicated meaningfully and effectively within the Hausa cultural context.This brief overview of the interaction of animism and Islam among the Hausa reveals a number of important missiological implications.

First, communication of the Gospel must be within the world view of the Hausa people. Their wholistic worldview requires the presentation of the Gospel in both supernatural and natural dimensions and realities.

Second, perception of the basic felt needs of the Hausa and our compassion towards these needs will determine the parameters of our message and thrust. Felt needs must be ascertained, analyzed and encountered with the Gospel in its fulness. The Hausa have an (a) ubiquitous fear - fear of the spirit world, of evil from spirits, of harmful magic, of the unknown, of the future, of taboo, of shame, of infertility, of isolation. Certainly the Gospel has an answer and the power to overcome such fears. (b) Sickness is a common need. The Gospel can bring spiritual, psychological, emotional and physical healing. The need of (c)

belonging, a sense of community and fellowship, can be experienced through the Gospel and the local church. The Gospel can give meaning and purpose to those who find (d) life empty and meaningless. "Islam presents itself more as a belief system and can seem irrelevant, even powerless."[21]

Third, a demonstration of the power of the Gospel, by means of changed lives of Hausa Christians, by evident blessing of the Gospel on Christians, by actual power encounter, is necessary for the Muslim to clearly understand the power of Christ as presented in the Gospel message. May the Holy Spirit guide both Nigerian and expatriate missionaries in the presentation of the Gospel of Jesus Christ to the Hausa people.

Endnotes

[1] *The Kano Chronicle*, English translation by Sir Richmond Palmer, Sudanese Memoirs, Vol. 111, (Lagos, 1928).

[2] Kritzeck, J. and Lewis, H.W., *Islam in Africa* , (Van Norstrand-Reinhold Co., New York, 1969).

[3] Ibid., p. 291.

[4] Ibid., p. 296.

[5] Mugazawa are generally referred to as the "pagan" *(arna)* Hausa who have resisted Islam. Being surrounded by their Muslim Hausa brothers and the using of the common Hausa language, Islamic influence can be seen, though superficial. In recent years there has been significant Christian conversion among them. The Nigerian Evangelical Missionary Society has reported over 200 new congregations the past few years.

[6] *Human Relations Area Files*,(Smith), p. 215.

[7] Bello, Adamu, *My Life*,(Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1962), p. 5.

[8] *Human Relations Area Files*

[9] Greenberg, J.H., *The Influence of Islam*, (University of Washington Press, 1946), p. 68-70.

[10] Gilliland, D., *African Religions Meet Islam,* (University Press of America, 1986), p. 23.

[11] A comprehensive descriptive account of Hausa animism is found in Major A.J.N. Tremearne's book, *The Ban of the Bori*, 488 pages, originally published in 1914 and reprinted by Frank Cass in 1968.

[12] *Human Relations Area Files*, Smith, 1954, p. 222.

[13] *Human Relations Area Files*, Greenberg, p. 206-208.

[14] Dihoff, Gretchen, *Katsina: Profile of a Nigerian City,* (Eastbourne: Praeger International Ltd., 1970). A picture of a saint's tomb is found on page 57.

[15] Lenning, L. G., *Blessing in Mosque and Mission*, (Pasadena: William Carey Library Publishers, 1980), p. 50.

[16] Ibid., p. 52.

[17] Trimingham, J.S., *Islam in West Africa*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1959), p. 115.

[18] Ibid.

[19] Ibid, p. 59, 60.

[20] Gilliland, p. 119.

[21] Ibid., p. 25.

Winds Of Change In Contemporary Missions

by Yemi Ladipo

Summary: The call of the church is to be catholic, i.e global and mission-oriented. Yet the very terms of her missionary service seem to be changing, argues, Yemi Ladipo. Starting with the sending church of the West (with a view particularly to the British scene), Rev. Ladipo looks at the impact of such trends as home and short term misisons, competition for charitable giving, higher support figures for missionaries and changing qualifactions of the missionary Candidate. He then surveys new trends among the receiving churches of Africa. His conclusion is that the church must not retreat from the call to missions but rather adjust to these new challenges.

