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## Introduction and survey on recent research in African Christianity (1)

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## (1) INTRODUCTION AND SURVEY ON RECENT RESEARCH IN AFRICAN CHRISTIANITY

**Isabel Apawo Phiri**

### **Introduction**

The purpose of this chapter is twofold. First, it introduces the articles contained in Section One of this *Anthology on African Christianity*. Secondly, it gives a survey of selected research in African Christianity from 1990 to 2015. In the process of reviewing past and current literature, African theologians and scholars have proved beyond reasonable doubt that Christianity is indigenous to Africa, and not an imported faith. The voices of African scholars have not only served to explain the Christian faith in the African context and understanding alone, but they have unanimously grounded the faith deeply in the world and perception of Africans and their existential needs. The authors highlight the important observation that there has been hardly any phase or aspect of Christianity over the years without some African participation. The effort by African theologians and scholars has gone a long way to releasing Africans from depending on western interpretation of their Christianity. African theologians and scholars have domesticated and produced Christian documents that appeal to African hearts and ears, thereby addressing the very existential challenges that confront Africans today. Nevertheless, the documents produced have had a global appeal as African Christianity finds its place in global Christianity.

The authors of Section One of *the Anthology of African Christianity* provide an overview of the different contexts in which African Christianity has developed. James Tengatenga's article has reminded the reader that African Christianity has deep connections and ancient roots going back to the birth of Christianity. He demonstrates why Christianity is called an African religion. David Tonghou Ngong has demonstrated the existence of African Christianity over the centuries before the mass evangelization of Africa in the nineteenth century by missionaries from the global North. At the same time, Roderick Hewitt has drawn the attention of the reader to the fact that among the early missionaries to Africa were also Caribbeans who contributed to the evangelization of West Africa. The contribution of Africans to the development of African Christianity is well documented by Obed Kealotswe who has shown how resistance to colonialism gave birth to initiatives of different forms of African Christianity. Hebron Ndlovu, Kwabena Asamoah Gyadu, Jesse Mugambi, Afe Adogame and Asonze Ukah have given the reader a variety of interesting pictures based on analysis of the trends and development of Christianity in the context of political independence. Their analysis goes beyond the transformations and challenges of Christianity within the churches to an analysis of its contribution to public life in Africa and abroad. Their work shows Africans as agents of change in the development of African Christianity. Central to African Christianity is the place given to the Bible. The articles of Gerald West and Musa Dube take the reader into this important area of African Christianity. Musa Dube's article goes a step further in analysing how the Bible has been used in African Christianity to empower and disempower men and women in negotiating their relationships. One aspect of African Christianity is its ability to develop side-by-side with African indigenous religions and Islam. The articles of Tabona Shoko and Johnson Mbillah give the reader glimpses of this complex relationship by giving an analysis that shows co-operation and conflict. Finally, the articles of Roderick Hewitt, Jesse Mugambi, Afe Adogame and Angelique Walker-Smith show not only how African Christianity has developed in Africa due to contacts with Africans outside the continent but also how African Christians are making an impact with other Christians outside the continent.

Secondly, by attempting to survey recent research in African Christianity, this article aims to anchor the current articles in the tradition of ongoing research. Ten research projects will be cited to demonstrate

international acknowledgement of African initiatives in research. The choice of the ten projects was guided by a) evidence of collaboration among African scholars across the continent, and in some cases with theologians and scholars from other continents on themes pertinent for Africa. This has meant I have left out research projects which were carried out by scholars in one country or by individual scholars. This could be a topic for further research. b) The choice of the ten projects was also guided by research projects which can be considered as forming the basis of the work presented in this section. This has meant that I have not included research projects by groups of scholars simply because the theme covered is outside the area of focus in Section One. c) As stated above, the period in question is twenty-five years. The choice of 1990 as a starting point is arbitrary and for management purposes only. This has meant that important research done before 1990 has been left out. Having outlined the parameters of this research, what follows is a presentation of ten key research projects on African Christianity:

