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A THEOLOGY OF SIN FROM
AN AFRICAN CHRISTIAN PERSPECTIVE

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by

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ABSTRACT

This thesis is an attempt to contribute to the ongoing quest for Christian theology developed from African perspective. The paper began with an introduction which specifies the problem, purpose, significance, methodology, delimitation and definition of terms. It further contended that adequate articulation of the doctrine of sin will enhance the understanding of the concept thereby removing obstacles that will hinder growth of any kind in the cause of Christianity.

The second chapter concentrated on the biblical meaning of sin. Different ideas of sin were overviewed with the intention of exposing the reader on how some earlier theologians wrestled with the issue at their own time. Particular references were made to the Pelagians, Augustinian, the liberals and the Arminian. All these earlier schools of thought held views that sometimes obscure the meaning they were trying to elucidate.

The third chapter surveyed the African concept of sin as it relates to God and divinities and as it relates to man and community. It is in this chapter that the paper observed that African views of sin are closely tied with that of the Scripture though not exactly the same. The evaluation of the concept was also done in this chapter.

The fourth chapter is a discussion on the implications of the various concepts of sin for the development of a relevant and scripturally based African Christian theology.

The fifth chapter deals with the theology of sin from an African viewpoint. The bulk of the work is found in this chapter. Others were like preparatory ground.

The paper posed some challenges that are pertinent. A careful reading will make an interesting study.

CONCLUSION

In general, it has become clear that the problem of the world today is sin; individual/personal sin and group or collective sin. All are affected without exemption. "All like sheep have gone astray." Since the hearts and personalities of individual human beings are corrupt, salvation becomes imperative for all if the problem of sin and evil in the world is to be eradicated.

The Church has to stand up to her God-given task to restore her lost integrity and propel the world to seek after righteousness. She has to emphasize upon evangelism, personal ethics and social ethics.

While the above emphasis is needed, the following observations have to be taken seriously as a measure to curb the weaknesses that have already permeated into the life of the Church, which have consciously or unconsciously encouraged sinners to continue to sin and the saints to abandon the way of righteousness.

The first observation is the abandonment of authentic biblical exposition that is relevant to the people. It has been the claim of Christianity that "only Scripture is finally valid as God's revelation of himself across cultures,"¹ but such claim has not been upheld with some measure of seriousness.

¹William A. Dyrness, Learning About Theology from the Third World (Grand Rapids: Academie Books, 1990), p. 195.

The power of God's Word will remain untapped if Christians do not have time for the reading of the Scripture. Until that is done, the biblical exposition will not take its central place to stimulate people to live both righteously and also be aware of God's presence in their midst.

The second observation is the fact that the study of the Scripture is now abstracted from its setting. A lot of imports that are not in agreement with the Scripture have been employed into the interpretation of the Scripture. Such unexamined inclusion of ideas that are not scriptural does more harm to the faith and leads people farther away from God. The Scripture has to be allowed to be the final word of the Christian faith.

If these observations are well taken, Christianity will become more meaningful to the people. Instead of leaving them hanging, they will be rooted in Christ through whom salvation is real.

RECOMMENDATIONS

All that is said in the preceding chapters has instilled quest for further research on this subject, especially those areas that were not covered in the course of the study. Since it is the desire of this writer that theology should be communicated to the immediate recipients from their perspectives to enhance