Winds of change continue to blow unabated across the contemporary mission scene. The church is slow to recognise change because, as Bishop John Neale rightly pointed out, it is disastrously short on a theology of change. These changes, if honestly recognised and openly discussed, will have a profound effect on our cultural assumptions about world mission. Let me note a few of these winds of change.

Changes Taking Place in the Traditional (Western) Sending Church.

1. There is a great decline in the number of missionary candidates offering for long-term missionary service. In a recent survey of sixty-eight enquirers who completed missionary application forms within a year, only one person put "however long we are needed" for the expected length of service--and he did not pursue his enquiry. Although many enquirers did not state how long they wanted to work overseas, twenty-two specified two years and four specified

three years. Although these statistics are not conclusive, the trend towards short-term missionary service seems clear.

A number of reasons have been advanced for the change: the desire of missionary candidates to keep abreast of development in their own professional training; job security at home; the fact that mission is viewed as a project, with a built-in duration timetable; people's concern for their children's education (which involves the residence factor for University grants); the change in immigration laws which in certain cases may affect the nationality status of those born outside of the United Kingdom; the desire of wives to work; and the fact that "temping" is now commonplace. Whereas thirty years ago, young people did think in life-time terms, I doubt if they have that conception today. "Two years is an eternity for many," according to the Rev. Canon John Ball, the General Secretary of the Bible Churchmen's Missionary Society. Also, there is the fact that there are over sixty countries in the world which refuse visas to Westerners. If missionary involvement is to continue in these countries, people will have to go as "tent-makers" on shorter term countracts.

Thus it could be argued that VSO (Voluntary Service Overseas) has shown remarkable foresight by recruiting personnel to serve overseas for two years with a possible option of only one renewal. For some, mainly historical, reasons, quite a number of missionary societies are unwilling to come to terms with this trend. Meanwhile VSO continues to reap the harvest at a time when missionary societies (with more attractive conditions of service) are experiencing great difficulty in recruiting people for overseas service. According to the statistics in the VSO 1988 Annual Review, VSO currently receives 3620 applications a year has 1125 workers abroad, 682 of whom are involved in education and technical training; the average age of VSO workers is now 32; 55 of VSOs are male, 45 female; the longest serving male VSO is six years (in Papua New Guinea) and the longest serving female VSO is five years (teaching in Malawi).

It is interesting that the report made clear that in VSO, priority is given to jobs in which volunteers train others, rather than carrying out the tasks themselves, and that many volunteers extend beyond their initial two years. For example, out of the 552 VSOs who departed overseas in 1984/85, 96 of them have extended for a third year.

2. The appeal of Relief Agencies lies in the quick and visible results they are able to show their donors. It is becoming increasingly difficult for missionary societies to balance their books because some of their traditional supporters now support Relief Agencies as well --sometimes at the expense of their missionary giving. You cannot show on television a picture of a spiritually hungry person in Ethiopia. Pressure is on missionary societies to become more cost-effective in their operations in order to survive.

"There is much generosity even if it is 'impulse giving'," admitted the Rev. Kenneth Skelton in his interesting article, "Mission and the Message" (Church Times, 17 March 1989, page 11). He went on to say:

> Impulse giving needs a personal object. The pictures of a starving child, or a family camping in snow outside their ruined home, will tap the well-springs of our compassion. Theological education in Central Africa will not--however carefully thought out the presentation. Yet, for a young church, that may be a really desperate need.

Many Western missionary societies shy away from planning strategically, perhaps because such an exercise would force them to consider when to wind up their operation in a given area, and would inevitably lead to the drawing up of a measurable standard of performance for their missionaries. To do this (so the traditionalists argue) will mean introducing a "success" orientation into missionary endeavour, something which the British consider to be American. Others argue that making the missionaries accountable is part and parcel of good Christian stewardship.

A continuing drop in the annual income of many missionary societies, combined with a shrinking mission field, and the demand for specialist personnel will inevitably lead to a re-alignment of medium and small sized missionary societies. There is too much duplication of effort going on among missionary societies, leading to unnecessary wastage of limited resources. There are too many "corner shop" missionary societies taking on the posture of "supermarkets" and it appears that if the quiet voice of the Holy Spirit will not get their attention to work together, economic recession will. Traditional missionary loyalties must not be allowed to stand in the way of God's good and perfect will for now and for the future.