### **African Indigenous Religions and Christianity**

#### *Religious Plurality in Africa: Essays in honour of John S. Mbiti*<sup>1</sup>

As stated in the title of the book above, the project was co-ordinated by Olupona Jacob and Sulayman S. Nyang in order to honour one of Africa's leading theologians, John Mbiti. In a review of the book written by Rosalind I.J. Hackett, this is what she said about its editors: 'Olupona Jacob and Sulayman S. Nyang have assembled an impressive array of contributors in the field of African religious studies and theology to pay tribute to this influential and productive scholar and most respected person.'<sup>2</sup> The project addressed various themes from over three hundred publications of John Mbiti on religion in Africa. The first section was on the study of African Traditional Religion. This section focuses on issues and perspectives on religious plurality in Africa, from Westernization to Africanization, African Traditional Religion as an enduring heritage, and the encounter between traditional African healing systems versus western medicine in Southern Ghana. The project also addresses African theology by considering civil authority from the perspective of African theology, the Bible and oral tradition.

Section Two of the book addressed the issues of Africa and Christianity with a special focus on domestication of Christian values in the African Church. The project addresses the fact that the African Church/Christianity has its roots in African culture and in the tradition of healing which most Africans neglect to their disadvantage. It calls for the need to recognize the place and contribution of women in Africa, and drew attention to the importance of appreciating religious plurality in Africa instead of allowing it to be viewed as destructive of African Christianity.

Africa and some world religions are the focus of Section Three of this project. It addresses the Islamic revival in West Africa; historical perspectives and recent developments, Christian-Muslim relationships in Africa, and in retrospect, Africa and Judaism: its problems and prospects. These are timely challenges that the project raises.

Since the project is dedicated to John Mbiti, it mainstreams and criticises Mbiti's works on aspects of African religions as reflected in the perspectives of students in a British university, Mbiti's views on love and marriage in Africa, and his contribution to African philosophy.

The project was funded by the Synodal Council of the Evangelical-Reformed Church of the Canton of Berne, the Copeland Fellowship, Amherst College and the World Council of Churches (WCC), Geneva.

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<sup>1</sup> Olupona Jacob and Sulayman S. Nyang (eds) 1993, *Religious Plurality in Africa: Essays in honour of John S. Mbiti*. New York and Berlin: Mouton de-Guyter.

<sup>2</sup> Rosalind I.J. Hackett in *The International Journal of African Historical Studies*, 28:3 (1995), 680-82.

*Rites of Passage in Contemporary Africa, and the Interaction  
between Christianity and African Traditional Religions*<sup>3</sup>

The project on *Rites of Passage in Contemporary Africa and the Interaction between Christianity and African Traditional Religions* addresses a variety of issues related to African indigenous and Christian rituals connected with cycle of life. Cardiff Academic Press has summarized the book by highlighting the following: ‘This text demonstrates that the academic study of religion is not only responsive to developments in religious life, but is interested in actively exploring the symbolic structures expressed in Christian and traditional ritual activities. Academic understanding is shown to be interactive with the many factors which compromise meaning within human societies and religious communities.’<sup>4</sup> This project involved the University of Malawi, the University of Edinburgh and the University of Zimbabwe. It was sponsored by the Pew Charitable Trust. However, the scholars of religious studies who participated in this project were drawn from various parts of the continent.

*The Wiley-Blackwell Companion to African Religions*<sup>5</sup>

Elias Kifon Bongmba co-ordinated this project. As the editor of the *Wiley-Blackwell Companion to African Religions*, he stated that ‘the project brings together a team of international scholars to create a single-volume resource on the religious beliefs and practices of the peoples in Africa. It offers a broad coverage of issues relating to African religions, considering experiences in indigenous, Christian and Islamic traditions across the continent. The contributors to this project are drawn from a variety of fields, ensuring the volume offers multi-disciplinary perspectives. It explores methodological approaches to religion from anthropological, philosophical and historical perspectives. It also provides insights into the historical developments in African religions, as well as contemporary issues such as the development of African-initiated churches, neo-traditional religions and Pentecostalism. It discusses important topics at the intersection of culture and religion in Africa, including the arts, health, politics, globalization, gender relations and the economy’.<sup>6</sup>

*Biblical Studies, Theology, Religion and Philosophy*<sup>7</sup>

The project *Biblical Studies, Theology, Religion and Philosophy* was co-ordinated by James Amanze. First, the project addresses issues concerning biblical studies. It introduces the history of interpreting the Bible and the methods involved. It gives an overview of the Old Testament and the major themes of the Old Testament. The project also introduces the survey of the New Testament and its major themes. These relate to Religion, Race, Gender and Identity as the Bible is read and understood by Africans. Biblical criticism is also introduced to create an opportunity for the voiceless to find their place in biblical interpretation.

