

AICs' Concept of Theology

African Independent Churches have a broad concept of theology. Theology, to the AICs, is not a systematic documentation of doctrines and praxis. Theology does not need an ecclesial acceptance by a group of churches, for the theology to be practiced. AICs do not make a difference between secular and sacred beliefs. To them, every belief is sacred. They do not affirm any definition of theology – whether universally accepted or unknown. To put it in a Pauline epistemology, “In him we live and move and have our being...” (Acts 17:28) is the summary of AIC theology. Theology, to the AICs, includes every aspect of life. Everything in human beings and outside of humanity is theological.

In fact AICs do not look up to a group of trained clergy or scholars to formulate and articulate what they consider as *theology* for them. Technically speaking, AICs do not have persons whom they regard as repositories of theology. They agree with Stone and Duke that “All Christians are theologians...”

Sources of AIC Theology

The theology of African Independent Churches is drawn from four sources. The first source is the Bible... The second source of theology for African Independent Churches is the Holy Spirit... The third source of theology for AICs is African Traditional Religion... The fourth source of AIC theology is from their own experiences or encounter with God.

Various forms of theological education in AICs

To the AICs, theological education is a broad venture which can be done at any level; it cancels all laid down regulations as to who is qualified and what the resources should be. The goal of theological education, to the AICs, is to make theology relevant and to propel African Christians to proclaim the Gospel of Jesus Christ in a context that is readily acceptable, meaningful, and applicable – thus, yielding bountiful results. With this in mind, AIC leaders have been impervious of their marginalization in theological education by the wider church. They have ingeniously used a variety of pedagogies while keeping the traditional pedagogies of western mission-founded churches to entrench theological education in their members. There are four main categories of theological education among the AICs:

1. Theological education by the laity,
 - Hymnody/Songs/Choruses
 - Testimonies about the goodness of God.
 - Visions/Trances/Voices/Prophecies
2. Theological education by the clergy,
 - Founders' Vision
 - Discipleship (Elijah-Elisha mode)
 - Symbolisms
 - Parables
 - Periodic Theological Education
3. Traditional theological education,
 - Sunday School Teaching
 - Institutional Theological Education
4. Theological Education by Extension (TEE).

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