A welcome sign of such a movement towards closer collaboration is the emergence of such organisations as the PWM (Partnership in World Mission) and the EMA (Evangelical Missionary Alliance). Commenting on the Church of England's decision to set up a new Board of Mission and on the Council of Churches for Britain and Ireland due to come into operation next year, USPG magazine had this to say:

> Here is an oportunity for the Societies to bring their mission concerns along with overseas experience, to the very centre of the churches' life. They will be able to do so all the more effectively if they can begin to draw closer to one another, overseas churches constantly urge the societies to "get together" (USPG Network Editorial, April 1989).

3. Some rich parishes want to send and support their own missionaries or to support national workers or projects, without going through traditional missionary societies. Since most of the support of missionary societies comes from the contributions of local churches, loss of income from large prosperous parishes can (and often does) have an adverse effect on their operations.

4. The high cost of supporting missionaries, especially those with families, is a matter of great concern among the traditional supporters of voluntary missionary societies. The average cost of supporting a family of four is about 12,000 (5,000 for a single missionary).

People are beginning to question the wisdom of sending couples with children overseas and why it is that missionary societies cannot follow the example of VSO in sending couples without children, with possible exceptions for missionaries with skills which are almost impossible to recruit locally.

5. There is the question of the spiritual calibre of missionary candidates, some of whom are from broken homes, and some who have deep emotional needs that could cripple their effectiveness as missionaries in a different culture.

It can be argued that by demanding professional qualifications as a necessary condition for missionary service, the overseas church has put employment before missionary service, and therefore the secular before the spiritual. It would therefore make more sense for a Christian professional (at least in some cases) to work and witness as a government employee on contract rather than as an employee of the national church. As a "tent-making" missionary, his or her

salary will be paid by the government to do the job which the Lord called him or her to do--to teach, to be a doctor, and at the same time, be an effective witness for Christ.

These are but a few of the winds of change that are blowing across the west, challenging the way we do missions. But other winds are blowing among the receiving churches, particularly in Africa.

Changes Taking Place in the Receiving Churches of Africa

1. The control of immigration by independent African states is getting tighter. British passports no longer guarantee automatic entry to former colonies. Length of stay is now governed by government regulations and visa and work permits are issued for a specified period of time-- between two or three years maximum. Thus a person may feel called to serve in Nigeria for an indefinite period but his residence permit and work permit will only be valid for two years with only a possibility of renewal.

2. The demand for professionally qualified missionaries. The Church in Africa has come of age and has become increasingly more specific about the kind of outside help she needs for her continuing growth in maturity. Africa has plenty of skilled artisans, but the lack of formal education in technology and modern science limits her effectiveness in certain areas. The Church therefore needs people with communication skills who are able to replace themselves by nationals within a short time. In many parts of Africa, governments will only issue work permits to those with skills which are in short supply in their respective countries.

3. A growing determination among church leaders to tackle the problem of perpetual dependency on foreign support. There is a desire among the receiving churches "to stand on their own feet" rather than remain tied to the apron strings of the well-meaning missionaries who have come out to help them. The aim is to prevent missionaries over-staying their welcome or becoming too expensive to be replaced by nationals.

4. Many perceptive African Christians welcome the increase in short-term missionaries because they come with a teachable attitude, an adventurous spirit and a willingness to learn and make the necessary cultural adaptation. African pastors now have unprecedented opportunities to help provide spiritual nurture

for the young missionaries in their midst and in doing so, gain experience in cross-cultural ministry--a useful preparation for sending missionaries to the Western church in the future.

5. There is a demand for reciprocal partnership in world mission. The Church in Africa has come to realise that a church not engaged in cross-cultural mission will for ever remain a mission field. Israel's Dead sea owes its name and state to the fact that it has no outlet. A church without missionary outlets to other nations has really not come of age and may become spiritually weak. The African church should and must seek to share its vital faith with the global Christian community. Gone are the days when it was said that "theology is constructed [and often corrupted] in Europe, corrected in the USA and consumed [wholesale] in Africa." The African Church has gifts to bring to the Church catholic by which we can all be enriched in our understanding of Biblical Christianity.