Secondly, the project addresses theology by introducing Christian theology, its tasks and methodology. The project covers African theology with a contextual analysis of Zimbabwe. Rethinking Liberation Theology and the major themes in Black Theology are also addressed. The project includes forging a theological framework for African Women’s Theology and theology of African Independent churches.

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<sup>3</sup> Cox, James (ed), *Rites of passage in Contemporary Africa, Interaction between Christianity and African Traditional Religions*. Cardiff: Academic Press, 1998.

<sup>4</sup> <https://books.google.ch/books?id=4InZAAAAMAAJ&q=review+of+Rites+of+passage+in+Contemporary+Africa,+Interaction+between+Christianity+and+African+Traditional+Religions&dq=review+of+Rites+of+passage+in+Contemporary+Africa,+Interaction+between+Christianity+and+African+Traditional+Religions&hl=en&sa=X&ved=0ahUK EwjshqOLuaTJA hXEYw8KHXdXAggQ6AEIHTAA>. Accessed 21.11.2015.

<sup>5</sup> Bongmba, Elias K (eds). *The Wiley-Blackwell Companion to African Religions*. Chichester, UK: Wiley Blackwell Publication 2012.

<sup>6</sup> <http://eu.wiley.com/WileyCDA/WileyTitle/productCd-1405196904.html> (accessed 21st November 2015).

<sup>7</sup> Amanze, J.N. (ed), *Biblical Studies, Theology, Religion and Philosophy*. Eldoret, Kenya: Zapf Chancery, 2010.

Thirdly, the project introduces religious studies and the phenomenology of religion. It looks at African Traditional Religions in contemporary Africa; its challenges and prospects, and Christianity in Africa in the 21st century. The project also addresses philosophy from the African perspective. Finally, the project also introduces philosophy, logic, critical thinking and science. It includes epistemology, African philosophy and moral ethics.

The project was sponsored by the Ecumenical Theological Education of the World Council of Churches (WCC) in conjunction with Evangelisches Missionswerk in Germany.

### **The Bible in Africa**

#### *The Bible in Africa: Transactions, Trajectories and Trends*<sup>8</sup>

This project was co-ordinated by Gerald O. West and Musa W. Dube. It involved a variety of African Bible scholars who share their own perspective of the place of the Bible in Africa. The project is about African scholars documenting and analysing African biblical scholarship. In a review by Brill, the publisher of the book that emerged from this project, it says: ‘Although the arrival of the Bible in Africa has often been a tale of terror, the Bible has become an African book. This volume explores the many ways in which Africans have made the Bible their own. The essays in this book offer a glimpse of the rich resources that constitute Africa’s engagement with the Bible.’<sup>9</sup> The book is divided into five sections: Part One is the historical and hermeneutical perspective. This section traces the historical developments of biblical interpretation in Africa. Part Two is particular encounters with particular texts. It gives examples from every region in Africa with a focus on the relationship between African biblical scholarship and scholarship in the West. Part Three describes comparisons and translations as transactions. The history and role of vernacular translation in particular African contexts is highlighted. Part Four is about redrawing the boundaries of the Bible in Africa. The ambiguity of the Bible in Africa is explored. Part Five gives a bibliography of what is known to the editors on biblical scholarship in Africa. In doing so, this project provides African resources for reading the Bible. This project was funded by the University of Natal Research Fund and the National Research Foundation (South Africa). This project has inspired many more publications in the area of the Bible in Africa.<sup>10</sup>

