AFRICAN AND AFRO-AMERICAN INCULTURATION BIBLIOGRAPHY

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Articles


Double issue devoted to various articles on aspects of the African theological situation as the African Synod begins.


Faith for the traditional African is a way of life and not merely a set of doctrines to be believed in (the sacred and the secular form one reality). The gospel message remains to become a way of life, and the Christian faith needs to become the essence, basis, and motivating force in the life of the believer. This faith must be lived in a communitarian context as in the case of the other spheres of the African's life--social, economic, and political. The article is an attempt to find a solution or a means of meeting this need in an
authentically African manner without watering down the gospel message. The initiating, sustaining, and consolidating of small Christian communities is offered as the frame work of the inculturation process that seeks to incarnate the gospel message within the heart and culture of the African.


One of several articles in this issue on aspects of African theology.


This article unfolds some of the concepts and processes that make divination a central place for healing and for a community reflection about God; for what we would call, in Christian terms, a theological reflection.


Discusses the background of the 1994 African Synod, as well as the question of African gods and the Christian God.


African Inculturation Bibliography


Seminar report on evangelization and inculturation of African Catholicism.


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Abstract: The problem of the inculturation of Christianity lies with particular acuity upon the young churches, which are not rooted in the cultures of Athens or Rome. Here, it is not a question of adaptation, of rejuvenation inside the same culture in movement. It is rather a matter of founding a church which fulfils the four fundamental functions of the whole community which is born out of the World of God: the liturgical, moral, juridical and theological functions.


Abstract: One can understand the life of a Negro-African only if the relationship with ancestors is known. Just as the biblical tradition is commemorative-narrative, so also, the African, by gestures inherited from his forefathers, hands from generation to generation the way to life and to the future. Because ancestors have shown this way it must be respected by the living. The ancestors deserve to be mentioned publicly by the Negro-African Christians so that they are integrated in Christ. The Fathers of the Church also strove to rehabilitate their dead "ancestors" who had not heard of Christ by reasoning in 1 Peter 3:19 and 4:6. The African has no less reason for associating himself with ancestors in prayers in the spirit of Jesus.

Bujo is a diocesan priest from Zaire and currently the Head of Department of Moral Theology at the University of Fribourg in Switzerland.


Abstract: Though Christian Churches have always worked towards an indigenous theology, the word "African theology" is comparatively new. The present author, himself a native of Zaire, claims that African theology deserving that name will exist only when Africans produce detailed theological monographs and integrate the revealed truths on Christ, the Church and others into their own system of thought. To achieve this they must not adhere
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too closely to Western cultural patterns, but study the Bible afresh and independently, in the light of their own cultural life. It is not sufficient that African theology discusses traditional customs and beliefs, it must also come to grips with the pressing problems of modern Africa. A theology of this kind, the author claims, has not yet been accomplished, but is possible and badly needed.


____. "A christocentric ethic for black Africa." Theology Digest 30 (Summer, 1982): 143-146.


Rispetto alla pretesa di esclusività assoluta delle forme di cristianesimo caratterizzate in senso occidentale durante il periodo coloniale, i movimenti di indipendenza e il Vaticano II hanno piuttosto rafforzato la coscienza di un valore specifico della cultura africana. In questo contesto Bujo si interroga sul possibile valore positivo di certe tradizioni etiche africane, normalmente considerate incompatibili con il cristanesimo. La risposta positiva invoca tuttavia un ulteriore confronto, in base al principio di comunicabilità con altre culture.


African Inculturation Bibliography

Considers Christ as proto-ancestor.


*Abstract:* The article presents a summary and evaluation of the first volume of *Wege christlicher Verkündigung* by Siegfried Hertlein. It is a mistake to ignore the tradition of a hundred years of evangelization. Just to go back to forms of pre-Christian culture and confront them with Christian values will not suffice. A new theological reflection is needed, and this can ultimately be done only by native theologians. Evangelization will be effectively promoted if local catechists and lay-people have free access to this new theology.


Burrows is managing editor of Orbis Books, and Sanneh, who was born in Gambia, West Africa, is professor of world mission at the Yale Divinity School. Sanneh was born a Muslim and converted to Christianity as an adolescent, and has been very involved in Muslim--Christian relations.
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This article argues that the concept of liturgical adaptation is no longer adequate. Instead "inculturation" must be considered. The concept of inculturation is based upon the realization that the universal aspects of faith and worship always find expression within the cultural, historical situation of a specific people as they come to belief. Maturity of faith comes for a people when they articulate the universal faith in a form indigenous to themselves. In effect, the Synod of African bishops calling for inculturation of the liturgy were saying that this time of maturity is arriving for African Christians. As an application the article offers pastoral suggestions of ways that Christian burial and the sacraments of anointing and marriage could be given African expression and identity.