Conclusion

The winds of change blowing across the missionary scene today demand a new breed of missionary as well as a restructuring of the missionary apparatus, which would be geared not only towards sending but also receiving. Adapting to change will be costly because it will force us to re-examine our cultural assumptions about world mission in the light of Scripture.

The Church worldwide must rediscover that spirit of Christian adventure that comes from an unconditional surrender to doing God's will in His world.

Doing African Christian Theology: An Evangelical Perspective

by Richard J. Gehman

(Nairobi, Evangel Publishing House, 1987) 130 pages.

Dr. Richard Gehman, a long serving missionary in Kenya and former Principal of Scott Theological College, has written a valuable survey of the development of Christian theologizing in Africa by Africans. Its twofold purpose is, on the one hand, to expose the anti-Scriptural foundation that underlies much of what has already been published on the subject and, on the other, to encourage more evangelical scholars to make up for this deficiency by presenting a more biblically-based articulation of what it means to "do theology" in an African cultural setting. Gehman takes as his keynote the well-known observation by John Mbiti (1972) that "Christianity has Christianized Africa, but Africa has not africanized Christianity" (p.i). He concludes his brief, but well-documented, study by saying that it would be "more accurate to state that Christianity has to some extent Christianized Africa but Africa has not fully africanized Christianity" (p.109). One has to carefully read this book in order to appreciate why the author has come to this rather pessimistic assessment of the current theological scene and, more importantly, to evaluate Gehman's several proposals for improving the situation--from an evangelical perspective.

Four chapters outline Gehman's discussion of African Christian Theology (ACT) with regard to need, history, proposed methodologies, and evangelical correctives. In chapter one he describes several early missionary attempts to contextualize the universal Gospel message in Kenya, particularly in relation to the perennial problems of female circumcision and polygamy. Yes, as we all know, these pioneer evangelists made their mistakes, but Gehman rightly points out that they were not all ignorant of and/or insensitive to the realities of African culture as many contemporary theologians like to claim.

Gehman concludes this first chapter with a useful summary of the reasons why ACT--or as he prefers, "Evangelical Christian Theology in the context of Africa"--is necessary today. However, the eight points that he presents could

probably be more succinctly stated in four, or perhaps even just two. First of all, from an internal perspective, the Christian churches in Africa must be able to correctly apply the Word of God to the specific problems, needs, resources, and potentials which confront them in their own situational and sociological context. And secondly, with an external view toward the Christian Church at large, the African contingent has an obligation to contribute its own unique perspective on biblical truths for the ultimate development of a richer, more complete and balanced Christian theology worldwide.

Chapter two is divided into two main parts. In the first, Gehman presents a historical sketch of "the origins of African Christian Theology." There are two minor problems with this treatment: It is too sketchy and should probably be specified as applying only to East Africa--or simply Kenya alone. Secondly, it overlaps with the "early missionary" material included in chapter one, and thus the two passages could well be consolidated into one. But we do find a number of helpful observations scattered throughout this section concerning some of the reasons for the early missionaries' failure to develop a fully relevant theology, especially in relation to the problems of sickness and spirit possession. However, I would question Gehman's apparent promotion of the "power encounter" approach when dealing with assumed cases of possession. This is certainly not the only possible evangelical way of dealing with the problem, and I seriously doubt that it is a method that ought to be practiced by "younger student pastors" (p.34). The issue probably needs some additional treatment in a future revision of this book.

Gehman then goes on to point out several important reasons that support the need for developing an African "theology of relevance" and "selfhood" in indigenous identity. He mentions, but perhaps does not sufficiently elaborate upon, the fact that ACT was continually developing from the very beginning of the Christian witness on the continent, primarily by means of the "oral theology" of sermons, prayers, songs, instruction classes, and so forth (p.28). I was happy to note his periodic emphasis upon the equally important factor of Bible translation: "Africans have been reflecting on the Scriptures since the Bible was first translated into the vernacular languages" (p.27). Bible translation is doing theology at the most basic level because it cannot properly take place without a careful reflection on what God meant to say in his Word and how best to communicate this via an indigenous language in a local

sociocultural setting. The problem with this first generation of translations (which Gehman does not call attention to) was that they tended to be too heavily dominated by the foreigners who brought the Scriptures, the result being a host of generally literal, unidiomatic versions that were all too often very hard to understand and hence also more difficult to meaningfully apply to African life.

