

Prolegomena to an African theology: An examination of the sources and methodology of Mbiti's theology.

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Abstract

On May 26th 1985, over the Canadian broadcasting corporation, Dr. John Mbiti stated that the Christians in Africa have a faith but not a theology; and that Western missionaries agreed to contextualize Christianity in music and Church decorations but not in theology. Examining the sources and methodology of Mbiti's theology, in this dissertation the author presents a prolegomena to an African theology. The author assesses Professor John Samuel Mbiti's theology with particular reference to his doctrine of eschatology developed in his book. New Testament eschatology in an African background. The author highlights the fact that Mbiti's theology lacks the dialectical tension and balance between creation, sin and salvation; and that Mbiti's theology tends to emphasize continuity between Christianity and African religion and cultural experience over discontinuity, hence Mbiti's theology being an inadequate statement of Christian belief that is both Christian and African. The author proposes an alternative methodology based on the Christ-event of incarnation, death and resurrection allowing for a construction of a theology that identifies and maintains the dialectical balance and tension between creation, sin and salvation. The author recommends that the Christ-event should be at the Centre of any theologizing in the African context that bears the name Christian.