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A theology of culture for modern Africa

Abstract

The role and place of culture in theological discourses has been a subject of intense controversy among theologians and scholars over the years. This controversy has been fueled by the perceived exclusion of culture as a key player in shaping our theological enterprise and especially in the African context. The foregoing notwithstanding, theology in its nature is contextual. This assertion flows from both the biblical and historical models of theologizing. For instance, in Jeremiah 18: 2 , we see Jeremiah being invited to receive God's message from within a cultural milieu of the day. It is notable therefore that, culture plays a vital role in the theological enterprise of a given people in a given place.

But then, whose culture is to be utilized? Is there a universal culture through which theological enterprise must proceed? What kind of culture is qualified to be considered for theological enterprise and especially with respect to modern Africa? It is argued that "European missionaries introduced the message of Jesus Christ to most Africans based on their own culture and mentality". In the same manner, the resultant theology was devoid of African cultural milieu and mentality, hence the failure to adequately serve the myriad of Africa's needs that call for theological interpretation.

This paper will therefore seek to formulate a distinct theology of culture for the modern African context, and one that will respond appropriately to the unique and varied needs of the modern African person.

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