#### *The African Bible Commentary*<sup>11</sup>

The project was co-ordinated by Tokunboh Adeyemo who brought together a number of African evangelical scholars. In reference to the aims of the project, Tokunboh said, ‘The *Africa Bible Commentary* is a unique publishing event – the first one-volume Bible commentary produced in Africa by African theologians to meet the needs of African pastors, students and lay leaders. Interpreting and applying the Bible in the light of African culture and realities, it furnishes powerful and relevant insights into the biblical text that transcend Africa in their significance. The *Africa Bible Commentary* gives a section-by-section interpretation that provides a contextual, readable, affordable and immensely useful guide to the

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<sup>8</sup> West, Gerald O. Dube Musa W. (eds) *The Bible in Africa: Transactions, Trajectories and Trends*. Leiden and Boston: BRILL, 2000.

<sup>9</sup> [https://books.google.ch/books/about/The\\_Bible\\_in\\_Africa.html?id=4DcVuqtoEiIC&redir\\_esc=y](https://books.google.ch/books/about/The_Bible_in_Africa.html?id=4DcVuqtoEiIC&redir_esc=y) accessed 21.11.2015.

<sup>10</sup> An example is Dube, Musa W. ed. *Other Ways of Reading: African Women and the Bible*. Atlanta/Geneva: Society of Biblical Literature/WCC, 2001 and Musa W. Dube and Musimbi Kanyoro (eds). 2004. *Grant Me Justice: HIV/AIDS & Gender Readings of the Bible*. Pietermaritzburg: Cluster Publications.

<sup>11</sup> Adeyemo, Tokunboh (ed). 2006. *The African Bible Commentary*. New York: Word Alive Publishers/Zondervan.

entire Bible. Readers around the world will benefit from and appreciate the commentary's fresh insights and direct style that engage both heart and mind.<sup>7</sup>

Key features of the commentary include:

- Produced by African biblical scholars, in Africa, for Africa – and for the world.
- A section-by-section interpretative commentary and application.
- More than seventy special articles dealing with topics of key importance to ministry in Africa today, but which also have global implications.
- Seventy African contributors from both English- and French-speaking countries.

Transcends the African context with insights into the biblical text and the Christian faith for readers worldwide.<sup>12</sup>

This project was sponsored by SIM and the Association of Evangelicals in Africa, with significant financial support from Christians worldwide.

### **Mission in African Christianity**

#### *African Christianity Rising*<sup>13</sup>

This research took place over a period of ten years. It is a documentary film series telling the stories of Christianity in Ghana and Zimbabwe. It includes commentaries from renowned African theologians and church leaders such as Kwame Bediako, Peter K. Sarpong, Trevor Manhanga and Mensah Otobil. The project addresses the issue of the remarkable growth of Christianity on the African continent. Bediako argues strongly, as he has in his other publications, that Christianity is no longer the religion of the West.<sup>14</sup> The majority of Christians are now in the global South, while within the global South, it is in Africa where the fastest growth is taking place. Among the different traditions of African Christianity, it is in the African Indigenous Churches where church growth is very rapid. It is this background information that is informing the conversation in the film series. This is reflected through the engagement of Christianity with local culture as shown in singing, dancing, drama, healing and other rituals that speak to African contexts and realities.

Furthermore, the project also addresses how African Christianity is finding expression outside Africa. Examples are drawn from African Christianity in Holland, Norway, Sweden and Britain where African churches are expanding. It also touches on the issue of African Christian scholars taking leadership positions in academic and theological institutions in the global North. Two funders of the project have been identified as the Pew Charitable Trust and the Templeton Foundation.

#### *African Initiatives in Christian Mission*<sup>15</sup>

Under the leadership of M.L. Daneel and Dana L. Robert, this project has produced a series of books with the explicit purpose of highlighting the African contribution to Christian mission in Africa. It counteracts the dominant discourse that associated mission activities in Africa with only missionaries from the global

<sup>12</sup> <https://books.google.ch/books?id=ExUm1hB1XxoC&dq=The+African+Bible+Commentary&hl=en&sa=X&ved=0ahUKEwiAIJCKzaTJAhVBtQ8KHQjCBhwQ6AEIHDA>. Accessed 21.11.2015.