Discusses the difference between a Council and a Synod and outlines John Paul II's attitude toward the African Synod.


Final message of the Roman Catholic Synod for Africa held in Rome from 10 April to 8 May 1994.

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The article assesses recent efforts at the inculturation of Roman Catholic values and beliefs in an African context, particularly since the Second Vatican Council. Several attempts in this area are reviewed covering organizational, theological and liturgical reform geared towards Africanization. Although Catholicism is considered to be inherently well-placed for such innovations, they are critically examined in the light of the fundamentally conservative nature of Catholicism itself and of recent reactionary trends in the church. Broad but balanced guidelines along which to proceed with such guidelines notwithstanding these limitations are suggested.


One of several essays presented at the Sixth East-West Philosophers' Conference held in August 1989 in Honolulu.


Article which came out of a conference on Women and Moral Theory held at The State University of New York, Stony Brook in March 1985. The work of Carol Gilligan is the main reference point for most of the papers.

Harding is professor of philosophy and Director of Women's Studies at the University of Delaware.


Illustrates the five principal topics of the 1994 African Synod with stories taken from Eastern Africa.
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Pastoral developments in Africa such as the emphasis on small communities and efforts at inculturation have pointed to clear priorities in regard to family life. Small Christian communities readily take on the shape of the African extended family. The gap between traditional marriage and church marriage can be remedied by correct catechesis and by a renewed rite which incorporates traditional values and symbols. The stress on interpersonal relationships and on family planning needs to be placed in an African context. Social injustice is the root cause of many family problems; poor families need more pastoral attention, which tends to be given largely to well-off, middle-class families. Finally, inter-church marriages are a major factor in Africa, yet they are held in suspicion by the official church leaders and by many families. These problems have to be solved at local levels, but regional guidelines can be helpful.


The article shows that the struggle to "inculurate" the Christian faith and the Christian church in different cultures, specifically in Africa, if fundamentally a christological question. Since the church is essentially Christocentric (a teaching re-emphasised in Catholic theology in and since Vatican II), the mystery of Christ is at the heart of any valid theology of inculturation. The "two-stage" Christology, looks at the historical Jesus as the man for others, reaching beyond cultural barriers, and at the Risen One, in whom this reaching-out has been transfigured and universalised, in the New Person in whom all people and all cultures find their home. Inculturation is not just practical or political necessity: it is a theological necessity, an imperative of faith, if the church is truly to embody the universality of Christ and if it is to be truly catholic.


One of several articles in this issue on aspects of African theology.


This article shows that both Islam and Christianity have sunk such deep roots in African society that they are now authentic African religions. This has been achieved through a process of acculturation which has enriched the monotheistic religions as much as it has transformed Africa. It has involved a dialogue and a certain accommodation with African traditional religion, which runs the risk of falling into religious syncretism. Despite this danger the Catholic Church has encouraged the process of inculturation in recent years with the purpose of fostering an authentic African Christianity.


Hillman was missionary for twenty-five years in East Africa, and currently teaches at Salve Regina University in Newport, Rhode Island.


Considers the role of missionaries in inculturation, especially in the African context.


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African Inculturation Bibliography


Apostolic Exhortation delivered following the special African Synod held in Rome.


Dr. Kasene bases his observations on the increased number of suicides due to the AIDS epidemic in Africa, and discusses a variety of African views on this subject.


Contradictory statistics have not clarified the extent of Islamization in Africa and Islam's "inculturation". Numerical data will probably never answer whether or not Islam is more likely to succeed than Christianity in Black Africa. Among decisive questions are: will Islam overcome the cultural barrier of being an Arabic religion in Africa; are Islam's hermeneutics and praxis more kindred to African cultures than that of occidental Christianity; and how is it possible that Africans may perceive Islam as an "African" religion? even if in Christianity there were much discussion of "inculturation", the explosive effects of these questions lies
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in the answers not only offered about traditional African values but also to the problems of modern Africa in upheaval.


M'nteba, Metena. "Inculturation in the 'Third Church': God's Pentecost or Cultural Revenge?" Concilium (1/1992): 129-146.


One of several articles in this issue on aspects of African theology.