In the second part of chapter two, Gehman makes a selective, but useful, survey of some of the more important titles in the corpus of literature on ACT. This leads directly into chapter three where he undertakes a critique of a number of the proposed methodologies dealing with ACT. A sample of the familiar names are briefly, but incisively, considered from an evangelical perspective: Dickson, Kanyandago, Kurewa, Tutu, and Nyamiti. Gehman rightly reserves the most space for ACT's "father," John Mbiti, but perhaps gives too much prominence to the latter's theory of time as it affects African theology. However, lest we become too pessimistic in our appraisal of the future of theologizing in Africa, Gehman cites the case of Byang Kato, an early scholar who attempted to counter such liberal trends and worked towards developing ACT according to sound Scriptural and evangelical lines.

But Kato was a lone light for his time. In one way or another, some more than others, the eminent (published) theologians of the day all illustrate the principle that "a faulty methodology will inevitably lead to a faulty theology" (p.43). And a faulty methodology, in turn always results from a faulty view of Scripture, namely, one which denies its ultimate unity, authority, and inerrancy. Gehman's critique clearly reveals that "liberal theologians...do not believe in the same kind of Bible as evangelicals do" (p.46), and consequently much of their work is marred by a theologically fatal cluster of "-isms": universalism, relativism, subjectivism, skepticism, rationalism, existentialism, and syncretism. The last item is manifested particularly in the formation of "ethic theologies" (p.50) that result from a flawed conception of "the relationship between Scripture and traditional religion and culture" (p.49). Indeed, it is essential to contextualize Scripture within the particular society and culture in which it is proclaimed, "but we also need to let Scripture 'de-contextualize' us" (p.61) in terms of the universally relevant Gospel of Jesus the Christ.

Gehman devotes the latter portion of chapter three to a presentation of nine "guidelines for developing African Christian theology" along more biblical lines. This section should probably stand as a chapter on its own to give it the

proper prominence within the book as a whole. Gehman summarizes his position as follows (p.77):

Contextualizing theology is that (8) dynamic process whereby (1) the people of God (6) living in community and interacting with believers throughout time and space, (4) under the illuminating guidance of the Holy Spirit, (9) proclaim (7) in their own language and thought forms, (5) the Word that God has spoken to them (3) in their context (2) through the study of the Scriptures.

Gehman elaborates upon each of these principles in the effort to delineate "a methodology of contextualizing that will make theology both relevant to the context and faithful to the Scriptures" (p.77). Especially valuable is his treatment of point three on the relationship between theology and culture. Here it is important to remember that

"Our cultural context is the medium through which the God communicates and by which we respond. But culture does not shape the meaning or message of theology (p.83)."

Two other crucial aspects of any programme to promote ACT are the need to encourage "theology at the grass roots" (p.87), that is, at the unsophisticated lay-level of reflection and articulation, and also to avoid an ethnic African sectarianism by maintaining links with "the historic Christian affirmations of the Faith" (p.87).

From the preceding general guidelines which provide a framework for developing an evangelical approach toward ACT, Gehman moves on in chapter four to offer four concrete proposals as to how the task might currently be effected. Theologians must first clearly state their presuppositions concerning the authority of the Scriptures, the proper method of biblical interpretation, and their concept of culture. With regard to our cultural assumptions, Gehman proposed five fundamental affirmations which summarize a Bible-based, evangelical position (pp.94-95). Indeed, these are worth remembering. Gehman's second proposal concerns the need for organizing a comprehensive plan for theological reflection in the African context. Gehman's own suggested seven-point action plan is presented in detail, and although readers will probably not agree with all of its various aspects, it does offer a refreshing change from the overly abstract proposals that one usually reads in similar contexts.