<sup>13</sup> Ault, James (ed) *African Christianity Rising: Two Part Documentary Film Series* Stories from Ghana (77: 00) Stories from Zimbabwe (73: 00). James Ault Production, 2012. 4 DVDs <http://jamesault.com/documentaries/africa-project/>. Accessed 22.11.2015.

<sup>14</sup> Kwame Bediako, *Christianity in Africa, The Renewal of a Non-Western Religion* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press/Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 1995).

<sup>15</sup> The African Initiatives in Christian Mission Series is edited by M.L. Daneel and Dana L. Robert, published by UNISA Press. See a list of its publications at the following website: [www.bu.edu/cgcm/research/africa/african-initiatives-in-christian-mission-book-series/](http://www.bu.edu/cgcm/research/africa/african-initiatives-in-christian-mission-book-series/) accessed 22.11.2015.

North. In the description of this project, it says: ‘White missionaries, western mission policies, and the relationship of mission to European imperialism have dominated the discussion of African missions. Little attention has been paid by scholars to African initiatives in Christian mission, nor have missiological studies been made exclusively from the perspective of the so-called “recipients”. Yet the phenomenal growth of Christianity in Africa has occurred in the twentieth century, much of it after the independence of the continent from outside control. The series *African Initiatives in Christian Mission* represents an attempt to address the reality that the spread of Christianity in Africa, its shape and character, has been the product of African Christians, both in the “mission churches” and the “African Initiated/Independent Churches (AICs)”.’<sup>16</sup> The project was sponsored by the Center for Global Christianity and Mission.

*The Dictionary of African Christian Biography*<sup>17</sup>

The *Dictionary of African Christian Biography* started in 1995 under the leadership of Jonathan Bonk. He has this to say about the project: ‘An international team of African scholars is facilitating the project. Contributors are drawn from academic, church and mission communities in Africa and elsewhere. Work began in 1995 and is expected to continue till 2020. The Center for Global Christianity and Mission at Boston University School of Theology provides technical and administrative support under the direction of Jonathan Bonk. While the growth and character of Christianity in Africa is without historical precedent, information on the major creative and innovative local figures and leaders of this growth – from local evangelists and pastors to nationally known Christian leaders – does not appear in standard historical and biographical reference works on the continent. The *Dictionary* covers the whole field of African Christianity from earliest times to the present and over the entire continent. Broadly interconfessional, historically descriptive, and exploiting the full range of oral and written records, the primary language of the *Dictionary* is English, with growing numbers of entries in the other major lingua franca of African universities: French, Portuguese and Swahili. The *Dictionary* stimulates local data-gathering and input. As a non-proprietary electronic database, it constitutes a uniquely dynamic way to maintain, amend, expand, access and disseminate information vital to an understanding of African Christianity. Being non-proprietary, it is possible for material within it to be freely reproduced locally in printed form. Being electronic, the material is simultaneously accessible to readers around the world.’<sup>18</sup> The project is sponsored by the Pew Charitable Trust.

*The Handbook on Theological Education in Africa*<sup>19</sup>

This project started in 2010 under the co-ordination of Isabel Apawo Phiri and Dietrich Werner. The project’s focus is on the history of theological education, regional surveys on theological education, and denominational perspectives on theological education – all these in Africa. It also addresses key issues and new frontiers in African theological education, centering on mission and dialogue, Gender and HIV/AIDS, public theology, peace, justice and ecology, forms and models of theological education, selected innovative models and case studies of theological education in Africa, and networks and resources for theological education in Africa. The project addresses issues around the rapid growth of Christianity in Africa and the need for well informed and biblically sound theological education in the formation of its priests, ministers and lay church leaders. Other issues being raised in the project include the social, political and public relevance of Christian theology on the African continent.

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<sup>16</sup> [www.bu.edu/cgcm/research/africa/african-initiatives-in-christian-mission-book-series/](http://www.bu.edu/cgcm/research/africa/african-initiatives-in-christian-mission-book-series/) accessed 21.11.2015.