The article studies the Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy of the Second Vatican Council seeking the hermeneutical implications of adaptation to different cultures. The texts which refer to adaptation as part of the general principles for the restoration and promotion of the liturgy are studied in detail. Various terms used in missiology today are also examined, such as: inculturation, accommodation, naturalization of local churches, and the principle of cultural relevancy. The article demonstrates the Roman Catholic Church's use of pluralism, emphasizing the process of inculturation as a dynamic on-going procedure constantly in flux. The development results from the utilization of language art-forms, philosophy, and the
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wisdom of the people of the times in order to make the gospel more explicit in different cultures.


Scriptures: Matt 3:2; Jn 1:1. Liturgy and inculturation are two core words that underline inculturation, an indispensable dimension of evangelization as the most fundamental duty of the church today in Eastern Africa. Inculturation must be seen in the light of the mystery of Jesus Christ and not just as efforts to make a system or institution more meaningful to the people of different cultures. Inculturation has to ensure that the salutary teaching of Christ is instilled in the minds of the people in such a way that Christianity strikes root that helps the true growth of a local church. [ed excerpt].


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One of several articles in this issue on aspects of African theology.


Discusses the history of the White Fathers (Missionaries of Africa) in Zambia in the context of a consideration of Christ's own manner of evangelizing. Practical examples are given in terms of confronting African witchcraft.


Argues that both African and Japanese philosophical traditions are examples of “ethnophilosophy” in that each is focused on the life patterns and belief systems of a people. Western philosophy by contrast seems based on reason and logic which develops a critique of folk thought and worldviews. In fact these traditions are not contradictory but complementary and each bears the marks of its own peculiar culture and history.


The article examines current striving of the African church for "inculturation" or Africanization of Christianity and "self-development". Neither task is easy. For, on the one hand, the African church needs to battle against westernized Christianity and its basic alienation and, on the other, against structures of exploitation, tribalism, and poverty, which
impede the church's self-development. The insights of liberation theologians are helpful in these basic struggles. The article examines the nature of liberation theology and its salient themes as found in the works of its main popularizers. Their emphasis on man's "integral development", "praxis", "man as subject", etc, are dynamic ideas that would change the African church into a liberating and progressive church.


Behind many of the problems of the Church in Nigeria and in Africa lies a lack of psychological and cultural liberation, an inability to experiment, a fear of standing on its own feet. Here can be seen an after-effect of colonialism: the stultifying of the creative and imaginative powers of a people. Mission Christianity, which drove a wedge between Christian faith and local culture and which shaped the Church in Nigeria, must also accept some of the blame. The visit of the Pope to Nigeria could be a moment of truth for the Church here: papal primacy exists to build up the local churches in unity, not to suppress them in a blanket of uniformity. It is no longer from outside that we must look for the enemy: the real enemy of localization and of religious inculturation lies within, not outside. In this struggle will be found the true liberation and salvation of the African Church. Pope John Paul's visits to East and West Africa are an assertion of the coming of age of the Church in Africa; but it is not his task to show how cultural and intellectual freedom can be gained by Africans: that is their task, and no one can be their substitute.


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Reprint from Sedos Bulletin, nos 16 and 18. The future of mission is already evident in the topics and trends of numerous mission conferences over the last decade. Latin American liberation theology demonstrates that insertion among the poor and adoption of their cause changes our perception of church and mission and leads to new agendas. Inculturation in
Africa is the task of Africans, not of missionaries, and implies a re-thinking and relativization of basic elements of faith and doctrine. The "dialogue with the great religions" characteristic of Asia further relativizes our basic theological tenets. Taken together, these trends imply a yet-to-be-articulated spirituality of openness, courage, freedom and deeper faith in Christ's continuing salvific presence in the world.


Summary, Uenezaji wa Injili kwa Methali


Considers charges that ancestor veneration would violate the First Commandment, but suggests that Holy Communion might be a way of integrating ancestors into the worshiping community, and seeing the gifts expected from the ancestors as now being granted by Jesus Christ, namely the fullness of Life.


Bearing in mind the 1983 Roman Catholic synod on reconciliation, this article reflects on reconciliation and the Igbo (Nigerian) context. Taking off from an experience of a traditional reconciliation ritual organized by a Catholic priest, the article underlines that for Christian reconciliation to be deeply rooted in the Igbo heart there must be emphasis on community (implicated throughout the ritual process), word (killing-healing), participation (no involvement by proxy), and celebration (sharing meal shows concrete reconciliation accomplished).

Suggests that ethics should be understood teleologically in relation to God’s goal and purpose for creation. The universality of this goal then can be a way to analyze culturally varying ways of responding to God’s purposes. Uses the African example of exchange of bride price.


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Books


Colloquium held in 1985 in Nairobi, Kenya.


