

CHRIST AS HEALER AND ANCESTOR IN AFRICA

In Chapter five, Tennent has an extended discourse on an important paradigm shift in the world of Christendom. This trend states the majority of the world's Christians will be in the global south. Sub-Saharan African is estimated to have fifty-percent of the world's Christians by the year 2050. Tennent reflects on how African theologians will "determine the whole shape of Church History for centuries to come (Tennent, p. 106). Then he gives an extended discussion on African Christology. In the larger context, the author examines how African Christology fits into the "Christological Puzzle" It denotes how African theologians will develop a framework of Christology that expounds beyond the traditional western Christology's critique of Christ's two natures (e.g. Divine and Human, soteriology, ecclesiology and eschatology). Tennent emphasizes the fact that the statements made at the Nicene Creed (AD 325) and the use of the Chalcedonian (451) are not the final words on Christological statements (Tennent, p.107). Moreover, Tennent states the Christological puzzle has an "upper side" (eternality, Trinity, Son of God) and an "under side" (teacher, healer, friend of sinners) (Tennent, p. 108). The author cites several African theologians (e.g. Mbiti, Sanon, Nyamiti) who have made important contributions regarding developing African Christology. Tennent gives a synopsis of the aspects of African Christology by conducting a comparative analysis of both Western and African Christology. African Christology is more holistic and less ontological. It will address practical concerns such as poverty, illiteracy, ethnic tensions, colonialism, dictatorship, illness, disenfranchisement, and suffering (Tennent, p.113). Pertinent aspects of African Christology also draw a connection to Africa's past and Christ as the Liberator, Victor, Ancestor, and Healer. In African Christology, Christ as a Healer has a dichotomy that entails both physical healing and spiritual healing, and cosmic healing over Satan and principalities (Tennent, p. 119). The Jesus as Ancestor concept is also explored in African Christology. African Traditional Religion (ATR) as per Bolaji Idowu has tiers. Tennent predicts that Christology in Africa will bridge the image of Jesus as the ancestor to the further expansion of the gospel on the continent (Tennent, p. 123). Tennent perceives Christology on the African continent as a significant 21st century theological trend.

African Christology is indeed a significant trend in the 21st century. The translatability of the gospel is vibrant on the African continent. I also believe it is vibrant in the African diaspora with the emergence of so many independent African immigrant churches in the Western Hemisphere. One cannot ignore culture when evangelizing. It is vital to acknowledge cultural dynamics in the transmitting of the gospel. Two pertinent questions that arise What impact will African Christology have on Christendom in the next 10-25 years? And Will the Western Church embrace the aspects of African Christology as significantly as it did the Christological statements in the at the Nicean and Chalcedonian councils? The missiological implications my church and denominational affiliation are significant. My denominational is international and we have several churches on the African continent. WE have already endured and surmounted the issue of having leadership from the Afrin continent develop the church in Africa. I will be instrumental in forging dialogue to have African Christology introduced to churches in my denomination across America. It is also important to form mentoring relationships between African biblical scholars and students in the United States. Evangelism and Mentorship in Christendom should be reciprocal. Christ taught us to love another (John 15:12) and there should be no tolerance for of cultural superiority in Christendom. African Christology is a phenomenal emerging reality. I