Gehman's third proposal is that evangelical Christian churches research the crucial needs--traditional, contemporary, ecclesiastical, social, and doctrinal--that require a biblical solution in a specifically African cultural setting. And finally, he proposes that these churches set forth a clear and unequivocal statement of their goals for ACT. Gehman's own general suggestion in this regard reads as follows:

Our primary goal in developing an African Christian Theology should be spiritual renewal among the churches and the building up of the Kingdom of God. (p.107).

In a short concluding chapter, Gehman highlights three aspects of a genuine "Africanized Christianity." It must be dynamically related to the problems and needs of everyday life; it must be firmly based on the Bible; and it must be made a necessary component of the mission of every African Christian church. Some of the specific examples here are somewhat repetitious of earlier material and would probably fit better anyway in one of the first two chapters where similar case studies are discussed. But the various observations and suggestions found in this section are valuable and ought to be carefully considered and acted upon. A fairly inclusive bibliography of works dealing with ACT rounds out this concise and constructive overview of the subject.

I discovered only one error of fact in Gehman's excellent presentation. This concerns my friend Martin Luther to whom the author attributes the following position:

> Martin Luther and Melanthon (sic, i.e. Melanchthon) held that monogamy was not obligatory under every circumstance, that whatever was permitted by the law of Moses, remained lawful today (p.20).

In fact, Luther said just the opposite:

> ...a man is permitted to have only one wife. This is why Moses' law cannot be valid simply and completely in all respects with us. (p.291 of Vol. 46 of *Luther's Works*, the "American Edition" edited by R. C. Schultz, Philadelphia: Fortress Press.)

Other than a certain amount of repetitiveness in places and occasionally also some rather loose organization of material, I find this work to be one of the best critical treatments of the subject of ACT that I have read. Gehman offers many concrete examples to illustrate or support the various points that he seeks to make. His evangelical approach is irenic, but uncompromising, as far as the Scriptures are concerned. The book is also clearly written in a level of language that is appropriate for widespread use in English-speaking Africa (although the publisher should try to do something to improve the book's binding). It would admirably serve either as the principal text or as required background reading for any survey course offered at the advanced Bible school or seminary level.

I would now like to see an African response to this material, specifically with respect to Gehman's criticisms and assessment of the current state of ACT, and also in response to his proposals for setting the situation right by restoring the basis for Christian theologizing in Africa to a more solidly biblical foundation. And then that crucial last step remains, namely, for more evangelical African scholars--both Francophone and Anglophone--to take up Gehman's challenge to write their own evaluation of the current state of religious affairs and what they consider to be the pressing needs and central goals as far as the Church in Africa is concerned. It will be interesting as well as instructive to compare the action plan that they propose with Gehman's. In many crucial respects, this would undoubtedly be similar, and that is important for the maintenance of evangelical unity and constancy in the face of many sociocultural, theological, and even political threats to a forthright and faithful witness to the truth of the Word. But it would indeed be enlightening to observe and study any alterations of or additions to Gehman's recommendations, for these would represent a vital aspect of the ongoing development of "an evangelical perspective" in "Doing African Christian Theology."

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The Theological Task Of The Church In Africa: Theological Perspectives In Africa

by Dr. Tite Tienou

(Africa Christian Press, 2nd edition , 1990) 56 pages.

With his informed insight of what the Christian Church in Africa ought to be doing theologically, Dr. Tite Tienou takes note of the contributions made so far. In suggesting a viable way forward, he not only points out certain mistakes that must not be repeated, he also critically, but constructively raises some important questions with which the Church in Africa must grapple. He lays a distinctive stress on African Christian leaders' responsibility to map out the future of theological content in the continent. In other words, he invites and encourages other concerned African Christian leaders to participate in wrestling with theological issues facing the Church today in Africa. The Church in Africa may be one of the fastest growing movements, but it is one of the weakest theologically.

Having pointed out the need for an evangelical theological strategy, and defined some key terms like "an evangelical," "theology," etc [pp. 9-13], he then attempts to describe and evaluate from within the purview of his Christian faith, what evangelical theological strategy in Africa has accomplished even before 1973; and what it ought to address since its genesis.