<sup>17</sup> Jonathan Bonk ed. *Dictionary of Africa Christian Biography*. Boston: Boston University Press.

<sup>18</sup> [www.dacb.org/what-is-dacb.html](http://www.dacb.org/what-is-dacb.html). Accessed 21.11.2015.

<sup>19</sup> Isabel Apawo Phiri and Dietrich Werner. (eds) *Handbook of Theological Education in Africa*. (Oxford/Pietermaritzburg: Regnum Books International/Cluster Publication, 2013).

The project also addresses the need for working to strengthen collaboration and quality standards for theological education through the work of regional associations of theological institutions. The project calls for working to create opportunities where churches of different denominations on the continent can learn from each other as well as complementing one other.

The project is funded by the Ecumenical Theological Education (ETE) unit of the World Council of Churches, EMW Hamburg, Germany, Dan Mission Copenhagen, and Mission 21 in Basel, Switzerland.

### **Gender in African Christianity**

While gender has been mainstreamed in most of the research projects mentioned above, the research projects of the Circle of Concerned African Women Theologians (the Circle) and Ecumenical HIV and AIDS Initiative in Africa (EHAIA) deserve special mention here because of the huge impact that their literature has had in the development of African Christianity.

#### *The Circle of Concerned African Women Theologians*

The Circle is the opportunity for women from Africa to do communal theology based on their religious, cultural and social experiences. These concerned women are engaged in theological dialogue with cultures, religions, sacred writings and oral stories that shape the African context and define the women of this continent. The mission of the Circle is to undertake research, write and publish on African issues from women's perspective. The vision of the Circle is to empower African women to contribute their critical thinking and analysis to advance current knowledge. Theology, religion and culture are the three chosen foci which are used as the framework for Circle research and publications. Between 1990 and 2015 the Circle has had five Pan-African conferences and four general co-ordinators.<sup>20</sup> Each Pan-African conference decides a theme for research and publications. Since the Pan-African conference of 2002, the Circle's publications has focused on women, religion and health. Among the many publications of the Circle,<sup>21</sup> I would highlight the following:

#### *African Women, Religion and Health: Essays in Honour of Mercy Amba Oduyoye*<sup>22</sup>

This book is divided into six parts that tells the story of Mercy Amba Oduyoye and deals with issues that she is very passionate about. Part 1 is entitled *Celebrating Mercy Amba Oduyoye*; Part 2 focuses on African women, the Bible and health; Part 3 on Women as Traditional Healers in Africa; Part 4 on Theological Reflections on Children and Women's Rights in Africa; Part 5 on Theological Reflection of African women's experiences of Family, Ethnicity and Sexual Health; Part 6 is a postscript, where a longstanding male friend of Mercy Oduyoye, Ogbu U. Kalu, has reflected on possible future areas of conversations between the Circle of Concerned African Women Theologians and Afro-American women theologians. The work of the Circle has been sponsored by many mission agencies including the Women's Desk, Ecumenical Theological Education, and the Ecumenical HIV/AIDS Initiative in Africa (EHAIA) of the World Council of Churches.

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<sup>20</sup> Mercy Amba Oduyoye is the founder of the Circle who gave leadership of the Circle from inception of the Circle in 1989 to 1995. Musimbi Kanyoro was the Circle general coordinator during the period 1995-2002. Isabel Apawo Phiri took over from 2002 to 2007. Fulata Mbanjo Moyo 2007-2013. Helen Adekunbi Labeodan from 2013 to the present.

<sup>21</sup> Books that have been commissioned by the Circle amount to more than forty. However, Circle members in their personal capacity have written books, articles in books and journals which number over a hundred. The Circle last attempt to produce a Circle bibliography for the period 1989-2006. An updated Circle bibliography is yet to come out.

<sup>22</sup> Phiri, Isabel A. and Sarojini Nadar. eds. *African Women Religion and health: Essays in Honour of Mercy Amba Oduyoye*. (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 2006).