Reviewed by Kevin Ward in Journal of Church and State, https://doi.org/10.1093/jcs/csx062 posted September 23 2017

From Ward’s review: “This book, in general, is a very fine analysis of Ugandan attitudes to sexual practice, in the light of the AIDS prevention campaign. It is thorough and illuminating. Concentrating on the new religious born-again movements, which have been so vital in these debates over the last thirty years, can be justified on the grounds that they have become a dominant voice in Uganda’s public debate. But Boyd is rightly sensitive to the fact that the Anglican and Catholic churches still have their own distinctive voices. The book is superb as a sociological/anthropological account of born-again Christianity. Its weakness, if it is a weakness, is its failure to examine the theological issues that animate (or
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ought to animate) the pastors who “preach” so fervently, and with such persuasion, on these topics.”


Collection of articles which have already appeared elsewhere, mostly in French or German.

Bujo is a diocesan priest from Zaire and currently the Head of Department of Moral Theology at the University of Fribourg in Switzerland.


Argues that the black church community has treated sexuality as a taboo subject and this has hampered constructive responses to a variety of sexual issues such as teenage pregnancies, AIDS, intolerance of sexuality diversity, etc.


"Report of a conference funded by the Kaiser Family Foundation."
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Collection of a number of African myths along with a discussion about their deeper universal meanings.


A British theologian in the Anglican tradition here examines selected themes in the English writings of three African theologians, relating them to comparable themes in the German writings of two Reformed theologians. The aim of this cross-cultural exercise is to ascertain whether or to what extent the development of Christian theology in Europe can be significantly enriched by African contributions. The focus is on the relationship between God and the world, and how this relationship is to be understood in the late twentieth century (e.g., in Christian environmental ethics).

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Study of gender and power among the Bakwena people in Africa.


Text which comes out of author's courses given at the Theological College of Northern Nigeria, Bukuru.


This book collects the proverbs and wisdom sayings that are both paradigmatic expressions of traditional African self-understanding and the best place to begin a study of African Christian theology. Using a mode of theological discourse far removed from that of Western theology, Healey and Syberitz seek to understand how theology is done in oral culture. They show how a body of sayings links Jesus, God, Mary and the African ancestors in a communion of saints, and how the ideal of church is to become an expanded “family” in which the care of guests is vital. Jesus empowers his followers to overcome death and enter into new relationships symbolized in the eucharistic meal. The themes of healing and mission are shown to be intrinsic to the African self-understanding. The issues discussed reveal the fertility of the African theological imagination.


Hillman was missionary for twenty-five years in East Africa, and currently teaches at Salve Regina University in Newport, Rhode Island.
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Reviewed by Gladys Ganiel (Queen’s University, Belfast, Northern Ireland) in *Catholic Books Review* February 26, 2018 at http://catholicbooksreview.org/2018/katongole.html

From Ganiel’s Review: “The essays are divided into three parts. The first, ‘Reconciling all Things,’ features theoretical essays in which Katongole elaborates on his theological vision of reconciliation. ... The second part, ‘For the Life of the World: The Church as Sacrament of God’s Reconciliation in the World,’ focuses on ecclesiological dimensions of reconciliation, providing a basis for Katongole’s argument that the Church is uniquely well-placed to transcend so-called ethnic and tribal divisions. ... The third part, ‘Improvising new Creation: On Being Ambassadors of Reconciliation in a Divided World,’ focuses on the lives of Christian peace activists and identifies what can be learned from their witness.”


Magesa argues that, just as Christianity or Islam, traditional African religion defines how people ought to live, with norms, values and principles that have much to teach the rest of the world. As with other world religions, it is Africans’ perceptions of the Holy that give direction to their lives.


Martey, Emmanuel. *African Theology: Inculturation and Liberation.* Maryknoll: Orbis Press,
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1993.

Revision of author's doctoral thesis from Union Theological Seminary in New York.

Martey is a Ghanaian theologian and Presbyterian minister.


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Revised version of his 1963 doctoral dissertation submitted in the University of Cambridge.

Mbiti is Professor of Theology and Comparative Religion at Makerere University College in Uganda.


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Onuh is a Catholic priest of the Diocese of Nsukka in Nigeria.


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Rader was a Baptist missionary for eleven years in Africa and is currently dean of the School of Christian Service and Professor of Missions at Oklahoma Baptist University.


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Explores how African cultural examples, allegories, etc. can illuminate parts of the Bible that a Western worldview might otherwise obscure.

Tarr was a missionary in the Assemblies of God Church and teacher for many years in Burkina Faso and Togo in West Africa.


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