Missionary contribution to evangelical theology in Africa, according to Dr. Tienou, has not only been amateurish but it created an unnecessary evangelical fragmentation of which African Christians in main line churches have to see now as a major deterrence. The historical record of divided evangelicals in Africa served as a backdrop of the need for the formation of the Association of Evangelicals of Africa and Madagascar (AEAM).

As its name suggests, AEAM's multi-purpose encourages: a) the sense of satisfaction obtained from belonging, 2) relief from pressure by both leftist and rightist extremists, 3) exchange of ideas, 4) spiritual fellowship and cooperation, and 5) prevention of waste of money, time and personnel. Dr.

Tienou constructively critiques the intention of AEAM by pointing out that things were suggested on paper but without any practical implementation. Moreover, the group was concerned with only evangelism but not with theology. Thus the balance was lacking from the beginning.

The establishment of the historic Theology and Education Group under the Lausanne Committee worldwide in 1974 gave impetus to interest in and revival of evangelical theology in Africa. The late Dr. Byango Henry Kato, a Nigerian evangelical theologian, caught the vision and began to preach it with conviction across the continent and internationally. But the term `African theology' was understood and described differently by different African scholars. Confusion in definitions resulted in African Christian leaders accusing each other either of `liberalism' or `conservatism' depending on one's position on the relation of pre-Christian African beliefs and Christianity. Some advocated for discontinuity while others saw an unbreakable continuity between the two. Therefore, such a disagreement resulted in a war of words which was then seen by some as an uncalled-for mudslinging among leading African Christian statesmen of the time.

Unlike his evangelical predecessors, Dr. Tienou sees an inseparable relation between Christianity and African culture. We are children of our own cultural background and evangelical history. In my own view, evangelical African theologians, before Dr. Tienou's book, had approached and addressed the issue of Christianity and African culture from a Western view. Dr. Tienou does well to listen to and summarize even African secular commentators on African life in general. He speaks like an African committed to Christ and God's written Word.

Having established the continuity rather than discontinuity of African culture in the context of expression of the Christian faith, Dr. Tienou, then, interacts with other African theologians in describing and defining things like African theology and contextualization. As an informed scholar, he critically evaluates what has been on the market on the same subject.

In a logical way, he then proceeds to pin point some of the threats to the theological task in Africa: mistrust, clericalism, a-historical faith, and denominational individualism. These are real threats to any progress in theological development in Africa--especially in regional contexts. Dr. Tienou's strength, as far as I am concerned, lies in his ability to give credit where it is

due, but subtly points out what still needs to be done in Africa theologically. He invites every reader to do something about constructing African theology even at a local church level.

Reading the book, by this African scholar and educator, is enough for anyone to start doing something about mapping the future of evangelical theology in Africa [pp. 45-56]. He creates in a reader a desire to do evangelical theology in and for his region. The book is a must for every evangelical Christian scholar or leader.

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The Lion Book of Christian Thought

by Tony Lane

(Oxford: Lion Publishing, 1992 edition) 256 pages.

The discipline of Historical Theology seems to be experiencing an embarrassment of riches these days. Jaroslav Pelikan's recently completed five volume history of *The Christian Tradition* represents one of the most ambitious treatments of historical theology in our time. Useful surveys (with accompanying books of primary readings) by William Placher and others are finding an appreciative audience. Yet there has been a need for an evangelical work that is more compact than Pelikan and more detailed than Placher and some of the other surveys.

Tony Lane, lecturer in Christian Doctrine at London Bible College, in *The Lion Book of Christian Thought* offers the interested reader a work that meets this need. He offers a compelling and well-told story of the great thinkers and ideas that have shaped Christian theology, not only in the west but to a significant extent in Africa as well.

This new edition is an update of his *The Lion Concise Book of Christian Thought,* published in 1984, a book which has enjoyed some success with the selling of over 20,000 copies. There are a few important differences in this new edition in addition to the name change. The layout has been altered dramatically. The original edition was small enough to fit in a breast pocket which meant that the print was smaller and not always easy to read. This new edition is larger and well-laid out. The bibliographies have been updated (e.g. Hans Küng's *Theology for the Third Millennium,* 1988 is included as is John Mbiti's important *Bible and Theology in African Christianity,* 1986). Lane also includes coverage of recent theological developments in the both the World Council of Churches (Canberra, 1991) as well as global evangelicalism (Manilla, 1989).