*The Ecumenical HIV/AIDS Initiative in Africa (EHAIA)*<sup>23</sup>

The EHAIA under the co-ordination of Nyambura Njoroge has done outstanding research and publications in partnership with the Circle and on its own. In my judgement, EHAIA has now taken the lead from the Circle in research and publication in addressing the issues of HIV/AIDS from a theological perspective in the context of Africa.<sup>24</sup> In the EHAIA Plan of Action it states that:

‘WCC-EHAIA’s two-pronged approach involved promoting HIV competence among churches in Africa and working with theological institutions to mainstream HIV into theological curricula. The main purpose is to transform attitudes and practices in the churches, to bring them into line with gospel values of inclusion and love.’<sup>25</sup> I have not singled out any one publication from EHAIA as they are all on the cutting-edge of research in African Christianity.

### Conclusion

This brief survey of African theologians and scholars’ contribution to African Christianity, though not exhaustive, is revealing, heart-warming and overwhelming. This leaves no-one in doubt about the fact that African theologians and scholars have done some ground-breaking work to re-root and document African Christianity, and to justify the submission that Christianity is not a religion imported to Africa and Africans, and that the Bible is an African book.

This breathtaking effort by African theologians and scholars has shown that they are focusing on issues that are of real concern to African Christians. The major concern is how much of this knowledge produced by African theologians and scholars is actually informing the theological curriculum of African theological institutions, where African church leaders are formed for the church. African theologians and scholars have a lot of work ahead of them to popularize their thinking in the African churches at grassroots level so that its impact is felt as it empowers people to eradicate some extreme social imbalances and injustices that are deeply entrenched within African societies and African Christians. One does not need a reminder that issues of gender inequality, HIV/AIDS, destructive masculinity, corruption, poverty, oppressive and repressive governance, all forms of violence against women, and socio-political and economic injustice, are all still deeply rooted in Africa. It is, therefore, hoped that the research of African theologians and scholars will contribute towards building relationships of trust in African communities.

### Bibliography

Bediako, Kwame, *Christianity in Africa, The Renewal of a Non-Western Religion* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, and Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 1995).

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<sup>23</sup> For more information on the publications of EHAIA go to [https://www.oikoumene.org/en/what-we-do/ehaia/activity\\_news](https://www.oikoumene.org/en/what-we-do/ehaia/activity_news). Accessed 22.11.2015.

<sup>24</sup> Some of the publications of EHAIA include the following: Musa W. Dube. “Culture, Gender and HIV/AIDS: Understanding and Acting on the Issues,” in Musa W. Dube (ed). 2003. *HIV/AIDS and the Curriculum: Methods of Integrating HIV/AIDS in Theological Programmes*. (Geneva: World Council of Churches, 2003); Musa Dube (ed). *Africa Praying: A Handbook on HIV/AIDS Sensitive Sermon Guidelines and Liturgy*, 209-221. Geneva: WCC Publications, 2003; Ezra Chitando and Sophia Chirongoma (eds). *Justice Not Silence: Churches facing sexual and gender-based violence* (Stellenbosch: Sun Press, 2013); Ezra Chitando and Nontando Hadebe (eds). *Compassionate Circles: African Women Theologians Facing HIV*. (Geneva: WCC, 2009); Ezra Chitando, *Troubled but Not Destroyed: African Theology in Dialogue with HIV and AIDS*. (Geneva: WCC, 2009). Ezra Chitando, *Living with Hope: African Churches and HIV/AIDS*. (Geneva: WCC, 2007); Ezra Chitando, *Acting in Hope: African Churches and HIV/AIDS*. (Geneva: WCC, 2007).

<sup>25</sup> Plan of Action, Ecumenical HIV And AIDS Initiatives And Advocacy. Responding to the HIV and AIDS Pandemic, 2014-2021, page 6.

Chitando Ezra and Sophia Chirongoma (eds), *Justice Not Silence: Churches facing sexual and gender-based violence* (Stellenbosch, RSA: Sun Press, 2013).

Kanyoro, Musimbi R.A., and Nyambura J. Njoroge (eds), *Groaning in Faith: African Women in the Household of God* (Nairobi: Acton, 1996).

Phiri, Isabel A. and Sarojini Nadar (eds), *African Women Religion and Health: Essays in Honour of Mercy Amba Oduyoye* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 2006).

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