Professor Lane discusses some hundred or so individuals and movements covering both the broad time span of Christian hisotry as well as the equally broad spectrum of theological opinions. Heretics and orthodox, eastern and

western theology, Roman Catholic and protestant, evangelical and liberal--all are given a hearing. Lane's primary objective is to "introduce leading thinkers from the past (and present) and to whet the appetite by giving extracts from their writings (p 6)." Lane divides the book into five parts, discussing the "Church of the fathers", "The Eastern Tradition", "The Medieval West", "Reformation and Reaction" and "Christian Thought in the Modern World." He groups the individuals and theological developments that he deems significant under these larger headings and in the estimate of this reviewer Lane seems to have avoided any major omissions. Indeed, Lane generally succeeds throughout the book to blend graceful prose, excellent historical introductions and summaries with superb quotations from original sources. His evangelical perspective is clear throughout. If he falters at all, I would see it in his evaluation of certain theologians of the post reformation period. The inclusion of evaluation in the modern period is appropriate but his judgment is questionable at some key points--the most consistent evangelicalism receives the most criticism while liberal and neo-orthodox movements receive little. But first the strengths of the book.

Lane has written a book that is a pleasure to read. There is a freshness to his description and analysis throughout that is a fine feature of the book. Two examples out of many possible ones can be givin. One is his discussion of Peter Abelard where (after a fine historical introduction) he skillfully surveys Abelard's positions and traces his heterodoxy to his theological method: "Doubt is not so much a sin...as the necessary beginning of knowledge (p 91)." This Cartesian perspective (400 years before Descartes) is ably described and its significance noted. The second example is his inclusion of Charles Wesley, noting the theological themes that fill his 18th century hymns which have had such a profound impact on evangelical protestantism all over the world (pp 169-170).

Other strong features of this survey include: 1)The coverage of the Eastern tradition which is sometimes slighted in historical theology texts; 2) his discussion of Luther's doctrine of justification by faith is sharp and well-explained ("Justification concerns my status rather than my state...God accepting me rather than changing me", p 130) (though his statement that Luther did not arrive at a forensic understanding of justification until after 1521

is highly debatable); 2) his analysis of Peter Forsythe, Karl Barth and Jürgen Moltmann which is informed and appreciative at key points.

On the negative side two criticisms can be mentioned. The first concerns method. Lane has adopted the common method of organizing theology by time rather than by topic (he surveys people and movements by historical periods and not by doctrinal topics). This has the obvious strength of setting theology in its proper historical context. Yet there is also a drawback to this approach. One loses the thread of development of particular doctrines. Luther's breakthrough on justification is so much more understandable when one surveys the historical development of that doctrine from the early fathers through Augustine, Scholasticism and late medieval nominalism. We need a treatment of historical theology that combines more skillfully the topical and the historical approaches (Donald Guthrie's approach in his *New Testament Theology* comes to mind as a model).

A second criticism is Lane's treatment of Calvin and post-reformation protestantism. Lane reserves his sharpest criticisms for evangelical calvinists such as John Owen, William Perkins, Jonathan Edwards and B.B Warfield. He assumes a certain understanding of Calvin that sees later calvinists (reformed scholasticism, puritanism.etc) as distorters of Calvin. This line has been argued by some neo-orthodox theologians and has been picked up by Basil Hall, Perry Miller, R.T Kendall and a host of others. Yet this is a highly debated point and recent studies by J. Bray, Jill Raitt, Richard Muller, David Steinmetz and others point in a different direction suggesting that Calvin really was a calvinist and that those who followed in his path did not betray but deepened and developed (in positive ways) Calvin's original understanding.

Inspite of these criciticisms, Lane has written a highly useful and interesting account of the roots of Christian faith. For African Christians concerned with their own theological roots this would be a valuable place to begin that search.

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